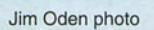




November/December 1996 Vol. 14, No. 5



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From the President

The VHPA Executive Council continues to strive to improve our association. We need your ideas and your participation to enhance the organization. Please take a few minutes to communicate your ideas on how to improve our association, its reunions and other VHPA activities and services.

Your input is welcome as to reunion locations, activities, hotels, speakers and programs. Tell us what is good, bad and how to do our reunions better by communicating in writing to VHPA, 949 University Ave., Suite 210, Sacramento CA 95825 or sending e-mail to VHPA [REDACTED]

The 1997 VHPA 11-by-17-inch, full-color calendar is available from Turner Publication for \$10, plus shipping and handling, by calling (800) 788-3350 to order.

Jack Swickard continues to publish an outstanding newsletter. The last issue was 28 pages of the right stuff. A tip of the 10 gallon Cav hats to the man from the Land on Enchantment, the general manager of the Roswell, NM, newspaper. Jack was recently honored with a lifetime pass for his long service as a board member of the Eastern New Mexico State Fair.

Mike Law puts out our wonderful directory on time and on budget. Mike has dedicated a large portion of his time to assuring that we, the membership of VHPA, enjoy such a quality publication. In my judgment, it is without peer for our size of veterans organization.

Kenny Bunn, Jack Jordan, Mike Hurley and I have been in the "scouts out mode" making several future reunion site visits.

Artistic culture is watching Ken Bunn's reaction to a display by a twenty-something racetrack circuit groupie of her Georgia Bulldog tattoo. Ken is in clinical nurse's training. Can you even imagine being almost dead sick and waking up to look at Bunn in nurse's whites with a syringe in his hands. I think I would rather fall on my saber. Good luck to Ken as he pursues his career change training.

Ken Fritz continues to ably oversee the smooth contractor transaction and has sought out new publishing companies for our newsletter and directory to our economic advantage. Ken is taking time to do a couple of scuba diving trips to Cozumel and Baja.

Jack Jordan has volunteered the services of his compa-

ny's communication system to facilitate the VHPA Executive Council telephone conference meetings. We think it will be a cost savings for VHPA. We are going to try it.

It is guys like Jack who step forward, not only with their time, but also make resources available to VHPA that make our association work.

The 1997 reunion is coming up sooner than you think. You should start making your plans and hotel reservations.

Look for announcements and information in the newsletters. Renaissance Orlando Resort is our main hotel. If I were to ask a hotel company to build the perfect hotel for a VHPA reunion, I would start with this one for a pattern.

To make your reservations, call 1 (800)-HOTELS-1. After the August/September newsletter came out, I received a call from Bob Inglett, who was my air cav troop commander, telling me he would be attending his first VHPA reunion in Orlando.

Bob is one of the leaders I admire. This is what makes the VHPA really worthwhile. It gives us all an opportunity to see some of our wonderful comrades from units and flight school. It is the VHPA newsletter at work.

Closer to home, I live in the sparsely populated tall grass prairie region of Kansas. Our entire county has less than 3,000 people.

We are now in process of constructing an All Veterans Remembrance Memorial in our local park. You guessed it, the center piece of military hardware is none other than a UH-1 from the Kansas Army National Guard.

The ole girl is a Vietnam vet. We peeled off her rotor system and loaded her up on a Harshman Construction lowboy, carefully measuring her to assure she would clear all the underpasses on the Kansas Turnpike and after clearing the first underpass without a crunching noise, Frank Harshman put the pedal to the metal and the ole girl achieved the ground speed of her lifetime from Topeka to Cottonwood Falls.

And, all this was accomplished without the assistance of any speed control interception by the Kansas Highway patrol.

I bring this up to encourage you to participate in the local veterans activities of your choice.

My wife, Merry, and I wish you and yours a Happy Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year. Yes, Merry was born on Dec. 25 of 19 . . . oh well, that is not important enough for me not to survive to bring in the New Year.

— Charles R. Rayl, President

Pilots flew with Little Bears

I am interested in finding Joseph Wasmond and Peter Gallimore. They flew with the Little Bears, 25th Infantry Division in 1969-70.

If anyone knows their whereabouts or has some old orders with names and social security numbers from flight school or the 25th, please send them to me or call.

Mike Taylor
P.O. Box 804
Camas, WA 98607
[REDACTED]

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How will VHPA, pilots be remembered?

I have been tasked with establishing a committee to determine the long-term goals our membership is willing to support and developing plans for how we can accomplish those goals.

The recommendations of this committee will be submitted to the Executive Council for action.

Examples of some ongoing and suggested goals are as follows:

We have some very dedicated members who have spent years gathering historical data which can and is being published (as funds are available) to preserve our collective history of the war in RVN.

An effort was made to start a scholarship fund many years ago.

There are several individuals and groups who are attempting to estab-

What will you be doing 21 years from now? For most of us, I think I know the answer.

lish museums.

These are ideas that have been presented. I am sure there are many more tremendous concepts which have not been explored.

All of these ideas have one thing in common: They require support. A concept without a plan is just a

dream.

If you want to participate in making VHPA last beyond you and me, now is the time and I need your help.

Please write or call and let's work together to decide what we want to accomplish and how.

Guys, please don't think, "I don't have time or I will participate later."

Twenty-one years ago, the last of our members left RVN.

What will you be doing 21 years from now? For most of us, I think I know the answer.

If we want to control the destiny of the VHPA and determine how we will be remembered, we must develop realistic goals the membership can support and we must implement them now.

— Jack Jordan, Executive Council

Participants sought in rescue attempt

I am a retired U.S. Navy captain who is writing a book about the last POW released in Vietnam and am trying to locate anyone who may have information pertinent to the book.

Robert T. "Bob" White, a U.S. Army first lieutenant, was shot down while piloting a Mohawk over the Long Toan District, Vinh Binh Province, in the Mekong Delta Nov. 15, 1969.

He was a member of the 73rd Surveillance Airplane Company (SAC) based in Vung Tau. With him that day as an observer was U.S. Navy lieutenant commander John G. "Jack" Graf, an intelligence officer and adviser for the Third Coastal Zone headquartered in Vung Tau.

They successfully ejected and were almost immediately captured by the Viet Cong. Subsequently, a massive rescue operation lasting five days was mounted to try to free them. It included numerous U.S. Army aviation, cavalry and infantry units.

In spite of the tremendous effort made to recover the two officers, they remained in captivity in the Long Toan Secret Zone of Vinh Binh Province.

Jack Graf eventually escaped only to die, supposedly while crossing a river. His body is reported to have been buried by the river bank and later washed away by erosion.

Bob White survived more than three years of captivity and became the last American POW to be released from Vietnam. He was turned over to Four Part Joint Commission officials on April 1, 1973, only a few hundred yards from where he was captured. His release came three days after the last POW flew home from Hanoi.

I am trying to locate anyone who has information relating to the rescue attempt Nov. 15-19, 1969, or subsequent BRIGHT LIGHT missions to try to free the prisoners between 1969-73.

U.S. Army aviation and cavalry commands and units involved in the initial rescue were:

- A Troop, 7/1
- B Troop, 7/1
- C Troop, 7/1
- D Troop, 7/1
- D Troop, 3/5

In spite of the tremendous effort made to recover the two officers, they remained in captivity in the Long Toan Secret Zone of Vinh Binh Province.

Continued on Page 5

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Continued from Page 4

- HHT, 1/9 ("Lighthouse")
- 25th Aviation Company
- 147th Aviation Company
- 12th Aviation Group
- 164th Aviation Group

I am particularly interested in contacting anyone from D Troop, 7/1 ("Powder Valley") who was part of the insertion and ground sweep looking for the two captives Nov. 17-19, 1969.

A Vietnam veteran, I was senior adviser to Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group 35 in Vinh Binh Province from March 1968 to March 1969.

Stan Sirmans



Longtime friend, pilot dies after Vietnam tour

Donald A. Peterson died on July 18, 1993.

Don was born May 25, 1945, in Montana and, like many of our generation of helicopter pilots, heard the call to serve, because we did not monitor our grade point, but the draft board did. He went to basic training and the Field Artillery OCS.

Upon graduation at Fort Sill, OK, as a new second lieutenant, he drove south in his new car to the dusty military installation at Fort Wolters, TX, to class 67-22. Another member of that flight class was VHPA member Jim Hipp, who would fly in the 174th in 1971 with Don.

In 1968-69, Don flew with the 121st AHC in the Delta. Upon completion of that tour he was sent to Germany, where he did not fly but served in his basic branch Field Artillery.

He returned to the 174th in early 1971 and participated in Lam Son 719.

Don will always be with me in spirit because he made the audio tapes of the 174th in Laos that I have shared with hundreds since 1988. These tapes vividly paint the horrific flying that was done by just one company, but experienced by all slick units that supported the ARVN.

I never will forget his befuddlement and confusion in trying to get the grid coordinates of where his aircraft had been shot at and hit at altitude. It is one of the most graphic examples of stress under fire I have ever heard.

In April-June 1972, I would hear it again over Loc Ninh and An Loc during the Easter Offensive, but I would recognize what was happening and the corrective action to take much quicker, because of the experience of hearing it before.

When I was assigned to the 174th in July 1971, I entered the unit as a second-tour Vietnam veteran, but first-tour aviator. Peterson took me under his wing, showed me

around, got me assigned to a room in the officers' hootch, and scheduled my in-country check ride and orientation ride.

He did it all in his normal laid-back, nonchalant manner that made me, a new guy, feel at ease. I appreciate that to this day. He told me to not let the warrant officer aircraft commanders bother me personally, do what they said because they are super teachers, and NEVER let them see you sweat (meaning show fear).

When the unit stood down in October 1971, I went to the 1st Cav at Bien Hoa to be assigned to A/229th, the "Black Bandits," and later "Load-hackers."

I wore my 174th patch on the pocket of my Nomex, like all the other in-country transfers, to let the new guys know we had some credentials. The unit was full of Ghostriders, Lancers, Phoenix and Kingsmen from the units in the 101st that stood down.

In July 1988, while visiting my mother in Oklahoma, I contacted Rick Barrett, who lived in Fort Worth and said, "Let's go check out this VHPA reunion stuff."

There I met Don Peterson again and probably one of my very best friends from the 174th, Fred Thompson. Peterson had all his Lam Son 719 tapes and a paper clipping about his shootdown in Laos and his rescue by 174th VHPA member Chick Luther.

Don had put a copy of the article on a bulletin board with the note, "If you are here, contact me in room ##." "

They met, they rejoiced, they drank beer. As one of the biggest and meanest and most proficient aircraft commanders in the 174th, Luther had a specific reputation with me from 1971-88.

After seeing this new side of him and his unflinching efforts to save Peterson and his crew, Luther the big guy, grew more in stature in my eyes. It would be an event I would see at every VHPA reunion since, but was most significant because it was my first.

At 0700 on Nov. 11, 1989, I was putting down memorials at the Vietnam Memorial when he came walking up on me. He had decided the day before, while working in Orlando, to just drive to the "Wall" for Vets day. he got there in the early morning and slept in his car over by the State Department.

He walked up on me and said he was hungry and let's go get something to eat. Just like that. Blew me over.

Well, unless you wanted a hot dog and Coke from the

In July 1988, while visiting my mother in Oklahoma, I contacted Rick Barrett, who lived in Fort Worth and said, "Let's go check out this VHPA reunion stuff."

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

Vietnamese concessionaires, you were out of luck. Don wanted something else to eat.

At the same time, I met Jerry Morgan from the Kingmen (B/101). I grabbed them up, and we went to the Pentagon and got something out of the junk food machines. It was a good day. I took pictures of both of them individually at the Wall, and have 8-by-10s of the moment.

I last saw Peterson at the '90 VHPA reunion in New Orleans. I flew to NO with my son for the reunion, and Don met me at the airport and took me to the hotel.

We met with the guys from the 174th, and were especially entertained by whatever Fred Thompson was doing when sufficiently fueled by his special alcoholic concoctions. Don left early, before the reunion to see his daughter in Houston. He was divorced and really wanted to spend some quality time with her.

In 1991, he did his usual. He called no-notice, while en route to Washington, DC, and had his teen-age daughter with him. He was going to show her Washington, DC. We immediately sprang into action and fixed up the guest rooms for Don and his daughter.

During this visit, I learned what was most important in Don's life was his daughter. He learned between Vietnam tours that being an Artillery RLO was not interesting to him and had an Officer's Efficiency Report to prove it. When the '73 RIF hit, he was at Fort Campbell, and left the service. In '88, he was selling encyclopedias and in 1990 he was working for a company in Orlando that made components for the V-22.

I am saddened that I did not learn of Don's death until three years after the fact. I am heartened to know that deep in my memory Don Peterson is remembered for the kind acts he showed me and others.

I never will forget the 30-degree bright clear morning of Nov. 11, 1989, when Don Peterson said: "Hey, I am hungry, where can we get some food?"

We had not seen each other since July 1988, but it seemed like I had had daily contact with him for life.

Mike Sloniker

Pilot flew LOH behind CH-47s dropping CS

I have been meaning to write, but I probably procrastinate as bad or worse than many.

I read with interest a few newsletters ago of the hook driver's encounter with CS. He described how they set proximity fuses in 55-gallon drums and rolled them out the back ramp.

Well, in the summer of 1968, I drew the lot to fly my OH-6 (LOH) on the receiving end of a similar flight, maybe even the same crew. I flew for D Troop 3/5th Cav. We were stationed at Bear Cat and worked in the Delta.

We were flying northwest of Dong Tam in the Plain of

Widow trying to locate husband's fellow pilots

I am trying to locate anyone who was flown by or flew with my husband, CW Edwin P. "Ed" Morgan, in Vietnam from 1971-73.

Ed was killed in a plane crash in Houston. Anyone knowing him should call Sharon Morgan collect at (713) 447-5581 after 5 p.m.

Ed was from Lakeland, FL, and was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, after his tour in Vietnam. He flew as pilot-in-command on Hueys in Vietnam.

Please help!

Sharon Morgan
Houston, TX

Reeds area. My mission was to fly behind the CH-47s as they dropped their CS and see what was scared up.

The barrels would float (like a rock) down to the ground and explode about 20 feet or so above the ground. After the load was dropped and the gas was well dispersed over the area, we would scout out the results. This was my only experience in flying in the aviator's gas mask for real.

We flew at least two fuel loads on the mission. My doorgunner and I masked up prior to going into the area and kept the masks on for the complete mission.

Even when we refueled, we remained masked up for fear of the CS residue still being on our two-piece Nomex clothing, which was the normal at the time. We did not want to come in contact with the gas and not be able to complete our mission.

Our dough boys on other missions, captured homemade gas masks which were very crude. Their effectiveness certainly was questionable. They consisted of a plastic hood with gauze as a filter.

Other than flying in a thick cloud, there really was no other affect on the flight characteristics. The only personal discomfort was the slight burning caused by the CS contact with the perspiration. I am sure we can all relate to this experience in the gas chambers.

Maybe this will be of interest to our members as this is the only time I know of anyone flying through the gas in search of "Charlie."

J.B. West, War Wagon 16

Late crew chief's friend wants home for photos

My very best friend has died from exposure to Agent Orange on Jan. 7, 1996. His name was Philip Meskinis.

Phil was a crew chief with A/227 AHB in the 1st Air

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6

Cavalry from August 1969 through August 1970. He went home a Spec. 5. He also had a doorgunner named Rocky. Both Phil and Rocky were from northern Ohio.

I am trying to find a home for a bunch of pictures that Phil took of missions, friends and of his base camp, Lai Khe. I can't find anyone from A/227 in the VHCMA, but I did meet with several pilots from A/227th "Chickenman" at the VHCMA/VHPA reunions in Philly in July of 1994.

One fellow, in particular, stands out because he remembered that one of Phil's ships was named "The Lithuanian." Another was named "Chicken Ship."

This former pilot was from somewhere in Texas. He was a tall and lean guy, about 25 percent gray and very sure of his authority; therefore, I think he was Chickenman 6.

Also, he was one of three people in Philly wearing a Chickenman T-shirt.

Some of Phil's accomplishments were that he was crew chief for the Nighthawk for a period of time. At other times, I know he flew his share of Charlie Alphas. He was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Bronze Stars with "V" devices. It was difficult to get awards like those as an enlisted man.

Phil, I know, was one pretty hot-damn heroic fellow. I have his citations and ribbons in my possession. I would like to get the medals and pictures into the hands of a unit historian with maybe the 1st Cavalry or perhaps a battalion association of the 227th AHB.

Neither Phil nor I have any children; someone should remember what Phil did, if only to read his citation 100 years from now. I know Phil would never speak about Nam. He held all of the pain inside of his head. While the Orange ate up his body, the pain ate up his soul.

I will miss my friend more than you can imagine. I very selfishly say that I have to spend the rest of my life without my best friend from the 1st Air Cavalry.

Hopefully, one of those pilots, maybe even "Chickenman 6" for 1970, will get in touch with me and we can find a home for these pictures and other stuff.

I was a doorgunner with A/101th AHB "Comancheros," 101st Airborne Division Class of 1970.

Martin "Cookie Man" DiOrio

Letter writer adds details about crewman's death

While I am not a helicopter pilot, I certainly appreciate the 7/17th Cav History that was published in your 1992 Directory.

This is an addendum to that history and also provides some details about how Ron Schultz died.

Ron was the CE on Maj. Inglett's favorite C&C bird, a UH-1C No. 66-0725. I transferred from a MACV assignment to A Troop on Feb. 13 and was the gunner on this air-

Australian author seeks contact with aircrews

I am writing an account of the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight-Vietnam (RANHFV) which served as part of the 135th AHC 1967-71 and was hoping to make contact with former U.S. Army aircrew and maintenance personnel who were part of the 135th in this period.

I would be most grateful if you could publish this request in your newsletter.

Any assistance you can provide would be sincerely appreciated.

Steve Eather
c/o Scienceworks Museum

craft.

On Feb. 29, the Troop's AO was west of Polei Kleng and the day had been rather uneventful up to this point. I cannot remember the pilot's name. I believe he was a warrant officer.

Capt. Philip A. Saunders was the AC. He also commanded the Troop's operations for the day.

We were returning solo to Kontum to refuel when we heard a loud bang. Ron looked out and said that we had lost the tail rotor. Capt. Saunders put out a MAYDAY and, not long after that, the aircraft started to fishtail. I can only guess that it got increasingly difficult to control.

I am certain that Ron anticipated we would have problems when we landed, so he said we would take the M-60s down and close the doors. We were still wearing our monkey harnesses, which basically tethered us to the helicopter, but allowed us freedom of movement both inside and outside of the ship.

We crashed into a heavily forested area and the aircraft came to rest on its left side, Ron's side. Sadly, the transmission broke loose and crushed Ron. It also pinned him in the wreckage.

The rest of the crew got out of the aircraft quickly. I remember either someone saying or maybe it was just me thinking that we needed to get away from the ship because of the possibility of fire.

After we stood there for a few second and realized the aircraft was not on fire and didn't seem like it was going to explode, Capt. Saunders told me to take my machine gun and set up a defensive position a few feet from the helicopter.

Using the survival radio, he initially contacted a fixed-wing aircraft and then helicopters from our Troop. The trees in the area were about four to six inches in diameter and very tall.

Capt. Saunders climbed a tree with what he thought was a smoke grenade and his radio. When it came time to "pop

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

smoke," he suddenly learned that it was an incendiary grenade.

He wasn't injured and our aircraft were able to locate us on the ground, so it all worked out fine.

When he got down out of the tree, I remember him saying something like: "Why didn't you tell me that wasn't a smoke grenade?" I also remember thinking — "Well, Gee, I thought captains could read!" While the canisters of the smoke and incendiary grenades were similar, they were clearly marked with black lettering.

Pretty soon, a medevac helicopter arrived with a hoist. I was rescued first and then the pilots.

About that time, the Troop inserted the Blues. When they got to the aircraft, they were able to provide proper security for the team that got Ron's body out of the wreckage and rigged the aircraft for extraction.

They also found my camera and Ron's. Before leaving, they took several pictures with both cameras. Later I got my camera back and Maj. Inglett gave me the film from Ron's camera.

I also have pictures of the wreck when it was returned to our maintenance area at Camp Enari. It was a total loss.

I continued flying with A Troop as a gunner until my enlistment was up in May 1969. I really liked being in the Cav and flying in Vietnam, but I still think about Ron.

If the aircraft ends up on the right side, maybe I'd be dead and Ron would be writing this story. This has always given me a different outlook on life.

Mike Peters
Tallahassee, FL

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mike's account is supported by information in the KIA and Helicopter databases; how-

Englishman studies Army Aviation nose art

I am seeking to record details of nose art (to include door and tail markings) used by U.S. Army Aviation units during the Vietnam War.

I would welcome period photographs (or copies) of same, as well as remembrances of rules and regulations governing such markings. All costs, including postage, will be covered and refunded.

Under NO circumstances will any photos or wordings, be loaned, copied or reproduced without express permission from sender.

I already have obtained some photo mementos that belonged to Spec. 4 Oland Kershaw, 114th AHC, 1967-68 and S.Sgt. Joseph White, 114th AHC and Can Tho ops 1972-73. Did anyone serve with these guys?

Anyway, hope you can find the time to write, sincere thanks.

John Jones

England

ever, we now have the first-person account only a crew member can provide. Only three guys in all the world could have provided this information. Thank you, Mike, for taking the time and making the effort to help us record one more piece of the Helicopter War in Vietnam.

Writer, Maj. Demko served in HMM-264

Thank you for the February/March issue of the VHPA Newsletter. Although not a member of the VHPA, I enjoy reading and reminiscing about our collective experiences in the war.

I noted with interest "The first CH-46D loss in Vietnam" article about Maj. Leonard (not Leon) Demko and HMM-364. Lenny and I served together in HMM-264 at MCAF New River, NC, right after he received his wings in 1960.

Lenny was then a young second lieutenant, but quickly established a reputation for reliability and stability. Everyone thought very well of him.

I joined HMM-162 in Vietnam right after Lenny's accident in 1963

during the Shu-Fly Operation out of Da Nang. His/our C.O. was Col. R. Leu at that time. Lenny's C.O. in HMM-364, Lt. Col. Louis "Uncle Lou" Gulling (not Guilling), also served with us in HMM-264 during his junior officer days, Lenny's first Marine squadron. Uncle Lou always thought highly of young Lenny.

By reviewing the Marine Corps Aviation Association's 1994-95 Directory, I am providing you with the addresses of two of Lenny's former C.O.s: Col. Leu (Retired) and Lt. Col. Gulling (Retired).

In addition, I am enclosing a copy of Lenny's death notice as it appeared in the Jacksonville, NC, Daily News, plus a copy of a photograph of a street sign showing a road named after Lenny on board MCAF New River.

I hope this bit of information is of help in "filling out" Mike Law's article about Lenny and the others involved in the loss of CH-46D 153986.

Semper Fi!

Bill Allanson
Lt. Col USMC Ret

EDITOR'S NOTE: We thank Bill for his letter, the information about Lenny Demko, and the addresses of

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8

the two former helicopter squadron commanders. The obituary states Lenny attended Penn State and the U.S. Naval Academy, then was commissioned in the Marine Corps upon graduation.

It also provides some details about the event that ended Lenny's first tour. In

March 1963, after he had been in South Vietnam for eight months, he was injured while engaged in a rescue operation for a downed aircraft.

He was thrown some 30 feet when his helicopter crashed, and the ammunition in it exploded, setting the craft on fire. He suffered a compound fractured leg, second-degree burns and lacerations.

He was evacuated to Clark Air Force Base, then later to the U.S. Naval Hospital, Philadelphia.

The VHPA Directory Committee is very interested in recording additional details about the March 1963 events in HMM-162. For that period THE ONLY data we have is two UH-34Ds (Bureau Nos. 145085 and 145747) were lost on March 10 and Maj. David Webster was killed in action while serving with HMM-162 on March 10.

Anyone who can provide these additional details is encouraged to contact Mike Law, VHPA Directory Committee at [REDACTED]

He was thrown
some 30 feet when
his helicopter crashed
. . .

What happened to Scot who operated orphanage?

I am seeking information from anyone who left the area after December 1970 as to the status of the Scottish missionary who ran the orphanage across the bay of Red Beach along with Dr. Stuart Halvorson.

We built a house for them there. Lt. Roger Fleming and I headed up the project, along with lumber and supplies from the Seabees.

I knew "Sneaky" James White who put his aircraft in at our D.S. unit for rebuild several times. He was flying Loaches when I knew him.

I was flying all of the Huey series, as well as Cobras mostly on maintenance flights but also on recovery missions. Would like to know where my old buds — Pete Fee and Dick Dillon are today. I think Pete was a Missouri boy and Dick was from Buffalo, NY. Both got medevaced to the States after a hot recovery mission.

I still remember the night Pete and I almost got shot down on a hot recovery mission south of the Hoi An River southwest of Da Nang in about February 1970. I think we

picked up about 30 holes from AKs, but didn't have a lot of choice on our route of escape.

Things have changed a lot for me, finally made CW4, still flying for a Guard unit, but now we have UH-60 Blackhawks, a real aircraft!!

It's a small world, after I got out of the Army for awhile, decided to come back in and 10 years later discovered two guys I was on Red Beach with — WO Pat Enderlin and his old stick buddy, Albert Riley.

Riley was stationed at Fort Sill, OK, and Enderlin was in a neighboring Guard unit in Wisconsin. So, if anyone knows the whereabouts of any of the names mentioned and what happened later to the orphanage and the patrons, please inform.

Ken Bryant, "Black Mariah 636"
Red Beach, Da Nang 1969

142nd Transportation Company
[REDACTED] m

Gamewardens of Vietnam want KIA/MIA information

I am looking for any information concerning the 2,518 U.S. Navy and 66 U.S. Coast Guard KIA/MIAs by the Unit/Division they were assigned to while serving in Vietnam.

I have a complete KIA/MIAs list. I need the name and unit/division each individual was assigned to so I can make a unit/division display plaque with their unit shoulder patch.

This information will be incorporated into the USN/USCG Memorial Wall Display that I hope to have completed by 1999.

This USN/USCG Memorial Wall Display will have the names of the 15 USN Medal of Honor recipients, 117 USN Navy Cross recipients, 2,518 USN and 66 USCG KIA/MIAs by the Unit/Division they were assigned.

This Memorial Wall Display is planned to be dedicated on Memorial Day 2000 at CISM Field, U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, CA.

I am requesting a color copy of every USN and USCG unit/division shoulder patch from all the unit/divisions so I can get the shoulder patch made up in cloth.

I need the patches in order to make up a shoulder patch display and unit/division display plaque of all the USN/USCG units that served in the Vietnam War for the Memorial Wall Display.

This display will be similar to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC.

Please send this information to: Ralph J. Fries, Gamewardens of Vietnam Association, Treasurer and Supply Officer, [REDACTED]

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Ralph J. Fries
CW3 USN Retired
[REDACTED]

'Miss Mini' restored to Vietnam era

This UH-1C helicopter was manufactured in 1966 and assigned to the 118th Assault Helicopter Company at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, in January 1969.

It served with the 118th AHC until June 1970.

The aircraft was named "Miss Mini," with a call sign "Bandit 3." During this period, Miss Mini flew more than 1,320 combat hours before receiving battle damage and being returned to Bell Helicopter to be rebuilt.

The aircraft returned to Vietnam in February 1971 and was assigned to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company at Cu Chi. In June 1971, a 1,400-shaft horsepower T53-L-13 engine was installed and the aircraft designation was changed to a UH-1M.

In December 1971, the helicopter was reassigned to the 120th Assault Helicopter Company at Long Binh and then transferred to C Troop, 16th Air Cavalry, until January 1973.

The aircraft had flown more than 2,000 combat hours in Vietnam.

From March 1973 until May 1974, the helicopter was assigned to the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), Thailand. The aircraft then was returned to Corpus Christi Army Depot, Texas, for overhaul.

In November 1975, the helicopter was delivered to the Pennsylvania National Guard and remained in service until November 1991, when it



"Miss Mini" is shown at Tobyhanna Army Depot, PA. It was restored by Frank W. Zardecki and Fred G. Eckelmann.

was retired with 4,578 flying hours.

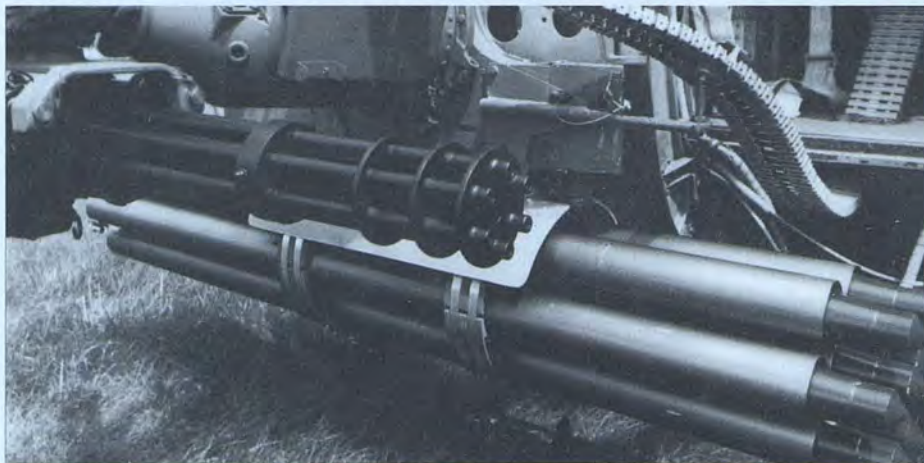
The aircraft was acquired by Tobyhanna Army Depot, PA, where it was restored by Frank W. Zardecki and Fred G. Eckelmann to its original configuration as "Bandit 3" of the 118th AHC's gunship platoon.

Tobyhanna Army Depot places "Miss Mini" on static display at local airshows, as well as at the depot.

Eckelmann was a crew chief with the Bandits of the 118th AHC in 1968-69.



The cockpit looks the same as it did during service in Vietnam.



The UH-1C gunship sports mini-guns and rockets, the same armament "Miss Mini" carried when it was with the Bandit platoon.

Photos courtesy
of Tom Payne

Independent Study

Every day at
Embry-Riddle,
Kevin Norris goes
to class so you
don't have to.

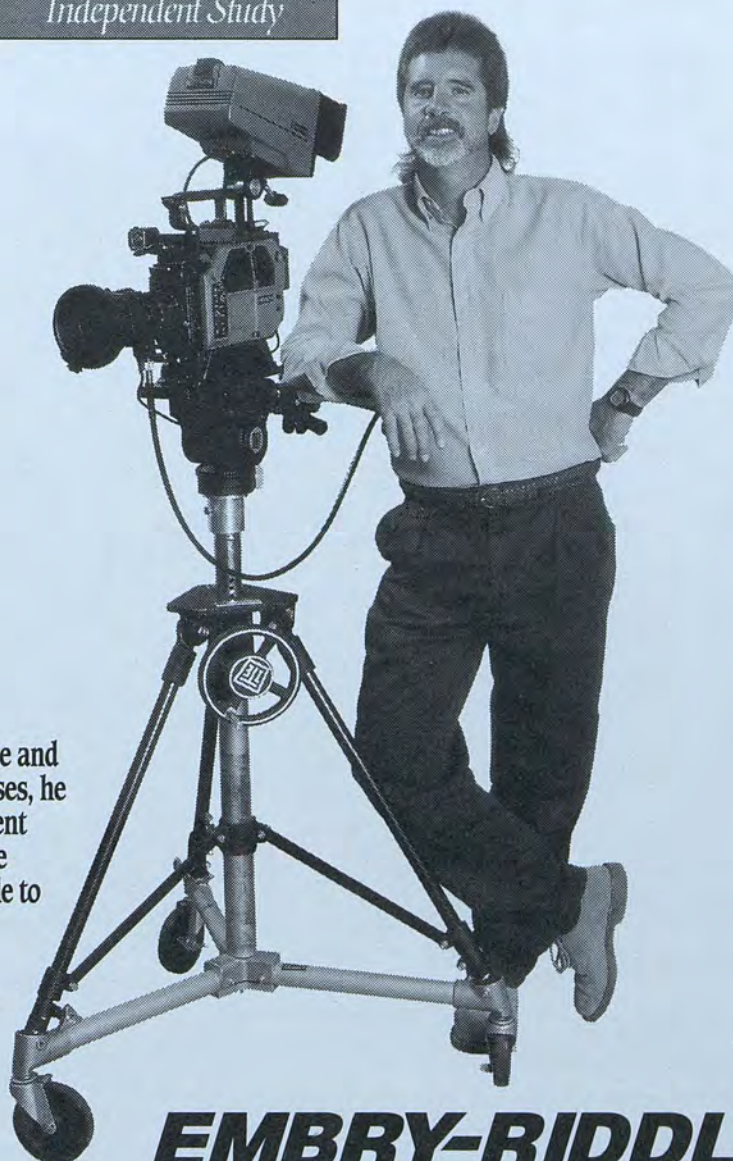
When our videographer records the lecture and discussion sessions of many on-campus courses, he makes it possible for Embry-Riddle independent study students to learn from videotapes of the same classes they'd be taking if they were able to take time off to go back to college.

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ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (_____) _____

VHPA1 10/96

July 4th to be busy at 1997 reunion

It will be a busy Fourth of July this year. Current plans call for a parade in the morning and visit to Sea World in the late afternoon and evening.

• **Parade:** We will start off the day early traveling to Brandon, FL. There we will be hosted by the Elks Club and be with the Florida Chapter OH-6 march in the parade.

The parade will be about two miles long. We are scheduled to be one of the first units, to enable us to participate in some of the activities prior to our return to Orlando.

All are invited to attend, including spouses and guests. If you can still fit into your flight suits, please wear them.

We will have a sign-up at registration and need a good count of participants to arrange for the buses.

This will be the second year the VHPA will be represented and the comments from our members from last year said it was like the homecoming we never received.

After the parade and return to Orlando, there will be time to relax, have a few drinks and get ready for Sea World.

• **Sea World:** Activities at Sea World will start at 4 p.m. You will have to preregister and be given an armband. That will be the only way to enter the park and attend the VHPA activities.

If you lose it and do not have the armband, you will not be admitted to the park.

The two main shows at the park will perform at a closed show only



The Renaissance Orlando Resort, reflected in the water, will be headquarters for the 1997 VHPA Reunion.

for VHPA members. Again, the armband will be required.

A barbecue buffet will be served in a closed area for the VHPA. Again, armbands are required. The evening will end with fireworks. All this is included in the registration fee.

• **Ladies social:** During the business meeting, the ladies are planning to hold a social.

Without the dedicated and devoted support of our wives, girlfriends, daughters, and other ladies who attend our annual reunions, they would be pretty dull affairs and most of us would not look forward to them or enjoy them as much as we do.

While we struggle through our business meeting, they'll be relaxing around a wonderful continental breakfast of an assortment of freshly baked pastries, including fruit danish

rolls, muffins, croissants and breakfast breads. Freshly squeezed Florida orange and grapefruit juice, coffee and specialty teas also will be served.

While we try to figure out Robert's Rules of Order, they will be winning neat door prizes and gifts, and stuffing them into their special commemorative VHPA reunion tote bags.

As we plod through exciting issues like budgets, projections, expenditures and recommendations, they will be seeing the latest in fall fashions and accessories presented by Dillard's, one of Florida's premier ladies wear stores.

They'll also get a humorous look at themselves in a segment intended to show which items to wear together

and which ones not to wear together. (Sounds like a photo-op, guys. Maybe we could sneak in a spy-cam!)

• **Tours:** Since there are so many attractions and theme parks in the area, we limited our scheduled events to enable members to see what they want, when they want.

We will publish more tour data in a later issue of the newsletter to enable you to do your planning.

We stress that you should plan to arrive early (June 28-29) to book as many attractions as possible so as not to compete with planned VHPA activities.

Available rooms for the 28th are almost gone, but the 29th is still open.

We are checking with the resort on bookings and will have our Florida LZ members there early to assist based on the early arrivals.

VHPA members get discount on shuttle

Travel arrangements between the Orlando airport and the Renaissance Orlando Resort are with Mears Transportation Group.

The regular rate of \$21 will be reduced by \$4 when the coupon published in this newsletter later is presented. Without the coupon, full fare will be required.

Upon arrival at Orlando international Airport, present your coupon (for round-trip ticket) at one of the Mears Motor Shuttle counters.

On the A-side, it is located at the curbside baggage claim level, outside carousel No. 5. On the B-side, it is located outside of carousels No. 8 and No. 14.

After receiving your round-trip ticket, you will be directed to a designated shuttle servicing the Resort. The shuttles run 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, and leave roughly every 20 minutes.

While at the Resort, stop by the Mears guest service desk in the main lobby for attraction and shuttle tickets. Discounted entrance tickets are provided for all non-Disney attractions such as Universal Studios, Busch Gardens, Cypress Gardens, and Church Street Station.



The lobby of the Renaissance Orlando Resort offers indoor panoramas. For hotel reservations, call 1-800-HOTELS-1 before June 4, 1997.

Dinner shows, such as King Henry's Feast, Arabian Nights, and Medieval Times also are available.

Exclusive limousine, Lincoln Town Car, van, and motorcoach service also are available.

One day prior to your departure, call the reservation number, provided on the return portion of your round-trip ticket, or stop by the guest service desk to make return shuttle reservations.

Collector's item!

Buy an original edition
of the **VHPA History Book**

Only a few left

Price reduced to \$49.95

(Originally sold for \$52.50 each)

Call (800) 505-VHPA to order now!

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

14th Annual Reunion Orlando, FL July 1-6, 1997

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Mail to: VHPA, 949 University Ave., Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95825

FAX signed credit card registrations to: (916) 648-1072

Name:	Member No.:	Arrival date:	Departure date:
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 6/1/97*		@ \$ 25.00	
Registration after 6/1/97*		@ \$ 35.00	
Total from sidebar	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	
Early Bird Party (July 2)		No host	
Reception (July 3)		@ \$ 25.00	
Sea World & Barbecue (July 4):			
Adults		@ \$ 55.00	
Children under 12 years of age		@ \$ 40.00	
Ladies Social (July 5)		@ \$ 20.00	
Banquet (July 5)		@ \$ 35.00	
Dues (if included)	1 year	@ \$ 30.00	
You can make 3 payments over 6-month Installment period if you wish	Life installment No. 1	@ \$150.00	
Complete Life Membership		@ \$450.00	
	GRAND TOTAL		

Indicate if you want to participate in these		
Golf Tournament: (July 3, 8 a.m. Includes prizes.) Cost: \$50. Limit: 72 players.		
Teen Dance: (July 2.)		
Tennis Tour: (July 3.)		
Parade: (July 4.)		
5k Run: (July 5.)		
T-shirts:		
Qty.	Size	Price
	S	@ \$12.00
	M	@ \$12.00
	L	@ \$12.00
	XL	@ \$12.00
	XXL	@ \$15.00
	XXXL	@ \$15.00
	Sidebar total	

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

- ☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion '97"
- ☐ Please charge my: MasterCard VISA Discover (circle one)

**Questions? Call
(800) 505-VHPA**

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. 8, 1997, and must include all tickets received, plus proof of payment. Refunds will not be granted for fixed-price events that lose money unless the entire reunion has a positive cash balance. VHPA headquarters will process and pay all refund requests within 10 days of completing the reunion account balancing.

VHPA Reunion '97 calendar of events

July 1 (Tuesday)

8 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Set up registration.
- Set up vendor area.
- 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Sign up early tours.

July 2 (Wednesday)

8 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Registration (\$35).
- 1-5 p.m.

- Vendor displays.
- 5-7 p.m.
- Early bird reception.
- 5-9 p.m.
- Teen get-together.

July 3 (Thursday)

7-11 a.m.

- Golf.

8 a.m.-5 p.m.

- Vendor displays.

8 a.m.-8 p.m.

- Registration.

9 a.m.-5 p.m.

- Sign up tours.

11 a.m.-5 p.m.

- Mini-reunions.

6-10 p.m.

- Reception (\$25).

July 4 (Friday)

7 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Parade.

8 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Vendor displays.

8 a.m.-midnight

- Registration.

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Mini-reunions.

4 p.m.-midnight

- Sea World (\$48 plus tax).
- Followed by fireworks.

July 5 (Saturday)

7-8 a.m.

- 5k run.

8 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Vendor displays.
- Registration.
- Mini-reunions.

9-11 a.m.

- Business meeting.

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Ladies Social (\$20).

6-9 p.m.

- Banquet (\$35).

July 6 (Sunday)

8:30 a.m.

- Church service.

Apache

Attack Helicopter Alarm Clock

Perfect Digital Sound Effects!

Actual airborne recordings were transferred to a digital chip. Precision quartz clock swivels for easy viewing from any angle. When the alarms sounds (or you hit the on button) you hear: Loud and perfectly crisp Air Calvary bugle call! The pilot shouts "Lets GO GO!", super real engine cranking as the rotor starts to turn, first slowly then faster and faster, the nose cone lights up, airborne the chopper suddenly dives as pilot barks out "Fire!!", real combat machine guns fire repeated long bursts! MISSION ACCOMPLISHED-YOUR AWAKE; you old dog! Requires 4 "AA" Batteries. Excellent detailing, large working model measures over 12" long.

Satisfaction Guaranteed.

Order APACHE, \$85.00 and \$5.00 shipping.

Snake Driver



**ROTOR SPINS
Red Nose
Cone
Lights Up
And Flashes**

Send checks/money orders to:

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PO Box 411687
Kansas City, MO 64141

**Credit Card Orders
Call Toll Free
1-800-821-5157**

Are you 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
1175 Beaver Valley Rd.
Beavercreek, OH 45434

Some Kids had Fords, Some Kids had Chevies - - Now Show 'em What YOU Drove!!



Any unit markings and armament are available.
Personalized prints - \$100 Standard prints - \$80

Have Guns, Will Travel
Personalized Examples Shown

Also Available



Riders on the Storm



Chariots of Fire

All prints are full color, 22"X30" in size, limited edition, signed, numbered and printed on acid free archival paper.

Coming Soon - the OH-6A LOH

Circle One
Have Guns, Will Travel
(UH-1C, B, E)
Riders on the Storm
(UH-1H, D)
Chariots of Fire
(AH-1G)

please find my ☐ Check ☐ Money Order attached or charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Unit _____ Time Period _____
Tail# _____ Color of Last 3 #'s _____ Skid Cap Color _____ Sync, Elev. Top Color _____
Other Markings _____ Armament _____
Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____



No. _____

Exp. Date _____



No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Please send description or photo of any non-standard nose art or other personal markings. Photos will be returned with print. **Satisfaction guaranteed.** Please allow two weeks for delivery. California residents add 8% sales tax.

JOE KLINE AVIATION ART

Whispered warning set tone for missions

STANLEY C. MARCIESKI
DUSTOFF 97

It was just a whisper over the tac push, "This is 'Two-zero Foxtrot.' There's 15 more of them coming up the trail toward you."

The whisper was strained taut. It was sweaty and tight with fear as it rose up to us from the eastern ridge-line of the A Shau Valley. That whisper was all we needed to tell us that this mission was not going to be a piece of cake.

Even at 1,700 feet above ground level the A Shau Valley was not a sight to inspire thoughts of comfort or welcome. The valley had a haunting beauty that disguised mortal danger under brilliant green foliage.

Like most of I Corps, it too was pock marked from arc-light strikes and the impact of uncountable artillery rounds. Unlike the rest of I Corps, however, this Valley of Death

had other scars that held a peculiar fascination for me as a pilot.

The floor of this valley was littered with the remains of too many birds of war that found there a final resting place. These crumpled metal toys rested far away from most prying eyes in the AO. Those eyes that could

Part 1 of series

see these toys did not want to be reminded of the frailty of the aircraft they flew night and day through Southeast Asia's skies.

It was, I imagined as I stared at it for the first time, the fabled elephant graveyard. Tarzan was right, the graveyard existed. The lost graveyard of elephants was there on the valley floor snug between the jungle shrouded ridge lines.

Unlike Tarzan in his movies, I knew these elephants did not struggle to this graveyard driven by some

overpowering instinct to bare their metal bones to our eyes. What I knew for a fact was that the myth of invincible John Wayne killed these beasts.

Odd thoughts have a habit of racing across your brain when the pucker factor begins to climb. Some of those thoughts and sensory inputs sear into the brain and remain there, burned scar tissue. Scar tissue that refuses to heal even after two decades of trying. It's like an old war movie I saw once with the singular difference that I had a bit part in the action. The slightest familiar odor or sound can bring those memories racing back.

A jog in the memory can make me hear the slap of the rotor blades and feel their thump vibrate my insides. My memory can hear three radios squawking and the crew all talking at once over my headset. I marvel now at how I could possibly understand them all and continue to function.

See ODORS, Page 18

VHPA news

Shirts will be replaced

Some of the 1996 Reunion T-shirts have faded.

Honor & Pride, the maker of the shirts, will replace those faded ink shirts with a newly made shirt using a better ink if the original is returned with name and return address clearly enclosed with the shirt.

The shirts will be done in a batch, so allow 6-8 weeks for return of the new shirt.

Honor & Pride's address is: 600 Trade Winds Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23464. Or call: (800) 277-9374.

WORWAC 67-5 reunion

Yes "Green Hats" of Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Class 67-5, it is almost 30 years since we earned our wings and WO1 bars.

Make plans now to attend the Class 67-5 reunion at the VHPA annual gathering in Orlando, FL, in July.

Members of Class 67-5 are asked to assist in locating former classmates and advising them of the reunion.

Contacts: Mike O'Leary, [REDACTED]

Calendar

June 19-22

Gamewardens of Vietnam Association, West Coast Chapter Reunion, for all operational and supporting units of TF-115, TF-116, and TF-117 of naval combat operations, South Vietnam, 1958-73. La Quinta Inn, Redding, CA.

Contact: Ralph J. Fries, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Telephone: [REDACTED]

Previous years' calendars offered at low, low prices

The 1995 and 1996 VHPA Calendars are truly collectibles.

The photos alone are worth more than the sales price, but VHPA must liquidate these items.

Now you can purchase them for:

- 1995 Calendars — \$5 each, plus \$3 P&H.
- 1996 Calendars — \$6 each, plus \$3 P&H.
- One of each — \$10 per set, plus \$5 P&H.

Call (800) 505-VHPA or use the order form on Page 4.

Odors trigger memories of Vietnam, war

Continued from Page 17

But it's the odors that come haunting. In Vietnam, I worked low in the air and my sense of smell was subjected to odors which it permanently catalogued.

The smell of burnt gunpowder or fireworks today can quickly make my pulse rise and transport me far away in place and time. Long, rainy days bring to my nostrils the heavy wetness of the jungle perfumed with tropical blossoms mixed with rotting vegetation. The scent of garlic browning in oil takes me back to flying over Saigon where your nose was struck in alternate waves with the wonderful bouquet of flowers, the stench of garbage and frying garlic.

A blast of black exhaust from a diesel engine brings to mind early morning preflights swathed in smoke created from burning human excrement in JP4 or diesel fuel.

Movies of Vietnam portraying

authentic-looking grunts can flood my mind with the odor of their animal sweat mingled with the rot of the jungle clinging to them after days in the field. It can make me smell wounded grunts as they hop or are carried, pulled, hoisted or half thrown in deadly urgency aboard our Dustoff Huey. And I swear I can smell their blood, too. It was a smell that came too often.

Some impressions I want to remember. Some I do not. But I have got them all, burned somewhere deep in my mind. And right there among them is that haunting whisper.

Just a few days earlier, my two roommates, Lt. J.D. Lawson and CW2 Bill Yancey, and I had been transferred to the Air Ambulance Platoon, 326th Medical Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), from the 45th Medical Company in Long Binh, with flush toilets, hot showers and nurses.

It was near the end of the Lam Son 719 incursion into Laos and close to my 24th birthday, a day I have since considered I was lucky to see.

To reach Camp Eagle that day, we hopped flights up the coast from Vung Tau, where we had been enjoying a bogarted three day in-country R&R. That R&R we felt entitled to for having ferried a Huey from Long Binh to the 237th Medical Detachment at Phu Bai and as one last fling before joining the Screaming Eagles.

Our route to Phu Bai followed the coastline the entire trip. We were captured by the incredible beauty of nearly deserted, wide, white beaches sliding into water that graduated from pale blue-green to almost purple as it deepened. It was a gorgeous sight that makes me believe to this day a tourist boom in Nam will rival any beach resort in the world. This ferry trip also gave us an opportunity to fly our

See FINDING, Page 19

Signed and numbered limited edition prints by Ronald Wong capturing actual hoist rescue in Vietnam



EAGLE DUSTOFF

DUSTOFF! — Call sign of the Vietnam grunts' guardian angel. When a grunt was wounded in Vietnam, he knew there were DUSTOFF crews on standby around the clock, in all weather, willing to risk their lives to rescue the wounded. On the night of April 15, 1971, D Company, 2/501st, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) was suffering heavy casualties while caught over a gigantic NVA tunnel complex. With two KIAs and 20 WIAs, D Company called for an urgent DUSTOFF. Ronald Wong has captured the drama and courage of this actual night hoist rescue in a stunning, limited-edition print. Each print is signed and numbered by the artist and four surviving participants. Included is a detailed biographical story of the events depicted in this scene.

\$100 plus \$10 S/H in U.S.A. Checks or money orders to:

Sundi Stein, 6631 Wakefield Drive, Suite 109, Alexandria, VA 22307 Or call: (703) 768-5959

COD orders: [REDACTED]

Finding Camp Eagle was difficult at best

Continued from Page 18

baggage to and briefly inspect our new home.

Finding Phu Bai, the nearest oasis of civilization for the 101st, from the air was not a problem. However, we had some difficulty in locating or in believing we had found Camp Eagle even when Phu Bai Approach said we were right over it.

Baffled by not being able to find it, one of us replied to Approach the only thing below us was a huge fire support base!

"Welcome to Camp Eagle," came the sarcastic reply.

It did look like the biggest fire support base we had ever seen. Scattered over the red-yellow colored earth was an amazing sight. It was unlike the disorganized order of Long Binh where the roads were paved and the clubs, swimming pools and tennis courts provided easily identifiable landmarks.

One very identifiable landmark nearby Camp Eagle that could be seen clearly only from the air was a huge peace symbol some GI with a bulldozer carved into the earth outside of the compound. That sucker must have been at least big enough to fit perfectly inside of a football field.

Camp Eagle gave one the impression that at one time the entire 101st Airborne Division had been loaded aboard a gigantic C-130, the tailgate had been dropped and the entire division had simply been dumped out and left to scatter among the hills outside of Hue-Phu Bai.

Since we were allotted seven days to accomplish the in-country ferry flight from Long Binh and had not yet signed in to the 101st, our plan was to drop off our worldly belongings at Eagle Dustoff, deliver the aircraft to Phu Bai Dustoff and beat feet for Vung Tau for a couple of days before signing in to the 326th Med-

ical Battalion.

Once we found Camp Eagle and introductions were made at the 326th head shed, we delivered the aircraft to Phu Bai Dustoff and set out to follow our plan to the letter.

At Phu Bai we caught a hop to Da Nang, where we spent the night. We ate dinner that night at the real China Beach which, as a TV serial, became pure Hollywood BS hardly resembling reality.

The next day, we caught a ride to Saigon on a C-130 jammed with about 130 ARVNs who had been in action in Laos. Getting a hop to Vung Tau out of Saigon was no sweat and, after three memorable days savoring the delights of Vung Tau, we hopped our way on a variety of aircraft back to the virtual doorstep of Eagle Dustoff.

We signed in to our new unit, gathered our previously stored gear and
See HOOCH, Page 20

Bro Vau Watch Co.

1301-F Corporate Drive East
Arlington, TX 76006

The VHPA watch

Bro Vau Watch Co. is offering special watches to members of the VHPA.

Each watch, which sells for \$36, has the VHPA logo imprinted on the face. Each carries a LIFETIME warranty, except for battery, strap and strap pins.

To order a watch, complete this form and then mail or fax it to Bro Vau Watch Co., along with a credit card number, a check or money order.

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	S&H (\$3.50 each)		
	TOTAL		

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They're a lot more than just pretty pictures . . .

The VHPA is running a special on 1995 and 1996 calendars ordered as a package deal.

For \$10 — plus \$5 P&H — you can buy a 1995 and a 1996 VHPA calendar.

Better yet, you will be getting the best photos ever taken of helicopters in action in Vietnam — while supporting the VHPA, YOUR association.

Call VHPA headquarters at (800) 505-VHPA and order your calendar package today.

Hooch filled with dust from flight line

Continued from Page 19

were shown to our new quarters, a tin roofed, non-insulated, typical hooch with mesh screens covering the walls from about the waist up.

Due to this ventilated construction and the building's proximity to the flight line, it filled with a certain amount of dust as each aircraft hovered in and out of Eagle Dustoff's flight line. Only time, ingenuity and lots of sweat was to improve what we were given as quarters. Even with the dust considered, it was a hell of lot better than a poncho in the boonies.

As night came on, we had barely started to settle into our new hooch when the Ops officer stuck his head in the door and said he needed a peter pilot for a mission.

Yancey was drinking a beer and JD, for what I believe was one of only two alcoholic drinks JD had in Nam, also was sipping on a beer.

That, of course, left only me to go fly into the night sky with strangers in a very unfamiliar and decidedly unfriendly night sky.

Having a dumb attack or a surge of John Wayne fever, I forgot the first rule of being a member of a military force in a combat zone or anywhere for that matter — never volunteer.

I had most recently been flying Dustoff across the fence into Cambo-

dia from Tay Ninh to support the latest ARVN attempt to kick Chuck out of his sanctuary, where, according to then-President Richard Nixon, there were no American troops on the ground.

Pitch-black Cambodia at night in bad weather with people shooting at you was not fun, but that episode in my tour is, in itself, another story.

However, at this particular moment, I felt I was an experienced combat pilot with enough night time to no longer sweat bullets over night approaches to the jungle. I had landed at night in hover holes without lights, guided, unbelievably, by Zippo lighters (I know, I thought those were BS stories in flight school, too, but a lot of that BS became too true later, except for the "black syph," I guess.), strobes and, on unfortunate occasions, muzzle flashes.

I was nearly an AC in my old unit, so I thought what can be so bad about a night mission in northern I Corps?

Not to my credit, I was rather ignorant of the fact that in my recent past, the guy trying to waste us was generally VC, but now that guy was NVA.

This guy no longer carried only an AK-47 or an SKS rifle. He carried an enhanced set of armament that could really make you see flaming green basketballs. Flaming green basket-

balls coming at you night or day was a sight that made you desperately long to be somewhere safe to see if you really did need a hammer to drive a pin up your seriously constricted nether region.

Another fact that slipped by at that moment was that down south, because of the flat terrain, we infrequently pulled hoist missions, while up north almost every mission was a hoist mission.

Hoist missions were dangerous under the best of conditions. During a hoist mission, your helicopter was halted not above, but nestled in, the treetops, often well over 150 feet high as you tried to keep it rock steady to avoid hitting those trees with your main rotor or your tail rotor.

You listened to your medic and crew chief on hot mike as they stood on the skids, fully exposed, giving you instructions. They told you where the jungle penetrator was at all times, how many feet right, left or up and down you had to move to avoid striking something.

They told you how the grunts were doing with the wounded and when to break ground with the patient on the JP and when to leave. They also told you where the fire was coming from when the bad guys decided you were

See GUYS, Page 21

VHPA briefs

New calendar available

The 1997 VHPA Calendar is now available from VHPA's authorized source, Turner Publishers, for \$10, plus postage and handling.

Call (800) 788-3350 to order one of these beautiful 11-by-17-inch, full-color calendars. They make great gifts, too, and part of the purchase price benefits the VHPA.

Membership Directory on its way

The 1996 VHPA Membership Directory has been sent out.

Because it is mailed fourth class, it may take up to four weeks to reach you after the U.S. Postal Service receives it for distribution.

In most cases, it should take less than three weeks, so you should have it by Thanksgiving. If you do not receive the 1996 Directory by Dec. 2, please contact VHPA Headquarters at (800) 505-VHPA or by fax at (916) 648-1072.

Dues renewal notices sent

VHPA has begun to send out dues renewal notices 90 days prior to your dues' expiration date.

This will allow VHPA to provide uninterrupted Newsletter services.

Please renew as soon as you receive the renewal notice so you stay on the current mailing list.

Nashville committee sought

The reunion site selection committee is exploring the possibility of a reunion in Nashville.

If you would be willing to work on the reunion committee for Nashville, call Charlie Rayl at ()

Guys in back were real-life heroes

Continued from Page 20

just too easy of a target to resist.

After I became an AC, I never required any crew member to stand on the skids because of the danger involved, but they all did it, anyway. Not smart maybe, but the guys who did their job in the back of the aircraft will always be admired by me as real-life heroes.

Hoist missions were always a little nerve-racking, never more so than at night, with the grunts in contact and half the helicopters in RVN flying around your head as you tried to get the wounded out.

Those simple, overlooked facts served to make that night one of the most memorable of my tour.

Having committed myself, I gathered my gear: Helmet and my security blanket, a very large chickenplate I had swiped from a Cobra revetment at Xuan Loc somewhat earlier in my tour.

(If the owner of that chickenplate is reading this, I hope you did not need that protection as much as I did. The original chickenplate issued to me at the 45th was an extra small and it rapidly shrank before my eyes as I sat in my first hot LZ. Later, when I spied that extra large chicken plate

sitting all by its lonesome in a revetment, my survival instincts took over and I merely did a one-for-one exchange.)

Outside our hooch that night, the Ops officer introduced me to CW2 Fred Behrens, who was to be the AC for the mission. Fred asked if I had a weapon. As I shook my head "no," he said "come on" and we ran to his hooch, which housed a small, personal armory. He grabbed a holstered .45, tossed it to me and we hustled off to the flight line.

I asked what the mission was. Fred said he was not sure other than it was a hot hoist with multiple urgents. Translated, that meant there were wounded grunts in the LZ who would die shortly if we did not get them to back to the 85th Evac in Phu Bai.

It also meant the bad guys who had just wounded them were still there and trying their best to finish the job. At that news, my pucker factor started to climb.

Two days prior to my arrival at Camp Eagle, Jim Zwit, a 20-year-old grunt with D Company 3/501st 101st, and 77 other grunts had been airlifted to a location southwest of Bastogne.

Their mission, documented to be the last offensive mission by U.S.

ground forces in Vietnam, was first a search-and-attack mission with the additional mission of recovering a U.S. KIA Company A was unable to recover after a firefight on April 12.

Around 1800 hours on the 15th, Company D began preparation for night defensive positions. The commander directed the first platoon leader, Lt. McKenzie, to search to the south with his platoon to assure the area was secure.

McKenzie's platoon members dropped their rucks and moved out down the trail. They replaced Zwit's third platoon as point element. At point were Jerry Sterns and Lt. McKenzie.

Around 1848 hours, the unit after action report reads, "the second platoon made contact with the enemy in the vicinity of YD581010. The enemy opened up with small arms fire when five or six individuals crossed the falled log."

Contact in this specific moment in the war was the death of Sterns and the severe wounding of Lt. McKenzie when the small arms fire, RPGs and mortars started raining on the grunts. As happens in combat initially, confusion reigned.

NEXT: The rescue attempt.

Taps

Darrell Edward Maitlen

Darrell Edward "Codge" Maitlen of Denver died of cancer Sept. 16 at University Hospital in Denver. He was 52.

He was born Oct. 8, 1943, in Cushing, OK, and graduated from Cushing High School in 1961.

He attended Oklahoma State University, where he was a member of the skydiving team.

On May 26, 1964, Maitlen married Dorothy Lavera White in Cushing.

He served in the Army as a heli-

copter pilot in South Vietnam, where he flew 320 combat missions, earning numerous decorations.

Maitlen was a member of flight school classes 66-23 and 67-1.

He was employed by Bell Textron since 1976 as a regional marketing manager and salesman.

The company honored him with its "Outstanding Sustained Superior Sales Performance Award."

Maitlen held commercial helicopter instructor and fixed wing instructor ratings.

He also held airframe and power plant licenses.

He is survived by his wife; a son, Gregory Allen of Denver; a daughter, Katherine Rene.

VHPA Newsletter advertising rates

Display advertising rates for the VHPA Newsletter are:

Full page — \$500

One-half page — \$250

One-quarter page — \$125

Classified advertising is \$1 per line or \$7 per inch, whichever is higher.

Advertising revenue is used to help produce The VHPA Newsletter and limit the publication's dependence on membership dues.



Sikorsky Aircraft photo

The first helicopter bomber, a CH-54A Skycrane from the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 478th Heavy Helicopter Company, flies toward a target near the DMZ in 1968.

Bombs dropped from helicopters

JIM ODEN

I was one of the first Army CH-54A "Skycrane" pilots and deployed to Vietnam with the 478th Heavy Helicopter Company as part of the 1st Cav in 1965.

I served with the company for one year and was one of that small group of pilots and enlisted men who helped pioneer the combat support role for this huge helicopter.

In those early days, the 478th only had four Cranes in Vietnam; so, when Al Gajan, "Shady" Lane and three enlisted died in our first total aircraft loss, it was a terrible blow for our small company.

Anyway, I was at home preparing for my second tour in Vietnam when the chief of staff at Fort Rucker called and directed me to report there for an assignment that could not be discussed over the phone.

There I met CWO "Bo" Brown, who had received the same message.

We learned we were the Army part of a joint Army-Air Force effort to

use surplus 10,000-pound bombs to blow instant LZs. These bombs, originally made for the B-36, were stored in the Pueblo Depot.

The solid fins had been sold for scrap so all we had was a large, round bomb.

We were placed on special duty with the Air Force and told to report to a USAF Col. Smucker at Fort Benning.

Col. Smucker was the director of the Skycrane side of the project. He had the money and the authority to work with the local commanders to get us what we needed to conduct the tests.

After Col. Smucker briefed us at Fort Benning, Bo and I returned to Fort Rucker, picked up a CH-54 and crew and returned to Fort Benning where a test site had been selected in a "Vietnam-like," tree-covered area.

The Air Force had moved a 10,000-pound bomb from Pueblo and had built a tripod stand so it would explode about three feet above the ground.

Their engineers told them that if it blew three feet off the ground, it would knock down the trees without creating a big crater.

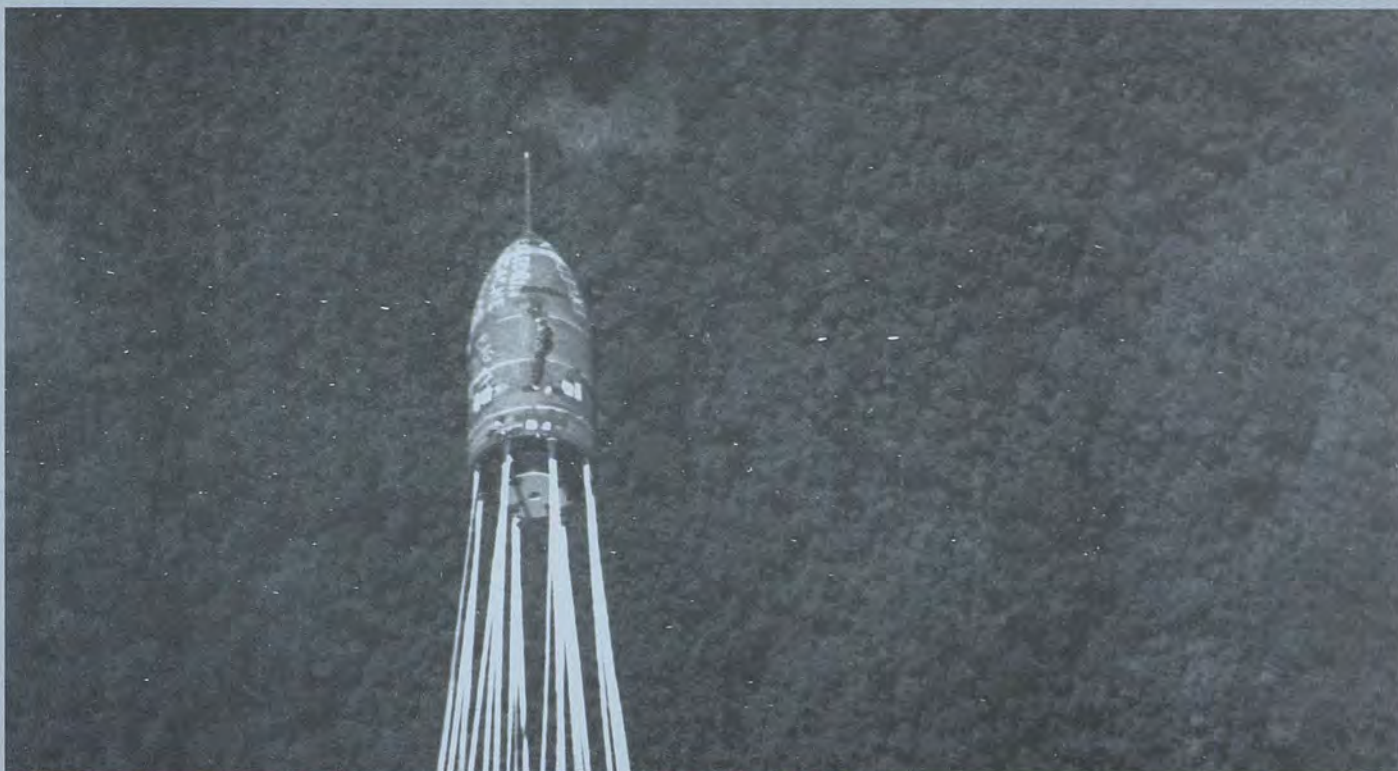
Initially, the tactics were to hover over the area, lower the bomb onto the target, fly away, and detonate it by remote control. Our "test LZ" was large enough for Hueys to land an engineer team with chainsaw which cleared a reasonably large LZ in quick order.

As encouraging as these results were, in the post-test briefings, we discussed the safety aspects of flying a "hot" bomb over enemy terrain, hovering to lower it onto the target, the possibility of it getting "hung up" in the triple canopy jungle, and the chances of FM radio transmissions prematurely detonating the bomb.

Col. Smucker sent us "home to await further orders" while the designers "went back to the drawing board."

In a day or so, we were told to meet Col. Smucker at Kirtland Air

See CRADLE, Page 23



A 10,000-pound bomb is shown being dropped from a Skycrane helicopter over the DMZ in 1968. The bomb was released from a 6,000-foot altitude. Parachute cords are shown trailing the bomb.

Cradle attached to CH-54 fuselage

Continued from Page 22

Force Base in Albuquerque.

In the meantime, Bo Brown had suffered an accident, so he was "off the team."

Our Kirtland team came up with a series of modifications so we could use drop tactics.

First, a "cradle" was attached to the fuselage that would hold the bomb secure horizontally under the Skycrane.

Second, a field-fabricated harness attached the bomb to the Crane's cargo hook and winch cable. Now the bomb could be winched snug against the cradle. When the cargo hook opened, the bomb would fall away from the helicopter bomber.

Third, we installed a three-foot piece of pipe with an arming mechanism to the fuse in the nose of the bomb. A pin kept a small propeller from turning, but the pin was pulled as the bomb fell away, which allowed the propeller to spin and the fuse to arm.

Fourth, the Air Force designed a parachute to stabilize and retard the

bomb's descent.

Fifth, somehow we ended up with a World War II drift meter which presents a grid on the landscape below so the aircrew could determine and correct for drift. This was our crude, but workable, "bomb sight."

I called the 291st Heavy Helicopter Company at Fort Sill and they sent a CH-54.

Two more Crane pilots, CWOs Merle Handley and Marc Wilson, joined and we began to develop bombing tactics with deactivated bombs.

After determining where the unit commander wanted the LZ, we would over fly it at 6,000 feet AGL, at a steady 60 knots on a specific heading, and our "bombardier" (Wilson) would view the target through the drift meter. On his command, the crew chief would drop a hand-held target missile with a smoke grenade in it.

Once it hit and Wilson observed this through the drift meter, he would pass the necessary corrections on to the pilot.

If the simulated bomb landed, say, 500 feet to the left and 300 feet long, we would do a 360 turn and approach the target with those corrections in mind at the same airspeed, altitude and heading.

Sort of Kentucky windage for a CH-54 rifle and a 10,000-pound bullet — why not?!

We made three smoke passes; the fourth was the real thing.

I must say that accuracy was THE problem and we started testing at 3,000 feet. The safety engineers ended up recommending 6,000 feet, which gave us 26 seconds after the release to gain more altitude.

Now, I am not the only one who will testify that an unloaded Crane really has one superior advantage over all other helicopters — with those two huge engines and six blades, it can really gain altitude fast!

When we got to Vietnam, we were assigned to the 478th Heavy Helicopter Company. They called themselves the "Uptight Hurricanes" and were based at Red Beach, north of Da

See ONLY, Page 24

Only drift meter brought from U.S.

Continued from Page 23

Nang.

Though they continued to support the 1st Air Cav Division, they were controlled by III MAF (Marine Amphibious Force), which was a U.S. Marine Corps command. At that time, III MAF controlled all U.S. ground forces in I Corps.

I briefed the various commanders about the project.

The only thing we brought from the States was the drift meter.

The 478th gave us aircraft No. 13418 and we started modifying it to become the first (legal) BH-54 (Bomber Helicopter).

Then we went about retraining ourselves with simulated bombs just off the coast above Da Nang. This was in September 1968.

Our first drop was west of Hue where the ground commanders wanted it placed on top of a tree-covered hill.

When Wilson yelled "bombs away," we pulled full power and got all the altitude we could.

What a blast! The concussion shook the helicopter as if all the blades were out of track!

We circled back and observed our work, feeling pretty confident that any VC in the area had a bad headache and ringing ears.

Accuracy again left something to be desired, as I believe we missed the hilltop by 120 meters.

Eventually we dropped three more bombs, all near the western side of



A bomb, dropped from 6,000 feet over the DMZ, explodes in the jungle below. Though the bombing mission was classified "secret," North Vietnam knew the helicopter's crewmen by name and sentenced them to death three days after the bomb was dropped.

the DMZ in late September or early October.

Only one — and it fell on a hillside — was, after a little clearing, used as an LZ. It was still about 90 meters from where they wanted it.

I went into this LZ to retrieve a downed CH-47 a few days after we blew it and that was an interesting experience.

The thing that amazed me the most was that two days after we dropped the first bomb, Hanoi Hanna labeled us war criminals for doing this and read each of our names (including the enlisted men) over the air! There was a security leak someplace!

Anyway, that finished the Army phase of the project.

The Air Force would continue to drop 10,000- and 15,000-pound "Daisy Cutters" from the back of C-130s.

Wilson and I stayed to finish our year with the 478th, while Handley returned to Fort Sill.

I understand Merle Handley passed away recently and I am sad to say I

don't know where Marc Wilson is today.

He had been commissioned and claimed to have bombed Qui Nhon during World War II. After the war, he was rifted and became a warrant officer.

He was in excellent physical shape when he celebrated his 50th birthday during this tour.

One of his good friends from their officer training program days was a colonel or a general in Vietnam, so Marc would often spend time with him because they ate and lived a lot better than we did.

I am sad to say I cannot recall the names of the enlisted men who crewed our bomber, but it would be good to talk with any of them again.

As for BH 13418, it was returned to the standard Skycrane operational configuration and the bomb sight was crated and left in the supply room.

Look at the June photo in the 1995 VHPA Calendar titled "A Helping Crane" — that is No. 13418.



478th Heavy Helicopter Company

Aviation warrants had good attitude

DREW BOUDRIEAU

At times we warrant officers were accused of being unmilitary and having an attitude problem.

We had a good attitude.

It was summed up in the standard answer we gave whenever someone accused us of the above or similar situations: "What are you going to do, send us to Vietnam and make us fly helicopters?"

That was our job and we did it damn well. As warrants, we were specialists. We had the pay and privileges of officers, but not all of the responsibilities.

For example, we could not command troops or hold certain positions. There may not have been many things we took seriously, but as pilots we were all business when the situation called for it.

Warrant officers were given their "warrant" by the secretary of the Army.

Commissioned officers (or RLOs — Real Live Officers) were given their commission as officers and gentlemen by act of Congress.

The distinction was very meaningful to us — we did not have to be gentlemen!

Some people, especially first lieutenants, also accused us of being insubordinate to first lieutenants and not treating them with something called "military courtesy" and the respect their rank deserved.

In our combat aviation unit,

respect was not automatic. It was earned.

The Minutemen and Muskets of the 176th AHC had a very, very fierce unit pride. We were the best and we knew it and proved it every day.

We would do anything to help the guys on the ground, even if it meant risking our own lives to save theirs. This doesn't mean we would foolishly take chances, because that wouldn't help anybody.

Back to lieutenants.

A second lieutenant is the lowest form of RLO life. It is the solemn duty of officers of any rank to nurture and guide the careers of officers of lower rank. This was one of the few officer-type duties we warrants took seriously.

Because of the war, promotion times were speeded up. Second lieutenants made first in one year and first lieutenants made captain in one year.

Due to time spent in the World in flight school and other things, RLOs came to us as first lieutenants with several months in grade.

Since we didn't have any second lieutenants to nurture, we had to work on first lieutenants. They often misunderstood our intentions and this is where the accusations of insubordination came from.

One of the first things we had to do for them was to put things into perspective.

To begin with, there were too

many officers, RLOs and warrants, to be saluting all the time. We all saluted the major, but that was about it.

Secondly was teamwork. The inside of a helicopter taking fire on emergency resupply or medevac was no place for "Sir this" or "Sir that." Since we were in the thick of things most of the time, this was the norm rather than the exception.

Just because we did not salute each other and say "Sir" did not mean lack of respect. As I said before, respect was earned. If you were a good pilot and a good guy, you got all the respect you needed or wanted.

In fact, you knew you had it made when, even on the ground, the enlisted crewmen called you by your first name. This was totally alien to some people, but it felt good when it was you.

Thirdly, even though the RLOs had their hooches and the warrants had theirs, we did almost everything together on the ground, too. Instead of familiarity breeding contempt, it helped to strengthen the team and spirit.

With a very few exceptions, we had a fantastic bunch of pilots and we were all proud to call ourselves and each other Minutemen and Muskets.

The RLOs would, of course, try to get us back, but we always managed to give back twice what we got and, if all else failed, we had our answer.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Drew Boudrieau was Minuteman 14 during his tour in Vietnam in 1968-69.

HAI convention planned for Anaheim in February

The 1997 Helicopter Association International (HAI) Convention will be held at the Anaheim (CA) Convention Center Feb. 2-4.

I am seeking a member to assume responsibility for VHPA representation at the convention.

If you have plans to attend and can represent VHPA at the convention or if you can work the VHPA booth any part of the time you will be in attendance, please contact Jack Jordan.

Thanks to all who have helped with HAI in the years past. The support given to this organization by HAI has

been terrific.

Our presence has brought many new members to the VHPA.

Please help to continue this long-term relationship with the aviation community.

Jack D Jordan
P.O. Box 395

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted] (Fax)

Net population continues to grow

MEL CANON

Seems like Santa Clara happened just yesterday, but it's been nearly five months . . . can you believe it? In a short time, Santa Clara will be farther into history than Orlando is in the future.

Funny how we measure time. For some of us, it's reunion-to-reunion . . . for others it's day-to-day, month-to-month or year-to-year. For many of us on the net, it's from login-to-login.

I don't really understand why the net is so addictive, or why so many of our members spend as much time on it as they do . . . but the fact is, they do. By the time this article reaches you, our net population will be something in the neighborhood of 200 plus.

Checking today we are at 190. That's 190 people who share the experience of Vietnam in the capacity of being a helicopter

crewmember . . . all meeting on a daily basis to chat, criticize, humor, ridicule, praise and generally BS with one another across cyberspace.

Most of us have never met, but we are like a family. And, like any family, we have our tense moments with one another.

Some of us are very active and submit some sort of commo to the net every day. Others are more passive and lurk in the background . . . probably shaking their heads in surprise or disgust at some of the stuff that leaps onto their computer screen. Sometimes . . . more often than not . . . those cybersyllables invoke gut-wrenching laughter. Sometimes they bring on a flood of tears.

The net offers no concrete governing entity . . . it is more self-governing by nature. The personalities of the current active members dictate the

One part of our network that's really made some significant improvements is the VHFCN Homepage.

flavor of communication.

The net is not for everybody . . . the attrition rate is testimony to that. For every three or four who sign onto the net . . . one or two drop out within a week or two. Some folks come in and out . . . swinging into action as their mood, or job, allows them to.

Some access the net via local access services that cost them anything from nothing to \$20-\$30 per month. Others pay exorbitant access charges because it's all that's available to them . . . but even that doesn't keep them from being as active as anyone else. I guess some of them are independently wealthy, but my guess is, that's the exception more than the norm.

For whatever reason . . . for whatever motivation, the net just keeps growing. And, as with anything else, that growth creates continual problems. We don't have a current roster of members. That's not to say we don't have the information, we just don't have it in a format . . . nor location . . . available to everyone.

We are working on that and will have a secure database in place soon. All our members (those that work behind the scenes to make the net possible) are volunteers who must deal with real jobs and family matters, in addition to the needs of the net.

One part of our network that's really made some significant improvements is the VHFCN Homepage. Located on the World Wide Web at <http://www.vhfcn.org/>, this faction of

the net has been the highlight of the net's activity.

It is with the homepage that we interface with the world outside our own little cybergroup. The homepage is accessible to anyone who has access to the Internet. Within this Internet site we have stories and pictures relating to the Vietnam War, personal biographies, links to member's personal sites, links to other, related, sites and general information about our group.

Additionally, we actively solicit, via the homepage, members for VHPA and VHCMA.

We have interactive application forms for each organization available for anyone who meets the qualification requirements for membership. All a person has to do is fill out the form and it is forwarded to the appropriate organization for processing.

The homepage also features up-to-date information relating to the forthcoming VHPA reunion. We expect the same information to be made available for VHCMA, as well, but haven't had any input from that faction for that feature.

The homepage also features a chat room (The Bunker) where anyone can participate in real-time communications with others who've accessed the net. We've had many visitor encounters via The Bunker. This feature is managed by PAUL "PAPA" PEL-LAND ().

Through our homepage, a person can access the Vietnam Memorial database and search for names and locations of friends/relatives who were KIA in Vietnam.

And, on that note, we have been responsible for developing closure information for many people regarding family members . . . loved ones . . . who didn't make it back.

A recent such incident involved a son who was in search of information about his father, a Chinook pilot, who was killed in an aircraft accident while conducting a hot refueling mission. All the son, or family, ever

See GROUP, Page 27

***On the
InterCom***

Group has helped families of KIAs

Continued from Page 26

knew was he'd been killed in an aircraft accident.

After seeing our homepage on the World Wide Web, he contacted me and asked for help in getting information about his father's death . . . or locating anyone who might have served with his father.

I made some inquiries that included a quick search of the VHPA database and found some very detailed reports on the accident that claimed the life of First Lt. John William Simpson Jr. I forwarded this report to his son, Mike Simpson.

The report included names of others involved in the accident. Also, a brief scan of the unit history turned up some other names of individuals that were in the same unit at the same time. With all this ammunition, and some other general sleuthing, we turned up several individuals who were close to Simpson when he served in Vietnam.

One of our net members served in Simpson's unit just after he was KIA and remembered the names of some of the personnel who were actually in the aircraft at the time of the accident.

This information was all forwarded to Mike Simpson and he is now in the process of corresponding with several of those people.

So, 26 years after his father's death, Mike Simpson is finally able to achieve some closure on his loss and come to know his father a bit better through the eyes and contributions of those who knew and served with him at the time of his death.

Incidents such as this, and the similar situation that occurred Christmas with a daughter and mother of another one of us who perished in Vietnam, makes all the work that we've put into the net very worthwhile.

Through the homepage, it has become much more than a place to hang out and BS with the boys. It has become an emissary of VHPA and VHCMA with the rest of the world.

In addition to developing valuable

For me personally, it has produced information regarding at least five or six people I flew with in Vietnam . . .

information regarding our fallen comrades for loved ones, the net also has produce many reunions between old friends who might not have ever bumped into one another again.

For me personally, it has produced information regarding at least five or six people I flew with in Vietnam and that has produced as many contacts with those from the past.

A high note from the VHFCN group is we're planning a large gathering in Washington, DC, this next Veteran's Day.

Several of us in the area of DC have availed themselves and their families to accommodating many of us who will make the trek from afar.

We have a large . . . and ever-growing . . . list of net members who plan to meet in DC for Veteran's Day for a visit to The Wall, and some visitation and revelry afterward.

The person who's been responsible for organizing this gathering is MIKE SLONIKER (██████████m). Mike has opened his home up for visitors as have several others, including our own official VHPA chaplain, THE REVEREND "THUNDERHORSE" JOHN PLUMMER (██████████), and JIM McDANIEL (██████████t), and others.

This gathering should prove to be very fruitful for all involved and we're all looking forward to it with great enthusiasm.

For any of you who want to join us on-line, send an e-mail to: VHFCN-ADMIN@VHFCN.ORG requesting information/access to the net. Or, if you are a bit more cyber-oriented,

visit our homepage at <http://www.vhfcn.org/>.

As a reminder to those that wish to join us on-line . . . and to those that have tried it and found themselves swamped with too much traffic, there is an alternate way to enjoy the net traffic that won't overburden your e-mail boxes. We can sign you on in a Digest mode that produces but one message per day. That message, however, contains all the net traffic from the previous day.

The Digest sports a table of contents that identifies each message by number and states the subject matter and author. You can get the net traffic in Digest form and read it at your leisure, responding to selected pieces of traffic as desired.

You needn't be flooded with tons of e-mail in order to enjoy the camaraderie of the net's fellowship.

If this is of interest to you, just state in your inquire message that you would be interested in the Digest Mode.

Also . . . as a reminder . . . the net is free. We require no fees for joining and participating. We do have expenses, however, and donations are accepted . . . even sometimes solicited. But, no one is required to pay anything.

Our contributions run from \$5 to \$175 . . . depending simply on your financial abilities and desire to lend a hand with the expenses. We also try to accumulate funds that will allow us to send flowers at those times of distress, illness or loss of a loved one.

Well, this has been more of an enlightening tome about the net than about the actual happenings on the net.

Next issue, I will concentrate on bringing you more precise commentary on some of the activities of the net in general, including some samples of actual traffic from our members.

Until then keep it in the green till we once again listen in "On The InterCom."

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

949 University Ave., Suite 210 • Sacramento, CA 95825

(800) 505-VHPA (voice) • (916) 648-1072 (fax)

Membership application/change of address

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Application | ☐ Annual dues: \$30 (Newsletters included) |
| ☐ Address change | ☐ Life membership: \$450* |
| ☐ Directory correction | ☐ Newsletter subscription only: \$32 |

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.*