



The VHPA Newsletter

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association ®

May/June 1999 Vol. 17, No. 3

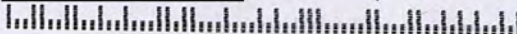
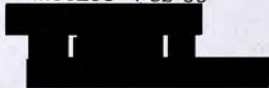


Don Joyce photo

A UH-1 raises a dust storm at Oasis Airstrip, southwest of Pleiku, March 1967.

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From the President

Writing my last column is going to be a lot harder than writing my first one.

As your new president, I was somewhat unsure as to what I should do and say in the beginning. I now realize there was so much I should have said and just didn't have the time or space to say it.

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association is a great group with a great future. It is most important that we select and then support our future leaders for continued growth and survival.

Here, in my last column, I would like to review some of what has been accomplished this past year. Then, I would like to list some areas I believe are important for the future.

The Executive Council unanimously voted to agree to have the VHPA become a Charter Sponsor organization of The National Museum of the Vietnam War, to be built in Mineral Wells.

Our agreement was in philosophy and assuming no financial responsibility.

The Fort Wolters Chapter of the VHPA is to be commended for its efforts with the museum, which has very recently been approved for tax-exempt status in Texas.

The Executive Council also voted to officially designate The Vietnam Center/Archives at Texas Tech University in Lubbock as our official history and document storage site.

Our history and legacy will be perpetually stored there for use by anyone, whether on site or via the Internet.

The quantity of materials is growing everyday as people send personal and VHPA items to the Center/Archives.

The financial health of the VHPA and the operation of our contractor, FritzCo, has been checked by a detailed audit and declared sound and proper.

Our tax-exempt status is assured and we can rest knowing everything financial is being done properly.

The VHPA is going to welcome member number 10,000 at Nashville in July.

Because of the good job being done by Deb and our headquarters staff and by guys like "Pappy" Jones, Don Joyce and others working on Operation 10,000, our num-

bers are growing at a greater rate than normal.

The highest percentage of paid members now exists than at any other time in recent history.

My initial challenge to the contractor was to reach 75 percent — and we are very near having 75 percent of our membership current and paid. Such an accomplishment is very rare in such a large organization like VHPA.

Two new chapters began this year. Mid-South and Southern Nevada are the latest.

In addition, there are chapters close to forming in Colorado, Arizona and Southern Calif. You need to encourage and support these groups if they are in your area.

Strong Chapters like Florida, North Carolina, Northern California and Mid-America will be good for the VHPA and its future.

The VHPA Welcome Letter sent to every new member was rewritten to more completely detail the benefits and future of the VHPA to the new member.

Our sign program on the back of cross-country trucks is still alive and will be accomplished in the near future, when we can get them printed.

Finally, your Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association now prepares and sends a Condolence Letter and Certificate of Appreciation to every widow or family upon the death of one of our members.

This service has been very well received and, unfortunately, is done too often.

If you know of some member who died this past year and his widow or family did not receive one, call headquarters with the particulars.

Some of the more important areas for the future of the VHPA are ones which have developed as a result of our membership growing as it has.

We need more good men to step forward and throw their helmets into the cockpit and run for our national offices.

Only with dedicated leaders from across the fruited plain will we be able to do what is best for all concerned.

Our scholarship fund is in need of leadership and a group of members who are passionate about the concept. This group needs to develop the criteria needed to set up, administer and select how the funds are to be used in the future.

While this fund still has insufficient funds to yield enough money for scholarships, it needs to be set up in a

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Classified ads

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From the President

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way that is what the majority wants.

There are still more than 10,000 helicopter pilots who served in Vietnam outside our ranks.

While it is almost unimaginable any of them have never heard of the VHPA, there are many who don't know we exist.

We need some way to obtain current addresses for this list which we have on hand and then an effort made to reach them.

More tangible benefits need to be identified for our membership.

Things such as group life insurance, product discounts, additional publications or some other items and/or benefi-

cial services could be identified.

Our funds are sufficient to establish and sustain some additional benefits which would then be an added incentive for new members.

I challenge the new leadership to see what we can do in this area.

Well, it has been a great year as your president.

In closing, I would like to thank Mike Haley, Ross Rainwater, Rick Haines and Rhea Rippey, as well as a great group of guys in Nashville, for all the work done to make our upcoming reunion a great one.

There have been some glitches so far, but we will not let those ruin the whole reunion.

I want to meet as many of you as I can in Nashville. If you cannot go to Nashville, you don't want to miss DC in 2000.

— Tom Payne, President
TomPayne@vhpa.org

Two old friends respond to letter

Thank you for publishing my letter in the January/February issue of *The VHPA Newsletter*.

I received two unexpected communications as a consequence of the letter being published.

First, my roommate from Rucker, Bob Eustice, called me. Bob and I had not talked since we graduated in March 1968. Well, we did chat and will be getting together in the near future to compare notes and tell lies.

Equally interesting was an e-mail from Walt Levering, the aircraft commander whose name I could not remember. Walt forgave me for the lapse in memory since, according to him, my details of the evening were very accurate.

He added that we had flown into the Ta Bat airstrip. He and our CO, "Rocky" Lane, had led the initial air assault into the A Shau Valley two days before (April 19, 1968), and he was startled to see bulldozers at work when he returned with the second lift on the 19th. Seems the first lift of troops had uncovered a major NVA depot-level cache, including fuel, equipment and bulldozers.

Walt is a very successful business man in Charlottesville, VA. We have since chatted on the phone and will get together soon in our capital city.

These contacts with the past hit the "recall button" with a vengeance.

It is now late September 1968. The weather has become rather predictably foul on a daily basis (monsoon season). Still I Corps, still B/229th, I am a new SIP with a very new Peter Pilot.

We are returning to LZ Sharon after an extended ash and trash mission when we receive an emergency medical evacuation call from a small firebase on route.

The weather is quickly getting very bad, but we decide to divert the few miles to perform the evacuation, since we are the closest bird to the base. We land to the helipad, and a freshly starched O-3 climbs on board with a small duffle-bag.

So this is our medical emergency, an artillery captain ready for R&R? Yes.

We take off along the ridge line from the firebase and we have to pick our way along under the now almost complete cloud cover.

We pop into and out of several scud layers. On our last pop out before we decided to turn west and climb IFR over the mountains, we see a pristine camp with several dozen tents perfectly spaced around a central flag pole, definitely not your basic issue GP Mediums. Wish we knew where we were, great air strike target.

We established a good rate of climb that we were sure

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would provide adequate clearance over the highest peak on course to LZ Sharon.

Like a class-B movie, we lose our ADF as we are bounced around in a fairly substantial thunderstorm. Then our 20-minute warning light comes on. I immediately dial in 77 on the transponder and called Quang Tri for an emergency let down over the mountains.

We tell the GCA operator our altitude, kind of what our heading is as we watch the magnetic compass swing, and that our 20-minute warning light has been on now for over five minutes, so could we limit the acquisition turns, please.

The transponder works. We are "painted" quickly. The GCA operator is very calm, and has the foresight to have our CO, Maj. Bonnett, contacted.

Like clockwork, we break out at about 800 feet. I thank the GCA operator, talk with Bill Bonnett who is flying out to meet us, are on short final to a dry field, and we run out of fuel. After a hovering autorotation, and we are safely down.

We jump out, take the radios out, and turn around to see Maj. Bonnett on short final. We secure our aircraft and wait for the "Hook" to sling the aircraft back to LZ Sharon. Captain R&R most likely has to break out a fresh pair of skivvies after our adventure, but our crew and the new Peter Pilot seem to take it in stride. Another day, another successful landing.

Mr. Hicks, our company safety officer, had provided a

mini-course on use of the transponder a few days earlier, knowing the weather would progressively grow worse as we moved into the monsoon season. Thank you, Mr. Hicks.

Bob Evans

Class 67-23

B/229th

Florida Chapter displays OH-6A at veterans reunion

The 12th annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion last weekend (April 17-18) was great. Even a cold, windy Saturday could not stop the friendship and joy that was felt and shared by the 100,000-plus attendees.

The Florida Chapter of the VHPA displayed our C/16th Cav-marked OH-6A near The Moving Wall, and the chapter manned a yellow-and-red tent in the vendor area to recruit new members for the VHPA, VHCMA and USAWOA, and to sell chapter T-shirts, patches and pins.

The opening ceremony featured the color guards of over 25 veterans groups and the raising of giant American and POW/MIA flags from a high-lift crane, where they flew proudly all weekend.

The Sunday morning outdoor church service was led by the Rev. John Steer, WIA on Hill 875, during the November 1967 Battle of Dak To, while serving with the 173rd Airborne.

Closing ceremonies at the Moving Wall on Sunday evening brought out the best for all the attendees. Patriotic music, bagpiper, guest speakers featuring Vietnam Medal of Honor winner Sammy Davis, who reminded us of the three POWs in Kosovo. Other speakers were a Gold Star Mother who lost a son in Vietnam, and our own Pam from "Sons and Daughters in Touch," whose dad, WO1 Stephen Cohan, was KIA in Vietnam.

Plan now to attend the 13th reunion on April 7-9, 2000, at Wickham Park in Melbourne FL. Reunion Web page is at: <http://members.aol.com/FLVietVets/reunion.html>

Don Joyce

179th ASHC "Shrimpboats" Pleiku '67-'68.
Now in Poinciana, FL

H-34 on newsletter cover identified as VNAF

The H-34 on the cover is a CH-34C from the VNAF's 213th Squadron. It's an early production, ex-U.S. Army aircraft. The pilot's sliding window is still the original flat panel, the landing gear is the early pattern, and the metal-tube steps predate the Army's conversion from 12-seat to 18-seat interiors.

If you can get me in touch with Curt Knapp, I'd be interested in buying a copy of this shot from him for my files.

Len Lundh

Author:

"Sikorsky H-34: An Illustrated History"
"H-34 Choctaw In Action"

Call sign was 'King Bee'

I know this is kind of late, but if you are still looking to identify the H-34 on the cover of the March/April newsletter, it belongs to the VNAF.

Their call sign was "King Bee."

Gary Grow
Ghost Rider 58

Ken Fritz's letter brings back memories for pilot

Thank you, Kenneth H. Fritz, for your article in the March/April *VHPA Newsletter*. I enjoyed reading of the problems encountered by members of the 176th AHC that followed.

I was in the 176th before the company moved to Chu

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Lai. When I first arrived in country, the 176th was down at Duc Pho, in May 1967.

At that time we lived on a hill in the middle of the 1st Division of the 101st, rear area, called Eagles Nest.

Life was great, but we lived in GP tents on the side of the hill. The view was wonderful. To the east was the South China Sea, about a mile away. To the west were the mountains, and the one hill that the 174th AHC was based at.

The tents were damp, but comfortable.

Then we moved the whole company to Khe Ha, at Chu Lai. I had broken some ribs in a fall, and was grounded for about two weeks or so. That's the time that the company moved to Chu Lai.

I was put in charge of packing up whatever the company could not take by helicopter to Chu Lai. Myself, several enlisted men, and the first sergeant were left to move the rest of the company, by two LSTs, up the coast. The CO left the first

shirt there to make sure this 22-year-old kid didn't screw everything up.

What a difference Chu Lai was. We lived on the side of a hill again, and could see the helicopter ramp that overlooked the water.

We were lucky enough to eat in the Marine mess, which was a lot better by far than the cooking we got from the Army. We had the left side (north) of the ramp. There was a hospital in the center of the ramp. I don't remember who had the right half of the ramp, but I think it might have been the Marine helicopters.

The hooches we moved into had belonged to the Marines, were plywood, and compared to the tents we lived in before, were like checking into a hotel.

We had cots, mattresses, and sleeping bags, all thanks to the Marines, and a bottle of booze.

The guys in my hooch obtained a tip tank from a large aircraft from the Marines. We put it on a stand at one end of the hooch so it was above the roof. Next came a 55-gallon drum with an immersion heater to heat the water in the drum.

We put two oil coolers in the drum, ran water out of the tip tank down through the oil coolers by pipes, and into a shower stall we had built outside of the hooch, and under the tip tank.

The hooch was the only one in the area with its own hot shower. We had a bar in the hooch with a fridge and all the beer we could put away. Always a pleasant place to go if we didn't go to one of the MAG clubs in the area at night.

I don't know if these were the same hooches you lived in during your tour with the 176th, but they didn't leak in '67.

I thought you might get a kick out of hearing about the accommodations provided by Uncle Sam for the boys.

Ray Mayhew

Former WOC to sing in Senate chambers

I'm forwarding this note from Mike Roulier. Mike is going to DJ the Early Bird at Nashville and is the director of WOC Chorus. He also will be singing the National Anthem at the Banquet.

Tom Payne
VHPA president

Tom:

I have been invited to sing in the Oregon State Senate chambers on June 7. One of the senators saw me on TV on an old cable show I taped years ago, so here I go!

I would like to play them the tape of "This is My Country" and then sing the National Anthem.

We have a state representative, Ron Sunseri (a new VHPA member), who would like to attend, and I would love to present a little bit of Army Aviation history into the public record of the Senate.

Now, I would like to tell them briefly about the recording and our reunions. Would it be out of line if I read them the presentation you make about the empty table prior to playing them the recording of "This is . . . "?

My thought was that all of our proceedings are now recorded live on the Internet, which means that any VHPA member with a computer could listen to the WOC Chorus recording being played in the Oregon Senate.

What I envisioned was to introduce the circumstances of the formation of the WOC Chorus to the members, make a statement about the VHPA, read the empty table presentation, play the recording of "This is My Country" and then do the National Anthem.

Mike Roulier

Visit to The Wall results in poem by VHPA member

Below is a short poem I wrote. I had not written a poem since third grade back in the 1940s. I went to The Wall Saturday morning and sent the message at 6:44 that night.

*I saw The Wall this morning.
Fore sunrise; Dark and cold.
No one was there in mourning;
The silence made me old.*

*Stars were quickly fading.
Clear skies brought early dawn.
The Names came out of hiding
As I sat there on the lawn.*

*A jogger slowed his paces
In tribute to the names.*

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*Some children ran their races
Unknowing in their games.*

*The dew went off the statues
As the sun performed it's thing.
I went back to business
On this first day of spring.*

I was awed to be at The Wall alone. I looked in all directions and there was nobody within sight. As the only one at the moment, it made me realize that some day another one of us will be the only one at all.

I have not written a poem in nearly 50 years. It just came to me today.

The sun rose exactly in the east behind the Washington Monument. It was amazing to see the names wink into their appearance on the west Wall. Later, the east names were shadowed in base relief as the sun crept toward the south.

I took photos of my roommates' names and one for Mommacknocker this first day of spring. I used up a roll and a half of film trying to get the best of the sunrise light.

Roger W. Ek
Seawolf 25

Another look at covert actions in Indochina

The November/December *VHPA Newsletter* feature article, "Pilots Rewarded With Laos Mission," submitted by Harry Nevling and William Ailes, brought back vivid memories of the day I reported to my unit assignment in early November 1966, my second tour in South Vietnam.

I was surprised to learn that the unit had just lost an UH-1D "slick," shot down over Laos, all occupants killed in action. My first confused thoughts: "What were we doing in Laos?" . . . "Was our war being expanded into areas unfamiliar to the American people, and certainly to me," 14 years a soldier at the time?

To recover the bodies from the shot-down chopper the next day, my unit commanding officer, Maj. Bill Griffin, led the air assault part of the recovery effort, carrying a 40-man Special Forces Mike Force team commanded by an experienced Special Forces infantry officer.

The combined air/land assault team set down in Laos, recovering the 10 deceased personnel — 6 Special Forces team members and our unit's 4 air crewmen. But not without cruel, predictable, enemy cunning.

The communist enemy had booby trapped several of the 10 deceased beneath the armpits and the crotch areas. But our SF rescue team, professionals that they are, looked for, found, and defused, the secreted explosives.

It was small consolation to know that our recovered soldiers would not be carried on the rolls as missing in action.

Maj. Griffin advised me that his policy would not allow me to participate in the recovery mission into Laos because, having just arrived, I lacked the local checkouts required.



Our unit, the 281st Assault Helicopter Company, 10th Aviation Battalion, had a unique assignment — operationally assigned in direct support of 5th Special Forces Group at Nha Trang.

Supporting them meant inserting and extracting their Mike Force unit or elements of the unit, providing close air support with our gunships during insertions and extractions all over South

Vietnam, routinely carrying passengers and cargo between far-flung Special Forces camps and evacuating wounded.

On occasion, our pilots and crewmen were asked to "volunteer" for missions into Laos for undetermined lengths of time.

These missions were controlled and directed by the Studies and Operations Group (SOG)*, headquartered in Saigon.

When our "volunteer" aircrews were preparing for missions into Laos, they were required to "sanitize" themselves. That is, no identification, no dog tags, no personal effects that would identify them as American military, and no insignia. Aircraft, weapons and accouterments likewise were "cleansed."

The possibility of our government being blamed for military incursions into countries we weren't technically supposed to be in was somewhat lessened by the "cleansings," assuming casualties and downed aircraft would occur.

On the other hand, our military "volunteers" could be, and would be, treated as spies, if captured, because our government would not admit responsibility for these covert missions.

There was an unwritten, covert-related rule, made known to all of us, that if lost on such a mission, we would be persona non-grata, disclaimed by our government, because people and equipment could not be allowed to be identified as "American."

Upon being shot down or crashing, if we weren't immediately rescued nor our bodies recovered, we would be carried as MIA, unless "hard evidence" would allow other abbreviations like "KIA" or "POW."

Fortunately, our unit's personnel and choppers always came back.

I personally never "volunteered" for missions into Laos, considering a wife and five children waiting at home for my hopefully safe return from the "legal war" occurring within both Vietnams.

Besides, flying Special Forces missions within the legal boundaries of South Vietnam could be hot enough to dissuade many of us not to volunteer for the additional uncertainties of Laos.

With the knowledge we have today that our covert "volunteers" did intrude into Laos, Cambodia and North Viet-

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nam routinely, as occurred in my unit with respect to Laos, surely there were covert-related survivors from aircraft shot down.

Sen. John Kerry, a Vietnam veteran himself, as chairman of the Senate committee looking into MIA/POW potential for survivability several years ago was correct in his comments in a Miami Herald article, that: "The Pentagon was knowingly wrong in asserting in April 1973 that there was no reason to believe Americans remained behind after the release of U.S. prisoners of war."

Requiring "hard evidence" that there were POWs left behind was a cop-out by official, political Washington. The "hard evidence" should be in the files of the U.S. forces' units operating in and over Laos and Cambodia, who reported their personnel losses when and where they occurred, unless covered up by some higher authority.

Even if the percentages of POW survivability were minimal, considering the long war and large numbers of people operating in the covert areas over many years, common sense alone would tell us that there were probably live POW survivors when the war ended.

Other evidence is perhaps entrapped within the minds of those who operated covertly, and survived, who have not yet told all they know.

As the result of long-term political ineptitude with regard to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, our armed forces ended up fighting three enemies.

First, the remarkably persistent and resilient communists' forces we confronted in all of the war-torn areas of Indochina. Second, the extreme adversarial relationship those American servicemen found prevalent in many of our bitter citizens (the toughest to stomach). And finally, the political reality that we could not depend on our politicians to bring the combined forces and power of our great nation, and that of all our allies, to convince world opinion to help us bring all of our POWs home when the war ended.

Our politicians, once understanding the war was impossible to win, on retreating, surely, left POWs behind.

Our losses in Vietnam, South and North, were bad enough. But the extreme, painful experiences suffered by the families, friends and comrades-in-arms of Americans missing in Laos and Cambodia, "spying" for their country as loyal "volunteers," is unconscionable.

Let us hope and pray that patriots such as Sen. Kerry will finally bring the correct answers home to its deserving citizenry.

NOTE: In their book "Secret Intelligence," the authors, Ernest Volkman and Blaine Bagget state: "But secret wars involve real problems of accountability and control, the two areas that were to cause much trouble for America's secret war in Indochina. The first alarm rang in 1964, when the secret war was expanded yet again, this time by creation of the Studies and Operations Group (SOG), which

combined personnel from the Green Berets, the CIA, and the four military services in an organization that was to conduct subversion, sabotage, and other covert operations in North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It was under a broad mandate known as OPLAN 34-A, which authorized SOG to conduct 'clandestine operations in denied areas.' In other words, SOG commanders could do just about what they wanted."

Jack W. Serig Sr.



David Lovett photo

A formation of Hueys takes off for a combat assault from a runway at Duc Pho in southern I Corp.

Common sense didn't always prevail in Army

The story could have made a theme for a M*A*S*H episode.

We like to think in Vietnam the Army didn't act like the Army and that common sense prevailed in a combat area. But I remember the officers on a mountaintop firebase got orders to conduct an annual PT test, which included a mile run.

The firebase hardly had a flat area large enough to land a Huey. But I digress.

A high-ranking general was scheduled in early 1969 to visit the 11th Infantry Brigade at the base at Duc Pho, which was also home to the 174th Aviation Company, known as the "Dolphins" and "Sharks."

A grand combat assault was planned for his visit, and it was planned so he could view it from Duc Pho. The PZ was the runway at Duc Pho, the LZ was 2 clicks away, and

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the LZ would be prepped with artillery from Duc Pho, as well as with airstrikes and gunships.

On short notice, the general canceled the visit. Should the combat assault be canceled? The military value was low. Common sense would say "cancel."

But the mission went on anyway. The LZ preps were made, the picture shows the takeoff from the runway, the gunships shot up the LZ, the formation landed, and the troops jumped out and walked back home. No casualties.

At least that's how I remember it.

David Lovett

Transportation Corps group looking for new members

Any former Transportation Corps Officers/Warrant Officers who were associated with Army Aviation and are interested in joining the Transportation Corps Aviation Association (TCAA), send an e-mail with complete mailing address and short biographical background to

The TCAA has a national membership of 199 to date, of which 80 plus are in the Fort Eustis, VA, area.

Local association members meet monthly at various local establishments for lunch, hangar flying, and an occasional guest speaker.

Annual dues are only \$12 and provide a monthly newsletter, semi-annual roster, and annual TCAA calendar.

In conjunction with the annual TC Week celebration in

Australian magazine seeks images for Internet website

We are in the process of designing the website for Pacific Rotors magazine and would like to ask operators, suppliers, manufacturers, etc., if they would have any images that we could possibly use on the website.

Since the magazine is dedicated to operations around the Pacific Rim, I would ask that all images be relevant to this region unless they are showing specific products.

If you could send them to the below address, it would be very much appreciated. They will be returned to you as soon as we have finished with them.

Editor — Pacific Rotors

3rd Millennium Group

P O Box 2066

Logan City DC

Queensland, 4114, Australia

Also if you would like your website included under our links page please advise what it is. Thanks again and I look forward to working with you all.

Neville Dawson

Editor

Pacific Rotors

Queensland, Australia

July, there is a reunion of all TCAA members who can attend (and many seem to make it)."

Richard A. Hartert

Pipemoke 6, 605th TC Company (1966-67)

Phu Loi, RVN

Taps

Billy C. Hupp

Billy C. Hupp died April 18 at his home in Sikeston, MO, from a massive stroke. He was 52.

He served with the 52nd Battalion, 170th Aviation Company at Pleiku in 1966-67.

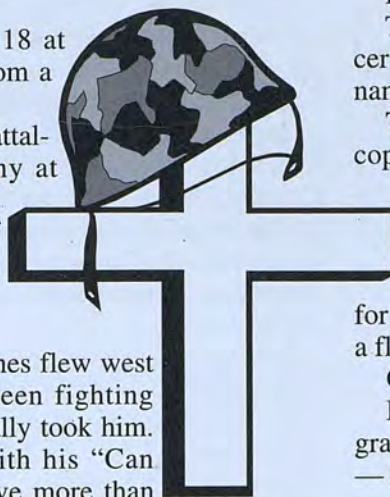
Hupp was a member of Class 66-15.

Robert A. Jones

Our comrade, Robert A. Jones flew west on Nov. 18, 1998. He had been fighting cancer for 15 years, but it finally took him.

He made many friends with his "Can Do" attitude and certainly gave more than his share to his country.

Jones served three tours of duty in Vietnam, interjected with a tour in Air America, before retiring from the Army, as a lieutenant colonel, in December 1969.



He worked for Bell Helicopter for a few months before starting his own spray business in mid-1970. Sun Country Helicopters, which started with three H-19's, was one of the pioneers in the art of spraying groves with helicopters.

He continued spraying until a few months ago.

The first time I met R.A., he was the maintenance officer for A Company, 25th Division, at Cu Chi, South Vietnam, and had the best availability on the airfield.

The next time I met him, eight years later, I had a helicopter down in the Loxahatchee Swamp and called the only company around with a helicopter big enough to lift mine. R.A. answered the phone and ferried 150 miles to lift me out.

February this year was the last time I called him for help and he drove three hours to Eustis to help us with a float in the George Washington Birthday parade.

Goodbye my friend, until I see you again.

He is survived by his wife Joan, two daughters, three grandchildren and two brothers.

— Raymond Shinkle

Larry E. Joyce

Larry E. Joyce, 60, retired American Heart Association vice president, died April 30 at his Granbury, TX, home

See TAPS, Page 10

Taps

Continued from Page 9

after a lengthy battle with leukemia:

Joyce was a former career Army officer and Vietnam veteran who later became an executive with two major health organizations, gained national recognition when he took on Clinton administration officials to seek changes in American policy involving the use of military personnel in peacekeeping operations, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported.

His campaign began shortly after his son, Sgt. James Cacey Joyce, an Army Ranger, was killed Oct. 3, 1993, in a firefight in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Joyce's views were presented in several top national publications and during interviews on every major network. He also wrote articles that appeared in various national and regional newspapers.

His efforts were climaxed by an appearance before the Senate Armed Services Committee and a personal meeting with President Clinton.

When the committee's report was withheld from the public, Joyce again took his case to the public, resulting in its release in September 1995.

The report criticized the Clinton administration officials and the military's use of special operations forces. Government leaders also developed and implemented new policies on the use of American fighting forces in peacekeeping activities.

Joyce was born July 8, 1938, in Dallas. He graduated from Merkel High School in Merkel in 1956 and from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene with a BBA in 1960. While in college, he was president of the HSU Cowboy Band and was named an ROTC distinguished military graduate, leading to a commission after graduation as a second lieutenant in the Army.

A year later, Joyce's battle group was ordered to West Berlin as a show of American resolve when the Soviet Union erected the Berlin Wall.

In 1963, Joyce volunteered to be one of the first American combat advisers in South Vietnam. He returned to Vietnam in 1967 as a helicopter pilot.

In 1970, Joyce was selected for Army Command and General Staff College.

While still in the Army, he attended graduate school at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, where he earned a master's degree in mass communications. That led to promotion to lieutenant colonel and the post of general manager of the European-Middle East edition of the Stars and Stripes.

He completed his military career at the Pentagon, where he was chief spokesman for the secretary of the

Army and Army chief of staff.

While serving in the Army, Joyce received the Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Air Medal for Valor with 12 oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Republic of Vietnam's Cross of Gallantry.

In 1980, he joined Dallas-based EDS in the insurance division.

Two years later, he became vice president for the American Heart Association's office of communications at the national center in Dallas. He guided that organization through the writing of a strategic plan and a major refinement of its image. He also took charge of the AHA's scientific publishing operations.

Joyce moved to the American Medical Association in Chicago in 1990 as senior vice president of communications and publishing.

While there, he consolidated all of the AMA's mass communications functions and reorganized and streamlined the scientific publishing operation resulting in all-time high net profits.

He returned to the American Heart Association in 1995 as vice president for corporate relations and retired in 1998 due to ill health.

Survivors include his wife, Gail Galbraith Joyce of Granbury; a son, Steven Joyce of Granbury; a daughter, Sancy Joyce of Austin; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Joyce of Sweetwater; a grandmother, Clara Hendrix of Sweetwater; and three grandchildren.

Robert Lynn McCrarey

Attorney Robert Lynn McCrarey, 52, of Fort Worth died March 27 after a brief illness.

McCrarey was born in Memphis on July 23, 1946, the son of Henry A. "Bud" and Ora Mae McCrarey.

After graduation from high school, he attended Baylor University and earned a bachelor of arts degree. Thereafter, McCrarey continued his education at Baylor Law School, where he earned a juris doctorate degree in 1978.

He entered law practice after graduation and spent his first seven years as a criminal prosecutor in the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office, the last five years of which he prosecuted major felony cases.

In 1985, McCrarey left the district attorney's office and entered the private practice of law, specializing in criminal defense.

He was considered by his legal peers to be a skillful trial attorney and in his representation of his clients and his conduct, in and out of the courtrooms, he exemplified the finest traditions of the legal profession. He had an abiding respect for the rule of law and a passion for justice and fair play.

McCrarey was a member of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Criminal Defense Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys and had been certi-

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Taps

Continued from Page 10

fied as a specialist in criminal law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization since 1979.

He was authorized to practice law in all courts, both federal and state, sitting in Texas, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court.

McCrarey served his country during the Vietnam War, attaining the rank of captain as a helicopter pilot and was stationed in Vietnam. He was a member of flight school classes 68-516/68-28.

He was very active in the Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Tarrant County. McCrarey was preceded in death by his mother, Ora Mae McCrarey and a brother, David Thomas McCrarey.

Survivors, all of Memphis, include his father, Henry A. "Bud" McCrarey; a brother, Michael W. McCrarey; and a sister, Patricia Phillips.

Henry A. Powell

The VHPA newsletter was delivered Saturday and, if at all possible, I would like the association to know my husband, Henry A. Powell, died on March 15 after a bravely fought battle with cancer.

He was a member of Class 56-5 and with the 242 Assault Support Helicopter Company in 1967-68.

He was a wonderful musician and did a lot of volunteering in nursing homes.

Helga Powell

Larry E. Stuart

This is to inform you of the loss of one of our comrade in arms, retired Lt. Col. Larry E. Stuart.

Larry was born Sept. 5, 1936, in Damascus, GA, to Charles and Lucille Stuart.

He is survived by his wife, Lucy of Fayetteville, NC; a son, Larry Jr.; four grand-daughters, Lissy, Caity, Abigail and Moriah; sisters, Marie Tabb, Hazel Tipton, Helen Askew, Betty Marder and Judy Adams; and brothers Phil

and Charles Stuart.

In June 1998, Larry was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia and underwent chemotherapy at Duke University Hospital.

He suffered a recurrence of the disease in October and was again admitted to Duke.

On Nov. 17, Larry pulled pitch for the final time and left his family, me and many other great friends behind with his memory.

Larry served two tours in Vietnam, his first starting in 1966.

He was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Distinguished Flying Cross, Army Commendation Medal, Air Medals, Bronze Star for Valor, Meritorious Service Medal, and Senior Army Aviator Badge.

Larry was working with Northrop Grumman at the time he acquired leukemia.

Not only was Larry a friend, he was a classmate of mine, graduating in Infantry OCS Class OC5-63, whereupon we were assigned duties with the Infantry School. We spent two years there prior to flight school. Our children sort of grew up together.

He was a fine soldier and "Above the Best" as an Army aviator.

J.R. Thomas

Ronald Neil Timberlake

Ronald Neil Timberlake, 50, passed away on May 5 due to injuries received in a motorcycle accident near Houston.

On April 18th, he was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. His gravesite is directly adjacent the Pentagon Heliport, which is as it should be.

His obituary could be short and sweet: "Crusader 18, 187th AHC Tay Ninh March '68-March '69 (Age 19), Saber 20 F Trp/9th Cav (B, 1/9) Bear Cat and Bien Hoa July '71-May '72 (Age 22)."

His obituary could be full of his thoughts in combat: "I was smiling right up to the time the bullet went through me!"

It could merely say: "Ronald N. Timberlake, 12 OCTOBER 1948 -05 MAY 1999, but it won't. His life touched too many for Ron to be a simple start-and-end date."

Vince Gonzalez, CBS News Los Angeles, wrote this eloquent obituary of Ron:

See TAPS, Page 12

Share your Vietnam memories with fellow pilots!

The VHPA Newsletter is seeking letters and articles.

E-mail material to: swickard@vhpa.org

Taps

Continued from Page 11

"Ron Timberlake always believed in fighting for what was right. A devoted father, husband and son, Ron was dedicated to his family. And he was dedicated to his country. Ron was a highly decorated helicopter pilot who served all over the world and in combat during the Vietnam War. Even after he left the service, Ron stayed close to the military. He worked as a civilian employee of the military in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during Desert Storm.

"But Ron never forgot the war of his youth and the men who gave their lives. Whenever their honor was called into question, Ron was ready to jump into action. He refused to go along with what he called 'the victim veteran' stereotype. In person, in letters and on the Internet, Ron spoke out against those who tried to paint all Vietnam veterans with what he called 'a dark and disturbed brush.' And he exposed those who tried to use that victim label for their own ends.

"Ron's knowledge and first-hand experience was also instrumental in a CBS News investigation that eventually uncovered the true identity of the American buried in the Vietnam Tomb of the Unknowns."

His fellow pilots call Ron an honorable man who cared about the truth.

One wrote in an e-mail, "Bonds forged in combat last



forever . . . and I am alive today because of warriors like Ron."

Another pilot who was rescued by Ron (Nov. 27, 1968, in an action where Ron was awarded the Silver Star) wrote, "Nothing was going to stop him from coming into the jaws of death to attempt to rescue us . . . As far as I'm concerned, Timberlake and his crew should have been awarded the Medal of Honor for their gallantry."

In recent years, Ron had become a successful businessman. He and his family lived in Katy, TX. Ron still loved to fly.

He is survived by his wife, Karen; his sons, Shannon and Beau; and his daughter, Laura. Also mourning his loss are his mother, Doris Timberlake Whiteman, and his brothers, Gary and David Timberlake.

As for me, I will remember seeing an F/9 Cav AH-1G come into parking in early 1972 at Lassiter Pad, Bien Hoa, without anyone in the back seat.

I was on top of an A/229 slick doing post-flight and was taken aback at what I was seeing.

As the snake danced into its revetment, I then saw this little head behind the M73 sight actually flying the aircraft. My life around Ron Timberlake has been an adventure since that day.

Phil Rosette recalled his dad's gravestone, which said: "To live in the hearts of those you leave behind is to never die at all."

As Ron would say, "Happy Trails."

Mike Sloniker

Larry Tweedie

Larry Tweedie of Hartlepool, England, died May 26 at South Cleveland Memorial Hospital in Middlesbrough after heart surgery.

He was a member of Classes 68-35/68-21, and served with the 128th AHC and 116th AHC in 1969-70.

Scholarship committee leader needed

One of the new activities within the VHPA is the Scholarship Committee.

Started 4-5 years ago, the idea initially was ushered along by a small handful of members with the vision to provide scholarships for VHPA members' children, grandchildren and school-specific scholarship funds.

The effort crept along with few funds being donated until last year at the Fort Worth Reunion when several sizable donations and matching donations were proposed and challenges arose at the membership meeting.

Well, the fund now sits at a little over \$8,000, which is a small amount of money needed for a scholarship fund to have to provide interest money

for scholarships. But it will grow and provide the needed amounts in the future.

Jack Jordan, the prime mover behind the VHPA Scholarship Committee, has been forced to resign as chairman due to business.

He was one of the prime visionaries for the project and was instrumental in getting the donations rolling at Fort Worth. His leadership will be missed.

I believe there is a vital role for the Scholarship program for the VHPA.

That is why I am coming to members to ask for volunteers to pick up the reins of the committee and provide the leadership needed to move on from where we are at the present.

The vision is there and needs to be "fleshed out" to the full thing. You need not have specific abilities in this area, but you should be able to work with others to decide what is needed and how to accomplish it.

Interested VHPA members should write me at VHPA HQ. Address why you are interested, how you might best provide leadership and expertise, and ways the VHPA might proceed to carry this idea forward.

Be prepared to spend some time at reunions and on the phone and Internet to come up with specific proposals for the Scholarship Program and its future.

— Tom Payne, President

Vietnam Center launches symposium

The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University held its Triennial Vietnam Symposium in Lubbock April 15-17.

To help commemorate the event, the moving Vietnam Wall was set up at the site selected for the new center on the campus.

This was the final display of this particular moving wall — "The Wall that heals" — before it was retired.

It was made of sheetmetal panels painted black with white lettering. The letters were not raised, so you could not make a rubbing of the names.

The sheetmetal panels were riveted to a lightweight steel frame, which rests on stakes and pipes driven into the ground.

The National Park Service operates this moving wall and the replacement will have raised lettering to allow rubbings to be made.

This was not the same wall VHPA members saw at Mineral Wells during our 1998 reunion in Fort Worth.

There was supposed to be a dedication ceremony for The Wall, with a flyover on April 14 to open the symposium, but with the West Texas winds gusting to more than 40 knots, we were fortunate to just get The Wall set up. The ceremony was moved inside the University Center.

The Vietnam Center has a National Council comprised of retired Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., chairman; retired Gen. William C. Westmoreland; William P. Bundy; Bui Diem, former South Vietnamese ambassador to the United States; and Col. Roger H.C. Donlon.

Zumwalt was one of the guest speakers.

This symposium, celebrating the 10th anniversary of The Vietnam Center/Archive, will cover a variety of scholar topics on the United States and allied involvement in the Vietnam War, as well as topics relating to Cambodia and Laos.

Papers representing all points of view are welcome. The time period for papers includes prewar Indochina, aftermath of the war, veterans' topics,

A review of past symposiums shows many of the topics were reviews of U.S. policy in Indochina or studies of battles. Now the symposium includes views from the PAVN and representatives from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

POW/MIA or any other relevant topic. Papers relating to Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian history, culture and language also are encouraged.

The unique part of this symposium was the participation of representatives of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV).

Lt. Gen. Nguyen Dinh Uoc from the Military History Institute in Hanoi, along with Col. Vo Dinh Quang, naval attache from the SRV Embassy in Washington, provide translation services.

There also were representatives from the former Republic of Vietnam: Ex-Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh, former ambassador Bui Diem, former Navy Capt. Kiem Do, and several ex-ARVN officers.

A review of past symposiums shows many of the topics were reviews of U.S. policy in Indochina or studies of battles. Now the symposium includes views from the PAVN and representatives from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This opens a new field of study.

There was tension and stress when former enemies met.

James Reckner, director of The Vietnam Center, recognized this when he published the *Philosophy for this Symposium*:

"We have consistently encouraged representatives of the former Republic of Vietnam to speak at our symposia and conferences, and that they always be received with dignity and respect. It means, too, that The Vietnam Center has sought the views of the leadership of the Socialist Repub-

lic of Vietnam.

"A delegation of officers of the People's Army of Vietnam will participate in this year's symposium. They are here as the formally invited guests of our chairman, Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, and of The Vietnam Center. I expect every participant in our symposium to treat these guests with the same respect and dignity you would accord their hosts.

"This occasion offers an historic opportunity for all involved, by their actions, to declare these meetings at The Vietnam Center 'neutral ground' where all sides of the complex events we examine might meet and discuss issues without rancor. I challenge all of you to make this a reality. By so doing, we all can but benefit by the exchange."

The Vietnam Center has a website at: <http://www.ttu.edu/~vietnam/html/vietnam.htm>

On this site, you can review symposium papers and the Indochina chronology, along with indexes of The Vietnam Center archives.

Archivist for The Vietnam Center is Dr. Ronald B. Frankum, who has been updating the website.

The VHPA is listed as a collection in the archives.

As the collection grows, we will have an index online. With proposed funding, there is a plan to place all the materials on the net in a virtual library.

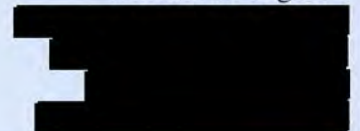
We need to start depositing our records for preservation with the archive, and you can e-mail Frankum at: lirbf@lif.ttu.edu

Or call him at () .

If you want to deposit materials to the archives, we can make arrangements to collect items in Nashville.

Dr. Reckner has accepted an invitation from the VHPA to speak at the General Membership Meeting about The Vietnam Center/Archives.

William J. Fitzgerald



Offensive highlight of '99 directory

The 1999 VHPA Directory will contain the history of the 1972 Spring Offensive.

It is the effort of the late Ron Timberlake who had done a magnificent job of tying the history together.

Ron died May 5. I have what he has written and will finalize his amazingly thorough work.

Ron and I were in the 229th Assault Helicopter Company during this fight and I have firsthand III Corps history.

Ron wrote an article about his VHPA task that was published in a fall VHPA newsletter.

Many folks responded, one being the strong account provided by Scott Fenwick, who flew the UH-1B TOWs in II Corps.

I have some personal account data from the 361st Assault Helicopter Company, nothing from the 57th Assault Helicopter Company.

The fall of Dak To was critical.

If nothing is forthcoming from the unit participants, I will use published

history that does not reflect the courage and bravery of the II Corps units.

If you want to read about your history, you have to provide it. I would rather not use the account of Paul Vann from "Bright Shining Lie."

I would prefer to use data from folks who flew the mission.

I have received some solid information from Jack Kennedy, the commander of F Troop, 8th Cav during that period.

Mike Austin has given permission to use his story about F/8th during that period. John Bridger is providing information on D/17th Cav.

From F/8th, I learned about the 100-ship combat assault into Quang Tri and suspect the 48th Assault Helicopter Company participated.

I need 48th Assault Helicopter Company data.

I have no Chinook data from I and II Corps. Ratcliffe was the AAAA Army Aviator of the Year in 1972 for action in I Corps with F/4th Cav. I

have no F/4th data.

I have great pictures from III Corps, Scott Fenwick's II Corps pictures, but no pictures from I Corps.

If you were a participant and want to see your history in print, contact me via my VHPA directory-listed address or e-mail at:

I had been working with Ron Timberlake since this effort started. I want this to be the best history written as a tribute to Ron.

I worked with Mike Law on the 1994 Directory History concerning Lam Son 719.

After it was printed and sent out in October 1994, I received amazing loads of information that would have been of interest to all, not just me, to read.

I will be manning a VHPA History desk next to Gary Roush at Nashville. Please don't wait until then to get the information to me. Support your directory.

— Mike Sloniker, VHPA historian

Museum incorporates with new name

On April 27, The National Vietnam War Museum received clearance from the Texas secretary of state to incorporate under that name.

While the original choice was to use the name "The National Museum of the Vietnam War," because of Texas' laws of incorporation, a conflict was discovered.

Another museum was already incorporated in the state, whose official name also started with "The National Museum of . . ."

As the museum were not willing to authorize the use of that naming convention by another organization, The National Vietnam War Museum was required to find a new name prior to incorporating.

While the name has changed, the mission of the museum has not: Providing a place of learning to aid in the understanding of an era. Toward that

end, the museum has acquired 12 acres in Mineral Wells.

This property, bordered on the north by U.S. 180 and on the south by the Rails-to-Trails State Park, is just east of the former Fort Wolters.

"This is a day we have been looking forward to for three long years," said museum director Charles S. Bogle, when the museum committee closed on the property. "It is an incredible sense of accomplishment to see that we have made significant progress toward achieving our dream."

In addition to the work of the museum committee in reaching this first goal, a great deal of credit goes to a local Mineral Wells civic organization, The Friends of the Museum, which was formed last year.

This organization was an outgrowth of the local participation in

helping the museum committee and the Fort Wolters Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association bring the Vietnam Moving Wall to Mineral Wells over the Fourth of July 1998 holiday.

Largely through the efforts of the Friends organization, the funds for purchase of the property were raised in the community through a program of "Honorary Landowners."

Through this, and other tax-exempt contributions, the museum has raised a steady, albeit modest stream of funds.

However, in the near future, a national architectural competition for the design of the museum building and grounds will be announced.

This will be accompanied by the first national fund-raising drive, with the ultimate goal of opening the museum in the fourth quarter of 2002.

Lapsed VHPA members names listed

The following eight-page list shows the names of VHPA members whose membership has lapsed.

If you know someone whose name appears on

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- 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.



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Reunions

Air Logistics

Ever been called "Tiger" by a boss who couldn't remember your name? Then you may be a candidate for the Air Logistics Mini-reunion to be held during the 1999 Reunion in Nashville.

All members who are former or current employees of Air Logistics are invited to attend. Please bring your photos, slides, videos, etc. and the proper amount of hush money will be negotiated.

If you plan to attend, contact Kenny Bunn at ()
or by e-mail at ()

175th AHC

The 175th Assault Helicopter Company will hold a mini-reunion during the VHPA Reunion in Nashville. The time and place of the mini-reunion will be posted in the registration area.

Richard D. Waldo

Vietnam veterans

We are having a Vietnam veterans reunion for a five-state area Aug. 12-15 in Scottsbluff, NE.

Check out our homepage on geocities at
<http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/4353/index.html>

Darrell E. Lewis

48th Assault Helicopter Company

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
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TV documentary to tell pilots life

A television documentary currently in development is setting out to give Vietnam helicopter pilots an opportunity to tell their stories to the American public.

"Flight Line: The Helicopter Pilots of Vietnam" is being developed by Maelstrom Media Inc., a Washington, DC-based production company.

Vietnam helicopter pilot Robert Mason, best-selling author of the book *Chickenhawk*, will be executive producer of the program. The producers of the film are Chris Fetner and Jeremy Wood, both PBS veterans.

The documentary will chronicle the experiences of helicopter pilots who served in Vietnam from 1965-1975. More than 100 hours of interviews with pilots and aircrew are being sought to complete the two-hour program.

Newly released Vietnam army footage will be used to weave the stories of the veterans into the actual scenes of the war.

By allowing the pilots to tell their stories, the producers hope to preserve important facts about the history of U.S. helicopter pilots.

"I grew up listening to my uncle's stories about flying H-34s in Vietnam, and I wanted to give more people an opportunity to hear these stories before there was no one around to tell them," Fetner said.

"We want to be unbiased, let the pilots tell their own stories . . . We want to show what it was like living and flying in Vietnam," Wood said.

The project, which is scheduled to begin production at the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association's reunion this summer in Nashville, should be finished sometime next spring and aired as early as the following summer.

The current planning proposes an initial national airing on PBS, with other distribution still being planned.

Maelstrom Media Inc. hopes that many of the pilots in organizations like the VHPA will support and participate in the project through interviews.

The producers would like to find pilots who served together to interview in groups to help convey stories collectively.

The production company encourages any pilots who would like to be

interviewed at the reunion or any other time to contact it at Maelstrom Media Inc., [redacted]

Helicopters flew troops into battle, gave supportive fire, rescued the wounded, flew in food and supplies, and brought the survivors out, yet the story of the pilots and crews who did these things has never before been told. Our purpose is to tell that story, the producers said.

Mason added, "Plenty of war movies have shown helicopters in make-believe action in Vietnam. No film or documentary has shown what life was really like for the pilots and crews who flew them.

"Slicks, scouts, medevac, gunships, heavy lift, you name it, helicopter pilots did it. *Chickenhawk* is one pilot's point of view of the helicopter war.

"In 'Flight Line: The Helicopter Pilots of Vietnam,' the public will get to see how many of us lived and what we did during the course of the entire decade, the dangers we faced and the fun we had."

VHPA does well at AAAA, HAI meetings

The VHPA booth at the Army Aviation Association of America Convention in Nashville generated a lot of interest.

Fourteen past due members renewed their membership and 15 new members signed up.

Thanks to all the guys from the

Mid-South Chapter for their help at the booth.

Meanwhile, the HAI Gathering in Dallas in February was a huge success for the VHPA.

We signed up three new life members, 35 renewals and more than \$2,500 was taken in.

Special thanks to Tom Payne, George and Barbara Shields, Jack Jordan, Betty Lou Jordan, Ed Malanoski, John Chesnut, Bob Layne, Dan Sachsen, Spike and Melody Eskins and Tony Alvarado.

— **Hayden "Pappy" Jones**
Membership chairman

Genesis of SAR in Southeast Asia

JOHN KONEK

I really enjoyed reading the trans-border helicopter history published in the last Directory.

As a result of additional research, we have the following that should be added to the VHPA's historical material.

On Aug. 18, 1964, during the neutralist withdrawal from their stronghold in the northwestern corner of the Plain of Jars, northern Laos, communist gunners brought down a T-28 engaged in a close air support mission.

The wingman notified the Air Support Operations Center at Udorn and the controller there, following rescue procedures established at the June 15, 1964 Air America Conference, contacted the Air America Air Operations Center at Vientiane.

An H-34D piloted by Air America Capt. Cornelio Pascual took off from Wattay Airport and U.S. Air Force F-100s scrambled from Takhi to form a Rescue Combat Air Patrol.

Pathet Lao gunners zeroed in on Pascual's H-34 as he made his approach for a pick up of the downed crew and shot his helicopter out of the sky.

As the F-100s strafed suspected gun emplacements, the enemy scored hits on one of them.

The pilot wrestled his crippled aircraft to a safe altitude and turned south toward Udorn.

He managed to nurse the plane to the Mekong River, then ejected and landed on the southern outskirts of the Thai river town of Nong Khai.

An Air America helicopter soon picked him up and flew him to Udorn.

In Vientiane, six T-28s took off from Wattay to escort a second Air America H-34 SAR attempt.

Meanwhile, the Air Force jets continued blasting suspected enemy positions with rockets and cannon fire.

When the guns fell silent, the H-34 darted in and picked up the badly

Earlier, on March 29, 1961, Clarence J. Abadie, an ARS pilot, led a flight of 16 UH-34s which were ordered turned over to Air America from U.S. Marine resources, by then-President John F. Kennedy, to Udorn from Bangkok.

burned body of Pascual and his injured mechanic, who also was badly burned, but was alive.

The two Thai T-28 flyers, objectives of the original SAR attempt, were last seen scurrying into the bushes, where they disappeared.

In the next two days, Pathet Lao gunners bagged two more T-28s and the crews were not recovered.

From the early days of the air war in Southeast Asia, it was apparent that SAR had to be timely and well-organized if it were to succeed.

To improve the rescue capability, U.S. Ambassador Unger asked the State Department for discretionary authority for use of Air America helicopters and planes for SAR whenever he felt the situation warranted such action.

The two SAR HH-43Bs at Nakhon Phanom were limited in range, and therefore were limited in their usefulness.

Royal Laotian Air Force rescue capabilities were negligible, with only three H-34s.

The language difference would have made proper coordination among rescue forces, airborne controllers, the Air Support Operations Center in Udorn, the Air Operations Center in Vientiane, and the downed pilot impossible.

Additionally, Air America pilots had a knowledge of flying conditions in Laos that came with years of experience.

There were no formal agreements

between the United States and Laos that allowed for placing Laotian T-28s under U.S. control during rescue efforts.

During the Aug. 18 SAR missions, the Royal Laotian Air Force cooperated with Col. Tyrrell, U.S. air attache, on an "unofficial" basis.

Earlier, on March 29, 1961, Clarence J. Abadie, an ARS pilot, led a flight of 16 UH-34s which were ordered turned over to Air America from U.S. Marine resources, by then-President John F. Kennedy, to Udorn from Bangkok.

Udorn would function as a major Air America rotary wing operating base which was 350 miles northeast of Bangkok and only 35 miles south of Vientiane.

By the time Capt. Pascual made his fatal rescue attempt on Aug. 18, the 16 helicopter assets acquired in 1961 had dwindled to a mere four ships due to combat and operational losses and the Marines wanted them back.

In August of 1964, after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, the arrival of additional jet fighters in Southeast Asia placed added demands on the infant ARS.

Pacific Air Force rescue resources already were stretched following the transfer of the Naha Local Base Rescue Unit, Naha Air Station, Okinawa, to Bien Hoa in May 1964.

This unit arrived with two HH-43Bs and because of the Yankee Team rescue requirements, was diverted and rerouted to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base on the Thai-Lao border.

This unit (33rd ARS) would be the first U.S. Air Force Rescue Services unit to enter the growing conflict in Southeast Asia.

The unit would use the call sign PANSY 88 and 89 — not a very flattering name to have to answer to.

In response to the early August crisis, Detachment 4 of the 36th ARS at Osan Air Base, Korea, an HH-43B

See AF UNIT, Page 26

Saturday activities start with 5k run

RHEA RIPPEY

In the last issue, my reunion article addressed the Early Bird Reception on Thursday evening, the golf tournament on Friday morning, followed by the high and low rpm Jack Daniels Distillery tours and the Music City Welcome Reception on Friday evening.

It wore me out just thinking about it. If you haven't hit translational lift long before Saturday morning, we'll get you Red-X'd and scheduled for depot-level maintenance. You'll need it for Saturday.

Bright and early on Saturday, July 3, you'll be awakened by the scent of testosterone and the sound of stretching ligaments. This signals the 7 a.m. formation for the 5k Run.



At press time, all approving civic authorities have not yet approved the complete route, a fact that offers great opportunity for the creative.

The intended route, however, proceeds from the rally point just outside the hotel, through the wire, among the remains of Friday night's urban partying activity, over a Cumberland River bridge to loop through the new East Bank Tennessee Titan NFL football stadium.

Survivors will be awarded a low-cal cracker for lunch. Drop and give me 20.

Buses leave at 9

At 9 a.m., buses depart the hotel for the nearby Smyrna Airport, home of the Tennessee Air National Guard and site of numerous Vietnam-era static displays. In addition, you'll get tantalizing peaks at some state-of-the-art hardware.

You'll have plenty of opportunity for nostalgia, Snoopy moments and photo ops on the apron or inside the tall hangar bays, squinting steely

Grey Line is offering a VHPA rate for transportation between the airport and the reunion hotels. Ask for the rate at the Grey Line booth, lower level.

eyed at the flight line.

At 11:30 a.m., a catered lunch of catfish and chicken will be served inside a large hangar. Music will be provided by a special guest.

Buses begin departing for the hotel at 1:30 p.m. and continue until the last hush puppy is quiet.

Mini-reunions run continually

Running throughout all four days at various times is a continuous flow of mini-reunions.

These reunions provide great opportunities to renew old friendships forged in combat, to show slide trays, to remember our fallen comrades and to lie like hell.

A set of quiet and private meeting rooms have been reserved exclusively for this purpose.

In addition to the minis, various ballroom configurations featuring finger foods, refreshments and a live DJ offer a pleasant place to meet and interact with old and new friends in a relaxed setting.

Two photographers will be on site for virtually the entire four days to shoot singles, couples or larger groupings at official events, mini-reunions or just plain hanging out in the bar. All shots will be available for purchase the following day.

Saturday evening, buses depart the hotel at 5 p.m. for the Grand Ole Opry. With



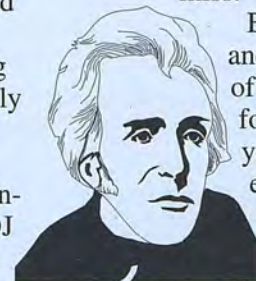
1,200 tickets in a block running from front row to the balcony, center section, VHPA will own the house.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the (new) Grand Ole Opry, the facility is state-of-the-art.

Featuring 4,000 seats, steeply banked and an incredible sound system, even the balcony seats are close to the stage and the acoustics are pristine. There are no bad seats, defects or obstructions to detract from a great show. Unless you count the lady in front of you with the big hair.

Show time is 6:30-8:30 p.m. Nobody knows in advance what artists will appear. It all depends on whose bus hasn't broken down, who's between road trips or who's just gotten out of jail.

Two hours of down-home radio, complete with commercials, performed on a stage that can originate color network TV productions and sponsored, in part, by Martha White self-rising flour. This is an American classic event that you will not want to miss.



Bring your point-and-shoot and plenty of flash cubes. These folks don't mind if you walk up to the edge of the stage for a shot or two. Really.

Sunday morning, our nation's birthday, the Ladies Social Tour of the Hermitage — mansion and grounds of President Andrew Jackson — occurs while the VHPA Business Meeting is in progress.

The Hermitage is a gorgeous estate, featuring massive trees, gardens and a home the books tell me is built in the Greek Revival style.

To a country boy like me, I can tell you two things for sure: It has lots of big white columns and it beats all hell out of whatever might be in Hope, AR.

The ladies depart by bus at 9 a.m.

See BANQUET, Page 25

Banquet last official event of reunion

Continued from Page 24

for the tour and return at 12:45 p.m.

This schedule fits nicely with the VHPA Business Meeting that begins at 9 a.m. and runs until noon.

You'll have just enough time to put your extensive notes on membership numbers and renewal rates back in your room before it's time for lunch.

Banquet caps reunion

The last official event of the day and the reunion is the banquet, followed by the dance.

Seating begins at 5:30 p.m. for dinner with brief pre-dinner program starting at 5:45.

Our post-dinner guest speaker is Adrian Cronauer, originally AFVN disk jockey and fellow Vietnam veteran.

Cronauer is a communications lawyer in Washington, DC, vice chairman of the Vietnam Veteran's Institute and a board member of the National Vietnam Veterans Coalition and the Citizen's Flag Alliance.

These activities have led Cronauer

to develop an intense interest in constitutional issues, especially First Amendment free speech issues. He may have a word or two to say about flag desecration.

Immediately following dinner at 8 p.m., a special high-energy aerobic activity will be hosted by Steve Jarrell and the Sons of the Beach, a seven-piece group with a wide following. This band specializes in the music of its roots, '50s, '60s, '70s oldies and early Carolina Beach music.

Steve Jarrell has put together a horn-based cover band of great renown especially designed to neutralize the deleterious effects of that French silk pie, so don't sweat eating the dessert.

'Quiet room' for chatting

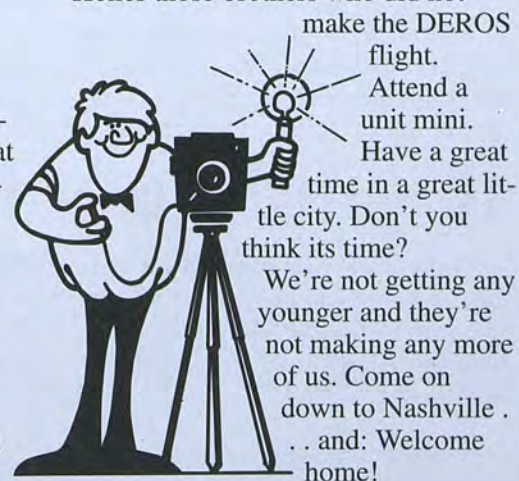
Immediately across a wide hall from the dance venue is a "quiet room" where you can catch your breath and chat.

Before and after dinner, couples and small groups may be pho-

tographed just outside the ballroom. Cronauer is expected to be available for inclusion in your photographs, if desired. Photographers also will be available for candid shots at the dance.

Basically, the bottom line is this: Our agenda is jam packed with a wide variety of activities that is sure to appeal to many interests.

When you consider the myriad opportunities, you have to be here. Revisit old friends. Make new ones. Honor those brothers who did not



VHPA has Rocky Mountain chapter

It is an exciting happening to report that there is now a brand-new Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA.

At its initial meeting May 22 in Denver, some 30 guys from as far away as Wyoming and New Mexico, but mostly from Colorado, met and formed the Rocky Mountain Chapter.

Officers elected are:

- President: Walter Winters
- Vice president: Elwood Soderlind
- Secretary/treasurer: Roger Peterson
- Membership: Willard "Bill" Martin
- Members at large: Ron Magnus and Ben Prieb

Thanks to "Pappy" Jones, our VHPA membership chairman, who went with his wife Susan in their motor home to be with the group as they met in their initial meeting.

Pappy talked to them about the 2001 reunion in Denver and provided the tie-in with VHPA national. Thanks, Pappy and Susan for going.

It was at my request Pappy and Susan went to be with the group. They had only returned from Nashville and the AAAA Convention about a week and half earlier. Great job, Pappy.

I want to also say a word of thanks to Roger Peterson for taking the initiative to get the group together. There had always been a nucleus of interested VHPA members in the Colorado area to form a chapter, but Roger took the necessary steps to pull it all together.

We are all hopeful the 2001 Reunion in Denver will be able to pull together a first-rate committee from this group to handle all the on-site organization, which I am sure they will be able to do efficiently.

Again, congratulations and thanks to all the new members of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA.

In addition there is a list of 31 other guys who are interested in this chapter who could not attend. Dues was set at \$20 per year and the chapter already has \$400 in the kitty.

— Tom Payne, President

AF unit receives orders for Vietnam

Continued from Page 23

unit, was assigned to Takhli on a temporary basis.

Because Pacific area rescue forces already were thin, local base rescue detachments in the United States were told to prepare for short-notice temporary assignments to Vietnam and Thailand.

In early August, the unit at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, received orders to leave immediately for Southeast Asia.

Capt. Philip Prince, the detachment CO, worked his crew through the night, dismantling and loading their

two HH-43Bs on C-124 transports. By noon the following day, they were on their way to Thailand.

Prince's unit reached Korat on Aug. 14 and was soon performing local base rescue services for the Air Force F-105 unit and the Royal Thai Air Force pilot school.

On Sept. 9, 1964, the chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. Curtis LeMay, approved sending six HH-43Fs to Vietnam as soon as they were delivered by the Kaman factory.

Pacific Air Forces requested that the HH-43Bs stationed at Bien Hoa and Da Nang, as an interim measure,

be moved to Nakhon Phanom and Takhli to replace the Osan and Naha Detachments

In November, the local base rescue detachments were transferred from Vietnam to Thailand and the temporary units at Nakhon Phanom and Takhli returned to their parent units. Thus began a very long and heroic service unequaled by any before or since.

An interesting note: Between June 1964 and June 1965, Air America helicopters recovered 21 downed airmen in Laos, while the ARS recovered five.

It's unlikely UH-1B was assembled

Cornelius F. McGillicuddy wrote the following letter to Mike Law in response to the CH-54B article in the November/December 1998 VHPA Newsletter:

I was the commander of the 223rd Combat Aviation Battalion (Griffin 6) from late June 1971 until May 1972.

The 478th (Uptight Hurricanes) was one of my units. We were located at Marble Mountain. Capt. Dan Wall (Infantry) was the 478th commanding officer, Capt. Walton was the executive officer and the first sergeant's name was Harrison.

CW4 Bill Lamb was the company maintenance officer until I pulled him, under great protest, to be my battalion maintenance officer. Some other notables at the time were WOs Mike Madden, Crowley, Sawell and Duarte.

The 478th stood down during this period and its aircraft were bagged and shipped back to CONUS on the deck of some container ship. Just in time, as several of the aircraft had serious salt water corrosion problems detectable only by extensive disassembly.

Anyway, if someone put together a B Model and flew it to Udorn they really were spooks. I was in the 478th

*You mentioned
the B Model being put
together at Red Beach.
All of the 478th was
located at Marble
Mountain during my
time — we had nothing
at Red Beach.*

area and hangars almost daily and saw no such activity.

It is hard to imagine anything such as you described in *The VHPA Newsletter* taking place without my knowledge or that of the 11th Combat Aviation Group commander, then Col. Bob Hollaman.

You mentioned the B Model being put together at Red Beach. All of the 478th was located at Marble Mountain during my time — we had nothing at Red Beach.

We did maintain two aircraft at Udorn on a 90-day rotation basis in support of operations in the Plaine des Jarres. The only spectacular events of this operation were the consistently outstanding performance of the 478th crews and the fuss that fol-

lowed when one of the A models thrashed itself to death on the parking ramp at Udorn and destroyed several USAF aircraft in the process. This happened in December 1971.

When I left Marble Mountain in May 1972 we had stood down the 212th Battalion HHC, 116th Assault Helicopter Company, 282nd Assault Helicopter Company, 73rd SAC, 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company, 203rd Assault Support Helicopter Company and, of course, the 478th. I took the battalion colors to Europe.

Remaining at Marble Mountain was the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (Blue Stars), a platoon of Mohawks, a few VIP aircraft and the remnants of the 11th Group HQ.

I do not know the whereabouts of Dan Wall. I suggest you try to track down Bill Lamb, he is more knowledge on your subject than anyone I know.

Good luck on your research. If you need any more help, let me know.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Comments from Mike Law: Thanks for this great letter. Sadly, the VHPA Directory states CW4 Bill Lamb passed away in 1985, but maybe some other 478th HHC people can help with this subject.

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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SOCIAL SECURITY NO.:

Information about each Vietnam tour:

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

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

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association?

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



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VHPA 2