

Dear Gentlemen,

It has been a long while since the VHPA reunion in Phoenix, and to those of you who have been sprinting to the mail box daily expecting a report, I apologize for the delay.

I do not recall what the total attendance figure was for the reunion, but the Phoenix were represented by about two dozen pilots, and lots of wives, sons and daughters. Skip Lee's trip from Hawaii, John Eaton's from Germany and Dave Rayburn's from Australia all make a statement as to the drawing power this event has generated.

Some of my post-reunion reports in the past have focused on activities that our group participated in or that VHPA sponsored. This past July, I have memories of two particular events that gave me a warm glow that had nothing to do with being alcohol induced.

After Sunday night's banquet the entire reunion adjourned to the poolside for music and dancing. I stood back away from the pool and watched as some 40-50 Phoenix T-shirt clad people claimed one area of the patio, pulled a bunch of tables together and visited. It had an aura of a family reunion, which in a very real sense, it was. Pilots, wives, offspring of all ages appeared to sincerely enjoy one another's company. I knew then, if never before, that we had produced something very special. This feeling is reinforced when I hear that 2, 3, 4 or more couples seek each other out to plan other vacations throughout the year. The fact that so many families show up also attests to the unique atmosphere that pervades our get togethers. Shelley and John Mayberry have practically grown up in front of us. Eric and Mark Frazier can probably read a road map better than most of us, and is there a Hard Rock Cafe location anywhere that is not represented in Scott Wolfe's T-shirt collection?

The second event that made our trip to Phoenix special was the arrival of UH-1 #67-17606 at the static display area. The fact that this original C/158 issue aircraft was present along with so many who flew her (including Ken Mayberry and Dave Rayburn who DXed her in RVN) quickly hit home with everyone, including the news media. I am enclosing an article submitted to the 101st ABN. ASSN. magazine by Larry Frazier that explains everything but the emotions stirred by sitting in the same cockpit 25 years later.

ON TO PHILADELPHIA

When we started doing this Phoenix reunion thing it was not necessarily our intention to make it an annual event. It has kind of turned out that way however. As the VHPA reunion moves around the country, it presents an opportunity for those who cannot attend a reunion 3000 miles away, but can attend if it is closer to home, to participate. Also, people who would like to attend every couple of years will at least find some old friends. At this time I cannot tell you who or how many will be in Philly, but once again we will have a sizable contingent.

VHCMA

As they did in Phoenix, the VietNam Helicopter Crew Members Assn. will have their reunion at the same time in Philadelphia. Larry Frazier was the only crewchief of ours that attended in Phoenix, however since last July, Larry has received copies of C/158 company rosters from the Army Records Center, has procured a CD ROM with a nationwide telephone directory, has gone to work and has already located a Number of crewmembers. Most were unaware of either of our organizations.

The February issue of the VHPA newsletter is being sent to all names in the database, member or not. The newsletter will contain some of the basic reunion information, should you need it. I understand the Wyndham Franklin Plaza is filling quickly. As always, if you are planning on attending or have a question, I will maintain a list of those I have heard from. Although July 4th weekend is not a good time for some, it is evidently preferable to the majority.

I am enclosing a copy of the detail page on the reunion that will be printed in the VHPA newsletter. You guys will have a 2-3 week jump on general publication, so don't get caught in a Motel 6 in Cherry Hill, N.J. as your closest hotel option.

And finally, some of you may notice that this letter is not as aesthetically pleasing to the eye as others have been. This new machine is supposed to make it pretty, fix any spelling arrows, and, place punctuation where it is supposed to go. Also, the grammar check ain't working to good either. I just wanted you to know it wasn't me.

Also, a new roster is in the works, so how about everybody staying put for a couple of years. Next person who moves types the updated roster.



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Our newly elected Governor is Angelo Malone (327), who joins Fred Ranck (327 VN) on the Board of Governors.

Airborne
Denis Parsons

Co. G 506 PIR WWII Reunion

The "G" Company reunion will be held May 12, 13, 14 and 15, 1994, at the Holiday Inn (HOLIDOME) in Lafayette, Louisiana. Wives and guests are invited. Contact Malcolm Martin, 110 Wembley Rd., Lafayette, Louisiana 70503. Phone (318) 984-6679.

Aviation News

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn. and the Vietnam Helicopter Crewmembers Assn. held a joint reunion in Scottsdale, Arizona over the Fourth of July long weekend. This reunion had over 900 pilots and about 150 crewmembers in attendance with their families. I don't have a complete list of 101st Assn. members that attended, but did run into Bob Acklen, Jim Smith, Ken Mayberry, Dave Wolfe, Bob Brooks, Gerry Morgan, Larry Wagoner and Ken Roach. Several mini-reunions were held for several of the 101st units that served in Vietnam and were well attended. The Ghostriders (A/158th Avn), the Phoenix (C/158th Avn), the Redskins (D/158th Avn) and the Black Widows (C/101st Avn) were the units that had these gatherings. Bob Acklen and Jim Smith did a tremendous job of attending these gatherings and spreading the word about the 101st Airborne Division Association. Bob had a table set up at the pilots' reunion headquarters and handed out applications and answered questions about our association. Our hats are off to you guys for a job well done! Our association should benefit from this by getting quite a few new members.



Bob Acklen sitting at his 101st Association table at the VHPA Reunion, July 1993 in Scottsdale, AZ. (Frazier photo)

'606' Returns to the Nest

During the reunion in Scottsdale, an unbelievable story unfolded to make it a gathering worth remembering. One of our helicopters that the 101st Division used in Vietnam was present to welcome all of us — old '606' is still alive and well!

The story started a couple of years ago when we started researching what ever happened to the original 20 UH-1H Huey Helicopters that were issued to C company, 158th Avn. Bn. at Ft. Riley, Kansas prior to being deployed to Vietnam. Mike Sloniker, who was working in the Pentagon at the time generously did the research and found eight of the original twenty helicopters. Aircraft 67-17606 was found in an Army National Guard unit in Phoenix, Arizona.



Dave Rayburn and Ken Mayberry being interviewed by a Phoenix TV station. (Frazier photo)

This really surprised all of us because the last time we saw this aircraft it was used in the evacuation of Firebase Ripcord in 1970 and received a lot of damage from a mortar round that landed near it on Ripcord. Ken Mayberry and Dave Rayburn were the pilots flying 606 that day and after evacuating the five men that were seriously wounded by the mortar round to the closest medical facilities, they immediately shut the aircraft down there due to damages incurred. Everyone thought the helicopter was probably dumped into the South China Sea because of the damage it received. Little did we know that a "Phoenix" bird would end up in Phoenix, AZ, and at a "Phoenix" reunion 23 years later.

Jack Glennon, a former Phoenix pilot and our ringleader for reunions wrote the National Guard unit several months ago and asked if they could bring '606' to the reunion. Most of the twenty or so of us that attended the reunion heard about it when we arrived and had our fingers crossed but we didn't have a firm commitment from the unit. That morning, I heard and saw a Huey in the air from



L to R: Bill Brown, Jack Glennon, Ken Mayberry, Larry Frazier, Tom Gladden and John Michaelson with A/C 67-17606 in Phoenix. (Frazier photo)

our hotel and couldn't wait to get over to see if it was '606'. They landed it behind the Registry Resort which was the headquarters for the VHPA. We couldn't believe it! Most of the Phoenix pilots present had flown '606' at one time or another, but to have three aircraft



Phoenix with A/C '606' — L to R: Bob Brooks, Larry Frazier, Dave Wolfe, John Kamps (rear), Ken Mayberry, Dave Rayburn, Jack Glennon and John Michaelson. (Frazier photo)

commanders present that flew her on a regular basis there was unbelievable. Bob Brooks picked the aircraft up at the factory and flew it to Ft. Riley. Jamie Navarette was the first A/C and took it to Vietnam. Jack Glennon flew the helicopter on a regular basis during his tour until he went home in early 1970 and Ken Mayberry became the aircraft commander and was the last one to fly it. Two local television stations heard this story unfolding and came over to interview these pilots. We all met Tom Gladden the current crew chief and several pilots tried to perform preflight inspections, etc. Several fuselage patches were very obvious, even though the aircraft has had a new tailboom, paint, etc. What a day! A lot of memories came back that day and it won't be one we'll soon forget either. The reunion wasn't another 'Tailhook', but I did overhear someone calling it 'Cargo Hook.' A good time was had by all and the pilots and crewmembers are planning next year's reunion in Philadelphia.

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Find The Buddies You Served With In The Army

How To Locate Anyone Who Is Or Has Been In The Military: Armed Forces Locator Directory

The book that has helped thousands locate thousands!

The 1993 edition has been expanded to 264 pages which describe every possible method to locate current, retired, and former members of Armed Forces.

Here is some of the valuable information covered in this unique book:

- How to locate any of 27 million veterans.
- How to obtain copies of individual military personnel and medical records.
- How to obtain copies of unit rosters (with individual names and service numbers), after action reports and many other records and reports.
- How to obtain someone's Social Security number.
- And numerous other ways to locate hard to find people (military or civilian) even without their Social Security number.

The author, Lt. Col. Richard S. Johnson (US Army, Retired), is the nation's foremost expert on locating people with a military connection.

Foreword by General William C. Westmoreland.

***One free Surname Search from
the National Telephone Directory
with each book purchased.
This is a \$30.00 value.***

Send check, money order or VISA/MastCard number and expirations date for \$23.00 (which includes postage and handling) to:

**101st Airborne Division Association
Post Office Box 586
Sweetwater, TN 37874-0586**

1994 Reunion

Overflow hotels booked for reunion

Gentlemen and ladies, it is getting time to make some decisions regarding your lodging in Philadelphia.

Our reunion hotel and headquarters Hooch is the **Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel**. We have reserved 650 rooms at the Wyndham for the weekend at a rate of \$69, plus tax, per night.

The Wyndham is the largest hotel in town and also one of the nicest, but we expect to fill it and, therefore, we have made arrangements at other hotels, also.

The reservation phone number is (215) 448-2000. If you want to stay at the Wyndham, I suggest you make your reservations early, if not today.

Our overflow hotels consist of:

- **Holiday Inn Midtown**, which is not to be confused with the Holiday Inn Centre City where the Helicopter Crew Members Association is headquartered.

The Holiday Inn Midtown is a few blocks from the Wyndham, but is near most of the other overflow hotels. The hotel can be reached at (215) 561-7500. The rate for the Holiday Inn will be \$65 per night.

- **KormanSuites Hotel**. While slightly farther away than the other overflow hotels, this hotel has very nice apartment-type suites for \$69 per night, but it is six to seven blocks from the Wyndham.

The KormanSuites can be reached at (215) 569-7000.

- About halfway between the Wyndham and the historic area is the **Doubletree Hotel**, also at \$69, plus tax, per night.

While a little farther from our activities, it is a very nice hotel and has lots of amenities to offer. The phone reservation number is (215) 893-1600.

- Then there is the **Hotel Atop the Bellevue**, a luxury hotel that offers a more historic flavor of the city. This hotel is located near the Doubletree.

Because it is a luxury hotel, the rates are \$90 per night, plus taxes, for rooms that normally rent for close to \$200 per night. Contact Meg Evans directly for reservations at (215) 790-2816.

- **Embassy Suites**, across the street from the Wyndham, is offering luxury suites for \$95 a night for one to four people. Each additional guest after four is \$15 per night.

These rooms include a kitchen area, wet bar and microwave, and a balcony.

The rate includes a free cooked-to-order breakfast and two hours of complimentary cocktails each afternoon. Embassy Suites can be contacted at (215) 561-1776.

Some of the above hotels have two-bedroom suites for those of you with larger families or those

who want to double up with another member or with another family. They also are offering those suites at greatly reduced rates.

When calling any of these hotels, be sure to mention you are with the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association to get the correct rate.

To make things easier for you, we will be running a shuttle bus between the Wyndham Franklin Plaza, the overflow hotels and the historical area on Friday, Saturday and Sunday during the day and the hotels only in the evenings for the dances and banquet.

Please be sure to make your reservations as early as possible!

While we have made arrangements for what we feel will be an adequate number of rooms, we are optimistic this will be our largest reunion ever and attendance may exceed our planning and expectations. There will be a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in town that may take up all available "close-in" rooms that we don't.

Your reunion committee has gone to a lot of effort to secure these accommodations for you and we feel they are the best available. We sincerely think you will enjoy your stay in Philadelphia and if this is going to be your first reunion, it should be a VERY memorable one.

Schedule of events for VHPA Reunion '94

Thursday, June 30

- Early registration.
- On your own.
- Entertainment at night.
- Trip to Washington, DC.
- Trip to Atlantic City Casino.

Friday, July 1

- Registration.
- Static Aircraft Display at Philadelphia Navy Yard. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Mini-reunions.
- Cocktail Party at the Wyndham, with live entertainment and dancing.

• Crewchief party at Holiday Inn. All VHPA members invited.

Saturday, July 2

- Registration.
- Golf Tournament.
- 5k Run.
- Luncheon — Guest speaker will be retired Lt. Col. Jay Strayer, Son Tay Raid pilot.
- Mini-reunions.
- Dance — Live band and dancing. 8 p.m.

Sunday, July 3

- Registration.
- Non-denominational church

service. 8 a.m.

- Morning — membership business meeting.
- Morning — Ladies function.
- Mini reunions.
- Cocktail party and Banquet, 7 p.m.
- Live band and dancing.

Monday, July 4

- Check-out day, or
- VHPA members have been invited by the City of Philadelphia to participate in the annual July 4th Parade with the North Carolina Chapter and helicopter float.