

Dexter Florence from Arkadelphia Arkansas. Not your everyday names, but it would be in Arkadelphia to honor Dexter that another example of the strength of the bond we have earned as Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crewmen would be demonstrated. The last time I witnessed a similar demonstration of a unit's strong bond was the October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1990 funeral for a former MIA C/158<sup>th</sup> crew at Arlington National Cemetery. Details are in Tom Marshall's book, Price of Exit.

Larry Cain, probably the quietest person I have ever met, took charge of an effort to rename the airport at Arkadelphia, Arkansas to Dexter Florence Municipal Airport. Dexter Florence, a scout pilot lieutenant in D/17 Cav, has the distinction of being the second to the last scout pilot lost in Vietnam, when he died in October 1972. He was one of ten Henderson State University graduates who died in Vietnam and his parents lived in Arkadelphia.

Why does the town's name, Arkadelphia, ring a bell? It was ravaged by a tornado less than 18 months ago; it has two Universities, Henderson State and Ouachita, in a town of 10,000 folks, and a spirit of small town America that represents Americas strength: its people. This town showed up at the dedication of the airport.

What touched me was to see the outpouring of VHPA and VHCMA members that also showed up. Below is the list:

Members of D/17 Cav:

Bob Whitford	Massachusetts
Mike Williams	California
Corey Thompson	Minnesota
Doug Brown	California
Mike Koone	Washington
Richard Cunnare	Alabama
John Robinson	Oregon
Hugh Mills	Missouri
John Bridgers	Tennessee

Other VHPA/VHCMA members:

Larry Cain	Arkansas
John Grow	Texas
John Seabolt	Texas
Chuck Carlson	Texas
Ken Paulson	Virginia.
Tom Payne	Oklahoma
Mike Sloniker	Virginia

Ft Campbell KY's 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division also showed up to honor this day by sending the troop commander of D D Troop 2/17 Cav, two OH-58Ds plus the 2/17<sup>th</sup> Color guard.. Ft Benning, Georgia was represented by the Silver Wings Exhibition Parachutists . The Arkansas ARNG and Army Reserves were also in attendance.

What made this ceremony unique? Chuck Carlock pulled his OH-6 (like the one that Florence flew) up from Texas for a static display. He also brought his amazing collection of artifacts which he had displayed at Ft Worth, and which was such a strong factor in the success of the 98 reunion. He was ably assisted by John Grow and the 71<sup>st</sup> AHC assn. organizer, Ron Seabolt. The family members and the community were seeing, close hand, the aircraft and the weapons of our war. Apparently they emptied