



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

May/June 1998 Vol. 16, No. 3

VIETNAM HELICOPTER

BACK TO THE BEGINNING
VHPA 15TH ANNUAL REUNION

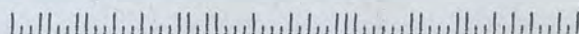
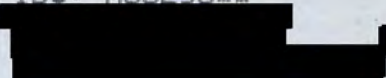
FORT WORTH
FORT WOLTERS ★ ★

JULY 1-5, 1998

PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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From the President

As we approach our next reunion, I'd like to share some thoughts about the special relationship that exists among us brothers.

My source is Shakespeare's King Henry V (Act IV, Scene 3) or, if you prefer, Danny DeVito in "Renaissance Man."

This day is called the feast of Crispian.

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,

Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,

And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,

Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors,

And say 'Tomorrow is Saint Crispian.'

Then he will strip his sleeve and show his scars,

And say 'These wounds I had on Crispian's day.'

Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,

*But he'll remember, with advantages,
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall never go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered —*

*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother,*

*And gentlemen at home now in bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispian's day.*

Our Saint Crispian's Day lasted months and years, but our vigil will soon be upon us as it is every Fourth of July. I hope to see ALL of my brothers in Fort Worth.

— Mike Hurley, President

VHPA seeks members interested in serving on Executive Council

The VHPA runs only with the assistance of many dedicated member volunteers who serve on various committees and the Executive Council.

Without all the extra effort on the part of a number of your fellow pilots, the VHPA could not exist as you know it today.

During this July's business meeting at the Fort Worth reunion, the VHPA membership will elect a new junior member at large to a three-year term on the Executive Council and a new vice president.

If you would be interested in serving, please send your nomination to Dave Rittman at the address below before June 26.

Please include a brief description of yourself and your background, which will be shared with the general membership at the business meeting.

Once you have thrown your name into the hat, you will be provided the opportunity to briefly address the members at the meeting, after which a vote will be taken. That's all there is to it!

If you are interested, please let Dave Rittman know by E-mail, fax or mail as follows:

Dave Rittman

[Redacted Address]

Fax:

E-mail:

[Redacted Contact Information]

Calendar

July

The 176th AHC and VHPA CCN will hold mini-reunions at July's VHPA Reunion in Fort Worth.

The date and time will be determined at the reunion.

CONTACT: Ken Fritz at [Redacted]

Sept. 28-30

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society will hold its annual convention/reunion at the Circus Circus Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV.

CONTACT: Alexander D. Ciurczak, [Redacted]

Phone: ([Redacted]); fax: (714) 493-DFCS.

Classified ads

POSITION WANTED: Experienced helicopter pilot looking for a position in the areas of EMS, natural resources or public service. Experience: Regular Army, Indiana National Guard. Class 68-27. Call Bill Resor at [Redacted].

CALORAD: All natural wellness product. Would you like to lose inches/weight while you sleep? Build lean muscle mass? No diet or exercise necessary. Too good to be true? An 86% long-term success rate speaks for itself. Available retail or wholesale in an excellent business opportunity. Call VHPA member Paul Uster (L200) at [Redacted]. Extension/PIN 8936, or [Redacted].

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Assistant editors	Charles Rayl, "Pappy" Jones
Contributing writers	Mike Law, Mel Canon

VHPA SUPPORT

Legal adviser	Charles R. Rayl
VHPA Headquarters	(800) 505-VHPA

ELECTRONIC MAIL

VHPA Headquarters	HQ@vhpa.org
Newsletter editor	swickard@vhpa.org
Public relations	PR@vhpa.org
Records/Database	roush@vhpa.org
Website	http://www.vhpa.org
Webmaster	webmaster@vhpa.org

VHPA chapters

Ohio River LZ Chapter	Jack W. Shrode Jr., President [redacted]
Great Lakes Chapter	John Becker, President [redacted] home
North Carolina Chapter	Vic Rose, President [redacted]
New England Chapter	Bob Whitford, Past President [redacted] home work
Fort Wolters Chapter	Charles Holley, President [redacted] m [redacted] fax
Mardi Gras Chapter	Don Hunt, President Lee Overstreet, Vice President New Orleans, LA
Florida LZ Chapter	Judd Chapin, Executive Director [redacted]
California Chapter North	Rich Buzen, President [redacted]

Florida Chapter joins parade in Eustis, FL

This was the second year the VHPA Florida Chapter has participated in Washington's Birthday Parade in Eustis, FL, the oldest continuously held parade in the United States.

This year's parade was Feb. 28.

Main Street in Eustis becomes the parade route for marching bands, twirlers, fire engines, "Little Miss" Everythings, U.S. Custom Service boats, canine clubs and, yes, our own OH-6 helicopter.

The Loach never looked better in the assembly area. Ray Shinkle had nicely decorated the trailer with American Flags, VHPA banners and signs. Rex Flohr had applied enough

"elbow-grease" to polish the OH-6's bubble.

Although the weather was cloudy, with a threat of rain, we all continued to prepare for the parade.

Bill Griswold and Bob Lee held the large VHPA banner to precede Ray's truck pulling the OH-6.

R.A. Jones and Fred Breuche prepared to ride in the truck. Helen Joyce, Fred's grandson and a friend rode in the Loach, to wave at the crowds through the door openings. I was busy photographing the scenes.

At 10 a.m., the parade started quickly as a slight drizzle was falling. Within a minute the sky "opened-up"

with a tremendous thunderstorm and squall-line.

Bob and Bill marched proudly with our banner, Helen and the boys waved from the OH-6. I ran after the trailer trying to take one last photo . . . but the crowd had left quickly and all of us were soaking wet!

The police cancelled the parade within five minutes and we all went back to the assembly area to seek shelter and a dry spot!

Thanks again to everyone who showed up.

Don Joyce, Vice President
2nd Region, Florida Chapter
[redacted]

Flying SS-11 'Hog' almost punishment

One of our ARA "Charlie" models carried two French-made SS-11 missiles (officially the AGM-22B missile and the SS-11 system).

These were wire-guided missiles with a powerful, shaped-charge warhead. The warhead itself was about 15 inches long and sported a bright yellow nose.

The rocket motor was about 30 inches long and 6.5 inches in diameter. It was solid-fueled, with four canted fins on the rear end of its olive-drab body.

The missile's primary purpose was to penetrate armored vehicles or hardened bunkers and destroy them.

Regardless of its mighty potential, I believe, without exception, everyone hated flying the old "Hog" with the SS-11s. It was so ungainly, wide and heavy; and it only carried 36 of the regular 2.75-inch rockets inboard of the SS-11 system.

All of the other "Bravo" or "Charlie" models carried 48 rockets (our bread-and-butter weapons).

It was almost like punishment when we had to fly the "Hog." It was even hard to park.

It was a good three feet wider than the other Hueys we flew and the revetments were all the same size.

The old "Hog" earned its keep one day when two infantry companies found themselves pinned down in rice paddies. A couple of NVA machine gunners in a reinforced bunker that was part of a rice paddy dike, laced the air with fire.

We scrambled out to help, but all we could see as we arrived were the infantrymen scattered across two huge rice paddies. One company was on the west side of the dike and the other on the east.

The bunker, cleverly built into the dike, had openings just large enough to accommodate two machine guns, one pointing east and one west, perfect for laying down grazing fire on each rice paddy.

From the air, the bunker was very hard to see, much less hit. What we could see were occasional tracers flashing through the air just above the infantry troops.

We set up our runs from south to north and made several passes with 2.75-inch rockets. The fire from the bunker continued almost as if we were not there.

Lt. Corey happened to be flying left seat in the old "Hog" that day just by coincidence (or God's providence). He was one of only two people in our battery qualified (school-trained) to fire the SS-11.

Lt. Corey said, "I have seen these things fail more times than they work right."



VHPA Products

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New VHPA bumper stickers	\$1/each	_____
Back VHPA Newsletters (Limited availability)	\$10/year (\$5 P&H each set)	_____
1994 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1995 VHPA Directory	\$10/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
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1998 VHPA Calendar	\$7.20/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____
1995-98 VHPA Calendar set (Limited availability)	\$20/set (\$6 P&H set)	_____
VHPA History Book, Vol. 1 Turner Publishing limited edition. Only a few left.	\$25/each (\$5 P&H each)	_____

GRAND TOTAL

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We conversed on the UHF radio about reliability and such. We used the UHF to discuss these kind of problems so the ground pounders would not hear the conversation. They used FM radios.

"When you say 'fail,' what exactly do you mean? Do they go crazy, out of control, or do they just drop off and fall into the mud?" I asked.

"Each failure I have seen, the missile fires and heads toward the target, then something malfunctions and the missile breaks right and goes straight down," he answered.

*It fell and fell,
and then it lit
and moved
out slowly
toward the
target.*

*For a rocket,
those things
were slow.*

"Let's give it a try. It may work right this once." I tried to be positive.

We decided to try it on this bunker. We were rather fearful for the infantry to the east.

With the failure information in mind, Lt. Corey said on FM, "I'll set up about 3,000 meters south of the bunker. I'll be low and slow. Cover me. You guys on the ground, get you heads down."

He maneuvered to within 1,500 meters of the bunker, but still well

back from the infantrymen.

When he finally launched the missile, I thought it was just going to fall into the rice paddy below.

It fell and fell, and then it lit and moved out slowly toward the target. For a rocket, those things were slow. They only clocked out at about 400 miles per hour. Compared to our 2.75-inch rockets, which got to the target almost the instant we fired them, the SS-11 was a turtle.

Lt. Corey flew the missile toward the target with a little joy stick in the cockpit of the helicopter.

BAVOOM! He scored a direct hit! The size of the explosion amazed me. It hit the bunker with the punch of a 155 mm howitzer HE round.

The real difference was that the shaped-charge warhead blew a small hole in the front side of the bunker, destroyed everything inside and took out the entire backside of the bunker.

A red fireball the size of a basketball skipped out across the paddy for several hundred meters. I have no clue what that was.

This was the end of the bunker and the beginning of a party.

Both infantry units were on their feet, jumping up and down and waving their arms as we departed to rearm and refuel.

In that brief exchange only a few of the ground-pounders sustained minor wounds. The only deaths were in the bunker

N.G. "Glenn" Brown

Blue Max 69-Q1

C/2/20 ARA

1st Cavalry Division, RVN 1968-69

Condition can appear long after war service

I spent a year in the RVN flying with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company, "The Crusaders."

We flew combat assaults seven days a week, every day of the year (if we had enough flyable aircraft), in all kinds of weather, and occasionally night CAs.

During that year, I logged 1,261 — of that, 1,050 were logged as combat; we didn't log "ash and trash" or en route as CA — which was about average in our company.

We were extremely competent in 10-ship insertions and extractions, and our gun platoon would do anything to protect the flight.

Our greatest glory was that we never left anyone on the ground. Dead or alive, we brought them all back.

No company or aviator saw any more action than the Crusaders! I saw death in the sky, on the ground, in our company area from rocket and mortar rounds, and house-size piles of dead NVA.

Simply said, I know first-hand the price of honor. The price was at least the loss of our youth and innocence. The COST for many was life and limb, others their heart and soul and mind, and many are still paying every day — with 30-year-old fear, anxiety and terror.

Army aviators (Vietnam veterans) are special and different from all others in combat. The individual aircraft commander has total authority (and, ultimately, responsibility) over the aircraft and personnel during operations. Only God outranks an aircraft commander!

We are not the type who admit pain, fear, or grief — it is not part of our SOP. In combat, fear, panic or uncertainty will not only kill you, it will kill your crew and PACs.

When you are "heavy left, on short final, within a rotor disk of two other aircraft, and it goes "hot" — real HOT. Panic is not an option! You cannot take cover and get flat — you "pucker tight" and pick your touchdown — land in that tight formation and get out. Don't think! Just FLY! Block that fear — don't show it — maintain flight integrity — ignore the tracers — "lead chalk four . . . the FNG just bought it . . . break, break, chalk four goin' down FTA!!! "Got a dink with an RPG killem- killem- killem" Lead! Chalk 7 — Trail is down and burning in the LZ — I'm going after him — I'll be breaking right! Lead Chalk 8 AC is hit — panel looks good will be following Chalk 7 . . .

The last thing that we need to do is further stigmatize brother veterans who may be suffering in silence, out of fear that everyone will believe his "manufactured grief" is weakness or something other than genuine.

PTSD is a real medical condition. Much of this disorder results from actual physiological changes that occur in the brain and body of combat veterans. It can manifest 20,

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even 30, years after the fact and in varying degrees.

Not all reactions are PTSD. Genuine grief is appropriate for anyone in our exclusive fraternity. Strong emotions are a reasonable and necessary part of healing and bringing closure to something that should have impacted all of us who were tested under fire.

I went to The Wall last summer. It was very difficult and painful, but I went. I sobbed uncontrollably, not concerned about what anyone thought. I was personally surprised by the power of The Wall and my genuine and powerful response.

Crusader Bob Bess was there with me and his presence was needed and important. I don't advise doing it alone, but it is an important pilgrimage for Vietnam veterans.

Any Vet who goes to The Wall and feels nothing should plan a trip to Oz and ask the Wizard for both a heart and a brain. If you think that grief is manufactured . . . Keep faith with your fellow Vietnam vets.

The Crusader ethic, "leave no one behind," is as important now as it ever was. If all you want to do is drink beer and peddle rotor wash — fine; however, leave serious matters to people who care and don't sit safe and dry making uninformed judgements. If you can do no good, do no harm.

John J. Jewett
Maggot 10

Petersburg, IL

Does VHPA send letters to surviving spouses?

Re: Passing of Tom Mandelke.

Has the VHPA implemented any form of a condolence letter which automatically goes to the surviving spouse or offspring of a deceased member, inviting them to the next reunion and making them all honorary members of VHPA, or perhaps a VHPA auxiliary, which could continue the tradition of having reunions after we are all gone?

Many World War II units have such a structure and communications link so that, hopefully, the memories will never die. The VFW has such an auxiliary, as well.

Just a thought which I feel is worth discussing in the business meeting in Fort Worth.

By the way, I am honchoing a mini-reunion of my flight class, ORWAC 65-18, which will have a couple of mini-reunion breakout sessions at Fort Worth.

Many of my classmates were National Guard or Reserves members who returned to their respective units throughout the United States.

Some volunteered for South Vietnam and others who did not were called up and spent up to two years on active duty, often in Vietnam.



Article about instructor receives strong response

I've wanted to say "thank you" for publishing the article I wrote, "Remembering Mr. Mallet," in the September/October '97 issue of the newsletter.

I am grateful for the dozens of e-mails and other correspondence I received from people who have contacted me, those who enjoyed the story and those who wanted to tell me about their own IPs and the impact those IPs had on their lives.

One of the responses was from a former classmate in WORWAC 68-7 with whom I had not talked him since flight school.

Another response was from a friend I had served with in Vietnam.

I had not heard from him at all since that time. After the article was published, he called me and, a few weeks later, we were able to get together for a fun-filled weekend when his business brought him to Dallas.

So, belated as it may be, thanks for including the article in the newsletter.

Ira Will McComie
235th Aerial Weapons Company
Can Tho 1968-69

Members of the latter groups are obviously eligible for membership in the VHPA, while two who did not go to Vietnam are coming as our guests.

Should be fun. Just watch for the green hats! You'll feel youthful again.

One of our members in ORWAC 65-18 flew TBM's and F4U Corsairs in World War II, then C-54's, all in the Navy until he was Rfited after 18 years.

Subsequently, he and two other Navy pilots and five former Air Force crewmen joined the Army, came on board as CWOs in our class, finished, and then proudly displayed their Army wings ABOVE their Navy and Air Force wings while serving with us in Uncle Sam's largest Boy Scout troop.

A request from both of you and any others you know: I'm assembling an Army, Army Air Force, and Marine unit shoulder patch collection for the National Training Center Museum.

The NTC, at Fort Irwin, is where the Blackhorse Regiment (11th Armored Cavalry Regiment) is presently garrisoned as the OPFOR (Opposing Force.)

Any patches, including pocket patches from flying days, would be greatly appreciated, even backward 11th ACR patches, if you wore one on your right sleeve.

Anyway, your help will be appreciated, perhaps an ad in the next Newsletter — see you in Fort Worth.

Gil Ferrey
"Hawkeye 9G"

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Canadian film company seeking pilots' stories

Screenlife Inc. is now developing the third season of the award-winning aviation series "Flightpath" for the Discovery Channel here in Canada. The series is also seen on direct television in the United States and has just been sold to "Wingspan."

"Flightpath" is positive and inspirational. Each one-hour program focuses on different aspects of flight and is comprised of four sections: A modern-day mission, profiles, history and the aircraft.

We are always looking for new stories and I invite VHPA members to submit ideas. This year, we will shoot in North America only from late June to the end of September.



The most important thing to keep in mind is that "Flightpath" is an adventure series. We look for colourful characters, as well as rich and vivid stories with strong historical links and exciting flying sequences.

We're lining up for this year's "Flightpath" programs and would like to locate:

- An author/historian located in the continental United States who could give us a dynamic interview on the role of the helicopter in combat from Korea to the Comanche.

- We're also looking into an episode on the last helicopter out of Saigon. Is your association in contact with anyone (passengers/crew) from that last flight?

I can be reached by telephone at [REDACTED]. Our fax number is [REDACTED] and my e-mail address is [REDACTED]

Pilar Segura, Director
Screenlife Inc.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Helicopter crewmembers learned enduring lessons

Everything I ever needed to know in life I learned as a helicopter crewman in Vietnam.

- Once you are in the fight it is way too late to wonder if this is a good idea.

- Helicopters are cool!

- It is a fact that helicopter tail rotors are instinctively drawn toward trees, stumps, rocks, etc. While it may be possible to ward off this natural event some of the time, it cannot, despite the best efforts of the crew, always be prevented. It's just what they do.

- NEVER get into a fight without more ammunition than the other guy.

- The engine rpm and the rotor rpm must BOTH be kept

Magazine writer to contact 1st Cavalry Division pilots

I have been assigned to write a feature for Vietnam Magazine on the role played by the 1st Cav and, particularly, B Troop, 1/9th Cav, during Operation PEGASUS, when the 1st Cav went in to help the Marines break out of Khe Sahn.

I plan to do the research for this article during the upcoming 1998 VHPA reunion this coming July in Fort Worth.

Could you please put in a notice that during the reunion, I would like to meet with any 1st Cav helicopter pilots who were involved in Operation PEGASUS (particularly B Troop., 1/9th)?

I can be contacted prior to the reunion by e-mail at [REDACTED], or by phone during the day at [REDACTED], Ext. 119, and in the evening at [REDACTED]

Douglas W. Nelms
atwnelms@aol.com
Class 67-9

in the GREEN. Failure to heed this commandment can affect the morale of the crew.

- A billfold in your hip pocket can numb your leg and be a real pain in the ass.

- Cover your buddy, so he can be around to cover for you.

- Letters from home are not always great.

- The madness of war can extract a heavy toll. Please have exact change.

- Share everything. Yes, even the pound cake.

- Decisions made by someone over your head will seldom be in your best interest.

- The terms protective armor and helicopter are mutually exclusive.

- The farther away you are from your friends, the less likely it is that they can help you when you really need them the most.

- Sometimes, being good and lucky still was not enough.

- There is always payback.

- Chicken plates are not something you order in a restaurant.

- If everything is as clear as a bell and everything is going exactly as planned, you're about to be surprised.

- The BSR (Bang Stare Red) Theory states that the louder the sudden bang in the helicopter, the quicker your eyes will be drawn to the gauges. The longer you stare at the gauges, the less time it takes them to move from green to red.

- It does too get cold in Vietnam.

- No matter what you do, the bullet with your name on it will get you. So too can the ones addressed To Whom It May Concern.

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- Gravity: It may not be fair, but it is the law.
- If the rear echelon troops are really happy, the front line troops probably do not have what they need.
- If you are wearing body armor, they probably will miss that part.
- It hurts less to die with a uniform on, than to die in a hospital bed.
- Happiness is a belt-fed weapon.
- If something is not broken on your helicopter, it's about to be.
- Eat when you can. Sleep when you can. The next opportunity may not come around for a long time. If ever.
- Combat pay is a flawed concept.
- Having all your body parts intact and functioning at the end of the day beats the alternative.



- Air superiority is NOT a luxury.
- If you are allergic to lead, it is best to avoid a war zone.
- It is a bad thing to run out of airspeed, altitude and ideas all at the same time.
- While the rest of the crew may be in the same predicament, it's usually the pilot's job to arrive at the crash site first.

- When you shoot your gun, clean it the first chance you get.
- Loud, sudden noises in a helicopter WILL get your undivided attention.
- Hot garrison chow is better than hot C-rations which, in turn, are better than cold C-rations, which are better than no food at all. All of these, however, are preferable to cold rice balls, even if they do have the little pieces of fish in them.

NEVER FORGET!

- WHAT is often more important than WHY.
- Boxes of cookies from home must be shared.
- Girlfriends are fair game. Wives are not.
- Everybody's a hero . . . on the ground . . . in the club . . . after the fourth drink.
- There is no such thing as a small firefight.
- A free fire zone has nothing to do with economics.
- The farther you fly into the mountains, the louder the strange engine noises become.
- Medals are OK, but having your body and all your friends in one piece at the end of the day is better.
- Being shot hurts.
- Pucker Factor is the formal name of the equation that states the hairier the situation, the more of the seat cushion will be sucked up.
- Thousands of Vietnam veterans earned medals for bravery every day. A few were even awarded.
- Running out of pedal, fore or aft cyclic, or collective are all bad ideas. Any combination of these can be deadly.
- There is only one rule in war: When you win, you get to make up the rules.
- Living and dying can both hurt a lot.

- While a Super Bomb could be considered one of the four essential building blocks of life, powdered eggs cannot.

- C-4 can make a dull day fun.
- Of course you can drink out of a human skull! Duct tape over the eye sockets will keep it from leaking.

There is no such thing as a fair fight — only ones where you win or lose.

- If you win the battle, you are entitled to the spoils. If you lose, you don't care.
- Nobody cares what you did yesterday or what you are going to do tomorrow. What is important is what you are doing — NOW — to solve our problem.
- If you have extra — share quickly.
- It's OK to take stuff off the body of a buddy, 'cause you know he would have wanted you to have it anyway.
- Always make sure someone has a P-38.
- A sucking chest wound may be God's way of telling you it's time to go home.
- Prayer may not help . . . but it can't hurt.
- Flying is better than walking. Walking is better than running. Running is better than crawling. All of these, however, are better than extraction by a medevac, even if it is, technically, a form of flying.
- If everyone does not come home, none of the rest of us can ever fully come home, either.

- A grunt is the true reason for the existence of the helicopter. Every helicopter flying in Vietnam had one real purpose: To help the grunt. It is unfortunate that many helicopters never had the opportunity to fulfill their one true mission in life, simply because someone forgot this fact.
- If you have not been there and done that . . . you probably will not understand most of these.

Many thanks to my fellow Vietnam Helicopter Flight Crewmember brothers who helped compile this list: J.C. Pennington, Lee Westbrook, Bob Blum, Ron Timberlake and Darryl James.

Bobby McBride
Puyallup, WA

Crew chief, 128th Assault Helicopter Company
Phu Loi, RVN March 1969-March 1970

Letter in VHPA Newsletter helps Ranger locate friend

Reference is made to last month's newsletter, and also to a letter written by Dave Bristol, a former Ranger, RVN 1969-70.

I read all the articles in our newsletter and recognized the name "Animal," who Dave was looking for and whom I served with on my second tour to RVN. I immediately placed a call to Mr. Bristol's home in Colorado, informing him of "Animal's" place of residence.

Steve "Animal" Howard served with Alpha Company, 4th Aviation Battalion, 4th Infantry Division during 1969 and 1970. Our company call signs were the "Blackjacks"

Continued on Page 9

VHPA member responds to article in newsletter

I am responding to John Konek's "Helicopters had various purposes" article in the March/April Newsletter.

I am a VHPA member and work for Shell Oil Co.'s Corporate Aviation Division. Shell Oil Co.'s international operating subsidiary is known as Pecten International and had operations in Southeast Asia in the early '70s. Shell's Corporate Aviation Division directly supports Pecten's aviation needs.

During my early years with Shell, Mr. J.W. Eagleton was the manager of the Corporate Aircraft Division and was something of a legend in the company. He retired several years ago and is in rather poor health today.

I have listened to him and other "old timers" talk about the oil exploration operations conducted by Pecten in Southeast Asia. In the early '70s, Pecten was working off Con Son Island.

Pecten did not have any of its own helicopters in Southeast Asia, but contracted with Evergreen Helicopters. I am certain that Evergreen helicopters participated in the rescues and evacuations for Pecten and others during the Fall of Saigon.

The president of Evergreen Helicopters, Mr. Delford M. Smith, is a world-class legend in this business and, hopefully, he and the VHPA can get together so this part of the history is correct.

D.P. "Phil" DeWoody
Shell Oil Co.

Korean aviator friend helps track down man

Dear John Konek:

I am a VHPA member and am happy to report that we struck pay dirt. My Korean aviator friend contacted Mr. Han and learned that he was in fact the man you are looking for.

He said that of the five on the list, three are still alive. I have his address in Korean. I will write it clearly so that

Continued from Page 8

and our sister company was "Gambler Guns."

Steve currently lives in Elizabeth, CO.

I also would like to hear from any former "Blackjacks." I served from June 1, 1969-June 30, 1970.

Thanks, VHPA, for the many stories like this one and also for others that I have read in the newsletter in the two years I have been a member. Your newsletter and staff are like the Army Aviation motto: "Above The Finest."

Donald J. Long
Edmond, OK 73034

you can copy it.

If you write it just as I did, there should be no problem. I cannot guarantee that he speaks good English, though.

Good luck and let me know if you need more help.

Shawn Marshall

EDITOR'S NOTE: Shawn sent this letter to VHPA member John Konek who, in turned, shared it with the Newsletter.

Korean helicopter pilots identified after story ran

Dear Mr. CW2 John B. Konek (Ret):

My name is Capt. Ki-Sun Han, Major Ret. I received your letter. Thank you very much.

I remember the Vietnam War, 30 years ago.

Capt. Choi Hun Yong, death by helicopter accident about 12 years ago.

Capt. Kim Ki Hwan died about five years ago in Sydney, Australia. He was a pastor.

(Ret) Col. Lee Jeomi Keom, lives in Seoul. Retired from Korean Air two years ago.

Lt. Choi Seung Woo, lives in Seoul. Retired major general from ROK Army Infantry. He is now civilian.

I can contact any time Col. Lee and Maj. Gen. Choi.

I am working now for Daewoo Group, Aviation Department, chief pilot and aviation director. We have two Sikorsky S-76B and three Sokol W3-A (Poland helicopter).

I have total flight time 8,000 hours (F/W and R/W).

I wait good news from you and VHPA.

I sent pictures of me in 48th AHC.

Thank you,
Ki-Sun Han

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Konek shared this letter with the Newsletter. Mr. Han sent two nice pages photocopied from what seems to be his photo album. The pictures show the Blue Star Officers Club of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, plus groups of Koreans and Americans. The only Americans identified in the photos are an IP CW2 Brown and another IP, CW2 Nelson. The only dates on the photos are 1968-69.

Hopefully this is just the beginning of the VHPA's efforts to learn more about Korean helicopter pilots who served in Vietnam.

Publications help keep valued memories alive

Just wanted to let you know that you all do a great job of keeping a lot of old but treasured memories alive.

I always look forward to your publications.

J. Dailey
BG, USA (Retired)
Hampton, NH

Taps

William R. Boatwright

William R. Boatwright of Baldwyn, MS, died Feb. 4 when the UH-1 "Huey" he was flying crashed in Tennessee.

His wife Margarette said her husband was preparing to string wire across the Tennessee River at Savannah, TN, when the crash occurred. Three other people died in the accident.

At the time of his death, Boatwright was a contract pilot with the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Boatwright was a member of class 68-4.

He served with B/25th Aviation, 25th Infantry Division in 1968-69.

Shannon D. Clark

Shannon D. Clark of Newport Beach, CA, died May 12. He was 66.

Clark, a lieutenant colonel, retired from the Army in 1982 after 26 years of service.

He served two tours in Vietnam as an aviator. Clark was rated in helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

He was commissioned a second lieutenant in October 1956.

Clark was active in a number of veterans and service organizations, including the Military Order of the World Wars, Sons of Confederate Veterans, the Retired Officers Association and the VHPA.

Evangelos Dantos

Evangelos Dantos, 65, a retired Army colonel who served two tours in Vietnam, died of pancreatic cancer Feb. 23 at his home in Davidsonville.

Dantos graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1956.

Later, he attended Army Ranger school and flight school and became a helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft pilot. He served in Vietnam in 1965-66 with the 11th Aviation Battalion and in 1969-70 as commanding officer of the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company.

His decorations include a Distinguished Flying Cross, the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, the Meritorious Service

Medal, the Air Assault Badge and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Commendation Medal.

Dantos attended the Army's Command and General Staff College. He retired from the Army in 1980.

Survivors include his wife of 41 years, Erma Dantos of Davidsonville; three children, Christos Dantos of Granby, CT, Maria Rachman of Slatington, PA, and Andrew Dantos of Bowie; a sister; and four grandchildren.

James H. Hill

James H. Hill of Florence, AL, died in a UH-1H accident on Feb. 3.

Hill, a retired CW4, graduated from flight school in class 66-7. He served with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in 1966-67 and with the 520th Transportation Battalion in 1969-70.

Thomas Albert Mandelke

Thomas Albert Mandelke died April 15 after nine months of fighting melanoma on his back. Although the cancer was curtailed in his body, it spread to his brain.

He was 51.

Tom was not only a good friend and the bicycle "beat" officer with the San Francisco Police Department near a piece of property I own, but he was so much more. He would stop by frequently when he saw me, and I convinced him to attend the VHPA reunion at Santa Clara two years ago before he was diagnosed.

He flew as a warrant officer with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment about a year after I did, in 1968, and as it turned out we both flew the commanding officer in the same position, Air Cav Troop followed by First Squadron, but at different times.

When I got out of the service as a captain, I worked for Astrocopters Ltd. at Oakland Airport which trained the initial pilots for the San Francisco Police Department helicopter flight detachment.

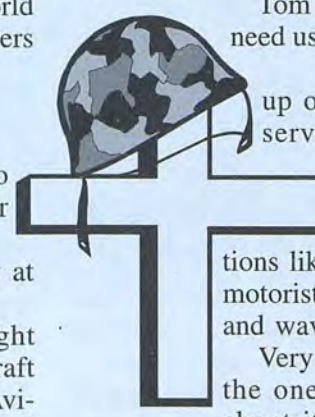
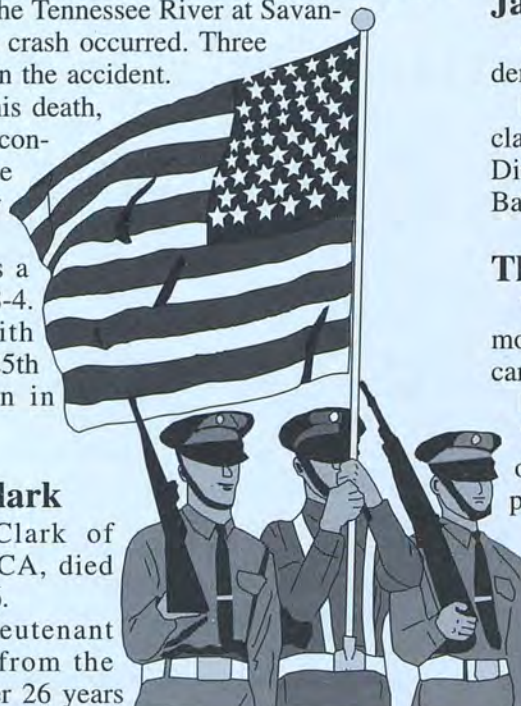
Tom already knew how to fly so he didn't need us.

About three years ago, Tom rode up on his bicycle and asked, "Did you serve with the 11th Cav and fly helicopters?" He had noticed a couple of decals on the rear window of my van which tend to cause questions like that to be asked. Otherwise, some motorists just pass you and beep their horns and wave or salute. Yes, even in California.

Very few have passed me and given me the one-fingered salute and lived to tell about it. I have fun notching my steering

wheel.

After the San Francisco Police Department crashed its H-13 in Lake Merced in 1972 and one pilot was drowned, the program wound down and Tom and the others became



Taps

Continued from Page 10

patrol officers.

He was a real "beat" cop, knew all of the homeless in his area, as well as the merchants and seniors. And he called them all by their first names.

His beat was a real mixed bag. He set up protection committees for the seniors in their apartments, and was always Mr. Cool.

Although I never flew with Tom, Jan Mayer, a VHPA member who flew with him in the "Blackhorse Regiment" and who also attended his funeral, said he was almost too cool under fire.

Maybe the high freqs affected Tom more that it did some of us and he just couldn't hear. I think not however. He was a very good listener, problem-solver, and a people person.

He was named the Police Officer of the Year in 1997 for Southern Station.

Gil Ferrey

Frank Luther Pinner

Frank Luther Pinner, 52, of Marietta, GA, died May 13. Pinner was a Georgia Southern University graduate, and served with the 335th Assault Helicopter Company "Cowboys" as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War.

He retired from the Department of Education Office of the Inspector General. Pinner was a member of the National Guards of Georgia and Florida.

Survivors include wife Karen, daughter Erica and son Will, all of Marietta; mother Nancy A. Pinner of Island Grove, FL; and a brother, Glenn W. Pinner of Island Grove, FL.

Phillip D. Prather

Phillip D. Prather, a former prisoner of war in Vietnam, died from complications of a heart attack in Wichita, KS.

Prather, a retired CW4, was shot down near the DMZ and was a roommate of VHPA member Dick Ziegler while held a POW in Hanoi.

He was in flight school class 70-37.

Cicero Stutts

Retired Army CW4 Cicero Stutts, 54, died April 12 after a 12-year battle with leukemia. He was a native of

Randolph County, NC, and a graduate of High Point College.

He had a distinguished, 29-year Army career. His awards included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, 42 Air Medals, one with "V" device.

He was a master aviator and paratrooper.

After retirement from the Army, he and his wife Sandy founded and ran Tay Ninh Kennels, breeding and showing championship Chesapeake Bay retrievers. He was an active member of the VHPA and the Palmetto Retriever Club.

Cicero's funeral included full military honors, including a helicopter escort from the church to the gravesite flown by Mel Patterson and Jack Pryor and one gun run by an Apache gunship. He leaves behind his wife, Sandy; two daughters, Beth and Becky; a son, Charles C. II; and a stepson, Brain Troxel; and niece Susan Thomas.

Cicero graduated with flight class 67-1 and served with the following units in Vietnam: 1962 - 1963 - MACV; 1968 - 1969 - A Battery 2/220 Arty, Blue Max; 1st Cavalry Division at LZ Sharon and Tay Ninh; B Troop, 3/17 Cav "Stogies" at Dong Tam and Di An.

During the 1970s he flew with the OKNG and NCNG. He returned to active duty during the 1980s and flew Cobras with the 82nd Airborne Division and saw action in Grenada. He graduated from jump school at age 41.

Cicero was medically retired from the Army with leukemia in November 1989 while flying with the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii.

Cicero was a "people person" and was always in the center of the socializing. He was well liked by all. He will be missed, but never forgotten.

Mel Patterson

114th Aviation Company, 1964-1965
1st Airlift Platoon, I Corp Aviation, 1965

George L. Youngblood Jr.

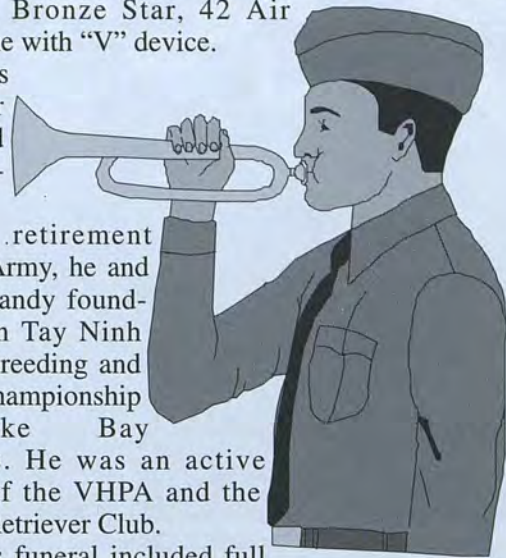
Col. George L. Youngblood Jr., 54, died Sept. 16 at his home in Williamsburg, VA.

He graduated from flight school in class 66-12 and served two tours in Vietnam as an aviator.

Youngblood retired from the Army in 1961 after serving as director of the Devices Management Directorate, Army Training Support Center, Fort Eustis, VA.

He served 27 years in the Army.

His awards include the Senior Army Aviator Badge.





Members of the VHPA North Carolina Chapter have their photograph taken with Gen. Henry "Hugh" Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during the Azalea Festival in Wilmington, NC. The pilots are (from left) Vic Rose, Frank Miller, Jerry Seago, Joe Armstrong, Gen. Shelton, Wiley Hazelwood, Terry Lanier, Dave Shanklin, Allan Hoffman and Carl Seager.

Top general salutes chopper pilots

Gen. Henry "Hugh" Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is a big guy! Nearly 6-foot-6.

But he made the men of the VHPA North Carolina Chapter feel just about that tall at the Azalea Festival in Wilmington, NC, this year.

The chapter was waiting for the start of the big parade, the largest in the state.

We had already set up the "Charlie Model" gunship, the "Huey" H-model and the LOH. This was our rolling museum that always brought applause, smiles and calls of "Welcome Home" when we came down the street. It's a striking thing to see three full-sized choppers floating down the parade route.

As we stood around, telling "there I was" stories, we spotted an official-looking blue Cadillac pass between the choppers and us. Inside, the big guy himself!

Gen. Shelton smiled at the choppers, probably remembering his own service in Vietnam. He looked at us and smartly saluted. We did our best impression of a bunch of laid-back warrant officers, jumping through our

Gen. Shelton smiled at the choppers, probably remembering his own service in Vietnam.

He looked at us and smartly saluted.

We did our best impression of a bunch of laid-back warrant officers, jumping through our butts to snap-to and return the salute.

butts to snap-to and return the salute.

We had heard "The General" was going to be the grand marshal. As it happened, he went into a rolling welcome station nearby and Jerry Seago walked right in and asked if he would come out and shake some hands.

His security looked a little nervous, but not "The General." He walked outside to say "Hi."

After some goad-natured bantering about the choppers (he knew you had

to scrape a fully loaded gunship off the deck to get it to fly) and six or seven pictures, he said something that made us all feel good.

The biggest guy in the military, the guy with all the silver stars on his shoulders, smiled and said, "I wish I could put you guys back in uniform and those choppers back in the air."

We wished we could get back into our uniforms, too! Then a strange thing happened: The flight suits that felt tight around the middle suddenly started feeling tight around the chest. It felt good, even if it wasn't true.

We all got one of his "Command Coins" and a picture to remember the event by. But more than that, we got to talk with a guy who had been there, someone who knew why this paunchy, smiling group of men did what they did so many years ago. Someone who knew it was important. A matter of honor, bravery and dedication.

Rock on Hugh!

Allan Hoffman
"Bikini 24"
Vice President
North Carolina Chapter

VHPA well represented at AAAA

The VHPA again had an exhibitor's booth at the annual Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) convention in Charlotte, NC, during the first week of April.

The North Carolina Chapter, though already committed to another event, was able to support the display through the voluntary efforts of several North Carolina members and one South Carolina member.

I wish to thank Ken Eldredge, Bill Williams, Rudy Ribbick, Sam Spencer, Al Herold, Bill Wilson and John Williams for responding on such short notice and for their participation in having the VHPA visible at this large event.

A special thanks goes to Glenn Klutz for his assistance and insight into the workings of this particular convention.

Once again, the "Quad A" put forth its best by having on hand the most modern U.S. Army aircraft, the latest crew equipment, and the best in technical support in a myriad of displays throughout the large convention center.

Especially intriguing were the military contractor and commercial vendor exhibits presenting their not-so-

The time we spent at the convention was, for me and I'm sure the others will agree, well spent in explaining the VHPA and its purpose with those who are not familiar with our organization.

farfetched ideas of what is just around the corner and waiting to be put into the hands of the next generation of pilots and crews.

For someone like me who learned first from the "old-timers" that the Huey is the "Cadillac of helicopters," the new innovations are Star Wars technology come to pass in the present day.

The time we spent at the convention was, for me and I'm sure the others will agree, well spent in explaining the VHPA and its purpose with those who are not familiar with our organization.

Hopefully, we planted a seed with someone who took a few minutes to chat with us at the booth, with those

who browsed through the directory looking for a particular name or with someone who left with an application in hand.

To those old acquaintances with whom I had the pleasure of speaking, if only for a few minutes, it was great seeing you again.

The City of Wilmington, NC, once again invited the North Carolina Chapter to participate in its annual Azalea Festival.

This is the fifth year that we have returned to display the chapter helicopters and the increasing popularity of the VHPA is evidenced each year as pilots and aircraft get closer to the front of the parade.

The crowd, as always, was enthusiastic and showed its appreciation with loud applause and cries of "Welcome Home!"

Dispersed among the spectators you can easily spot the ones who really know what we're about; they are the middle-aged men who don't wave or yell or otherwise make a big display, rather they honor us with a knowing smile seen behind a sincere thumbs up.

**Vic Rose, President
North Carolina Chapter**

Chapter attends Florida veterans reunion

For the second year, the VHPA Florida Chapter was represented at the Vietnam Veterans of Brevard County reunion.

During the reunion, thousands of veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and recent international actions meet with other veterans, their families and friends to celebrate the U.S. military and honor their fallen and missing comrades.

The Florida Chapter displayed its OH-6, in full Cav markings, near the "Moving Wall," where it was viewed and photographed.

Information was provided and questions answered by chapter members Jim Basta, Fred Breuche, Bob Lay and Bob Lee.

In the main vending area, the chapter's booth, with a red-and-yellow tent and VHPA signs and banners, was visible to all visitors.

Chapter T-shirts, caps, patches, cups and stickers were

fast-selling items.

The "banker" for the weekend was Helen Joyce. Helping her by talking-up our chapter and VHPA, were Jim and Linda Kirkley, Charlotte Lee, Marie Basta and Bob Buchanan.

Membership applications and researching names of helicopter pilots and crews was my responsibility. The Florida Chapter gained 11 new members over the weekend!

The great weather and the spirit of all the attendees made this a reunion to remember!

Mark your calendars for next year's reunion: April 16-18, 1999. Visit the reunion webpage at:

<http://members.aol.com/FLVietVets/reunion.html>

Don Joyce

Sun N Fun Fly In big success for chapter

The Experimental Aircraft Association Sun N Fun Fly In at Lakeland, FL, just finished up.

As usual, it was a huge success, with hundreds of thousands seeing the show during the week. Once again, our Florida Chapter did a fine job representing VHPA.

We had a UH-1H on static display and, thanks to Gary Roush, we found out it flew with C/101st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 101st Airborne from June 1969-February 1971.

The local National Guard unit lent us two of its tents in which we displayed our members' Vietnam-era memorabilia. It was quite a display, as we really showed off our history.

Everybody who stopped by said we had the best display at the show. They loved us, which goes to show we are finally getting the recognition we deserved so many years ago.

Getting the show together was a team effort, which is not surprising,

considering the high caliber of the people involved in our association.

Without the help of Howard Smith and Dave Caracker, we would have had no show. Without Rick Brooks, we would have had no display racks or cases. Rick is not a member, but he is the finest carpenter.

Don Joyce and his wife Helen were there all day for four days; Lou "Soup" Goeltzenleuchter and his wife Nancy spent three days; Bob Lee spent three days. He brought his wife Charlotte in her wheelchair because she didn't want to miss our display.

Don Welch spent five days; Ray Shinkle and Rex Flohr came for two days and they had to drive two hours each way. John Vasco, Gary Spooner, Dick Smith, Bob Buchanan for two days, Richard Levy and his wife Mattie. Dick Antross spent four days. Gary Bartolus, Bob Davies, Wayne Coe and Lee Stephens spent three days.

Dave's son Luke and Howard's son Ian, both fine young men, helped a great deal. Also a special thanks to my sister-in-law, Theresa!

This fine group of volunteers needs a well-deserved round of applause. Ya done real good!!! I am real proud to be associated with these very fine people!!

We signed up several new members and we gave out more than 80 applications to people who knew pilots and crewmembers, so we have many potential members who, hopefully, will send in the application and join up with this great group of people.

You will not find a better group anywhere. This is truly what we are all about. I have pictures and video, and I will bring them to Fort Worth.

Herb Nagel
VHPA of Florida
B/227th, 1st Cav



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Marine Corps pilots subject of book

"Bonnie Sue: A Marine Corps Helicopter Squadron in Vietnam" by Marion F. Sturkey. 510 Pages; 21 photos; 4 maps. Latest printing, 1997. Heritage Press International. Plum Branch, SC.

The detailed history of the Marine helicopter pilot has never been written in such a hard, cold-steel factual way as this great book reveals.

The author, Marion Sturkey, has produced a very exciting chronological documentary using no pseudonyms, only the true names, of pilots and aircrewmembers who flew and died in I Corps.

His Dedication page, to 28 Marines from HMM-265 who "made the Supreme Sacrifice in the noble cause of freedom during the course of the Vietnam War," punctuates the fact that real people fight wars, not statistics.

The Prologue very squarely sets the stage for the book by looking at a small part of the history of Vietnam which is germane to understanding a small bit of the Oriental mind as it pertains to "the war" and the "coming of the United States, as leader of the free world."

The U.S. Marines arrived in 1962 to help the South Vietnamese in a country already used to warfare for at least 2,000 years.

How bizarre to begin the whole affair on Palm Sunday 1962. Beginning with the very early troop deployment, Code named "Operation Shu-Fly," the Marines actually started in

Book review



the Mekong region with H-34s before landing en masse at Da Nang on March 8, 1965. Funny how PBS documentaries seem to leave this fact out.

Following the Prologue, Marion Sturkey does a masterful job through some 10 chapters, telling the actual story of Marine aviation, starting from Marble Mountain on July 14, 1966, through The Siege at Khe Sanh.

Day-by-day, hour-by-hour, you will be stunned by the details contained in chapters titled: "Mutter Ridge," "The New Year's," "The Longest Night," "The Hill Fights" and "They Bought the Farm."

You will be held captive by stirring detail, taken from hundreds of abstracts from after-action reports, aircraft accident reports, squadron unit diaries and flight schedules, casualty cards, and command chronologies.

Bonnie-Sue is no "from memory" biography.

Closing out the book, the author submits a Requiem: (Webster — A Mass for the repose of a departed soul or souls . . . in honor of the dead!)

Punctuating the details of the pull-out, overthrow and die-down of the war, Marion Sturkey quotes many prophetic words by people known

and unknown to show just how "history" will remember the whole affair. There is no crying or remorse, only a factual, hard-hitting and truthful approach to reality.

To quote the author, "Surviving Marine Corps helicopter pilots and aircrewmembers remember the horror and hardships, the fear and fatigue, the stench and carnage. Yet, they also recall the camaraderie, the love and brotherhood, the passion, the incommunicable experience of Marines at war.

"They fought and flew hand-in-hand with death, but they were never more alive. Their survival became their victory!"

Any helicopter pilot who is serious about knowing exactly what happened will want to buy and read this book.

If you rely on accounts, such as the many PBS mini-series, for your facts, you have not heard the real truth. To help quickly find facts and names, "Bonnie Sue" contains a complete master index with 419 names and a bibliography of 169 listings.

If the author didn't apply for and receive a PhD for his fine research and writing, he should have. As far as receiving one from the School of Hard Knocks, I would give him a PhD, for sure.

Read it and you will, no doubt, agree. And, in this case, PhD actually stands for "Plenty of Heroic Detail!"

Tom Payne
"Bandit 32"

118th AHC, 1966-67

New Directory will include e-mail addresses

By popular request, the 1998 VHPA Membership Directory will include e-mail addresses for the first time.

To ensure as much accuracy as possible, please send an e-mail requesting that your address be included in the directory to Gary Roush at webmaster@vhpa.org no later than Aug. 1.

The request must be sent from the actual e-mail address you want to use.

If you are using an alias pointing to your regular e-mail address, please state that in the body of the message and be certain that the alias is spelled correctly. The addresses printed in the directory will be cut and pasted from your e-mail to ensure accuracy.

Please include your name as listed on the label of your VHPA newsletter and your membership number — also

on the label.

If a request is not received by Aug. 1, we will assume you do not want your e-mail address in the directory or the address we have in the membership database is incorrect and it will be purged from the database.

Gary Roush
Directory committee

Relive the Fort Wolters experience

CLEVE CLARK AND
GERALD BRAZELL

Do you remember the first time you saw the front gate of Fort Wolters?

I still get butterflies thinking about the experiences and memories of the "wild bunch" in my class.

It was an unusual mix of commissioned officers, to include Col. George Patton Jr., warrant officer candidates and Vietnamese student pilots.

What else could you throw into that mix to make it more interesting? The Vietnam experience itself, but that would come later. We were all invincible.

What amazed me the most being the youngest in age and rank among the commissioned officers, is the camaraderie we developed between such a diverse group.

Of course, we were all equal when we climbed into the "great equalizer" — the cockpit. Simply, they were a neat group of guys and we always felt welcomed by the folks of Mineral Wells anywhere we traveled.

Well, I could go on, but you have your own unique experiences to relive at the Fort Wolters Extravaganza. The Fort Wolters Chapter hopes to make this the best reunion for you and your family. Enjoy!!

Here is the schedule for our visit to Fort Wolters and Mineral Wells on July 3:

Golf tourney at Carswell

The golf tournament at the 1998 Reunion will be held at Carswell Golf Club on Thursday, July 2.

The buses will pick up participants at 7 a.m. starting with The Worthington Hotel.

This is the old Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth.

Included in the golf fee are green fees, cart fee and lunch (a burger bar)

following the tournament. There will be awards for closest to the hole and longest drive. All awards must be exchanged for items in the pro shop, which sells exceptional quality products.

Should you have any ideas concerning any other types of competitions, you can contact Rick Couch at () or ()

or Tom Tolar at () m for consideration.



• **8 a.m.** — Depart The Worthington Hotel by bus.

• **9 a.m.** — Arrive at the old Student Activities Building at Fort Wolters.

• **9-11 a.m.** — Welcoming cere-

monies and tour of the aircraft static display and barracks.

Speakers will include Mineral Wells Mayor Earl Medlin, and 1960s and '70s era Chamber of Commerce member and past president Benny Saylors. There may be several other speakers, but we will try to keep this short.

Note to ex-WOCs: There have been unconfirmed reports from Civil Air Patrol squadron personnel who use the old WOC barracks that a man dressed in TWs and polished helmet liner has been stalking the area, so watch out for demerits.

• **11 a.m.-1 p.m.** — Lunch at the old mess hall (now the Texas National Guard mess). Menu will be Mineral Wells-style barbecue with trimmings, soft drinks and plenty of cold beer.

• **Noon-3 p.m.** — As people finish lunch, buses will leave for a tour of Fort Wolters and the main heliport flight line, stopping at the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall, which will be located adjacent to the front gate.

There will be further individual bus trips from the Moving Wall to the Days Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn, where the rotor blades are still located by the swimming pool); downtown Mineral Wells, including the Baker Hotel; and Mineral Wells Municipal Airport (Downing Heliport).

• **3 p.m.** — Buses will begin departing for the return trip to Fort Worth.

Rooms available at Clarion

The Fort Worth Reunion Committee has negotiated 175 additional rooms at the Clarion Hotel, 600 Commerce St.

In addition the hotel will try to accommodate additional rooms if they have them over the 175 guarantee, at the same \$80 per night rate.

The hotel, which is four blocks from The Worthington Hotel, between The Worthington and the Radisson, has been remodeled.

The phone number is ()

The main entrance is on Fifth Street, just off Commerce.

Advertising rates

Display advertising rates for the VHPA Newsletter are:

- Full page, \$500.
- One-half page, \$250.
- One-quarter page, \$125.
- Business card size, \$45.

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

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

Eric Burdon to perform at reunion

The 1960s was the greatest era in rock 'n' roll. There were many unique groups with multiple releases that were successful.

Eric Burdon and The Animals ranked among the best.

How many imitation bands did you hear attempt to sing our Vietnam theme song, "We Gotta Get Out of This Place"?

As bad as they were, the music and lyrics made up for the performances.

Eric Burdon will be with the VHPA during the Fort Worth Reunion, appearing at the banquet and dance on Saturday, July 4.

You owe it to yourself to be there and repeat history with one of the greatest. Come prepared for fun and lots of dancing . . . you're not so old that you have forgotten how to boogie.

Of the three bands — The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and The Animals — that were called the "British Invasion" of U.S. popular music in the 1960s, only one requires the name of its lead singer in order to state its identity.

Eric Burdon and The Animals has been extinct for some time now, but Burdon is alive and well in California and singing better than ever.

*'We
Gotta
Get Out
of This
Place'*

— Eric Burdon and The Animals



Burdon and his new band, called Eric Burdon's I Band, have just finished recording some new contemporary material.

Burdon began his career as one of the world's preeminent popular singers in England when he and The Animals recorded and released their signature song "House of the Rising Sun," followed by "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," "We Gotta Get Outta This Place" and "It's My Life."

When the band broke up, Burdon formed several groups and eventually teamed up with Lee Oskar to form War and recorded two albums, including "Eric Burdon Declares War," which included the Eric Burdon super hit "Spill the Wine."

When that group disbanded, Burdon got together with the Jimmy

Witherspoon and recorded "Guilty" and other blues.

He and The Animals got together to record a reunion album "Before We Were So Rudely Interrupted," after which Burdon appeared in several European films. He eventually starred in and composed the soundtrack for the German film "Come-back."

Burdon reunited with The Animals again, for another world tour. He also recorded "Sixteen Tons" for the soundtrack to Tom Hanks' feature film "Joe vs. The Volcano."

In 1990 Burdon toured with Robbie Krieger, formerly with The Doors, and appeared in television shows such as China Beach.

In 1991 Burdon collaborated with fellow Englishman and keyboard player Brian Auger to form the Eric Burdon/Brian Auger Band and tour the world, primarily in Europe.

In 1994 Burdon and The Animals were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Now Burdon has a brand new band. Eric Burdon's I Band has toured Europe extensively, and has performed recently in Los Angeles, Sacramento, Harrah's Tahoe and Reno, and many other places.

Mini-reunions

To schedule mini-reunions: Fax preferred date and time for mini-reunion to Gerald Brazell at [REDACTED] or e-mail him at [REDACTED]

To receive information regarding vendor booth registration: Dave Rittman at [REDACTED]

Mini-reunion schedules

Below are the mini-reunions scheduled as of May 1 and the contact person. These mini-reunions will be held at The Worthington Hotel. Rooms will be assigned at the reunion.

If you need to reserve a mini-reunion, please fax date and time to Gerald Brazell at [REDACTED] or e-mail him at [REDACTED]

Wednesday, July 1

9 a.m.-noon Black Widow C/101st 188th AHC, Bob Crow.
2-5 p.m. Crusaders (187th AHC), Pat Dougan, VHCMA.

Thursday, July 2

10 a.m.-noon ORWAC 65-18, Gil Ferrey.
10 a.m.-1 p.m. Soc Trang, 121st AHC, Jerry Esmay.
1-5 p.m. D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5/24th Cavalry and C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, Ray Swindell.
2-5 p.m. A/77th ARA, Jack Tabor.
2-5 p.m. 9th Cavalry, Pete Booth.

Friday, July 3

3-6 p.m. 7/17th Cavalry, Charlie Rayl.

Saturday, July 4

9 a.m.-noon ORWAC 65-18, Gil Ferrey.
9 a.m.-noon Black Widow C/101st, 188th AHC, Bob Crow.
9 a.m.-noon D Company, 158th Aviation/101st Airborne, Joel Glenn.
1-3 p.m. 134th AHC, Arvine Coleman.
1-4 p.m. Crusaders (187th AHC), Pat Dougan, AHCMA.
1-4 p.m. CH-54, Jim Messinger.
2-4 p.m. Blue Stars, 48th AHC, Carl Cortez.
2-4 p.m. D Troop, 2/1st Cavalry (Air), Charles Holley.

Tour of Bell Helicopter scheduled

The Fort Wolters Chapter has an exciting afternoon planned for you and your family at the Bell Helicopter facility on Thursday, July 2, from 1-4 p.m.

The tour will cost \$5 per person. It includes bus transportation from The Worthington Hotel and the Radisson Hotel.



cover some administrative requirements. The Bell plant will be in operation on July 2, so be very careful monitoring your children for safety precautions.

Cameras, tape recorders and alcohol are restricted at the facility. Everyone is encouraged to ride the buses, due to parking and security issues. POVs are discouraged.

Now that we have covered the dull issues, let's get back to the excitement we have planned. The tour schedule is as follows:

- Tour of the production facility.
- Tour of Heritage Hall, which depicts the history of Bell.
- Tour of the flight line where there will be various unpainted, commercial models on display, as well as an OH-58 and an AH-1W Cobra.

The XV-15 tilt rotor may be on display and possibly fly for us in a demonstration. Bell is unable to confirm the XV-15 until the week of the Reunion.

Finally, but probably the most exciting part of the tour: There will be a flying demonstration of the AH-1W Cobra.

Have a great afternoon and the Fort Wolters Chapter of VHPA looks forward to making this a memorable event.



Reunion events

Wednesday, July 1 1-5 p.m.

- Early registration
- Vendor displays
- Early Bird Reception

Thursday, July 2 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Golf tournament (\$60)
- Registration
- Vendor displays

1-4 p.m.

- Bell Helicopter Tour (\$5)
- Fort Wolters Chapter welcome
- Dance at The Worthington Hotel

Friday, July 3 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Fort Wolters Extravaganza (\$20)
- Registration
- Vendor displays

8 a.m.-5 p.m.

- Western Night dinner (\$25)
- Country & Western Music/Dance

Saturday, July 4 7-8:30 a.m.

- 5K run
- Registration
- Vendor displays
- Business meeting
- Ladies social (\$20)
- Banquet (\$35)
- Dance (Eric Burdon)

Sunday, July 5 8:30-9:30 a.m.

- Chapel Services

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Fort Worth has diverse attractions

The Fort Worth and surrounding areas offer a diversity of attractions and entertainment for the whole family.

Below is a listed of just a few of your choices:

The Texas Rangers will be in town playing the Los Angeles Dodgers June 30-July 2. They will play the Seattle Mariners July 3, 4 and 5. These are all night games.

For information or to purchase tickets, call [REDACTED]

The Fort Worth Zoo is home to more than 5,000 exotic animals, including the World of Primates, a climate-controlled tropical rainforest and the new Penguin Island.

An aquarium, herpetarium and insectarium are just some of the exhibits on 70 acres. Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Saturday/Sunday. For information, call [REDACTED].

Watch world-class thoroughbred horse racing at Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie, just 20 miles east of Fort Worth. Post times are as follows: 6:35 p.m. on July 1 and 2; 5 p.m. on July 3; and 1:35 p.m. on July 4 and 5. For more information, call [REDACTED]

Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington, just minutes east of Fort Worth, offers world-class rides and exciting shows for the entire family. It has the No. 1 rated roller coaster in the world — The Texas Giant. Feel the exhilaration when you ride the new Mr. Freeze, the tallest, fastest, most technologically advanced thrill ride. For hours and ticket information, call [REDACTED]

You can shop til you drop at the Fort Worth Outlet Square located across the street from The Worthington Hotel. The outlet mall offers a food court and over 40 specialty stores plus The Ice for family ice skating recreation.

Also visit Sundance Square, the 16-block downtown area, which features a variety of popular restaurants, art galleries, boutiques, theaters and upscale night spots. The Caravan of Dreams features some of the best-known jazz musicians [REDACTED]

Some 19,000 gallons of water per minute cascade over five pools at the Water Gardens just south of the Convention Center. The gardens, noted for their beauty and special lighting effects, is a perfect spot for relaxing or taking a stroll.

The Botanic Gardens, a 114-acre garden which includes a Rose Garden, with more than 3,400 roses, a Japanese Garden and a Perennial Garden that has a broad variation of annual and perennial flowers. Information: [REDACTED]

Fort Worth offers a variety of cultural sites within walking distance of each other, including the Amon Carter Museum, which displays masterpieces by Remington and Russell, the premier artist of the American West, as well as 19th and 20th century American painters, [REDACTED]; Kimbell Art Museum, an internationally acclaimed museum that houses works by Rembrandt, Cezanne, Picasso, 18th century British portraits, late European Renaissance art and masters of both the East and the West, [REDACTED]; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, which features an extensive collection of modern and contemporary American and European art, [REDACTED]

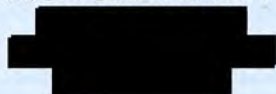
In this same area is the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. It has seven exhibit halls as well as the Noble Planetarium and the Omni, with its IMAX domed theater. The Omni will be showing "Everest" during the days of the Reunion, [REDACTED]



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NICK SKRINIKOFF



Reunion briefs

Morning Report online

Check the VHPA webpage for a Morning Report of members who have preregistered to attend the Fort Worth Reunion.

The Morning Report will be updated as the reunion draws nearer. Avoid long registration lines in Fort Worth — fax your registration form today to [REDACTED].

The reunion morning report is now available on the VHPA website at <http://www.vhpa.org/info/morning.htm>



Calendars on sale at reunion

VHPA Calendars for 1999 will be on sale at the Fort Worth Reunion.

Published by Turner Publishers and edited by Ken Fritz, the calendar is 11-by-17 inches in size, full color and features Air America, CH-47, LOH, Huey, CH-54 and HH-43 helicopters.

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

15th Annual Reunion Fort Worth, TX July 1-5, 1998

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Mail to: VHPA, 5530 Birdcage St., Suite 200, Citrus Heights, CA 95610-7621

FAX signed credit card registration to: (916) 966-8743

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 6/1/98*		@ \$ 25.00	
Registration after 6/1/98*		@ \$ 35.00	
Total from sidebar	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	
Early Bird Reception (July 1)		No host	
Bell Helicopter Tour (July 2)		@ \$ 5.00	
Fort Wolters Chapter Welcome Reception, Entertainment/Dance (July 2)		No host	
Fort Wolters Extravaganza Tour and Barbecue Lunch (July 3)		@ \$ 20.00	
Western Night Dinner/Dance Featuring Don Edwards (July 3)		@ \$ 25.00	
Ladies Social (July 4)		@ \$ 20.00	
Banquet & Dance (July 4)		@ \$ 35.00	
Special program planned		@ \$ 30.00	
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 2 — 7 a.m.) Cost: \$60. Limit: 72 players.		
5k Run: (July 2 — 7 a.m.)		
T-shirts:		
Qty.	Size	Price
	S	@ \$15.00
	M	@ \$15.00
	L	@ \$15.00
	XL	@ \$15.00
	XXL	@ \$15.00
	XXXL	@ \$15.00
Sidebar total		

Entree choice	July 3	July 4
Beef		
Chicken		
Pasta/Vegetable		

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

- ☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to "VHPA Reunion '98"
- ☐ Please charge my MasterCard or VISA card (circle one)

Credit card No.:	Expiration date:
Signature:	

REUNION NAME TAG INFORMATION

Name you want on name tag:	Call sign:
Name of wife/guest:	Flight school class:
(Number or year for Army; branch and year for other services.)	
1st combat unit:	Year(s):
2nd combat unit:	Year(s):
3rd combat unit:	Year(s):
Hometown or current residence:	

Refund policy: No refunds will be granted before reunion. All refund requests must be submitted to VHPA Headquarters no later than Aug. 7, 1998, 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.

SuperShuttle®

This coupon valid for \$2 off any SuperShuttle fare in the local service area.

Limit only one coupon per person. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer.



Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

VALID: 27 June 1998 through 7 July 1998

\$2 OFF

FROM THE AIRPORT: Collect your baggage and call for pick-up using either the courtesy phone located in the baggage claim area or on the Ground Transportation Board, or by calling direct:

Baltimore-Washington - (800) 809-7080. Proceed to the Ground Transportation Desk, lower level pier C.
Burbank - (818) 556-6600. Pick-up is located at the center island shuttle stop outside the baggage claim area.
Denver - (303) 370-1300. Proceed to the SuperShuttle counter located on level 5 (same level as baggage claim) in the main terminal.
DFW - Dial 02 from the Ground Transportation Board in the baggage claim area. Pick up is at the Shared Ride Zone on the lower level.
 From Love Field, advanced scheduled pick-up is available by calling (817) 329-2000.
LAX - (310) 417-8988. Pick-up is located at the Blue Van Stop area on the lower level.
Miami - Pick-up is located outside the baggage claim area. Ask the SuperShuttle Representative for a shuttle van.
Ontario - (909) 467-9600. Pick-up is at the shuttle van stop on the outside curb, outer island. Delta pick-up is curbside at the shuttle van stop.
Orange County - (714) 517-6600. Pick-up is at the shuttle stop area located on the inside curb at the far west end of Terminal B on the lower level.
Philadelphia - (215) 551-6600. Check in at the SuperShuttle Counter or call us on a Courtesy Phone.
Phoenix - (602) 244-9000. Proceed to our pick-up point at the outer island Van Service sign.
Sacramento - (800) 258-3826. Proceed outside to the SuperShuttle ticket booth to purchase your ticket from our representative.
SFO - (415) 871-7800. Pick-up is available on the upper level, outer island at all terminals.
Seattle - (206) 622-1424. Dial 48 on the nearest Traveler's Information phone center in baggage claim. We will direct you to our departure area.
Washington-National - (703) 416-7873. Proceed to Washington Flyer/SuperShuttle counter.

Information must be completed by passenger in order for discount to be valid

Name:	
Address:	
Phone #:	
# of Passengers:	Fare:
Origin:	
Destination:	
Signature:	Confirmation #

TO THE AIRPORT: Advance reservations are required.

Baltimore-Washington
 (410) 724-0009 (Baltimore)
 (301) 369-0009 (Washington)

Burbank
 (818) 556-6600
Dallas/Ft. Worth
 1-800-BLUEVAN (800-258-3826)

Denver
 1-800-BLUEVAN (800-258-3826)
Los Angeles
 (310) 782-6600
 (213) 775-6600

Miami
 (305) 871-2000
Ontario
 (909) 467-9600
 (818) 443-6600

Orange County
 (714) 517-6600
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 (215) 551-6600
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San Francisco
 1-800-BLUEVAN (800-258-3826)
Seattle
 (206) 622-1424

Washington-National
 1-800-BLUEVAN (800-258-3826)

CA fares subject to tariffs and timetable established by the CPUC.

Rev 1/97

Directions for traveling from DFW Airport

There are several means of travel between DFW Airport and the VHPA Reunion hotels in Fort Worth.

The **Super Shuttle** is offering a one-way fare of \$10 per person, which is a \$2 discount off its regular rate of \$12. *You must present the coupon printed above to the driver to receive the discount.*

Each person will need a coupon for the trip upon arrival from the airport and back to the airport (the coupon may be photocopied).

The **Super Shuttle** runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and leaves the airport about every 30 minutes. However, you will need to call from a courtesy phone located in the baggage area and lower level to give **Super Shuttle** your

location and receive the exact pickup time. The wait is usually 15 minutes.

For your return trip to DFW Airport, call **Super Shuttle** reservations at **(817) 329-2000** the day before your departure to schedule a specific pickup time.

You will need to provide your flight information.

The **Fort Worth Airporter** offers a one-way fare of \$8 per person. No discounts are available.

Upon arrival and after retrieving your luggage, go to the lower level and locate the purple sign for "Scheduled Transport."

The **Airporter** departs about every 30 minutes, but you will need to use a courtesy phone to contact the **Air-**

porter with your terminal location and to receive your exact pickup time.

The last bus departs the airport at 11 p.m. The bus makes one stop at its park-and-ride location in downtown Fort Worth before proceeding to The Worthington and then the Radisson hotels.

For your return to DFW Airport, the **Airporter** recommends you leave at least two hours prior to your departure time. The first buses from The Worthington to DFW Airport depart at 5, 6 and 6:15 a.m. Thereafter, the buses depart every 15 and 45 minutes past the hour. The last bus picks up at 9:45 pm.

The first bus departs the Radisson for DFW Airport at 6:20 a.m. and then every 20 and 50 minutes past the hour.

Brothers fly on the sly in Vietnam

My brother and I were able to get together — although it required some thought — while serving in Vietnam at the same time.

Dan, who is one year older than me, was in Vietnam when I graduated from flight school in class 70-35.

I had requested a tour in Vietnam after flight school because I knew I would be sent there after he returned home.

I arrived in Vietnam on Dec. 7, 1970, and asked to be sent up to I Corps. My brother was with the Army Security Agency (ASA) stationed near Hue.

I was assigned to C Company, 101st in Phu Bai. It turned out Dan was only a mile from my hooch.

After weeks of flight preparation, indoctrination and a few bad missions, I finally had the time to try to see my brother. I knew the address of his unit by the mail he sent me.



But trying to get permission to visit was impossible.

I got upset with all the technical requirements for getting a visitor's pass and one day just walked out the gate at Phu Bai and started toward my brother's unit.

When I got to the ASA compound, the guards gave me a very strange look when I walked in the gate from Highway I.

But it became such a hassle for us to visit one another, I came up with an idea.

I could see my brother waiting as we came to a hover. He jumped in and we flew back to Phu Bai

I asked one of the Black Widow aircraft commanders to help me.

My brother could not get a pass to leave the area, but when he had a day off, he waited at a predetermined time at the ASA helipad. We were right on time.

Who would question a helicopter dropping out of the blue, picking up a soldier and taking off? There were no guards to ask questions, no commanding officers to approve the flight.

I could see my brother waiting as we came to a hover. He jumped in and we flew back to Phu Bai, dropped off the doorunner, strapped my brother in, and we were off to view the countryside.

Just use your imagination on how we entertained a

I got upset with all the technical requirements for getting a visitor's pass and one day just walked out the gate at Phu Bai and started toward my brother's unit.



WO1 John Madden (left) and his older brother Dan stand in front of a Huey from C/101st. The brothers served about a mile from one another in Vietnam.

land-hugging older brother. I flew low level, high, tight spirals down, over the ocean, under wires, and he even shot the guns.

I will never forget the look on my brother's face. He had a great time. We had a great time.

Here is my brother's brief account of the flight:

It was raining hot lead as my brother and I emptied our napalm canisters on the enemy, mass storming our little fort . . . with mortal wounds, we fended off a division of NVA in hand-to-hand combat . . .

then, when the smoke cleared, the enemy was buried, the bleeding stopped, and the barbe-

. . . when the smoke cleared, the enemy was buried . . . the barbecue was lighted . . . we settled in the lawn chairs.

Brother takes Huey through paces

Continued from Page 22

cue was lighted . . . we settled in the lawn chairs with a cool Fosters!

I sat in the doorgunner's seat on the starboard side and hoped for a little action — until I remembered my brother was in the pilot's seat.

Ha! Actually, I only remember being in the helicopter and not much more.

I had to smile at my brother John as he preflighted the Huey. It was my first flight in a helicopter and I was proud John knew so much about a complicated machine.

It's been many years, but as close as I can remember, it probably was March or April of 1971, in Vietnam near Phu Bai. The weather was bright, with few clouds, and reasonably cool for Southeast Asia.

When we finally lifted off the ground, I thought it was noisy, but smooth . . . then, after climbing 500 feet, he took the Huey through its paces!

Wow! I'm glad he made sure my shoulder harness was strapped tight!

With the doors open, I was hanging only by the harness as we flew over the countryside. I sat in the doorgunner's seat on the star-

board side and hoped for a little action — until I remembered my brother was in the pilot's seat.

No, let's have a bread-run, an easy ride, a safe adventure, a memorable experience.

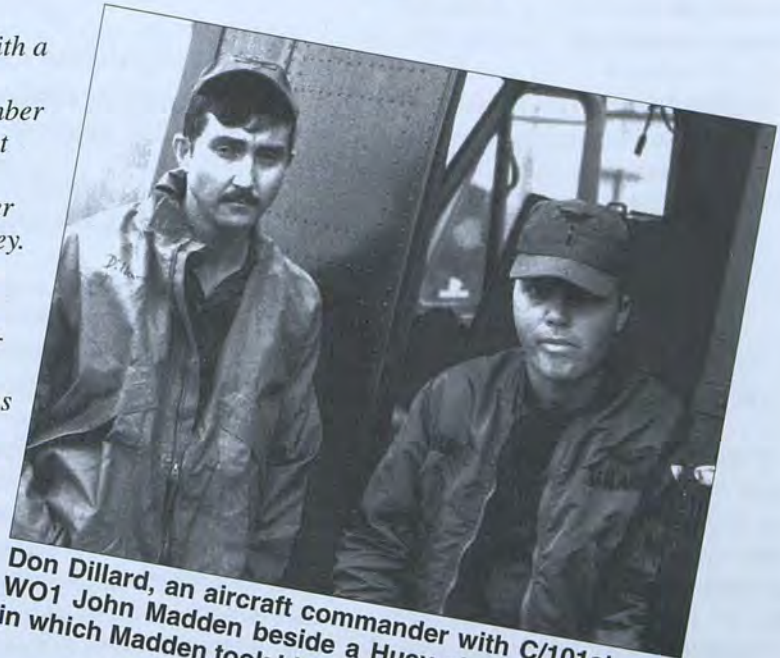
It was exciting to watch my younger brother skipper this funny contraption that really moved in different directions at the tip of a lever.

We finally floated down smoothly to the landing pad. Great company, super power, an exhilarating flight, and fond memories that have lasted

a lifetime.

Thanks, John, for taking time to show your older brother the "other" side of the Vietnam experience. And, thank you, Lord, for answering my prayers in bringing my brother home safely.

I never did thank the Congress for allowing two brothers to experience such a good time. Dan and I got together



Don Dillard, an aircraft commander with C/101st, and WO1 John Madden beside a Huey similar to the one in which Madden took his older brother for a flight.

as often as possible until he was sent home.

The rest of my tour was a bit lonely without my older brother close by.

Oh, by the way, my brother was an enlisted man and I was a warrant officer, which made for some very unusual tough times when we visited each other.

He couldn't spend time with me in my hooch and I couldn't spend time in his barracks.

Some of the Black Widows will remember when I took him into the officers club at C Company, 101st. You could have heard a frag drop when I walked in the club with an enlisted man, and I can still see the irritated RLOs reactions. Can you imagine what it was like, and what we were going through?

Thanks to our executive officer, who put the CO in his place, one night 27 years ago, my brother was allowed in the club. We drank anything and everything available, and told our war story in peace.

Thanks to our executive officer . . . one night 27 years ago, my brother was allowed in the club. We drank anything and everything available, and told our war story in peace.

John B. Madden
maddenj@aol.com

NOTE: Dan and I did get part of a week in Sydney, Australia, together. We couldn't get the same flight or time off.

A pilot lived because of brave men

MIKE LAW
DIRECTORY EDITOR

The History Section of the 1998 Directory will feature helicopter operations that took place outside of South Vietnam.

The support of MACV SOG FOB II provided by the Gladiators and Cougars of the 57th Assault Helicopter Company and the 361st Aerial Weapons Company will be described, thanks to the work of lots of fine people.

Clearly, VHPA members Bobby Ross, Stanley "Steamer" Steenbock and Rich Madore from the 57th, plus Gary Higgins and Jack Jordan from the 361st, are some of those fine people!

Within the past few years, several publications and 57th Assault Heli-

However, pulling together details of the helicopter support for FOB II, based out of Kontum, is still an area full of challenge.

copter Company reunions have helped bring a lot of material together so a better view of the story can be told.

Harve Saal's SOG Volume III, John Plaster's SOG, and several good articles in Behind The Lines magazine by Gary Linderer and Gregg "P.J." Jorgenson have really helped everyone learn more about the secret and classified world of Special Operations.

However, pulling together details of the helicopter support for FOB II, based out of Kontum, is still an area full of challenge. Sometimes even Vietnam-era aviation unit histories have errors that really hurt the effort. Allow me to explain.

From the various SOG books and articles we are able to put together, the following details about the events on the ground in Laos on Feb. 19, 1968.

Special Forces Staff Sgt. Fred W. Zabitosky was at the end of a normal six-month active mission cycle with FOB II. He was the One-Zero, team leader, of Recon Team Maine, but on this mission was helping Glover become the new team leader, so "Zab" was the One-One, assistant team leader.

See MISSION:, Page 25

VHPA LOGO ITEMS

(DAVE GRIEGER, L-66)

THEY'RE BACK!! THESE ITEMS ARE STOCK ITEMS AGAIN

VHPA JACKETS (L, XL) — \$59.95 (XXL, XXXL — \$64.95)

CALL SIGN, NAME, UNIT, LOCATION, DATE, ETC. — FREE (3 LINES)

ALSO AVAILABLE: WINGS (ALL SERVICES), CIB, CMB, ABN, PATHFINDER, MORE — \$12.00 EACH

VHPA BIG BACK PATCH (10") \$29.95

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VHPA HAT WITH PATCH \$ 9.50 (Bk, N, Wh)

VHPA HAT W/"EGGS" & PATCH \$10.50 (Bk, N, Wh)

VHPA EMBL'D GOLF SHIRT \$25.00 (L,XL)

\$30.00 (XXL, XXXL)

VHPA T-SHIRT (LT BLUE) \$16.95 (L, XL)

\$19.95 (XXL, XXXL)

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VHPA brief

1998 Membership Directory

In keeping with our tradition, the 1998 Membership Directory cutoff date is the close of business on Aug. 14, a Friday.

This means any changes to a member's information, anyone who joins the VHPA or any new potential members added before close of business on Aug. 14 will appear in the 1998 Directory.

It also means any such changes applied after Aug. 14 will not appear in the 1998 Directory.

Separately, the Records/Database Committee will announce the cutoff date for membership E-mail address additions and changes. Only E-mail addresses approved by the Records/Database Committee will appear in the 1998 Directory.

The current schedule calls for the 1998 Directory to go to the printer in early September and to be in members hands about the middle of October.

The VHPA uses U.S. Post Office bulk mail from Sacramento, CA, for the Directory. This can take as long as three weeks to get to all members.

Membership changes should be directed to VHPA Headquarters. Comments concerning the 1998 Directory can be directed to Mike Law, Directory Editor, 6969 W. Yale Ave., Unit 72, Denver, CO 80227; ()

Mission: Check on NVA activities

Continued from Page 24

On Feb. 18, RT Maine was inserted into "The Bra," the river curve where Highway 110 split eastward from Highway 96, the Ho Chi Minh Trail's major north-south route.

The NVA launched two assaults on the nine-man team's position, but was stopped by napalm, cannon fire, and the team's weapons.

Their mission was to learn whether the NVA was pulling back, reinforcing or resupplying its Tet offensive activities in the Central Highlands.

Not long after their insertion, they made and broke contact. There were

at least two other

RTs active in this same area, so they had to wait their turn for airstrikes and worked their way back to the LZ.

The NVA had set up 12.7mm guns around the LZ and the U.S.A.F. Covey FAC could see at least four NVA companies converging on the LZ.

The NVA launched two assaults on the nine-man team's position, but was stopped by napalm, cannon fire, and the team's weapons. Covey had the team run 150 yards to an alternate LZ.

The first slick lifted out one Special Forces member and two Montagnards, which left Zab, Glover and four Montagnards still on the ground.

The NVA then struck in four successive waves which were all stopped, but the team was almost out of ammunition. It was now or never. The second slick went in as gunships and jets blasted the area. The NVA and Maine seemed to be racing for the helicopter. The doorgunners and the SOG men were shooting like mad.

Zab recalls the NVA soldiers were so close blood from one he shot splat-

tered the Huey.

They were 75 feet up and almost clear of the LZ when an RPG blast rocked the Huey, spinning the tail boom into the main blades.

Zab came to about 20 feet from the Huey and rolled clumsily on the ground to extinguish his burning clothes.

The Huey had snapped in two just behind the pilots' section and burned furiously. The troop compartment lay on its side and Zab heard the final cries from the three Americans and four Montagnards in the burning wreckage.

Zab moved away from the wreckage, then looked back to see the pilots still strapped in the burning nose section. He returned, opened the door and grabbed the semiconscious WO Cook and pulled him out.

Everything was burned off the man except his leather gumbelt.

The pilot was still inside. Zab could feel his flesh burning as he undid the pilot's harness. The fuel cells exploded in the other section and blew Zab and the pilot clear.

Overhead, Special Forces medic Luke Nance had watched these events in horror, but had seen Zab.

*Staff Sgt.
Fred
Zabitosky
received the
Medal of
Honor
for his
actions that
saved the
lives of two
... pilots.*

Medal of Honor for his actions that saved the lives of two 57th Assault Helicopter Company pilots.

Sadly, WO Cook passed away 10 days later in Japan due to burn-related injuries.

The good news is Fred attended the 57th Assault Helicopter Company

Reunion in Las Vegas in 1995 and everyone was able to speak with him.

After retiring from the Army, Fred worked for the Veterans Affairs office and was very effective in helping families of those lost in Laos. By all accounts, Fred

was a great guy!

Fred lived with his wife of 30-plus years in Pembroke, NC. Sadly, he passed away in 1997 of cancer.

The only other good news is VHPA member Richard Griffith is alive today because of the actions of Zab, Nance, and several others.

Returning of other source material to learn more about the helicopter side of this event, we read the following in the Synopsis report compiled by the Homecoming III Project:

"SYNOPSIS: Melvin Dye was the engineer and Robert Griffith the doorgunner aboard a UH-1H helicopter performing an emergency extraction mission in Laos. They were extracting a reconnaissance patrol team consisting of three U.S. Army Special Forces personnel and three indigenous personnel. The aircraft carried a crew of four. Douglas Glover was one of the Special Forces personnel aboard.

"As the helicopter picked up the team four miles inside Laos west of Dak Sut, it received a heavy volume of small arms fire. It is not known whether the aircraft was hit by hostile fire or hit a tree, but it nosed over, impacted the ground and exploded, bursting into flames.

"The pilot, co-pilot WO Wood and one passenger, Special Forces

See FIRE, Page 26

Fire drove rescuers from chopper

Continued from Page 25

Sergeant Fred W. Zabitosky, managed to leave the aircraft. Because of the

The first slick extracted half the team. The second ship, piloted by Lt. Richard Griffith and WO John Cooke, followed and picked up the remaining five.

fire and exploding small arms ammunition, rescue attempts for the others were futile.

Wood died later in Japan from burns. Zabitosky was awarded the Medal of Honor. See Zabitosky's story in Vietnam magazine February 1996.

"There were six U.S. and three indigenous personnel

aboard the helicopter. When search teams reached the site the same day, they could not account for the other U.S. personnel. Five were accounted for, but could not be recovered because of intense heat."

OK, so this account has at least one error — the co-pilot's name Cook not Wood.

Returning to another source, the 57th Assault Helicopter Company's Vietnam-era unit history states that as a result of all the flying and deferred maintenance caused by Tet, the daily requirement for the FOB mission of 11 slicks and 6 guns was cut in half.

The operation continued on a lim-

ited basis through the third week of February, when it went back into full swing.

The 57th's first combat aviation casualty occurred on the 19th. A 10-man FOB II LRRP was surrounded and called from extraction.

Tac Air bombed and strafed the area before the slicks went in for the pick up.

The first slick extracted half the team. The second ship, piloted by Lt. Richard Griffith and WO John Cooke, followed and picked up the remaining five.

The remainder of the patrol and the gunner perished in the fire. WO Cooke died two days later of the burns he had suffered in the fire.

LRRP team.

The remainder of the patrol and the gunner perished in the fire. WO Cooke died two days later of the burns he had suffered in the fire. WO Herbold was later awarded the DFC for his heroism.

As they started out of the LZ, they came under intense hostile fire. The ship burst into flames and plummeted to the ground. At this time, the chase ship, piloted by WO John Herbold, descended into the area and was able to pick up Lt. Griffith, WO Cooke, the crew chief and one member of the

This unit history is a big help; however, it too has errors.

First, it was WO Cook, not Cooke.

The chase ship carried a Special Forces medic named Luke Nance, who helped Sgt. Zabitosky get the two pilots to the chase ship.

Second, it also indicates that the chase ship was able to extract the crew chief from the downed ship. The truth is that bodies of both the CE, Spec. 4 Dye, and the gunner, Spec. 4 Griffith, along with the LRRP team leader, Staff Sgt.

Glover, were not recovered.

The chase ship carried a Special Forces medic named Luke Nance, who helped Sgt. Zabitosky get the two pilots to the chase ship. Luke Nance was extracted on the chase ship.

The VHPA's Helicopter database indicates the destroyed Huey was No. 66-16282.

The VHPA Directory Committee would like to know of anyone else who was involved in this event.

Who flew the first slick? Who else was on WO John Herbold's ship? Who were the gunships' crew on station?

Contact Mike Law [redacted] call him at ([redacted]) (days) or ([redacted]) (evenings).

Membership grows for third straight month

I have some good news!

We have had the third straight month of increased paid membership, with unpaid members dropping 2 percent each of the past two months to 48 percent.

The new management company is doing a great job of getting renewals and new members. We may be seeing a turning point here. My hat is off to Marcia Fritz and her troops. Keep up the good work!

The March 1998 membership statistics have been posted on the VHPA website.

Go to <http://www.vhpa.org> and click on "VHPA Membership Report" just below the Fort Wolters Chapter information.

If you want to go directly to it:

<http://www.vhpa.org/info/vhpastats2.htm>

You can bookmark this address if you want, since I plan to keep the same name each month.

Gary Roush
Database Committee chairman

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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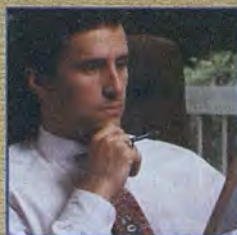
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