



The VHHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

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a 1967 USO
Show Tour –
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FROM THE STAFF AT VHHPA HQ!

We want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a great Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas! We are looking forward to next year. You are an awesome group of guys and we appreciate everything you have done for our country!

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To the President of the VHPA,

Moon, it is with pleasure that I send you my Annual Dues for my membership in the VHPA. All of you guys in the EC are a classy bunch and I appreciate your efforts in keeping us all connected.

Last year's Christmas in Vietnam issue of the Aviator, especially the article on the Bob Hope Christmas Tours, caught my attention so if you don't mind, I'll "bend your ear" a little by telling you of my visit to his Christmas Show on December 20, 1966.

I had been in Vietnam for only a short time when I my orders were to fly with another pilot on an admin run to Pleiku. It was to be just another flight to our 52nd Aviation Battalion Headquarters and the date was December 20th, 1966.

After landing I had some free time and soon I was invited to ride with some other GI's to attend the first show of Bob Hope's Far Eastern Christmas Tour. We piled into a quarter-ton truck for the ride over to the 4th Infantry Division's Camp Ivy outside of Pleiku. Because we arrived in good time, our group found seating space only about 50 feet from the stage. I recall watching around us as over 3,000 soldiers of all ranks quickly filled the area around the large stage.

Then remember seeing Bob Hope open the show, his principal co-star was Raquel Welch. Also there that day to entertain us was Miss World (whom I believe was from Egypt) and many other lovely girls and funny guys that graced the stage for the two-plus hour show. The show was great and received many periods of applause for Bob's fantastic efforts in bringing this high-level of entertainment to the troops in Vietnam. In a letter to my mother the next day I wrote "Quite a day and I would not have missed it for all the rice in Southeast Asia!"

*Again, thanks to all of you in the EC
of the VHPA for all you do for us!*

Willis Jerry Heydenberk

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E-mail items to The Aviator at: Aviator@vhpa.org

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2013 AND 2014 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES UPDATE

If you ordered a paper or CD 2013 membership directory, you should have received it by now. If you have not, please call HQ at 800-505-VHPA (8472) and let them know. As a reminder, the password protected online membership directory at <https://directory.vhpa.org> is our primary membership directory included with your dues. It is updated weekly and contains phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The paper and CD directories are obsolete by the time you receive them and do not contain phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The history section in each printed directory is also just an abbreviated example of the full history that is online also at <https://directory.vhpa.org>. This year's history section is about helicopter maintenance in Vietnam and was written by Joe Hardy.

If you did not pre-order the 2013 paper or CD directories, you can still get one as long as they last by calling HQ. They are \$20 each.

You can pre-order next year's (2014) membership directories for \$15.00 each, the price for the CD versions of the directory will remain at \$10.00. Be sure to do this before the 1 September 2014 cut-off date. Please note this is a price increase over previous years and is set so that we can come closer to breaking even in meeting this year's proven cost of \$18.00 each for printing and bulk-mailing each copy of the directory. And we expect our costs to go up in the future. If you have already paid in advance for future directories at \$10 each, those obligations are grandfathered in so you are all set.

Our directory mailing expenses go up once the initial bulk-mail shipment has been completed, and that's why we must charge \$20 per-copy. We print just a limited number of extra copies so if you want one, please contact HQ right away.

Any questions, please let me know.

*Gary Roush, directory editor
webmaster@vhpa.org*

To the Members of the VHPA~

from Frank Bengtson, Jr.

My Father died on 7 May 1971 when his OH-6A scout helicopter he was piloting was hit by enemy fire and crashed and burned near the Chup rubber plantation in Cambodia. My Dad, 1LT Frank Bengtson and his crew, WO1 David Paul Meyer and SP4 Larry Wayne Rothel, were the last three Apache Troop (A/1/9 CAV) KIAs in the Vietnam War.

While in Vietnam, Dad fell in love with a Vietnamese girl and I, Frank Junior, was the result. I was born five months after my Dad's death and Dad's parents helped both my mother and I come to America; and eventually they ended up raising me as their own.

Thanks to the efforts of "Little Sister" Julie Kink and the Family Contacts Committee of the Vietnam Helicopter Flight Crew Network (<http://www.vhfcn.org/>), I have made contact with John Donnelly, another A Troop scout pilot who was friends with my Dad. But I would also like to hear from others who served with my Dad, so if you have memories to share of the scout pilot they called "Animal," please email me at: [REDACTED]

Last, I would also like you all to know that a movie about us Gold Star Children has just been released. If you go to: <http://goldstarchildren.org/> you will find both the movie's "trailer" and a schedule of the movies showing throughout the country. After Veterans Day, the movie itself will be available on the same website.

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From Bill "Moon" Mullen, President of the VHPA



WOULD YOU GIVE 10 CENTS A DAY TO A FELLOW VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOT?

Almost 9,000 of you will be reading this column and probably all of you would answer...YES!

Now you are thinking....OK Moon...what's the catch?

I'm asking you for 10 cents a day for 365 days, a total of approximately \$36.00. Wow you say, isn't that close to the cost of VHPA membership for one year? And that's why I am asking for your donations.

There are literally 1,000's of guys out there we have lost touch with. They have never been VHPA members and they are the ones we want to give a taste of what the VHPA is today. We have their addresses. We have some phone numbers. We have some email addresses....but we still can't find them.

I think that if we give them a one year membership, where they get six (6) copies of our award winning Aviator magazine, they will know that we miss them and want them back as we all get closer to that final "check ride".

New members that have joined in the last couple of years are excited to be hearing stories, telling stories, searching out old friends from flight school and their Vietnam units. They are also attending reunions and glad they finally belong...they are being "Welcomed Home" as only an Aviator-to-Aviator contact can.

It is easy to sponsor a new guy....just call headquarters at 1-800-505-8472 or e-mail Sherry at HQ@VHPA.org. Give her your credit card number and tell them how many guys you want to sponsor. You can also mail a check to Headquarters: Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 2100 N. HWY 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX. 75050-1030. If you want to take it a step further and target an individual....talk to Mike Sheuerman, our membership chairman. He can also be reached through our headquarters.

Once you commit, you can then make other choices as to how your gift will be handled; i.e. to remain anonymous, to find and sponsor your flight class members, to sponsor pilots from your Vietnam unit, to find guys from your State etc.? If you don't have any special requests, let Mike suggest some.

Now as you read this I sense a reader's question. Moon, since this is your idea, "put your money where your mouth is"! The answer - my check to sponsor for several guys with this program has already cleared the bank!

Now how many of YOU out there are going to give 10 cents a day too? It's a holiday present that should make two people feel good.....both you and your new best friend. "BROTHER...CAN YOU SPARE ME A DIME?" In this case the answer is a resounding YES!

I am PROUD to be one of us! Happy Holidays, Welcome Home, God Bless You and God Bless the United States of America.

Let me know how we are doing...

e-mail: [redacted] today!
Moon



Moon flying Mohave's in the Vietnam Delta during the Christmas Season of 1963. He went on to say that "Flying Mohave's was the easy part, keeping the engine oil supply reservoir full was much harder and above my pay grade!"

From the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

This issue marks our fifth edition of our Christmas in Vietnam issue. Previous versions have mostly been filled with stories of "Big Name" entertainers, Bob Hope and Raquel Welch for instance but you know those shows were actually only a part of the USO's efforts to bring "stateside" entertainment to the troops stationed in Vietnam. So in this version of our "Christmas in Vietnam" issue, we're running the stories of some of the lesser known entertainers who took months out of their lives to make the trip across the Pacific Ocean and bring a little "Hometown USA" to our part of the world. I hope you enjoy these stories as well; all I can say is that every one of the entertainers we have contacted told me their visit to Vietnam changed their lives.

Next, I would like to talk about both our story contributors, and our Executive Council. When I accepted the job as Editor of the VHPA Aviator five years ago, about all that came with it was an inventory of less than ten unpublished stories. Now that number has swelled to an embarrassingly large number of unpublished stories and that's why something you send in to me today, doesn't immediately appear in the next Aviator. In fact, the problem got so large that I asked the EC to increase my budget to allow us to expand to 48 pages "just until I can get the unpublished stories inventory down to a manageable level". They approved the increase and the rest is history, but that's why you will notice the 2010 date of our "Reflections on a Military Funeral" story, its Christmas tone combined with a computer crash in 2011 seriously delayed that, and other stories from a timely printing in the Aviator. My apologies to our readers, our author Mr. Lee and anyone else who might have known Mike Wheeler for the delay in publishing the story. The good news is that we'll probably be at a 48 page Aviator for at least another three to four issues, but honestly, that part is mostly up to you, our readers and our members.

About once a month I receive either an e-mail or a letter asking "Why don't you print more 'Chinook' and/or 'Marine Corps' and/or 'Air Force' and/or 'Sky Crane' and/or 'Flare Ship' and/or 'Dust Off' and/or at least five more separate types, of stories? Well the simple answer Gentlemen, is that I would be glad to print more of all types of such stories; but I can't just make them magically appear on my desk, they must come from YOU. So, do your part – send us a story to run in the Aviator, if it's funny,

send it to me by the middle of next January so it can run in our annual "Lighter Side of Vietnam" issue, if it's another type of story send it in as soon as you are ready. Remember, I'll also be asking you for a photo or two to run in your story, if nothing else just one of you while you were stationed in Vietnam so be prepared for that. And I'll also add your e-mail address to the end of each story so that others can either congratulate, or commiserate with you on your efforts, so let me know if that that's not OK with you.

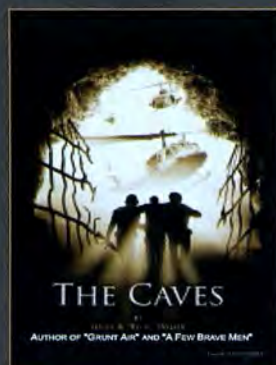
Also, I want you to know that I am just like most of you in the Association; I'm certainly not a computer expert and honestly, I am just a "two-finger" typist. So, anything you send me in the mail, a letter, an excerpt from a speech you gave, a story about you that's cut out of a newspaper, an obituary you spotted in your local newspaper etc., needs to be typed up so it can be set to print in the Aviator. The moral to that story is that it is always best to either e-mail me the original text file, or a link to the published story, or be prepared for the story to sit on my desk for a while. In real life, I'm trying to get a herd of cattle through an extended drought over at our place in east Texas, and frankly I stay pretty busy over there and don't have unlimited hours to devote to the Aviator and/or re-typing your story. That's for all such submissions except for our TAPS entries, those will continue to receive immediate placement.

Next, Member Paul Winkel, Col. USA, Ret., wanted me to let you know that the man that took the Cover Photograph of the Smiling Tigers in Vietnam back in 1965 was Cpt. Frank Newman, a German-American citizen and a member of D Company, 229th Aviation Battalion. It is a great photo and he deserves all the recognition he receives for it.



Last, please accept our warmest wishes for a great Holiday Season from the staff of the VHPA Aviator (Tom Kirk, my volunteer Assistant Editor; Kay Taylor, our Graphic Designer and myself). And Thanks for your support of the VHPA Aviator!

David Adams



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The Caves

by John R. "Rick" Taylor, Author of "Grunt Air" and "A Few Brave Men"

Scheduled Release September 7, 2013

"The Caves", the sequel to "Grunt Air", begins in Washington, where a radio intercept officer decodes a classified message from the head of the North Vietnam office that controls the captured American and Allied Prisoners of War. The message instructed the camp commanders in Laos to be prepared to execute the POWs on command. This sets the massive military machine into action to find a way to save the POWs. Due to very limited time and internal Pentagon turf wars, normal units could not be used.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was convinced by Brigadier General Herbert to use the unknown Grunt Air unit stationed in the Philippines. The story vividly describes the life and torture of the POW prior to their scheduled execution date. Major Dan Roman, commander of Grunt Air, gets the assignment and launches a very unique and imaginative operation plan to get the prisoners out of Laos before they are killed.

The novel covers the exhaustive intelligence gathering on Laos while the unit trains and prepares for deployment. A few twists occur along the way to make life for Roman a little difficult. It tests his leadership and his resolve in accomplishing the mission before the unspeakable happens to the POWs. Right on schedule the mission launches, but not exactly as planned.

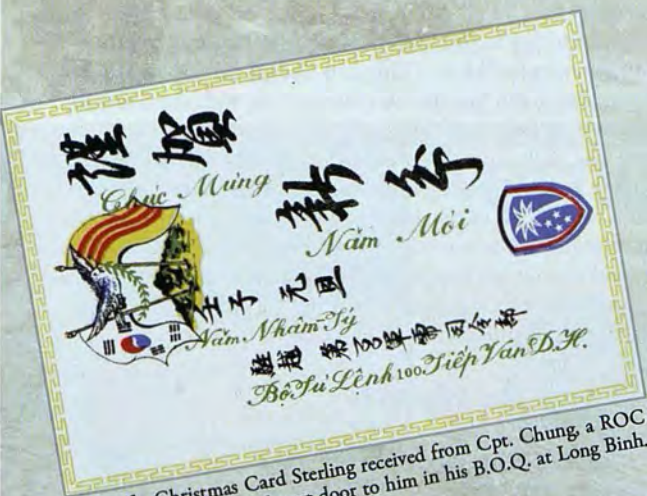
Visit Us on the Web @: <http://afbm-blackbart.com/caves.htm>

"Souvenirs' of Christmas Past"

VHPA Member Sterling Hart (E-mail address: [REDACTED]) sent us these "Souvenirs" of Christmas Past" from his two tours in Vietnam. One set was saved from the Christmas of 1968 when he was flying with the 271st ASH Company out of Can Tho AAF. The second set was saved from the Christmas of 1971 while Sterling was flying with the Flight Section of HHC, First Avn. Bde. out of Sanford AAF in Long Binh.



Christmas of 1971 - Christmas Card that Sterling received from his Hooch Maid, an older Catholic Vietnamese woman.



Scan of a Christmas Card Sterling received from Cpt. Chung, a ROC Army Officer who lived next door to him in his B.O.Q. at Long Binh. Note the Korean flag and the Korean text.



These two photos are of both the front cover and the inside menu for the 1968 Christmas Day dinner menu with the 271st Aviation Christmas.



The M.P. unit responsible for security at Plantation AAF decorated one of their armored cars for Christmas back in 1971.

CHRISTMAS DAY MENU

Shrimp Cocktail	Crisp Saltines
Cocktail Sauce	Roast Tom Turkey
Cornbread Dressing	Bread Dressing
Giblet Gravy	Cranberry Sauce
Mashed Potatoes	Glazed Sweet Potatoes
Buttered Green Beans and Mushrooms	Assorted Relish Tray
Hot Parker House Rolls	Butter Patties
Mincemeat Pie	Pumpkin Pie with Whipped Cream
Fruit Cake	Salted Nuts
Hard Candy	Assorted Fresh Fruit
Coffee	Tea
	Milk



What Christmas in Vietnam would be complete without Bob Hope? Here's a photo taken of the crowd that had gathered in Long Bin for Bob's Christmas Tour of 1971. "I can't remember the unit of the hovering Chinook but it represented just one of several helicopter flight crews that gave up their chance to see the show by ferrying in the troops from the boonies instead."



Christmas of 1971, decorations put up at Stanford AAF by our base Chaplin.

Christmas of 1969, in Bear Cat, Vietnam

By Ben R. "Gentle Ben" Games

To make a short story long, as I am often known to do, our story of Christmas of 1969 in Bear Cat, Vietnam begins long before that day...

To begin, I started my military aviation career with flying bombers and night fighters in WWII for the Army Air Corps; during the Korean War I flew fighter jets for the US Air Force and in Vietnam, I flew CH-47's for the US Army. I'm also incredibly lucky to be married to my wife Helen who also is no stranger to the Aviation business. She is a just-accomplished pilot in both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft; in fact Helen wears the silver wings of Whirly Girl #86, signifying that she is the 86th women in the world to hold a helicopter pilot license.

We have two sons, Ben Jr., and Jon and in February and March of 1965, Helen and I took a trip to Vietnam to both satisfy our curiosity about the struggle going on over there and to visit our son, Navy Petty Officer third class Ben R. Gains Jr., who was stationed in Camp Tien Sha in Da Nang while fighting with the Marine Corps. A prominent part of our tour was the opportunity to witness firsthand the workings of US Army Aviation. In fact, I was so impressed with the Army's air operations in Vietnam, that I decided I'd like to be a part of it!

When we returned home, I offered my flying experience to my home state (Michigan) National Guard, and was promptly accepted. I was first sent to Fort Rucker for initial Army aviation training and was able to stay for CH-47 Transition. The fall of 1969 found us (it wasn't exactly an "Accompanied Tour" but both Helen and I were in Bear Cat together), living in Vietnam while I flew Chinooks for B Co., 228th Avn Bn, 1st Cav Division. To make matters even better, our youngest son Jon was now also serving with the Army in Vietnam and we were all able to get together several times before he rotated home.

But the Christmas of 1969 was really something special, by then Helen had firmly immersed herself with working to improve the plight of orphaned Vietnamese children. One of the projects she took on was the job of providing a Santa Clause for their annual Christmas Party. I was recruited to play Santa, our unit was tasked to fly in children from all over III Corps for the party and when it was over, Helen, Jon and I retired to our "quarters" (a parked mobile home) on Bear Cat for what was to be a very memorable Christmas Dinner. One that all of us will cherish memories of forever.

Enjoy the photos!

Ben R. Games, PhD, Major,
CW-4, USA & USAF, TCN-6,
Commissioned Army Aviation Class 43K



While with B Co., 228th Avn Bn, 1st Cav Division Ben is awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for Heroism while acting as the A/C for the CH-47 Aircraft "City of Elkhart". On 6 November 1969, Ben was shot down during a firefight at LZ Vivian. Ben eventually served as a senior pilot for the First Cavalry Division, the 5th, 8th, 13th and the 20th Air Forces, and both the Indiana and Michigan Air National Guards.



Merry Christmas!



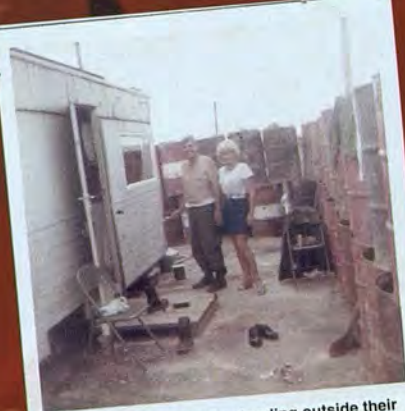
Helen & BEN
Ben and Helen on their "Family Wheels" in 1969, a Honda 50 motorbike. "We went everywhere on that little motorbike!" declared Helen Games later on.



Jon brings his girlfriend home to enjoy Christmas Dinner with his family, 1969



SP4 Jon Games visits with his Dad, Ben Games on the UH-1 flightline in Bear cat, Vietnam, 1969



Ben and Helen Games standing outside their Bear Cat home in November of 1969



Jon Games helps the Vietnamese orphans unload from the CH-47 that brought them to the Christmas Party and onto 2 1/2 ton trucks for the ride over to the Base Chapel in Bear Cat.



Our author, Ben Games playing Santa Clause for the Vietnamese Orphans' Christmas Party at Bear Cat, 1969



Helen helps unload the Vietnamese Orphans from a 2 1/2 ton truck that brought them from the Flight Line to the Base Chapel for the Christmas Party.

Editor's Note: When I received the above story, I saw that it centered on a Christmas in Vietnam theme and so I opted to wait several months to prepare it for inclusion in the Aviator. Unfortunately, last month when I went to VHPA.org to confirm Mr. Games' address so I could send him a copy of the story to review, I discovered that he had passed away on 13 June of this year. It shouldn't have surprised me, after all part of the material he sent me for this story included the fact that he had learned to fly in 1942 in the Army's Stearman bi-plane and by the time WWII had ended, he was qualified in P-40's, P-51's, P-61's, and F-82 night fighters as well as B-17, B-24, B-25, B-26 and B-29 bombers. In fact, he was already 48 years old at the time of this 1969 story about flying CH-47's in Vietnam. I said it shouldn't have surprised me, but now I am truly sorry he never got to see his story in print in the Aviator. Hopefully, if you have enjoyed reading it here, or perhaps even knew "Gentle Ben" during his time in the Army, then perhaps you might also consider sending Helen and his kids a card to show your gratitude for both this story and for his service to our country. Her address is: [REDACTED]

David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator



The Games family, photo taken in 2006. From left, Ben R Games Jr., (three tours in Vietnam with the US Navy/Marine Corps), Helen M. Games (Bear Cat 1968-1970), Jon R. Games (US Army, Bear Cat, 1969) and Ben R Games Sr., PhD, (US Army, Bear Cat, 1967-1970).

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TANK WITCH

Doug Baker, a Vietnam War veteran and his National Guard tank crew are whisked through a warp in time and into another dimension. They have been summoned by a hag witch and find themselves in a medieval land, where they are unwittingly thrown into the social conflicts of the kingdom.

TOLTANCINA

Archeology assistant professor Austin Tripp, an expert in Mesoamerican civilizations, accepts an assignment to a recently discovered, ancient Toltec city. The lack of any artifacts shrouds the city in a mystery as to why the entire population vanished, and took everything with them.



VHPA Member Bill Hatounian is a 24-year military veteran and a retired Army Aviator. He served with the 1st Squadron, 4th United States Cavalry in Vietnam and after active duty, he flew with the 997th AHC of the Arizona Army National Guard. He has recently retired from being both a pilot and a Lieutenant with the Phoenix Police Department and is enjoying retired life by writing books, being active and traveling with his wife.

A Tale of Two Christmases

by VHPA Life Member Mel Latham

A Christmas Past

I was all of 20 years old when I went to Vietnam; I arrived in-country on December 7th, 1968 and was assigned as a helicopter pilot with the 4th Infantry Division, based in the Central Highlands near Pleiku. That was the good thing about it; I was a mountain kid from Bishop in California's Sierra Nevada's. Our unit had two Aviation Companies; A Company was the "Blackjacks", they flew Slicks, and B Company was the "Gamblers", they flew Gunships. I was a co-pilot at that stage; I was a Gambler.

Christmas of 1968 found the team I flew with flying missions out by the Cambodian Border. The area was filled with rich mountainous terrain and deep river valleys. The tallest mountain even had a slight dusting of snow.

There was a lull in our activity around lunch time, so we landed at Plei D'Jerang, a village out by the Cambodian border. There was a Special Forces Camp nearby with the same name. We set down on the parking apron and broke out some C-Rations for lunch. I think we were only there for a half hour, or so, when we heard the drone of a fixed-wing prop-job overhead. It was a De Havilland Caribou; an Air Force cargo plane. Not small like a De Havilland Beaver, or its big sister, the Otter. But the Caribou wasn't large by any means either. It was the perfect plane for getting supplies into FOB's. As this one got closer, we noticed that its nose was painted up like Santa, and it had "Santabou" painted on its side.

Santabou landed and taxied over to the apron not far from us as the Special Forces guys came out to greet it and take on their supplies. But Santabou had more than ordinary supplies... As the tail ramp dropped, one of the pilots, dressed up in a Santa costume (wonder if that was fire retardant) greeted all with a jolly ho, ho, ho, as the rest of the crew rolled out a wheeled bar. I can't begin to remember all that they had stocked, but nobody complained - we all had a good drink and toasted each other to a Merry Christmas and a safe trip home.

Fast-forward 30 years to 1998. I had a full-time job with the Army at Fort Lewis Washington. By then I had become an Electrical Inspector and Project Manager with Ft. Lewis Public Works. But I had also taken on a part-time job with Eagle Hardware, later bought-out by Lowes. I worked evenings in their electrical and lighting department doing my best to keep some customers from burning their houses down. The next department over was the tool dept where Jim Priest worked, another RVN Vet and a friend from Ft Lewis. There was another Jim working in tools also, an older, crotchety kind of guy. He was also an RVN Vet; a retired Air Force Colonel and since he knew I had been a helicopter pilot, we shot the breeze (War Stories) now and then. During one of those times, Jim mentioned something about Caribous. I had only made one or two trips in a Caribou, but I thought they were kind-of cool; a real seat-of-the-pants kind of plane. I told Jim about my Santabou Christmas. That put a grin on his crotchety face as he said Holy Shit that was me, I flew the Santabou! We discovered that we had met that Christmas Day over in Vietnam! Jim and I kind-of bonded ever after over that - I suppose it's a Veteran thing...



Mel poses with pieces of a PSP runway just west of Kontum damaged by direct mortar hits.



Mel bags a little front-seat time in a Cobra at Camp Enari in 1968

A Modern-Day Christmas

Christmas of 2012 found me at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. I'm not active in the Army anymore, but I've worked for the Army most of my life. For now, I'm here in Afghanistan and am still trying to keep people from burning their house (or barracks) down, or getting shocked to death. As most of you know, the boss spent Christmas in Hawaii, and not wanting the rest of us civil servants to feel left out he also gave us Christmas Eve off - almost. All our contractors were on a regular schedule Christmas Eve, so we all put in eight hours, rather than the usual ten. No problem, we didn't come over here for the nightlife...

We enjoyed our Christmas party Monday afternoon from 3:00 till sometime around dinner time. I shared my Christmas in Vietnam stories, we had a visit from a descendant of one of the Wise Men (our Office Engineer) who was located with us on Bagram, he illuminated us with his great wisdom and intuition. He came forward, draped with a "camo" parka robe and a scarf wrapped around his head. (Remember Johnny Carson and his Great Kar-nack routine)? He had us in stitches with questions covering everything from the weather and politics, even to include some of us. i.e. - Q - Who does Mel call after he gets off the phone with his wife? A - AARP... We had a lot of fun.

Then we sang a round of Christmas Carols - we forgot to clear this part with the ACLU first as several of the Carols were actually about Christmas.

Then we had a "White Elephant" gift exchange. I got a box of good cigars! That lasted about four rounds till one of our ladies took them from me... Well, I went back up front and picked out another package. This time it was a small ornate brass urn. (It's just big enough for my ashes if my wife catches me packing it home). The funniest gift was an ornate hookah. Our clean-cut Mormon picked that one out... He lucked out when someone else bagged that one from him.

As we closed the party and got ready to head our separate ways (mostly to the chow hall) our 1st Sergeant reminded us that it's Christmas, and the Taliban will probably pay us a visit, right alongside Santa...

The night of Christmas Eve was calm, or at least I thought so - I didn't hear either the incoming or big voice; I slept in till 4:00. Realizing that 4:00 is just too damned early to get up on Christmas Day, I convinced myself to go back to bed and make sure the alarm was off. My phone rang at 7:00; it was Tim, the engineer I work with wanting to know if I was up for some morning PT. We went to the gym that morning and hit the treadmills inside rather than freezing out on Warrior Loop. About half an hour into the routine, we heard a loud thump. I said that it sounded a bit like incoming. Tim said to him it sounded like somebody had just dropped a set of weights; happens all the time, so we kept up with the cardio. After that we walked next door to the DFAC for breakfast. As we were leaving the DFAC, big voice comes over the air again with something about donning our IBE (Individual Battle Equipment). Turns out that loud noise we heard in the gym wasn't weights after all. Thank you Mr. Taliban, Merry Christmas to you too!

So there you have it, 45 years later and I'm back in a combat zone wearing flak gear but I got'ta tell you gents, these



Mel (in center) with the engineers from Prime Projects Intl. on the job at Bagram Airfield, 2012.

young men and women do us proud.

Do the best you can to enjoy the Christmas at hand, have yourself a Merry Christmas, stay warm, and have a cup of your favorite beverage. I also hope someone out there will have a small toast to those of us over here; and to others who can't be home with their loved ones. Hell, I wouldn't mind if one of you had a nice cup of hot spiced wine just for us at Bagram...

God Bless & Merry Christmas

Mel Latham

Gambler 37, VHPA Life Member, Member of the Washington State Chapter of the VHPA

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

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Christmas Day of 1967

By Bob Hartley



(from the left) Crew Chief Sgt. Fuller; WO Dave Sebright, our A.C.; our Navy Seabee "strap-hanger" and WO Bob Hartley.



I graduated from flight school at the end of November, 1967 Class 67-19 at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

After being home for 13 days I reported to Oakland, California to be sent to Vietnam. I was enlisted throughout flight school and became a Warrant Officer upon graduation. I was standing in a long line to be issued my jungle uniforms and the Sargent keep calling Sir, oh Sir, up here. I was looking around for the officer he was trying to get his attention, when the enlisted man in line next to me said, he means you. So I went to the front of the line. I liked being a Warrant Officer.

I arrived in Saigon and was processed through and assigned to the 176th Assault Helicopter Company in Chu Lai. When the plane left Saigon it made a lot of stops and kept heading north. I thought they were taking me to Hanoi. Finally, we landed in Chu Lai. From the Airport to the Company Area the driver said that the Bob Hope Show was there today, so I missed the show. The best part of the war and I missed it. Not a good sign.

After several days getting settled in, I was given my first flight on December 24, 1967, Christmas Eve Day. I was flying with WO Dave Sebright IP, Crew Chief Sgt. Fuller and the door gunner who was a Navy Seabee. Dave was showing me the area and explained operations in Vietnam. As a FNG, I did not know what to expect and was glad we had not been shot at. We went to a firebase just north of My Lai to pick up a POW and take him to Chu Lai. He was Viet Cong and had been captured days before and was interrogated by two South Vietnamese soldiers and had not given them any information. He was loaded on to the helicopter, blind folded and his hands bound behind his back. He squatted on the floor and the two interrogators sat on the seats. I was flying about 100 feet above the ground and we got into a rain storm with low visibility. Chu Lai ground control told us there was not traffic in the area but all of a sudden, a South Vietnamese CH-34 helicopter was right in front of us. Dave Sebright took over control of the aircraft, pulled pitch and we climbed over the top of the CH-34, missing it by a few feet.

As we pulled pitch to climb, the engine had a compressor stall and we could not regain RPM, we landed hard in a rice paddy. What saved us was Dave's skill and airmanship, and the mud in the rice paddy that softened the landing.

We all got out of the aircraft and checked to make sure that everyone was okay. No injuries. We now realize that we cannot see the POW. Remembering he was blindfolded and his hands were tied behind his back, we found that he was flipped out of the helicopter and was 100 feet away, face down in the water. He could just get his head up just enough to breathe. The POW thought this was some sort of torture and was now telling the interrogators not to do that again to him. He began singing like a bird, telling where the guns and ammunition were located, even turning in his relatives as Viet Cong.

The helicopter was repaired and sent to the 335th TC our direct support company in Chu Lai. We were all unhurt and glad to be alive. The Seabee even flew as door gunner again with the 176th Aviation Company.

What a first flight in Vietnam. This is a Christmas holiday I will never forget. Thanks to Dave Sebright, my friend forever.



*Merry Christmas
to all.*

Bob Hartley

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

A Christmas Time Birthday Party in 1970

A.K.A. A couple of nights before Christmas when I sat down to dinner with General Foods

by David Adams

It was indeed a dark and stormy night – we were in the height of the monsoon season over in Vietnam but it was still cool by Vietnam standards, probably in the low 80's. We had been flying missions all day but things were pretty quiet in the A.O. for indeed it was almost Christmas and as we respected the TET season for the enemy, he seemed to almost do the same thing by respecting the Christmas Season for us, or probably just for the benefit of many of their (Catholic) Vietnamese brethren.

But maybe I'm remembering it all wrong, perhaps the gloom was home-made as Christmas was almost upon us and we were all feeling the effect of being half-a-world away from our families and loved ones... And to be honest, we didn't even celebrate Birthdays in Vietnam, after all it was just another day in Chu Lai and not even a big enough deal to take the day off from pulling missions. But then, once we all figured out that it was Carl's Birthday we were talking about, well that was truly a game changer.

We still flew missions that day, I can't really remember if Carl was one of the "lucky" pilots chosen that day or not, but we always tried to field our A-Team every day, so he probably was invited to "go out and play" even on his birthday. I do remember that we returned to our hooch's later than normal, after the Mess Hall was closed, leading us to " fend for ourselves" for dinner. But even that was nothing to worry about, after all Dale made a mean pizza in our electric skillet; but even better, we had already stocked up on beer for Carl's party!! And party we did, the Teac 8" reel-to-reel tape recorder, fed through our Pioneer 5000 Amp, played over our Sansui speakers (Carl still has that tape recorder – and I still have those speakers) belted out hours of music from The Doors, Janice Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, John Denver, the Stones (but never the Beatles), Jim Croce, Neil Diamond and all those other great bands and singers that make the 70's so special. And the whiskey flowed and the stories were told of days not long gone by - in fact this is ending up sounding like it was so much fun in Vietnam, why in the world would anyone ever want to go home?

But eventually the party dragged to a close, after all several of us had to fly in about seven hours and it would be back to the "normal" grind - the grind that had just gotten a little tougher as we got one day closer to Christmas. Luckily someone recalled that the Mess Hall re-opened at midnight so the guards and shift workers could get a hot meal – and didn't that mean us? After all, in our way of thinking, the fact that we were all wasted shouldn't stop us from having dinner!

Now every mess hall in the Army keeps a table set for their division's Commanding General and his staff, just in case they would show up for a meal. The table is never used of course, the chance the CG will come is almost less than zero, but there it is, all shiny and sparking and complete with name cards for the marking all eight seats as "Reserved for (our Division Commander MG Kroesen in this case)" and "Reserved for BG ..." etc. Of course Carl, being the "Birthday Boy", chose to sit at that table!

Me? I was scared to death! But I was definitely in the minority when I

suggested we should sit someplace else. I don't know if it was the beer talking or not but it wasn't long before I found myself occupying some Colonel or other's place at the table along with another six of Carl's closest friends.

And, as I also have always suspected, having someone sit at "that" table (something never seen by me in any of the mess halls that I had even been to all over the world), caused an instant commotion back in the kitchen. Pots were banging, food was flying and every extra soul that knew a frying pan from a dinner plate was pressed into service to prepare a midnight meal for the "distinguished" visitors.

Us? We were completely oblivious to all the commotion...we sat down and claimed our seats and wiped the dust off the (never used) plates and glasses. And after some more laughs at several not-funny-to-anyone-except-drunks jokes, we placed our plates on the trays, and went down the chow line helping ourselves to the dried up roast beef, hard-as-a-rock mashed potatoes, boiled-to-death green beans and soggy red Jell-O; in other words an Army mess hall meal.

But just as we had finished sobering ourselves up by trying to cut our first bite of roast beef, the door to the kitchen flew open and out marched two cooks rolling a cart filled with eight plates of food that bore absolutely no resemblance to what we were eating. There was a salad of fresh fruits and big steaks on each platter complete with fresh mashed potatoes and carrots; there was even the often rumored to exist, but never seen, chocolate cake for dessert!

But just as suddenly as the cart appeared, it was about to disappear when the head cook noticed that instead of serving the CG as he thought he was going to be, sitting at the table was a just a bunch of pilots (and even worse – Cav Pilots)! *Us?* We were wondering what the hell was going on and/or just much trouble we were in, for everyone knows it is much better to upset the CG than the mess hall cook!

But then the cook noticed that Carl had brazenly scratched off the MG Kroesen on his place card making that place "Reserved for General Foods" - and that brought a smile to his face. After all it was probably time someone finally sat at his prime table – and who better than some of the best pilots in I Corps. In the end he was glad to serve us the meal he had fixed for men of a much higher rank than any of us, a meal that was truly fit for a General. But in this case it happened to be prepared for a Warrant Officer named General Foods.

And Christmas? It came just a few days later like it always does, but for me it wasn't so bad. After all my Mother had already passed on, a casualty of being dumped by my Dad for a younger woman. Naturally I wasn't very close to my Dad and his new family. I had even saved us both some heartache by breaking up with my girlfriend before I left for Vietnam.

But most of all I realized that for that one particular Christmas night over forty three years ago, I was with the family I loved the most in this world; the Dragoons of D Troop, 1st Squadron, the 1st Regiment of Cavalry.



David Adams
Editor of the VHPA Aviator
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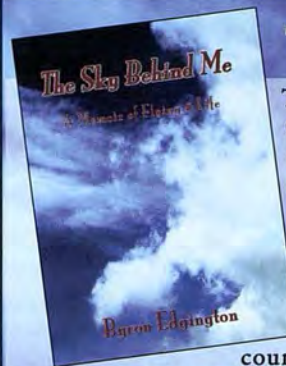
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Byron in January of 1971, between missions on the runway at Khe Sahn. Most likely taken by his crewchief, Gil Alvarado.

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Christmas Flying with The Pelicans

I arrived in Vietnam around Thanksgiving of 1969 and was assigned to A Company - "The Pelicans" - of the 123rd Avn. Bn., Americal Division in Chu Li. I had been in the Company only a short time when I received a letter from my wife telling me that my Grandfather had passed away. I was still recovering from the loss of my family member back home when a tragedy struck the Pelicans. One of the first guys to befriend me when I got to A Company, Ward Hooper, and all others aboard, including a Chaplin, were killed when one of our Hueys hit the side of a mountain.

Both of these events and the idea of being away from home for Christmas for the first time left me a little depressed and a lot homesick. My spirits were lifted somewhat when I found out that Bob Hope and his troop were coming to Chu Lai and since I wasn't scheduled to fly, I was going to get to go down with a couple of other pilots and see the big holiday show.

To my dismay on Christmas Eve, the day before Bob's show, I was informed that the schedule had been changed and I would be flying the next day. The next morning, Christmas Day, was an early wakeup. I got dressed, got some breakfast and reported to flight Ops. My AC, sorry I can't remember his name but I can see his face clear as day, and I were told



to fly to the 196th Infantry headquarters and get our flight orders for the rest of the day.

Once at the 196th we were told we would spend the whole day flying mail, clean uniforms, and hot food - turkey, dressing and all the trimmings, to units in the field.

Our crew spent the next 10 hours doing just this. We would find a given unit and land to unload our cargo. The soldiers would come running to the aircraft just like it was Santa's sleigh. Everywhere we landed we were met with big smiles and handshakes. To them these letters from loved ones and a hot meal meant a way to help ease the pain of being away from home, family, and friends during this time of celebration and hope.

We finished after dusk and flew home in the dark. I was tired, it had been a long day. But, as I sat on my bunk that night, I thought to myself that this day of flying far over shadowed a missed performance of any show. This had been a wonderful Christmas. One I'll never forget.

*James "Scotty" Scott
Pelican 15, 37*

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



Christmas with The 229th AHC

The Christmas of 1963 was approaching. I was a 1Lt stationed at Soc Trang with the 93rd Trans Co and those bedeviled CH-21's. The Special Forces had numerous camps located in the Delta. We worked closely with them and I had a special place in my heart for those guys for what they did and what they were exposed to. I scrounged bread, fruit, vegetables, anything I could get from our mess hall to take out to them, of course I added some booze.

My Commander, Maj. Ed Seymore, gave me permission to fly a chopper on Christmas Day after informing him of my intentions. I don't recall for sure who was with me that day but probably it was Lt. C.J. Miller or Lt. Passo. Anyway, we made a sign from butcher paper that said "Merry Christmas Special Forces". We flew into the camp unannounced, shut down, unfurled our sign and taped it to our chopper before anyone got to the landing zone. When a couple of the Special Forces walked out and saw the sign they almost wept. They knew they had not requested a chopper and were actually lounging on a day off. When we presented them with the goodies they were speechless. As we flew back to Soc Trang I was satisfied that we had brightened some very special men's Christmas day.



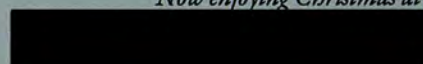
I will also always remember the Christmas Eve of 1967, at LZ English. Someone had the idea that flying a Huey around the firebase playing Christmas carols would be a good idea. The aviators of A Co. 229th Avn Bn, 1st Cav Div. were in an intoxicated state and didn't cotton to the Huey and its "feel good" caroling. Some of them even found a few hand-held flares and when the Huey came over, they launched them at the Huey.

Col Rattan, the 1st Brigade Cdr, quickly came up the street looking for me as I was their commander, he was irate to say the least. His concern, which quickly became my concern, was what would happen if our new ammo dump was ignited by the flares just as it had just only days before from incoming fire.

Certain things you never forget, particularly about Christmas. I remember it well. Another Christmas spent half a world away.

*Eugene A. Beyer
Bandit 6*

*A/229th Avn Bn. 1st Cav. Div.
Now enjoying Christmas at*



A Really Cool Christmas Card from Vietnam, 1971

(Member Greg Bradley writes) My wife, Peggy, and I went to Vietnam together as 1LT's in July 1971. She was already a registered nurse and late in my flight school course at Fort Rucker, we decided it would be a good career move for her to join the Army and go with me to RVN (we had no children at the time).

She was immediately accepted into the Army Nursing Corp and I swore her in at the post hospital. It happened so quick that I think I ended up only having a five-day, date-of-rank lead on her! Once in Vietnam, we were both stationed in the Delta/IV Corps area, I flew with the 162nd AHC in Can Tho and she was assigned to the 3rd Surgical Hospital in Binh Tuey, about a mile up the road.

In October of 1971 we decided to send a Christmas Card to our families and friends back home and attached is a photo of that card. Our friends back state-side absolutely loved at, we thought it was pretty cool then and we still do today

*Greg Bradley
Copperhead 31*

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



Flying with the Outlaws of the 175th AHC on Christmas Day of 1970

By Ken Bradley

The latest rumor was that there would be a cease fire truce tomorrow, Christmas day of 1970.

News like this is always too good to be true. Some pilots checked flight operations for mission assignments others headed to the club early. During the evening the mission board stayed blank, maybe the rumor was true after all.

Soon it was time to head to the showers to cleanup then head to the club to join the celebration. With only cold water available the shower would be quick, the only time anyone took a long shower was the night a pilot talked a stripper from a traveling show into using the shower. I did say the water was cold and the sight was remarkable, but that is another story for another time.

The celebration at the club had started early and no one was feeling any pain. The beer-can castles climbed higher and higher. About 1:30 a.m. I crashed on my cot just knowing there would be an entire day to recover. But the bed started shaking around 3:30 a.m. on Christmas morning, out of the semi conscious haze a voice was saying get up, get up, get up. You have to fly. Trying to decline because of drunkenness and hangover didn't work. The voice just replied they couldn't wake up any other aircraft commanders except the XO so I was elected. They didn't know what the mission would be but they needed two slicks and we were to take off immediately for Ca Mau.

Ca Mau is located towards to bottom end of the Vietnamese delta between the U Minh and Nam Can jungles. The U Minh jungle is to the west and the Nam Can is located to the south. The local VC used the airfield as their practice firing range. Local kids would occasionally deposit an armed grenade under a helicopter first aid kit, if it was not found before takeoff the vibration of the helicopter would shake the grenade loose so that it and the helicopter would explode.

Some how they had found a newby for my co pilot, so with the gunner and chief resuming their sleep in the back, we pulled pitch and headed south. The XO took the lead and we followed at a safe distance, this was a very loose formation. As we turned away from the lights of Vinh Long visual contact with the ground became non existent, there were no lights on the ground, no stars in the sky and no moon. Only the instrument lights and the navigation lights of lead were visible. The window in my door was wide open so the fresh air would help suppress the drunken urge to redecorate the cockpit. Feeling the need to hold my head out the window in case my stomach had enough of this abuse, I told the co pilot "you've got it". The quick reply "no I don't" brought my head back in real fast and any urges would just have to be suppressed. I'm sure he thought he was about to die and I was sort of wishing I would.

The lights of Can Tho were a welcome sight, there was ground below us after all. As we got closer to the city the lights seemed to move from the right of lead to the left and back again. "Lead am I weaving or are we weaving?" Lead answered that he was weaving meant we both were weaving and that somehow that made me feel a little better, passing Can Tho soon put us back into total darkness. Having made it this far gave us a little hope that we would actually make it to Ca Mau and fortunately the rest of the flight was uneventful and the fresh air was not needed quite so much.

We landed at Ca Mau in total darkness and had to wait till after dawn to refuel and inspect the aircraft, and wait for our mission. Eventually an officer arrived and the XO was given the mission of taking the Christmas meal to remote U.S. troops scattered throughout the Delta, taking

holiday chow to the troops is a real feel good mission. Somehow, our mission turned out to be just to take a Vietnamese paymaster around to give Christmas bonuses to the Vietnamese troops in the U Minh. Bummer, they



One of the tour girls from Mr. Grant's 1968 Christmas Tour to Vietnam shows her appreciation to her chopper pilot for the day.

woke us up for this?

We flew into clearing after clearing with some landing areas only a few hundred yards apart. In some places we could hover down only part way in the trees and the paymaster would drop the cash.

I kept expecting the traditional greeting of ground fire but the truce held. There was not a single shot anywhere.

We landed so many places and handed money out to so many Vietnamese troops that I am sure that we were also paying the VC but at least on that day, they were friendly VC. By late morning the paymaster mission was complete and instead of sending us home we were then assigned to haul supplies for a US support base on the eastern edge of the U Minh.

In the early afternoon the XO arrived at our location with the chow at the same time we returned. None of the crew had eaten since yesterday so they got in the chow line. The crew chief had his plate full and the gunner was not far behind when a Lt Col came over and ordered me to get the crew out of the line. He said our crews got hot chow and slept in nice beds every night and so they could not eat in his chow line. The chief and gunner just set their plate's right where they were and returned to the aircraft with my co-pilot. Still hung-over I was in no mood for this bullshit, my crew would normally see more combat in one week than this ass would see in all of his tour. My crew was going to get fed even if we had to fly all the way across Vietnam to do it! As I stormed into the command bunker to tell them we were leaving and would not return until our crew was fed, a message arrived diverting us to another mission, we were now to report to Rach Gia. Once airborne I called Paddy control and told them I would report for this new mission as soon as the crew was fed and after a short delay, Paddy control told us to go direct and that food would be provided. As we sat down at Rach Gia an officer came up and asked for my call sign to verify if we were the right aircraft. With only two helicopters flying in the entire delta, it shouldn't have been hard to figure out we were it.

After giving my call sign, Outlaw 66, the officer waived to a vehicle and Mr. Johnny Grant and some Hollywood starlets brought us sandwiches and sodas. The day had definitely changed and the entire crew was wide awake. Mr. Grant had brought these starlets to Vietnam to boost troop morale. They were spending their Christmas for the soldiers and our job was to get them out to as many of the remote locations as possible. The

first stop was a small base at the North end of the U Minh and the girls sang and danced while we were fed even more Christmas dinner. These guys at this base knew that as long as the crew was eating the girls were there. Eventually we figured out the same thing and cranked up for our next stop.

The plan for the rest of the day was to fly Mr. Grant and the girls to our advisors furthest southern LZ in Vietnam and then start to work our way back North, towards Cambodia. At each location there would be 2 to 4 U.S. advisors to a Vietnamese unit, these were the guys that spent day after day with mud up to there, their lives depending on each other and a small force of Vietnamese that in some cases included VC. When the girls got out you could almost see these guys start floating in air. For the next 5 minutes the guys would talk to the girls and then we were off to the next location or to hot refuel. Often the girls would outnumber the advisors. The sun got lower as we headed further north. By dusk we still had a couple of stops to make and no one knew how long the Christmas truce would last. Under normal times we would have received fire at many of these areas. By the next stop it was getting dark but everything went ok. The last planned stop was a particularly bad area. The VC had the landing areas zeroed in and normally if you were on the ground more than a few seconds a mortar round would be headed your way. The game was that you would land, count to nine or ten and then hover to a new spot, then watch the mortar round explode at the first location. By this time you would have unloaded the supplies and would be pulling pitch. As we approached this location the U.S. advisors reported signs of VC activity and they felt that it would be unsafe to land. The rest of the crew handed their helmets to the girls and the chief and gunner set them up so that they could talk to the guys on the ground while we flew overhead.

After returning to Rach Gia, Mr. Grant leaned forward and asks if the crew would like to join them for supper. A quick glance at the crew showed the only possible answer was yes. It was a short ride into town and a Christmas supper the entire crew would remember. Then back to the Huey and reality. The night flight back to Vinh Long some how did not seem as dark as the flight out that morning. Paddy Control told us that our unit, the 175 AHC was inquiring about us. We told them we were ok and on our way back to Vinh Long. The co-pilot even tried his hand at night flight of the last aircraft flying in the delta on that Christmas day. The crew and the soldiers on the ground owe a special thanks to Mr. Grant and the starlets that risked their lives to do so much for others on that Christmas day. Thank You.

Ken Bradley, Outlaw 66



Victoria's Secret Angel Heidi Klum receives a star from honorary mayor of Hollywood Johnny Grant on Nov. 13, 2007

Santa searches long and hard for Good Little Boys...



In his eternal quest to find "Good little boys at Christmas-time" back in 1967, Santa hits a brick wall when he runs across VHPA members Ted Riendeau and Bob Baird of the 283rd Med Detachment at the Evac Hospital in Pleiku.

Photo courtesy of Ted Riendeau.
E-mail: [REDACTED]

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TSgt, USAF, Ret
USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74
USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83
Tours of Duty:
1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx
1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England
1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.
1971-74 Osan AB, ROK
1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

1.509.523.4213

email:

khbt114@frontier.com

VHPA Satisfied Clients

- Dan Fox
- John Shafer
- John Penny
- Lanny Julian
- Terry Opdahl
- Korean War Vet Satisfied Client
- Kenny Hames Photos of War Tour
- 1952-53 Heartbreak Ridge & Sugarloaf



CHRISTMAS AT THE MESS HALL

of the 118th Assault Helicopter Company, Bien Hoa Air Base, 1970

(Photos courtesy James Tipton)



The entire mess hall crew proudly displaying gifts and food for Christmas. (70)



WO Junius H. Julien and 4 of the kitchen workers get ready for Christmas KP Duty. (70)



LTC Kenyon, 145th Bn Commander, going through the serving line for Christmas dinner. (70)

Personal Remembrance of the rocket attack on the 118th AHC's Mess Hall

by Tom Roy

It was at 6 PM on May 1st, 1970 when the rocket hit. No sirens went off.... no warning.... nothing!

Just two other guys and I were eating in the mess hall. One was named David Weaver and the other we called Abba (or alphabet). We had just finished and were walking out the door.....and BOOM! A direct hit! If it had been any other day at least a hundred people would have been in the mess hall. But, it was May 1st, which was payday and very few ate in the mess hall on payday. However we three were eating in the mess hall because we were all going on R&R in two weeks and we were saving our money.

Dale Moore was on base at 300 hundred feet bringing a brand new H- model to the Red Tails in 1st platoon. He saw the steel corrugated roof blown a hundred feet in the air. If the enemy had known us better and waited a day or so it could possibly have been one of the biggest tragedies of the war!"



Fifteen former 118th AHC Thunderbirds gather at the VHPA's 2012 Reunion in New Orleans, Louisiana

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If you remember them, she will too.

Every hero deserves a place where their story is told. By continuing to work together, we can preserve the legacy of your service by building the Education Center at The Wall, to promote healing and educate the next generation about the impact of the Vietnam War. Help us make sure that your heroic stories, the sacrifices you made, and the ones who never came home, will never be forgotten.

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MEMBERS - HAVE A BOOK FOR JOHN TO REVIEW?
CONTACT HIM AT: BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG

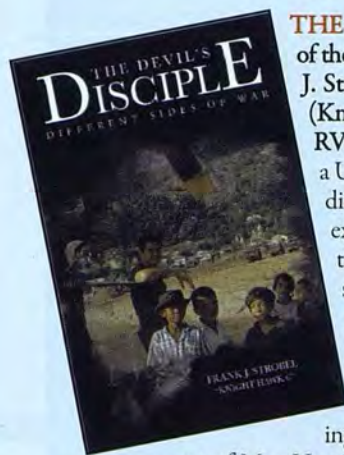
**By VHPA Life member:
JOHN PENNY**
E-MAIL: BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG



SEAWOLF 28 is a memoir spanning the 22 year career of A.J. Billings, a Naval Aviator in RVN with HC-1 (66-67), HA(L)-3 (68-69) and TACRON (71-72) and (73-74). It is a story of the service and sacrifices of a self-described "Maverick" whose strong personality and flamboyance earned him the nickname "Hollywood Al." He also stood out when it came to aggressiveness in the face of the enemy when American lives were at stake. He was young and searching for who he was and hoping to find out.

Billings began his journey to the cockpit of Navy helicopters offshore and onshore in RVN with the NAVCAD program. He had hoped to be assigned to jets upon graduation but the needs of the Navy came first – 13 of the 14 men in his class were assigned to helicopters. His initial flight duty was a RESCAP SAR assignment in a UH-2A Seaspire on the USS Bon Homme Richard.

On their cruise to RVN they stopped at SERE in the Philippines where he failed to endear himself to the staff by avoiding capture. During this cruise he witnessed some useless losses and to his consternation, discovered some Navy pilots found practicing emergency procedures to be a waste of time! It was his next tour to RVN with HA(L)-3 (The Seawolves) that put him well on his way to finding out who he was.



THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE is the compilation of the memories of VHPA Life Member Frank J. Strobel who served with the 114th AHC (Knights of the Air) in 1970 at Vinh Long, RVN. Strobel found his way to the cockpit of a UH-1H in RVN much the same way we all did. However, we often had very different experiences due to the changing nature of the combat. It was the night missions that set Strobel's flight experience and tour of duty apart from most of us; few Army Aviators left RVN with the number of night hours he accumulated.

The 114th had the mission of providing a night hunter-killer aircraft every night out of Moc Hoa into the Western Delta Seven Mountains Area near the Cambodian border and the southern end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This was a dangerous and unpopular assignment to say the least. The crew rotations saw crews flying the mission about every two weeks. This infrequency was an added danger, as it was difficult to gain much proficiency in recognizing spatial awareness on dark and cloudy nights, or as Strobel phrased it: "up is not always where you think it is."

His arrival in-country at Tan Son Nhut involved a steep descent and plenty of hustle disembarking, as the Tet Offensive was still ongoing. He was assigned a UH-1B in the Run Sat Special Area supporting the Riverine Forces. His familiarization ride in the AO was a lesson in what not to do – like flying low and slow and not recognizing emergency situations when they came up. He quickly learned what needed to be done when the chips were down and the stakes were high in support of the Navy Seals and the PBRs of the "brown water Navy."

Billings was awarded 40 medals including the DFC and Silver Star for his service. He was uncompromising when it came to leadership and dedication to the men who served under him. Billings was once interviewed for a book for the Naval Historical Archives by a Navy Captain. When Billings asked the Captain if he wanted the "award version" or what actually happened, the Captain replied that only the award version was wanted. I recommend this well written and engaging book that brings out Billings' personality and emotions. You will get the real story.

Seawolf 28: A True Story by A.J. Billings (\$15.26, 386 pages, \$5.50 - Kindle) ISBN: 978-1594572999 is available from your local book store, Amazon, other book suppliers, or obtain a signed copy by going to www.combatsar.com

Strobel found himself being asked to "volunteer" to take on this assignment on a regular basis. He cut a deal for his choice of aircraft and crew and took on the call sign of Knight Hawk 6. Calls for the services of Knight Hawk 6 were frequent and came from a number of the usual "customers" in need of assistance, including Green Beret camps under assault. Many missions were urgent but were sometimes complicated further by the need for final approval of a target by an onboard ARVN observer.

Strobel visited many villages while in Vietnam and found a much different aspect of the war. He was very moved by the impact of the war on the villagers, particularly the young children who always showed up when his helicopter landed. He befriended many of them and their families and even attempted to adopt one child without success.

Strobel has written a very readable narrative of his service in RVN all those years ago. His descriptions of the missions he and his crew performed at night in the AO of a dark and dangerous corner of RVN makes for an intense reading experience. I recommend this book.

The Devil's Disciple: Different Sides of War (\$25.39, 428 pages, \$4.99 - Kindle) by Frank J. Strobel, ISBN: 978-1475974553 is available from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

Note To Readers:

With the passing of USAF Colonel Bud Day, MOH, this July, America lost one of its heroes. If you are interested in the flight career of Colonel Day and the pilots of the F-100F "fast FACs" of Commando Sabre (Misty), I highly recommend *Bury US Upside Down: The Misty Pilots and the Secret Battle for the Ho Chi Minh Trail* by Rick Newman and Don Shepperd.



"My/Our Tour in Vietnam"

by Ret LTC John Sackman

While I was assigned to Fort Ord in their new weapons research unit (we were working on development of Night Vision Devices), I received orders for Vietnam with a reporting in date of February of 1966. My wife, already a registered nurse, joined the Army Nurse Corp and immediately left for training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas knowing that she would join me in-country when her training was finished.

After arriving in Vietnam, a number of us pilots were first assigned to the port of Saigon because they were heavily backlogged in cargo. We commonly used "Ro Ro" ships (Roll On, Roll Off) to bring the equipment and materials into country. Cargo was placed on semi trailers in the states and marked for delivery upon their arrival in Vietnam, the idea was that we could hook them up to a truck and take them directly to their in-country destination. Unfortunately, pilferage was rampant as one could find street vendors in Saigon selling the same items that could be found in the BX.

My wife's was first assigned to the 3rd Field Hospital near Ton Son Nut when she arrived and we pilots were billeted nearby. Later I was assigned as S-3 to the Transportation Battalion at Long Bin and commuted (but not at night) between our quarters and work. In August of 1966 I was assigned to the 1st Cav at An Khe. Upon my arrival there was an awards ceremony going on that marked the 1st Cav's first year in country. That night while we were in our billets, on the hillside next to the base, Charley continued the "celebration" with a very accurate mortar attack on the airfield causing loss of both aircraft and men. After another few days of in-country orientation I was assigned to D Troop 1/9 as a Scout Pilot. My first mission was to scout an area west of An Khe. I spotted two men running out of a hooch and was given permission to engage them. I lined up, pulled the trigger on my on-board mini-gun but after two shots, the gun jammed so I had to fly back to base camp. The next day we flew a covering mission in an area south of Bong Son, the only sign we saw of any action was a dead cow. While returning to base camp I was flying the low position and we took fire. I circled around to mark the area with smoke that my

crewman was ready to drop but just then, we received another round from the rear of the

aircraft. That bullet hit my crewman in the left butt cheek, then hit the friction control knob and finally exited the cockpit,

shrapnel and all, through my right calf. I flew out of the area for a short distance and landed. I was picked up by my chase and his crewman stayed with my crewman till they both could be recovered about an hour later. I ended up at the hospital in Qui Nhon. A few days after my first surgery to clean up the wound, my wife came and transported me to Saigon for an about 6-week recovery which was extended due to another operation when infection set into the wound. Upon return to the Cav I flew a few missions and was known as "Queen for a Day" after the popular TV series.

My wife and I were both transferred to Qui Nhon where I was assigned to the 498th Med Co with the call sign of Dust Off 67. I finished my 15-month tour supporting our troops, Korean and South Vietnam troops in May of 1967.

We were both assigned to Fort Stewart when we returned to CONUS. Shortly after we arrived we adopted a girl whose natural parents were an Army nurse and a Dust Off pilot, she has just turned 47.

And I, like our president Moon, am proud to be one of us!

John Sackman, Lt Col USAR, retired

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



Making Your Own Reality:

A Survival Story by VHPA Member James P. Meade, Jr., PhD

This is an extraordinary story of survival and recovery.

On May 8, 1967 just outside the wire at Tay Ninh, RVN, his aircraft crashed and Jim Meade died. Ten weeks later James Meade was born at Madigan General Hospital, Ft. Lewis, Washington.

Severely brain damaged with loss of all memories, there was little hope he would have a bountiful, productive life once he had recovered from his physical injuries. However, an unusual decision by one of his doctors at Madigan proved crucial to his survival: he was transferred to Ward 13. The men on Ward 13 – the amputee ward, accepted responsibility for James providing him with care, companionship, encouragement, and inclusion within the human milieu.

James Meade has no memory of his first 19-years of life. He has no knowledge of Vietnam, much less who or where he was when he was injured. The men of Ward 13, along with the unwavering love and determination of his parents and siblings, started Meade on his long journey that led to a career in psychology where he continues to help many others with traumatic brain injuries.

James points out that those who suffer a severe brain injury never recover completely. But there is increased hope in new methods of treatment that he has researched, including imagery and visualization. This book is not just a memoir of Meade's recovery and the miracle of the human mind and its capacity for self-healing, but an understanding of the importance of faith and the human-to-human connection for the healthy survival of us all.



James Meade today. The photo was taken at last year's Reunion of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company in San Diego, CA. Yes, he is still able to wear the flight suit from his Fort Rucker primary flight training days....

MAKING
YOUR OWN
REALITY:
A SURVIVAL STORY



JAMES P. MEADE, JR., PHD

Making Your Own Reality

(\$15.10 hardback, 218 pages, \$3.95 Kindle)

by James P. Meade, PhD., ISBN: 978-1449793357

is available at your local book store, Amazon or other on-line book suppliers.

James may be reached at:

Mine was earned in Vietnam. By my dad.

Barbara Q., USAA member



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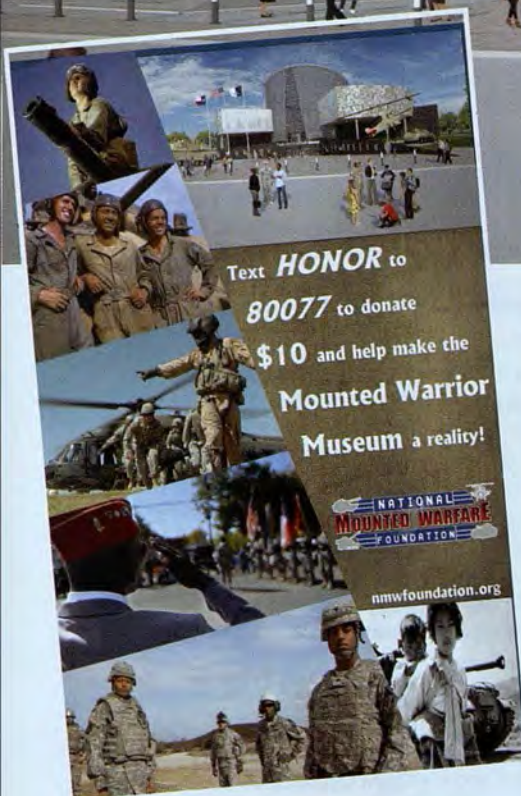
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¹Based on 2011 Member Communications Trend Survey.

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Coming Soon to the Fort Hood Area:

The Mounted Warrior Museum



***Vision:** The Mounted Warrior Museum will provide a unique educational experience, preserving and interpreting the story of mounted units and Soldiers, who have served at Fort Hood and worldwide, and the rich history, values, and heritage of Texas.*

and their storied units by incorporating the history, traditions and artifacts of III Corps, the 1st Cavalry Division, the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, the 2nd Armored Division, the 13th Corps Support Command, and many other units that serve or have served on Fort Hood. It will be the only Army museum west of the Mississippi that honors the service of mounted warriors and units in this unique manner.

Last year Fort Hood pledged the land for the museum, outside the post's security perimeter to provide easy access to all visitors. The City of Killeen provided financial support to the project and over \$4,000,000.00 dollars have already been pledged by both local business and individual donors.

***Mission:** To Honor the Legacy of Mounted Warfare, the soldiers and their machines, by providing an unique educational experiences for Soldiers and their families and for the general civilian community from across the Nation. To also preserve, interpret, and tell the story of Soldiers who have served in mounted units, and to depict the history and value of Killeen/Central Texas and its unique relationship with Fort Hood.*

But we still have a long way to go to bring this Museum to reality – here's how you can help!

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SHARE YOUR STORY

Visit nmwfoundation.org/submit-your-story
to share your Mounted Warfare experiences

*The Mounted Warfare Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation.
Charitable donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

***Make this Christmas truly memorable –
Give to the Mounted Warrior Museum!
Complete details also available at***



The Museum will represent the history of mounted Soldiers – the ones that rode into battle on horseback, as well as the tankers and infantrymen, the artillerymen and aviators, the logisticians, engineers, military policemen, signalers, and intelligence Soldiers who fought alongside. This is the history of the mounted Soldiers' combined team efforts, a force for freedom so many times in our nation's history.

The main museum facility is proposed to be roughly 66,000 square feet in size and will include exhibits, interactive galleries, a children's discovery area, library and archives, classrooms, an orientation theater, exhibit maintenance, preparation and administrative spaces. In addition to the main building, outdoor areas will also have dedicated areas for a military vehicle walking trail with vintage and modern vehicles, an outdoor children's recreation area and both unit and individual memorials and monument areas.

This museum will honor all past and current mounted Soldiers

WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA.

Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (**) ID new life members

Line 2, his current city and state, branch of service

Line 3-5, his (Flight) Class and Vietnam Unit(s) served with, if that info is available

We welcome these 36 new Members to our Association! All have joined the VHPA during the period from 5 August through 30 September 2013

Bradley, Lawrence R 'Larry' **
Phoenix, Arizona, US Army
Flight Class(s): 71-15 71-17 71-19
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 175
AHC in 71-72; 18 CAC in 72

Brandt, Joseph R 'Joe'
Lake Ozark, Missouri, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-22
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
174 AHC in 69-70

Breland, Gary C
Jupiter, Florida, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-19 67-17
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
388 TC CO in 67-68

Brennesholtz, Mark D **
Emerald Isle, North Carolina,
US Army Flight Class(s):
68-520 68-36
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
B/7/17 CAV in 69-70

Brooks, William C 'Bill'
Leakesville, Mississippi,
US Army Flight Class(s): 69-34
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
HHC 1 BDE 101 ABN in 66-67;
282 AHC in 70-71

Chase, Robert M **
Palm Bay, Florida, US Army
Flight Class(s): 65-15W
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
335 AHC in 66-67; B/2/20
ARA 1 CAV in 69-70

Coleman, Michael M 'Mike'
Princeton, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-19 67-17
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
116 AHC in 67-68;
20 ENG BDE in 70-71

Daves, Phillip E **
Tucson, Arizona,
US Army Flight Class information
not provided
Vietnam Combat Unit not provided

Davis, Perry J **
Hudson Oaks, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-19
Vietnam Combat Unit not provided
Davis, William E 'Bill' **
Morristown, New Jersey,
US Army Flight Class(s): 71-34

Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
62 CAC in 72

Garrett, Thomas W 'Tom' **
Seabrook, South Carolina,
US Army Flight Class(s): 71-42
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
F/79 AFA 1 CAV in 72-73

Green, Grant S **
Alexandria, Virginia, US Army
Flight Class(s): 62-6
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
HHC 1 BDE 1 CAV in 66-67;
158 AVN 101 ABN in 69-70

Grimes, Cecil H **
Paris, Kentucky, US Army
Flight Class(s):
USARVMEDCOM in 68-69
Vietnam Combat Unit not provided

Hamilton, Richard A 'Rich'
Strasburg, Virginia, US Army
Flight Class(s): 66-13 66-15
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 173
AHC in 66-67; 156 AVN in 69-70

Harmon, Thomas D 'Tom'
Saint Petersburg, Florida,
US Army Flight Class(s): 69-34
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 69-70

Harrison, Ralph L 'Lee'
Omaha, Arkansas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-12
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
2/27 Inf. BN 25th ID in 66-67;
A/25 AVN 25 INF in 69-70

Hartzell, Jonathan **
Austin, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-11 68-15
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
C/7/17 CAV in 68-69

Havre, Donald E 'Don'
Richland, Washington, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-32
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
F/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 73-74

Hierholzer, Otto J **
Floresville, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 55-1
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
57 TC CO in 93-94;
228 ASHB 1 CAV in 67-68

Hood, Charles H
Clarksville, Tennessee, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-15 70-13
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
227 AHB 1 CAV in 71

Ice, Donald A 'Don' **
Olympia, Washington, US Army
Flight Class(s): 56-9
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
A/1 AVN 1 INF in 66-67

Jackson, Michael W
Enterprise, Alabama, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-26
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): A/3/17
CAV in 70-71; F/4 CAV in 70-71

Jones, Donald E 'Don'
Buffalo Grove, Illinois, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-4
Vietnam Combat Unit not provided

Kearns, John W 'Bill'
Paxton, Florida, US Army
Flight Class information not pro-
vided
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
DIV ART 25 INF in 66-67;
DIV ART 1 INF in 68-69

Keating, Richard P 'Dick' **
Saint Petersburg, Florida,
US Army Flight Class(s):
56-2 58-2
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
244 AHC in 67-68

Kellogg, Kenneth E 'Ken' **
Belleville, Illinois, US Army
Flight Class(s): 56-7
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
116 AHC in 66-67;
335 TC CO in 68-69; 58 TC BN

McGinness, James J 'Jim'
New York, New York, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-8
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
23 ART GRP in 69-70

Mettler, Glenn E **
Huntsville, Alabama, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-11 68-15
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
334 AHC in 68; C/7/17 CAV
in 68-69; 2/17 CAV 101 ABN
in 71-72; D/17 CAV in 72

Nesselroade, Dale R. 'Bob'
Danville, Virginia, US Army
Flight Class(s): 69-35
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): A/159
ASHB 101 ABN in 70-71

Rhoades, James **
Marshall, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-21
Vietnam Combat Unit not provided

Shandrowsky, Walter J.
Pasadena, Maryland, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-1 68-503
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): C/3/17
CAV in 68-69; HHT/3/17 CAV in 69

Smith, Geoffrey R. 'Randy'
Columbus, Ohio, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-505 68-3
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
174 AHC in 68

Stevens, Joseph D. 'Joe'
Huntsville, Alabama, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-43 68-523
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
B/229 AHB 1 CAV in 69;
68 AVN in 69-70

Wade, Melvin G. 'Mel'
Sidney, Maine, US Army
Flight Class(s) 69-27 69-25 69-27
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
68 AVN in 70-71

Weeden, Thomas R. 'Tom'
North Woodstock,
New Hampshire, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-8 68-3
Vietnam Combat Unit(s):
238 AVN in 69-70;
HHC 268 CAB in 69-70

Whetstone, Charles B. 'Brad'
The Villages, Florida, US Army
Flight Class(s): 67-20
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 119
AHC in 67-68; 120 AHC in 71-72

Whittington, Gary T. 'Whit'
Montgomery, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 68-507 68-7
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 121
AHC in 68-69

Will, Robert E. 'Bob'
Windcrest, Texas, US Army
Flight Class(s): 70-2
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): 52 ART
GRP in 68-69; 571 MED DET in
71-72; 3 BDE 1 CAV in 71-72

Williams, Clifton G.
Boulder City, Nevada, US Army
Flight Class(s) 67-25 67-23
Vietnam Combat Unit(s): B/1/9
CAV in 67-68; 108 ART GRP in 68

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From the Editor of the VHPA Aviator...

In the first part of last month, I received an e-mail from our Life Member Jim Crawford, asking about placing an ad in the Aviator to publicize the sale of his business Timberline Air Service, currently located in Monroe, Oregon.

I told Jim I would be glad to sell him an ad, but he needed to realize that most of our members are probably just like me, looking for a way to get out of a business as opposed to looking to get started in a new business. Jim agreed with that, but still wanted to try running an ad with us, and so he sent me the details of everything he wanted to sell, both the aircraft and all the spare parts accumulated in his 30+ years of providing Aerial Services to literally hundreds of customers throughout the Pacific Northwest.

You can read the basic ad elsewhere on this page, we'll repeat the ad in the March/April Issue of the Aviator in order to let these details "roll around in your head" for a bit before you see it again. What the (already crowded) ad itself doesn't have enough space to list are the details of those two other "project" helos Jim also wants to sell; one UH-1M Army gunship and a UH-1L Navy gunship, plus an expanded listing of those other parts, spares and records he has also accumulated over 30+ years.

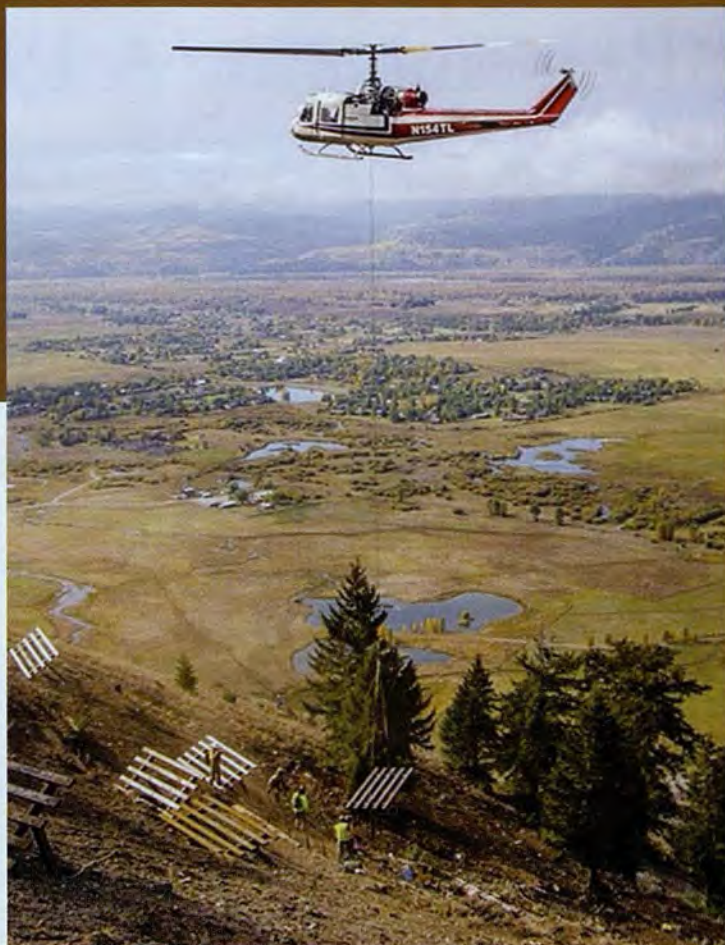
The UH-1L Navy gunship was the 6th of the original 8 UH-1Ls and flew with the Navy Sea Wolves in IV Corp; it was pictured in the 1970-71 edition of Jane's All the Worlds Aircraft. As for the Army Mike Model, Jim has all of its military and civilian records which were a mess to sort out since that bird was flying (illegally) using Lima model data tags and records. The Mike Model was pretty much stripped of gauges, radios, etc. when he acquired it, but is intact and the wiring has not been damaged. The fuselage of the Lima Model is damaged beyond repair, but, since the Lima is quite an historic helicopter the data tags, airworthiness certificate, etc. can be legally transferred to one of the E/Ls and then it would join its sister E/L model which also has an extensive combat history in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Jim also has a "shelf full" of military radios, control panels, etc. which would be great for restorations. He has also kept all his timed-out M/R blades, M/R heads, etc. so putting together a static display with the Mike Model would be easy.

If Jim fails to find a suitable buyer for the entire company, he would consider a possible donation of some items and the sale of others. But hopefully somewhere out there, a single member, a group of members or a VHPA Chapter would be interested in acquiring a part of Jim's historic gunship collection.

But perhaps being the head of an Helicopter Air Service Company just isn't for you, but owning a nice home in Monroe, Oregon might work out just dandy. If so, Jim is also selling his 3,200 square foot custom home located on 20.75 acres as well. The home comes complete with a caretakers cabin, a barn with an indoor riding area, a hangar complete with concrete landing pad, a six-bay equipment shed and several outbuildings. Complete details on that property are also available at: TimberlineAirService.com.

Jim may be reached at [redacted] or by e-mail at:
Support@TimberlineAirService.com



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TIMBERLINE AIR SERVICE specializes in high-altitude helicopter support for ski lift construction, but also does frost control, power line work, roof top placement of HVAC units, cell phone tower construction, aerial fish restocking, and fire fighting for Oregon Department of Forestry. Average yearly gross earnings are in the \$500,000 to \$700,000 range using only a single aircraft.

Conveying with the sale is the two complete and flyable UH-1E/Ls which form the heart of the business, both aircraft are fully serviceable and come complete with fresh paint; also conveying are an UH-1M Army gunship (project aircraft) and an UH-1L Navy gunship (unflyable). There are military records for all the aircraft and civilian records for the E/Ls and the L model, also included in the sale is a huge 30-year inventory of spares, supplies, special tools, ground support equipment, etc. - enough to keep they flying for years!

Complete details are available at:

TimberlineAirService.com

Jim may be reached at: 541 847-5199 or by e-mail
at: Support@TimberlineAirService.com

Remembering A 1967 USO Show Tour

By Jo Marie Escobar

I've always grabbed at opportunities that present themselves to me. Last July, on an unusually eventful Amtrak trip, I met the Weatherills and learned that Jim had flown helicopters in Vietnam. I had no idea there was an association such as VHPA and a way to say "thank you" these many years later, so I'm grabbing this opportunity.

The summer of 1967, I was an actress working in Manteo, North Carolina, in the outdoor drama *The Lost Colony*. About the time I started wondering what I was going to do when summer ended, I got a call. Would I be interested in a USO tour starting in September? The tour would go to the Far East for four months. I'd previously worked with the leader of the show and had some idea what I was getting into, but the prospect of four months' income while touring exotic locales in the company of numerous young soldiers, airmen, and sailors was simply irresistible to this "Old Kentucky" farm girl who wanted to be a star.

And it happened that in early September I reported to rehearsal studio B at the usual spot on 47th Street in New York City to get ready for what became one of my life's great adventures. The show was *Broadway Tonight!*, a musical revue of Broadway show tunes and skits. Nicholas J. De Noia was director/producer/star. There was a second male who was tall and romantic-looking. Around these two men revolved four women, constantly changing positions, roles and clothes. Nick believed that audiences bored easily, so constant, frenetic movement with multiple costume changes was the answer to that. Rip one gown off, slap another one on, and run back on stage. This worked fine in rehearsal, in the studio, and in those first shows in calm, cool Japan and Korea. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

In October, after entertaining in Alaska, we left for San Francisco to catch a MATS flight out of Travis for Tokyo. We played in Japan, then Korea, in secure locations with closed dressing areas on each side of the stage. Audiences were relaxed and appreciative. Our chiffon gowns with feathers, sequins, and head-dresses were always clean, pressed and ready to wear. Little did we know how things were going to change.

In late November, we flew into Ton Son Nhut Airport, Saigon, South Vietnam. And that was how it happened that on Thanksgiving Day, 1967, I stood with several men in khakis and T-shirts in what shade we could find beside big trucks, eating turkey sandwiches on an airstrip. Our first show was in a few hours right there at the base and it was hotter than Kentucky on a humid summer day just before the rain comes. And no rain was coming! Just sweat. I now understood why I'd been given salt tablets.



Jocelyn in the amphitheater at Long Bien before our show for 25 injured warriors from the base hospital. The healthy ones chose Bob Hope's show.



The cast of *Broadway Tonight! 1967 Edition*, with Jocelyn McKay on the extreme left (back to camera) and Nicholas de Noia front right. Photo appeared in the Lexington (Kentucky) Herald-Leader news paper when the show played at a local dinner theatre.



Our pre-show audience taking pictures of the performers, or perhaps just staring at us.

were, we thought the swift, straight-up departures with an occasional dip and swoop right or left were for OUR enjoyment (just like Disneyland!!). I later learned the truth – that you guys were taking fire and doing your best to keep us all alive. And to realize that one of you was doing all that just to ferry boxes of costumes – risking death for chiffon! Darned chivalrous, it seems to me.

We were transported by helicopter from Saigon to Pleiku in the Central Highlands, to Vung Tau on the coast, and many places long lost to other memories. We played big shows at Long Bien and Vung Tau (where the audience of hundreds was mostly Aussies on leave). Generally, however, we played to small audiences in those larger venues because able-bodied soldiers had the choice of *Broadway Tonight!* or Bob Hope. Jocelyn McKay and Nick de Noia were no competition for Raquel Welch or Joey Heatherton. A huge benefit of playing the small bases was that we were often in the company of the late Martha Raye. Maggie loved to visit the troops there and spent her life making them laugh. To share hours with her over coffee or a meal was such a treat. But I have digressed.

Every USO entertainer says it, but it is true nonetheless: these were the best audiences anyone could hope to entertain. They cheered. They whistled. They clapped. They loved every stupid joke and bad skit and good song and dance! But, now, instead of dressing rooms, we had curtains hanging from rods lashed to...whatever we could find in the 30 minutes or so after the helicopters landed and before the music started. It didn't take long to seat 50 or 60 guys. We were hot from setting up, and then the dancing started. Sweat followed, soon running down every part of my body. Our fast costume changes did not anticipate everything being sticky and to be done in full view of some audience members. The winds blew the curtains up and around, and boys became men in those audiences if they sat in the right places!

Dresses had sweat stains visible from any distance. Wigs and headdresses, such as survived at all, became hideously untouchable about halfway through, and we refused to wear them. Nick flew into a Nick-rage, but we were four against one. Why had no one bothered to find out about the WEATHER in this place? And dry cleaning? Please, this was a war zone! If you were one of those brave pilots who had to move this troupe around, I can only pray it was the girls. Nick was not a pleasant man when the shows became difficult. I can still hear his ranting at some officer who had to endure his "Where am I to get these wigs cleaned?"

Finally, some four weeks after we entered the country, we left for Thailand and big shows at the Thai air bases that supported the B52 missions. The shows got easy again with regular schedules, wigs and gowns got cleaned, and Nick calmed down. We continued to the Philippines and Okinawa, then Midway, Guam, Hawaii, and home.

There were many other shows, but that 1967-68 USO tour remains in my memories as some of the most special moments I ever had on stage. I lost track of the players over the years, and moved on to other careers myself, but wanted to take these minutes to remember *Broadway Tonight!* and four months that helped shape my life. If you were one of those transporting angels, thanks again. If you remember being in one of my audiences, thanks for making my life memorable. If you served, thanks for my freedom to write this note. Bless you all.

Jocelyn McKay, *Broadway Tonight!*
AKA Jo Marie (Metcalf) Escobar



Jo Marie Escobar first represented Kentucky in the 1964 Miss America Pageant and soon thereafter adopted the stage name of Jocelyn McKay when she went on to work on Broadway (Funny Girl, The Fig Leaves are Falling, I'm Solomon), on national tours (Your Own Thing), in nightclubs and cruise ships.

A highlight of her life was this USO tour in late 1967 that took her to the Far East and Alaska as part of a musical revue called Broadway Tonight! Other high-

lights were winning on the old game shows Match Game and Tic Tac Dough, and performing in Washington, D.C. for President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

Shown in this section are two more photos of Jo Marie Escobar, the black and white photo shows her as Jocelyn McKay when she was performing as Jocelyn McKay on various cruise ships with Carnival Cruise Lines as well as Norwegian Caribbean Lines and Costa Cruises during 1971-1975. She was the better half of the team of Fabio and Jocelyn, perhaps our members might recognize and remember her from those times as well.

The other photo is of today's version of Jocelyn McKay as she has long since dropped her stage name and is now known as Ms. Jo Marie Escobar, Attorney at Law. Jo Marie has is now retired from the District Attorney's Office of Orange County, California, where she was a prosecutor and supervising attorney from July, 1987, until her retirement in January of 2011. During those years she conducted over 200 felony and misdemeanor jury trials, while she specialized in the areas of family violence and sexual assault. She was promoted into management in the DA's office in 2000 and thereafter supervised other attorneys and staff in the Family Violence Unit until she moved over to supervision of the Insurance Fraud department in 2008. Hopefully, none of our members recognize her from those days.

Ms. Escobar has been married for 36 years to Alfonso Escobar. They live in Buena Park, California, where they enjoy travel, their dogs, and playing with their first grandson, now four.

Jo Marie closed her last e-mail to us with the words "Again, thank you for allowing me to thank all those wonderful pilots". Perhaps we can also thank her for our memories as hopefully, both Jo and Alfonso will be able to join us at next year's Reunion in Louisville, Kentucky. Until then, Jo Marie may be e-mailed at:



David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator

The USO Girls of Vietnam



They came to us to bring a smile
In this land of Uncle Ho
Always in danger, they put on their show
Those were the girls of the USO

They all chose to travel over here
To lift our spirits and make us smile
And each one brought their own special gift

If you were not able to be there yourself
The Radio waves would spread the news
That the girls were here to take away your blues
If only for a little while,
they would always make you smile

If you were lucky enough to see the show
Two hours of happiness in that crowd
Was worth two years in Vietnam

They would bring a short reprieve
The sight of a beautiful girl from stateside
Raquel Welch, Connie Stevens and Suzanne Pleshette
We remembered fondly what each one wore, or didn't

They entertained us one and all
With a heart of Gold and jokes galore
Just to put a smile on a weary sole

And now those years have passed us by
But your faces still linger on in our mind
You have left us in God's good grace

So please understand that when we say
Thanks for the memories

The dancing, the jokes, the songs that were sung,
in our hearts, you will always stay Forever Young

Author Unknown



“Looking For”

Looking For – anyone who might have known my brother John Charles Reilly

John was killed in action on May 22 1970, at the time he was flying with C/227th Avn. based in Phuoc Vinh. John crashed while flying a sniffer mission which was escorted by ‘Cobra 766’. They had an engine failure and crashed in triple-canopy jungle. The Huey erupted in flames on impact. All four crewmembers were killed in the crash, but three passengers survived and were later rescued.

We have searched for years for more information and are hoping to hear from any of your members who were either familiar with the incident, or might have know my brother either in flight school or while he was stationed in Vietnam.

Sincerely,

Peter Reilly

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Looking For....anyone having knowledge of particulars of Operation Shenandoah-One in the Ming Thanh area in October of 1966.

The day started when I had gone as a lone volunteer into a valley about a mile under fire, while about seven other men held the LZ at the top of the valley. We had been let off by a Chinook that had a footbridge rigged underneath. It then flew off down the valley to await our arrival to guide it in. But the Sergeant had frozen at the top of the valley and asked me to go down alone. The other volunteers were all new to Vietnam and he had them remain at the LZ with him.

We had been told that there was an infantry unit in trouble and they wanted us to install the footbridge to get them across the stream. I had reached the bottom of the valley after being fired at on the way. At that point, I did not see any Infantry or the Chinook. There was, however, a Major or Lt. Colonel who must have flown in on a small two man helicopter. I never saw nor heard that helicopter and he never said how he arrived ; although he was bone dry and I was drenched(a well a scared).

He told me that the Chinook had had to pull out due to heavy ground fire, but would be waiting when I returned to the LZ. I got there, and all but two were on board including the Sergeant who would not make eye contact. Two of the new guys had just started down from the LZ to look for me when I arrived.

The Chinook flew us a few miles away and dropped us in a clearing in the late afternoon. We were told to head into the woods, where we would find an American unit. We went in there and found about six tanks in a circle and spent the night with them. The next day they took us east for several hours. There we rejoined A-Company of the First Engineers.

There have been a few of the men that I knew well who said they were on the mission. But none remember being flown to the tanks. There may have been two groups of Engineers on the same mission. I've never been able get a true version or even an acknowledgement that there were two groups or that I had been in that valley alone.

I've searched for seven years with little luck. I figure that the crew of the Chinook that would have known what happened, or possibly the crew of the two- man helicopter (assuming that is how the aforementioned officer arrived). I believe the Infantry that the unit was the 1st of the 26th, although I am not sure of that.

I had a brain tumor by the time I left Vietnam in December of 1966 and which may have affected choice to go into that valley as the sole volunteer. My Company Captain has been very unwilling to provide much detail of the mission. He retired as a full Colonel.

I had a lot of difficult years from the tumor as well for years after its removal. It was not until early in 2007 that I began to revisit that action. The 1st Infantry Division has recently sent me an email that acknowledged my recall that I was in the valley by myself. They relied on a very cryptic email from my prior Captain, sent in 2012. Mostly, however, it was based on my version of what happened. I have recently tried to locate the helicopter crew in the hope that would be able to

verify my account. They would likely recall the instruction to wait up at the LZ for my return. I still have no idea of who the Officer was that I met down there.

From the time I went into that valley, I've never told anyone until 2007, at which point, related the story to my daughters. I hope that through your contacts I might locate the crew of either or both helicopters. It would be greatly appreciated. Failing that, I've reached a the point of letting this go, figuring I will never truly know what happened that day.

Steve Pearce [REDACTED]

Editor's note: Steve also gave me his direct phone number so if you can help him, but not through the e-mail system, call me at [REDACTED] and I'll pass the number on to you – David Adams

VNC
A

Looking For...anyone who served with A/337th Arty

To all VHPA members who served with A/377 ARTY, call sign Gunner, in Vietnam or later at Fort Campbell, Ky. I recently had a nice long chat with David Gardner who flew for the Air Force after leaving the Army and retired in Colorado. We shared a lot of great memories from our days in Gunner's Gulch, Camp Eagle, RVN and Ft. Campbell and we would like to hear from all you.

Please contact me, John Penny [REDACTED]

Looking for.....Dustoff Niner-Niner-Niner

I was a radio operator at 1st Medical Battalion in Da Nang during mid-January 1971. It was my first day on the job when a Medevac call came in from Dustoff “triple-niner”. He stated he had two MFW's and one GSW to the head and was five minutes out.

I relayed the message to the emergency room. About two minutes later, he called back and said to change the GSW to a “permanent routine”. As I was a FNG, I asked the Lance Corporal with me what a “permanent routine” was and he answered that it meant that the GSW to the head had died and that I now had to call the motor pool to have a “cracker box” (ambulance truck) sent down to retrieve the body bag. That was my initiation to the realities of Viet Nam.

I still don't know why the Dustoff came into 1stMed as it was a Navy/Marine outfit. I guess we were the closest medevac hospital or the wounded/dead were Marines.

I would appreciate receiving any more info you have about Dustoff 999 as it left such an impression on my life that I now use it for my g-mail address.

Alan L Vande Vusse
Cpl USMC
[REDACTED]

Looking For.....My Helo Rescue Pilots

I was wounded at Nui Ba Den on May 13th 1968. The next day (May 14, 1968) I was rescued on by helicopter.

I would now give anything to make contact with the crew that saved my life. Hopefully the fact that we were all “bunkermates” that long night might trigger the memory of your members. Thanks a Billion times.

Deane Allyn James
[REDACTED]

Looking For...Edward Conner

I'm hoping to contact Edward Conner (Ft Rucker flight class 66-4) as part of a project to connect with the pilots of two old (basket case) Huey's my Dad gave me to restore.

If you can help, please contact me at the below contact information.

Kenneth Edwards
Phone: (715) 837-0051

Looking For.....Major Bacon

I was in Vietnam in 1969-70 in Nui Dat, in Phuoc Tuy province while serving with the Australian Army. While there was enjoyed a lot of CH-47 support from both the Geronimo's

and the Muleskinners. Today I am involved in an Australian Army photo history project covering the years 1967-71.

This photo was sent to me as part of that project and I am looking for help ID'ing the officer in this 1971 photo as other than just "Major Bacon" in the caption. We believe him to be one of those CH-47's pilots we all so fondly remember. So, if anyone out there can help us, please contact me at the below E-mail address. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Paul Asbury

E-mail: [REDACTED]



Officers in the Australian Army Photo Maintenance Association photo, Nui Dat, South Vietnam in 1971. Major Bacon (left) and Major Asbury (right) are seen with a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. Photo: Major Asbury

Looking For.....CWO Tom Hatcher

Looking for CW 2 Tom Hatcher, last seen while living in our "Party Central Headquarters" (a long silver Airstream trailer) just outside the gates of Fort Hood back in the early 70's.

Sorry I have lost touch with you old friend, would appreciate either an E-mail (MohawkDriver@Gmail.com) or a phone call at: [REDACTED] David Adams

If you are Looking For....

Looking for an old stick buddy from Flight School, trying to locate a guy you flew with in Vietnam or maybe a pilot you served with after your tour in SE Asia or in the Reserves or National Guard? Let me help you find that guy.

For starters, go to the VHPA website, click on member services, click on online directory. If he's listed there, then try and contact him with the info listed. If the data is out of date contact me via email or phone call, and give me all you have on the guy and I'll do the rest. Hey, it's my job as MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN and I really like my job.

Why will I do all this for you? Two things - 1) I get to help a fellow VHPA member and 2) I know YOU will help me recruit the guy to join VHPA, so we all three win.

Looking forward to helping you find your friend - Mike Shetlerman, Membership Chairman. E-mail: [REDACTED]

or phone [REDACTED] or membership@vhpa.org or 1-800-505-8472

Looking For...anyone who might remember me from Vietnam

I need some help in finding anyone who might remember me, Robert (Bob) Tyma. I flew with the 68th out of Bien Hoa in the later part of 1970. I flew as a relief gunner on the slicks. Here is a picture of me in my flight uniform.

Robert (Bob) Tyma
E-Mail: [REDACTED]



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Full details and booking information are available on our website:
TheCubInn.com
Or call us at: 209-962-0403 (land line) to book.

CANTIN, Paul William Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-2WFW and 64-6QC, flew in Vietnam with the 45 TC BN (1965-66), 145 CAB (1965-66), I CORPS AVN DET (1965) and A/82 AVN 173 ABN (1965-66) under the Cowboy 8 call sign.



Paul William Cantin, 69, of Port Orange, FL, died at his home on September 5, 2013. Paul was a U.S. Army Veteran having proudly served his country from 1962 to 1966. At age 19, he was accepted into flight school and became the youngest pilot in the U.S. Army. He served as Chief Warrant Officer with the 173rd Brigade as a UH-1D helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1966 and was a lifetime member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Paul continued his aviation career as a pilot with Delta Airlines, from which he retired as Captain after 34 years of service in 2003. Paul enjoyed his retirement traveling with his wife Ruth, playing golf and playing blues harmonica.

He is survived by his wife Ruth, one daughter and one son, four grandchildren as well as numerous nieces and nephews. The family requests donations be made in Paul's memory to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675 or 855-448-3997. Condolences may be shared with the family at www.lohmanfuneralhomes.com.

CARLSON, Curtis A. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 71-25 & 71-33, flew in Vietnam with B/2/17 Cav (1970-71) and 59th CAC (1971) under the Dean call sign.

Carlson, Curtis A. "Curt" passed away at age 62. He was a Vietnam veteran serving as a helicopter pilot and was a recipient of the Bronze Star with 3 Service Stars.

He is survived by his wife, Denise; his father, one brother, both a brother and a sister-in-law, one nephew and one niece as well as other relatives and many friends. Internment was held at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery. Memorials preferred to either the Disabled American Veterans or to the Vietnam Veterans of America.

CLASBY, Joseph USMC Aviator who graduated in Flight Class 7-62, flew in Vietnam with HMM-361 (1966-67).

Joseph "Clas" Clasby, Sr., died on September 16, 2013 after a long valiant battle with cancer at the age of 75. He graduated from Lowell Institute at MIT in Boston, Massachusetts. He was a Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps, a pilot in the Vietnam War, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross. The actual helicopter he flew is displayed at the Air & Space Museum near Dulles Airport, where he is listed on the Wall of Honor.

He was an airline pilot for 30 years retiring as a

Captain with U.S. Airways. He played softball, basketball, and participated in the Senior Olympics. Clas spent many wonderful summers at the beach in Matunuck, Rhode Island. He lived in Milton, Massachusetts; Avon, Massachusetts; McLean, Virginia; and most recently in Gainesville, Virginia. Clas will be remembered for his generosity of time and spirit, wonderful sense of humor, love of God and country, and lifelong devotion to family.

He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Gay Landrigan Clasby; his three children and their spouses. He was known as "Papa" to his seven grandchildren. Clas regularly donated blood and platelets to the American Red Cross and he would be honored by contributions in his name.

CROUCH, William E. Jr. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 59-1, flew in Vietnam with OSD/ARPA (1954-65), HHC/9 AVN 9 INF (1969-70), HHC/17 CAF (1970), HHC/101 AVN 101 ABN (1971-72), 3 BDE 1 Cav (1972), USARV (1972), HHC/1 ANV BDE (1972) under the Thunder 16 and Destiny 6 call signs.



Colonel William E. Crouch Jr., USA (Retired) passed away on Thursday, September 19, 2013 in Panama City, FL. Bill was born in Laurel, Delaware; he attended Laurel High School and enlisted in the US Army Air Corps after graduation in 1946. Bill was selected to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY and graduated in 1951. While at West Point, he met the love of his life, Betty Jane (BJ) Macaulay, whom he married after graduating and being commissioned as Second Lieutenant.

Bill served with distinction during his 30 year Army Career. As a Field Artillery Officer, he first served with the 82d Airborne Division, then deployed to the Korean Conflict in November 1952 with the 48th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. After returning home, he attended Artillery courses at Fort Sill, OK, and Fort Bliss, TX where Bill was assigned as an instructor. In 1957, after graduating from the Artillery Officers' Advanced Course, then Captain Crouch started the second phase of his Army Career in Army Aviation. Bill attended Mississippi State University where he earned a Master of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering in 1959. Following graduation, he was assigned to Fort Rucker for flight training and earned his Army aviator wings in 1960. He remained at Fort Rucker, serving three years at the United States Army Aviation Test Board. He was then assigned to and graduated from the United States Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, KS in 1964.

Bill deployed on his first tour in Vietnam as

Light Aviation Project Officer, developing aviation combat tactics and techniques. Returning home, he assumed duties as Chief, Aircraft Branch of the Combat Development Command's Aviation Agency. Bill applied for and was selected for the United States Naval Test Pilot School. After graduation Bill was assigned to the United States Army Aviation Test Activity at Edward Air Force Base, CA as an experimental test pilot, Chief, Flight Test Engineering, and later Deputy Commander.

In 1969, he returned to Vietnam as commander of the 9th Aviation Battalion, 9th Infantry Division, and later as Executive Officer, 17th Aviation Group. He returned home to attend the United States Army War College and returned to Vietnam in 1971 to command the 101st Aviation Group, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). When his unit redeployed to the United States in January 1972, Bill served as G-3, 1st Aviation Brigade, and later as Deputy Commander for Operations, 3d Brigade (Separate), 1st Cavalry Division.

As a Colonel, Bill served in the Pentagon as Chief of Airmobility Division (later reorganized as the Aviation Systems Division) in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development, and Acquisition until July 1977. He concluded his military career in 1981 as Commander, U.S. Army Aviation Development Test Activity in Fort Rucker, AL. He continued to work with Army Aviation as a member of industry until his retirement in 1993.

Bill was the recipient of numerous military awards. They included the Legion of Merit with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross with an Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with a "V" device for Valor and three Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with 32 awards, Army Commendation Medal with a "V" device for Valor and an Oak Leaf Cluster, and many foreign awards.

Upon retirement Bill and BJ moved to Panama City Beach, Florida and although a long time boat owner, Bill decided he needed to take a boating safety course to learn more about boating. One thing led to another and he joined the Flotilla 19 of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary in Panama City Beach. Bill started out as an instructor and shortly thereafter was appointed as Flotilla Finance Officer. Other staff assignments included Personnel Services Officer and Communications Services Officer. His leadership positions included service as Flotilla Vice Commander, Flotilla Commander, Division Vice Captain, Division Captain, District Rear Commodore and District Vice Commodore, and in 2007 he was elected Commodore of the Coast Guard's Eighth District Coastal Region, with responsibility for all Auxiliary activities from the Arizona / New Mexico state line to St. Marks, FL, and covering all or part of eight southern states. Bill's contributions to Boating Safety and the Auxiliary were extensive,

TAPS

and he received numerous awards, including the prestigious Martin S Herz Award for inspirational leadership in early 2013. He continued to be active as an instructor and advisor until his passing.

Bill is survived by his wife of 62 years BJ, one daughter, two brothers, one sister and three grandchildren. Colonel Crouch's remains will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery with military honors for his service to the nation at a later date.

DUKE, Leiland M. Graduated flight training with the U.S. Marine Corps, flew in Vietnam with VMFA-314 (1965-66), H&MS (1966) and VMO-6 (1969) under the Seaworthy Rebel callsign.

Lt. Col. Leiland M. Duke, Jr., USMC (Retired), age 74, died while on vacation on June 19, 2013 in Rapid City, SD, after a massive stroke.

Leiland, a graduate of Auburn University, enjoyed a long and illustrious career in aviation beginning in college, then as a pilot in the USMC and later with FedEx. A decorated Vietnam veteran, he was rated in all types of aircraft and was recently awarded the Wright Brothers "Master Pilot" Award for fifty years in aviation without an accident or incident. Leiland especially enjoyed introducing new students to aviation. Leiland was a member of the Memphis Astronomical Society, served on the board of directors at the United Methodist Neighborhood Center, was a Germantown reserve police officer and a member of Germantown United Methodist Church, where he served on many boards and played hand bells. The family honored Leiland's wishes to be an organ and tissue donor and found great comfort in knowing that he lives on in someone who received his parting gift.

He is survived by his wife of 50 plus years, Betty, his three daughters, eight grandchildren, one sister and many friends, nieces and nephews.

Please remember Leiland with a donation to the Memphis Food Bank, The United Methodist Neighborhood Center, Life-Source.org, the IRIS Orchestra, or the charity of your choice.

DZINGLESKI, Norman John Flew in Vietnam with the 4 AVN, 4 INF (1967-68) under the Blue 26 callsign

Norman John Dzingleski, age 80, of Toledo, Ohio, passed away on August 28th, 2013, in Maumee, Ohio. He graduated Macomber High School in Toledo, Ohio and joined the Army after graduation. Norm attended Army flight school and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. He served tours in Korea and Vietnam, where he was awarded numerous decorations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross for "Heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight." Norman continued his interest in aviation and was active in the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and the Experimental Aircraft Association.

Norman He leaves behind one daughter, two sons, six grandchildren, three sisters and his special friend Barb Schwieterman.

KNIGHT, Robert "Bob" Graduated flight training with Flight Class 62-8 & 63-5, flew in Vietnam with A/101 AVN (1965-66) and 336th AHC (1967-68) under the T-Bird Chief callsign.



Robert "Bob" Knight went to his heavenly home on August 28, 2013.

Bob's life was spent in the Army where he was a fearless leader, a devoted friend, and a combat decorated hero. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and three Purple Hearts, he had too many other awards to list. He was a remarkable man, a leaders leader, a mentor, a Master Army Aviator, and a friend. He will always be remembered as T-Bird Chief of the Soc Trang Thunderbirds, 336th AHC. His exploits as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam are legendary.

Bob served as National Commander for the Legion of Valor 2006-2007. For three years, he was the Florida State Director of the Goldwing Road Riders Association and led the Platinum Coast Road Riders as chapter director for many years. He volunteered as a police officer for the Melbourne Police and also for the States Attorney's office, helping first offender youths.

He is survived by his wife Dru, three sons, one daughter, one granddaughter and three sisters. Burial, with full military honors, will be at Arlington National Cemetery. If considering tributes to his memory, he would appreciate remembering the Wounded Warrior Project.

KNOWLES, Richard T. Deputy Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division



Lt. Gen. R. T. (Dick) Knowles (ret) passed away on September 18, 2013. Dick Knowles was born in 1916 in Chicago, Illinois, Dick left the University of Illinois to join the Army in 1942. His military career spanned more than three decades. He retired in 1974 as a Lieutenant General, having served in three wars. After his retirement, Dick moved to Roswell, New Mexico, opened an antique store, and ultimately served for 16 years as State Repre-

sentative for District 57.

Dick's life spanned nearly a century of remarkable experiences ranging from remembering the first time he saw an automobile, seeing Frank Capone's funeral parade in Chicago in 1924, training as a young officer candidate in the ROTC on horses, captaining the fencing team for the University of Illinois that contended for a national championship, and witnessing an atomic bomb test in Nevada.

He went to silent movies for a nickel and had an email account. He was known for his open mind, quick wit, and outgoing personality.

While his military and civilian accomplishments are too numerous to mention in detail, he was awarded the Silver Star for Valor during the Korean Conflict and Congressional Medal of Honor Society Distinguished Citizen Award in 1994. The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations be made to The NMMI Foundation, Inc., 101 W. College Blvd., Roswell, NM 88201.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Elizabeth Kay Knowles. He is survived by his daughters, Diane Buchwald, Katherine Buck, Rebecca Crosby and her sweetheart, Gregg Brown, his son, Richard J. Knowles and his wife, Sandra Clinton, his three stepsons, and nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Interment will follow at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery.

VHPA Member Jack Swickard sent us the above obituary along with these personal notes about his friend retired Lt. Gen. Richard T. "Dick" Knowles...

Dick went to Vietnam as deputy commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. After retiring from the Army, he moved to Roswell, New Mexico, and opened an antique shop, which he named The General's Store. Dick later was elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives, where he served for 16 years, rising to House minority leader.

He served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Dick was a rated aviator and once told me he was the only general officer to be shot down while piloting a helicopter in Vietnam. In addition to the 1st Cav, Dick also commanded Task Force Oregon in 1967 and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam.

Additionally, early in his Army career, he worked for the Army chief of staff in the Pentagon. While there, he learned the Army planned to close Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas. Dick came up with a plan to save Wolters from closing. His plan involved getting the word of the planned closure to then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas. Dick's plan worked and Wolters remained open, later becoming the U.S. Army Primary Helicopter Training Center during the Vietnam War.

The British authors of the book, The Tunnels of Cu Chi, acknowledged that Dick Knowles was the only U.S. commanding general with a strategy for identifying Viet Cong tunnels. He would have trees dragged around an encampment before his troops went to bed for the night. Any Viet Cong who came out of a tunnel then could be followed

back to its entrance.

Dick told me years ago he was the person who selected the landing zone for Hal Moore's troops in the Battle of Ia Drang.

I am attaching two photos of LTG Knowles, one was taken when he commanded Task Force Oregon in 1967 and another one taken with his dog Sarge about two years ago here in Roswell.

He was a friend of mine for more than 37 years and lived about 4 blocks from me in Roswell, N.M.

JACK SWICKARD

MARSH, Caryl Glenn Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-6

Caryl Glenn Marsh was a retired Lieutenant General in the US Army and a successful military consultant. LTG Marsh passed away tragically Friday, August 23 in Cumming, GA. He was 73 at the time of his passing.

Glenn Marsh was born in Bracken County, KY, he spent his youth as a farmer and attended high school in Bracken County. He married Claire Boudrias on September 11, 1961 in Washington DC. He graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1962 and was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation from UK and the Army ROTC program. He was a dedicated soldier for 34 years.

LTG Marsh began his distinguished career as a soldier in the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot and parachutist in Wertheim, Germany. He went on to serve two tours in Vietnam where he was a company commander. LTG Marsh completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course and the Air Command Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, AL. He became a battalion commander at Ft. Lewis, WA. He attended the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. LTG Marsh then was stationed in Berlin, Germany as Chief of Staff for the Berlin Brigade. He then went to Ft. Lewis, WA as Brigade Commander and then Chief of Staff of I Corps. LTG Marsh was then stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY as Assistant Division Commander of the 101st Airborne Division. While there, he completed the Air Assault Course. LTG Marsh then went on to command the Berlin Brigade in Berlin Germany. Under his watch, the Berlin Wall came down. LTG Marsh then became the division commander of the 2nd Infantry Division in Camp Casey, Korea. Following that, LTG Marsh was the Chief of Staff of FORSCOM at Ft. McPherson, GA and I Corps Commander at Ft. Lewis, WA.

During his long and distinguished career as an Infantry soldier, LTG Marsh earned the following decorations: Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with "V" Device, numerous Air Medals, Army Commendation Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Valorous Unit Award, Air

Assault Badge, Master Army Aviator Badge, Parachutist Badge, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Medal First Class.

Following his career in the Army and in retirement, Glenn joined Cubic Applications as Vice President & General Manager of the Columbus, GA office. He worked for Cubic for 13 years where again distinguished himself as a valued advisor to military units across the country and abroad. Glenn had many admirers in both of his careers.

Glenn was a devoted husband and beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Glenn was an avid bird hunter and went on an annual pheasant hunting trip to North Dakota with several of his friends. Glenn loved tractors. He had recently restored a 1952 Ford tractor and had driven in the local 4th of July parade. Glenn was active at his parish, St. Benedict Catholic Church. He was a very spiritual man.

Glenn Marsh is survived by his wife Claire; three children, 12 grandchildren, one sister and one great grandson. He was interred at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, GA.

Martinak, Joseph B. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-5, flew in Vietnam with the 189th AHC (1967-68) under the Avenger 2 callsign.

Joseph B. Martinak 'Jay', 66, sadly passed away on September 29, 2013, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Jay was born in Lorain, Ohio, he proudly served as a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War from 1967-1968, earning a Purple Heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and a Bronze Star among other medals.

Jay continued his pilot career flying with Cal Fire as an aerial firefighter eventually promoting to Chief of Flight Operations. After retiring from Cal Fire in December 2005, Jay worked for Dyncorp International, Construction Helicopters and Flight Test Aerospace.

Jay leaves behind his loving wife Alison who cared for him throughout his final days. He is also survived by one sister, one brother, two nephews, one niece, and two stepchildren. Rest peacefully now my dear...

Donations in his honor may be sent to: Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage, PO Box 9322, Auburn, CA 95604-9322 or Hinds Hospice of Merced, CA.

McCarty, Robert Elliott Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-15 & 70-17

Robert "Robin" Elliott McCarty Jr., 65, currently of the Dominican Republic (formerly of Helena, AR and Memphis, TN), passed away August 17, 2013 in Puerto Rico.

Robin proudly served his country as a helicopter pilot in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He was twice shot down and was the recipient of the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and Bronze Star Medal among other



awards. Once discharged from service he farmed the deltas in Arkansas before becoming a stock and commodities broker in Memphis, TN. Upon early retirement Robin traded coat and tie for shorts and sandals. He bought a sailboat and for the next 20 years he and his young family lived life on the "high seas" sailing throughout the Caribbean and making lifetime friends in every port. Robin was loved by many, astounded more and left a mark on all.

He is survived by his mother Merry Jean McCarty of Little Rock, AR, five children, two brothers and one sister. To sign the online guest book please visit www.nelsonberna.com Nelson-Berna Funeral Home (479)521-5000

MELANCON, BG Steven L. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-20, flew in Vietnam with B/2/20 ARA 1 CAV (1968), B/4/77 ARA 101 ABN (1971), and 5 AVN (1972) under the Blue Max and Toro callsigns.

Brigadier General Steven L. Melancon, beloved husband and father, passed away peacefully at home on Aug 2, 2013. His modest manner & generous spirit hallmarked a life unselfishly dedicated to family, community and country. He was a decorated pilot, accomplished attorney, skilled craftsman, master storyteller, expert genealogist and was more technologically savvy than those half his age.

Born in Clinton, LA he spent formative years in Bogie Chitto, MS. In 1963, a chance encounter at the local cinema in Brookhaven, MS introduced him to the love of his life, Veda Janice "Jan" Nevels.

His various military assignments include two tours in Vietnam. The Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster & Air Medal with "V" for Valor are among his numerous national awards. From the State of MS he received the Magnolia Medal & the War Medal. He is a 1995 inductee to the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame. He received a B.A. from the University of NE and a J.D. from Ole Miss.

From 1979-1988, Gen. Melancon practiced law in Brookhaven, held a seat the MS House of Representatives and was instrumental in revamping the state's Justice of the Peace court system. He considered passing a bill on mandatory school attendance one of his greatest accomplishments. In 1983, he founded the Wesley Mission which fed and taught at risk youth.

Prior to retirement from the National Guard in 1996, he served as the Dir. for Operations for the U.S. Selective Service System. In 2001, he became the MS State Director for the Selective Service System. He most recently served as a county Veteran's Service Officer.

He was a Sunday school teacher and lay leader of First United Methodist Church of Brookhaven. He was a Past President of the Lincoln County Bar Assn, a member of the MS Army Natl Guard Assn, the Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, and the State Bar.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Jan Melancon, one daughter, one son, four grandchildren, one niece and two half-siblings.

TAPS

MORSE, John H. Flew in Vietnam with the 40 ARRS (1968) and the 40 ARRS (1971-72) under the Litter 81 and Jolly Green callsigns

Lt. Col. John H.I. Morse Sr., a longtime Springfield, Ohio, resident who commanded a helicopter rescue squadron during the Vietnam War and co-piloted the Jolly Green Giant credited with the 1,500th save of a downed airman in that war has died at the age of 90 in a Columbus, Ohio hospital.

He had been on the mend after a recent stroke when he caught an infection, according to his son, Charlie Morse. John Morse served 32 years in the Air Force and was also a veteran of World War II. He retired in 1974 while at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. "He was so very proud of his military service," Charlie Morse said Monday. As the pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress during World War II, John Morse flew 25 combat missions over Europe, but he remained most proud of his two tours of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War said his son.

Arriving at Nakhon Phanom Air Base in northeast Thailand in June 1968, as commander of the Air Force's 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, it was Morse's job to hoist downed American pilots to safety using the Sikorsky HH-3E — the helicopter lovingly called the Jolly Green Giant.

On his second combat tour, which lasted from May 1971 to 1972, he flew the HH-53, the Super Jolly Green Giant. On Dec. 21, 1968, Morse's Jolly Green set out to retrieve an F-100 pilot in Laos they knew only as Litter 81, his call sign. The fighter pilot turned out to be Maj. Forrest Fenn and he was the 1,500th save by combat search and rescue mission in Southeast Asia.

John Morse is survived by his second wife, Phyllis, seven children and many grandchildren.

MORRIS, Robert E. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 54-4, flew in Vietnam with the 1 INF DIV (1965-66) under the Danger 15 callsign

Robert E. Morris, 83, Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army (retired) passed into heaven on Friday, July 26, 2013, with his beloved family at his side. Born and raised in Kingston, NY, Bob enlisted in the U.S. Army in August 1948. He attended flight school and spent his career flying Fixed Wings Planes and Helicopters during his tours of duty in Alaska, Germany and Vietnam.

He is survived by his loving wife and soul mate, Joan Morris, two daughters, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his three sons, five sisters, and one brother. Interment will be privately held at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA. Donations may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project. To post a tribute, please visit www.neary-quinnfuneralhome.com.

McINTOSH, Van Lee Graduated flight training with Flight Class 59-7 & 61-40, flew in Vietnam with 571 TC DET (a965-66) and 224 AVN BN (1967-68) under the Knuckle Buster 6 callsign.

Van Lee McIntosh, 76, died on July 29, 2013. He was born in Greeley, Colo., he attended Colorado State University, graduating in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science in agriculture and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Army through the ROTC program at CSU.

Active duty tours include seven years in Germany, two years in Vietnam and assignments in various posts and camps in the U.S. as a helicopter and fixed wing Senior Army Aviator. He retired at the rank of Major after service in the Army, Army Reserve and the Oregon Army National Guard. He is survived by his wife, Joslin; one son, one daughter, one stepdaughter and several grandchildren. The family request donations be made in his honor to the Wounded Warriors.

SMITH, Alfred C. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-7 & 63-7WTm flew in Vietnam with the 1st BDE, 1 CAV (1965-66) under the Fullback 13 callsign

Alfred "Al" C. Smith, 77, passed away Monday, Sept. 23, 2013.

Al was born in Galena, Kan., he entered the U.S. Army in 1953 serving in Germany, Greenland and Alaska. In 1963 he entered helicopter pilot training and graduated as a warrant officer. Flying helicopters in Vietnam in 1965-1966, he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star and numerous air medals. He was honorably discharged in 1967 as a chief warrant officer. Later, he flew for the Tennessee Valley Authority, owned and operated a grocery store and worked as a sales representative prior to becoming one of the first civilian helicopter pilots for the city of Fort Worth.

He retired as the Fort Worth Police Department chief pilot and division commander in 1993. For the last 13 years of his career with the police department, he was a reserve police officer for Fort Worth. Since their marriage in 1977, he and his wife, Karen, resided in Lakeside, where he also held volunteer jobs as a city councilman, lay municipal judge and road commissioner. He held memberships in the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Airborne Law Enforcement Association, the Fort Worth Police Officers Association, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, the Lake Worth Area Historical Society and the Lake Worth Boating and Ski Club.

Al is survived by his wife, Karen Reddick Smith of Lakeside, Texas; his mother-in-law, one brother and several nieces and nephews. Donations are requested for the research of Alzheimer's, the North Texas Humane Society or the Lake Worth Area Historical Society.

TERRY, William Louis Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-15 & 66-17, flew in Vietnam with C/227th Avn, 1CD (1966-67) under the Bamboo Viper 22 callsign.

William Louis Terry, 67, retired Army CW-4 from Roanoke, VA, passed away suddenly on 9 August, 2013.

Bill was a 36-year CW4 with the Virginia Army reserves and National Guard, he served in Vietnam as an UH-1 helicopter pilot participating in many battles and assault missions. He was awarded the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and over 40 air medals for his actions in combat.

Bill was also an Embry Riddle Aeronautical University graduate. His civilian employment included corporate pilot, and regional airline Captain. In his later years he became active in the insurance industry.

He is survived by his wife Catherine, a daughter, two grandsons, a brother (Bruce Terry, a former Dustoff pilot) and two nephews. Many feet are on the ground today, because of Bill's heroism. He walked the walk.

WEIMER, John R. Flew in Vietnam with the 15 MAS (1969), 37 MAS (1970-71) and 37 ARRS (1972) under the Jolly Green 20 Callsign.

LTC John R Weimer Jr. (retired) of Bailey, Colorado went to be with his Lord and Savior on Tuesday, August 13, 2013 after a lengthy illness. John grew up in Akron, Ohio and lived there until he joined the Air Force at the age of 18. Airman Third Class Weimer began his military career as an enlisted man in 1959 at Lackland AFB, San Antonio TX, completed Aviation Cadet Navigator training in 1962, Electronic Warfare training in 1963, and Pilot Training Program in 1968. USAF aircraft flown were T41 Cessna, T37 Jet Trainer, B-52H and B-52F Bombers, C141A, C-47D and T-29D Cargo Transport. Helicopters included: TH1F Hughes, CH3C, CH3E and HH53B/C, Sikorsky.

He was a C-141 Transport pilot from 2/1969 to 4/1970 at which time he attended USAF Conversion Pilot training (Helicopter) F-V5F/E, he completed HH53B/C Helicopter SATS training in 1970. He was a HH-53C Helicopter Rescue Aircraft Commander in DaNang, South Vietnam from 10/1970 to 10/1971 and 4 to 5/1972. John was stationed at Minot, ND with the 91st Combat Support Group (Strategic Air Command) from 12/1973 to 4/1975. Captain Weimer was awarded two Silver Star medals for gallantry in action in 2/1971 and 5/1972. He was also awarded two USAF Distinguished Flying Cross medals for Heroism while participating in Aerial Flight in January and March, 1971.

John's Air Force career spanned 22 years. He later worked as a carpenter and built his own home in Bailey, Colorado. John enjoyed spending time with family and friends at his mountain home. He would always say: "We'll give you a one hundred dollar meal and a million dollar view". One of

TAPS

John's favorite things was singing in the Church Choir and on the Praise Team. He worked as a volunteer at the Billy Graham Crusade in Denver and made several Mission trips to Mexico and Africa with his church.

John is survived by his wife, Beth Ann Weimer of Bailey, CO, and three children, five step children, seventeen grandchildren and one great grandchild. John is also survived by one brother, three sisters, five nieces and seven nephews. He will be sadly missed by all his family, friends and community.

Sent to us by Rick Beaver, Rocky Mountain Chapter, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

WILDMAN, John T. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 57-1.

John T. Wildman, CW3 US Army (Ret), 83, of Enterprise, AL died Friday, August 16, 2013 at his home surrounded by his loving family.

Mr. Wildman was a decorated career army pilot that served in the Korean War and Vietnam Conflict. Upon retiring from the military, he settled in Enterprise because of the area, and then pursued a successful career in real estate.

He is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Bonnie Biggs Wildman, three children and seven grandchildren. Donations in his name may be made to Day Spring Hospice or the SOS Animal Shelter. To sign a guest register, please visit www.sorrellsfuneralhomes.com.

MILNER, Courtland A. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-20 & 68-34

Courtland A. Milner, 66, of West Palm Beach, passed away Aug. 08, 2013.

Mr. Milner was a U.S. Army Veteran and served as a helicopter pilot during Vietnam. He will be lovingly remembered by his family, including his wife, Beverly A. Akin, his stepchildren, Tracy and Mark and 5 grandchildren. Funeral Services with military honors were held at the South Florida National Cemetery, Lake Worth. Memorial gifts may be sent to American Heart Association or American Diabetes Association.

Notice of the passing of the following 12 Military Aviators were received by the VHPA during the production period for this issue. None of these men were ever members of the association, nor were the notices of their death reported to the Association by a member of the man's family, or by a member of the VHPA; they were all obtained through an internet search. Because of that, we have posted the TAPS information we received on these men on their individual listings of the on-line membership directory being maintained at VHPA.org. If you are not able to retrieve the information on-line, call HQ for assistance (1-800-505-VHPA).

BABSON, Bobby Wayne Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-49 & 71-1, flew in Vietnam with A/7/1 CAV (1971-72)

BLAIR, Donald Charles III, Major, USAF, Retired of Peachtree City, Georgia

GEDZINSKI, Henry "Hank" P. LTC. USMC, Ret.

HAMBRICK, George Oakie, LTC. USAF, Ret.

HAMILTON, PERRY CARTER Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-521 & 68-39, flew in Vietnam with B/3/17 CAV (1969)

HARRIS, Samuel Young LTC. USA. Ret. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 71-42

HAVENS, John F. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 71-2

HERBOLD, Robert Allen Flew in Vietnam with 18 AVN (1962-63)

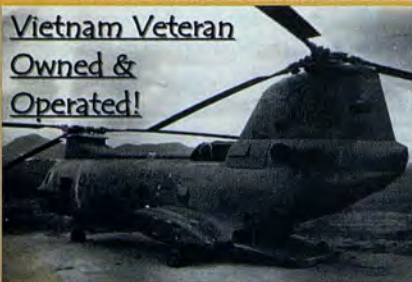
MELSON, Walton Ray (Walt) Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-11, flew in Vietnam with the 273rd AVN & the 478th AVN under the Dustoff call sign.

NYE, Elbert "Sonny" Carson, LTC. USA. Ret.

PARKER, Thomas Bernard, graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-12 & 68-18

SCHMIDT, Erwin Augustus "Dutch" II, LTC. USA. Ret. Flew in Vietnam with the 191 AHC (1969) under the Boomerang 6 call sign.

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VHPA Life Member Glenn Goins has been approved by Arizona Governor Jan Brewer for induction into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame. Glenn served in Vietnam with A/2/17th Cav of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) May-October 1971 and HHT, 2/17 Cav from October '71-February 1972.

The Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame seeks to recognize those Arizonans who have worn the uniform of

this Nation's Armed Forces, performed their military duties, and then continued to contribute to community, state, and nation in an exemplary manner over the life of the nominee. Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame focuses on a nominee's contributions outside of, and after, their military service.

Glenn retired from the Army after postings all over the world, including service in Vietnam. He is the father of six adult children and seven grandchildren, and a resident of Chandler, Arizona. Upon retirement, Glenn became the Senior

Army Instructor at Carl Hayden Community High School's Army Junior ROTC Program from 1992 – 2006, ever since he has served the school district as a Certified Substitute Teacher. A Mentor to youth for over thirty years, Glenn is known affectionately as "Major Dad" by many students.

Glenn has financially supported the education of two children (in Honduras and the Philippines) from 2002 to Present. He has served as President, Arizona Youth Leadership, Inc. for four years and helps organize the Annual Arizona Youth Leadership Conferences sponsored by the Military Order of the World Wars where he teaches Communications. Glenn has been the Colors' Coordinator of Veterans' Service Organizations at the annual September Massing of the Colors and Service of Remembrance event in Phoenix from 2007 to Present.

Glenn's induction was held on October 25, 2013 at the El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium in Phoenix. Full details on both Glenn's induction and the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame are available at: www.aznav.org



UH-1D/H 65-09584 identified; help needed filling in her service history

Dear VFPA family,

I'm searching for anyone familiar with 65-09584 to help my effort to document her service history. My father found 584 several years ago in a salvage yard and recently gave the Huey to me to research and restore. Although 584 no longer had a data plate or legible tail number, she was eventually identified through Army maintenance records, and found to have seen action in Vietnam in mid-1966 and service with the Georgia ARNG in the early 1990s.

The rest of 584's service history remains a blank.

I'm planning to restore 584 along with a gunship (see page 34 of the Sept/Oct, 2013 issue of the Aviator) for future public display, and am asking VHPA members to help fill in her missing years so that a complete history can be assembled for posterity. If you have any personal accounts, log book entries or photos – any information at all – please do not hesitate to contact me.

I'm hoping in particular that somebody will remember an Aug 20, 1966 rollover incident involving 584 while serving as 11th CAB commander LTC Joseph Starker's aircraft. As many of you know, Starker was an Army aviation pioneer and an architect of the airmobility doctrine; 584 is particularly special because of Starker's association with her. Following is a list of known units and combat incidents, taken from the VHPA database and ARNG records:



Units:

- 1966: Army 11th Combat Aviation Btn (presumed), VN
- 1966 -1990: unknown
- 1990s: 1st/244th AVN, ARNG, Winder, Georgia; exact dates unknown
- 1995 (approx): 151st AEB, Dobbins ARB, Georgia

Known combat incidents:

- 8/16/1966: hit in main rotor system by one 7.62mm round while landing at hot LZ but completed mission; no casualties; crew included P Hart, CM; location and unit unknown
- 8/20/1966: hit by a stray round on short approach to a hot LZ and lost control, crashing and rolling onto right side, pinning a crewmember and 2 assault troops underneath. The 11th Combat Aviation Battalion commander, LTC Joseph B Starker was aboard at the time. The only other known crew member during this mission was AC Conner, EL. 584 is presumed to have been assigned to Starker's 11th CAB at that time; the location of the incident and aftermath are unknown

If you have any information at all, or wish to help in the reconstruction effort, please contact me - thanks!

Ken Eward

Chetek, WI ~ Tel: [REDACTED]

Looking For Long Lost Artist...

I served in Vietnam in Bien Hoa, 1st Avn Brigade, 145 CAB, 68th AHC, "Top Tigers" as a slick lift platoon leader. After my tour in Vietnam, I was stationed at Ft Ord, CA, as a Basic Training CO, for two years in the 1970-1972 time frame. Those were the years that they drafted anyone who could walk or talk.

I had a young man in my unit who we judged to be unfit for service because of his mental condition. He was a gentle soul and was terrified of going to Vietnam. We determined he would be a danger to his fellow soldiers because of that fear.

All I remember about him is that he lived in San Francisco and that he was an artist. It took months to get him processed out on an article 12. He could not adjust to simple peace time duties like KP, or barracks cleaning, sooooo.... Having recently returned from Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, I asked him to paint some pictures of helicopters in action.

Being only 25 years old myself, I never thought to have him put them on canvas... I



had him draw them on the plaster walls in my office and a few other walls in the company area. Each picture was about 5 foot high by 7 foot long. He would start around 2100 hrs., work all night and stop around reveille. He would then sleep all day, which pissed off my drill Sergeants off to no end... but I wanted those pictures finished. The two pictures ended up taking him months to complete.

I've always regretted not having those pictures on canvas. As you know, Ft Ord was later closed and all those buildings were demolished. This young man had an artist's soul because every combat pilot I've shown these to is amazed. For a kid who never set foot in Vietnam, he captured the chaos, the blood, the disorganization and the stark raving fear associated with flying combat helicopters.

I haven't the slightest idea who this young man was or where he is now...he's got to be in his 60's at least. If anyone has any information about this young man I would appreciate knowing. I'd love to get these paintings on a canvas.

Bob Godar

E-mail: [REDACTED]





DPMO
Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office

DPMO has announced that the remains of one US Army and two US Air Force soldiers missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified.

Staff Sgt. Lawrence Woods, U.S. Army, Head Quarters, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, was lost Oct. 24, 1964 near the Cambodian border. He was accounted for on Sept. 27, 2013. He will be buried with full military honors in early 2014.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Robert E. Pietsch, 31, of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Maj. Louis F. Guillermin, 25, of West Chester, Pa., will be buried as a group Oct. 16, 2013 at Arlington National Cemetery. On April 30, 1968, Guillermin and Pietsch were on an armed-reconnaissance mission when their A-26A Invader aircraft crashed in Savannakhet Province, Laos. Witnesses saw an explosion on the ground and did not see any signs of survivors. Search and rescue efforts were unsuccessful, and they were listed as Missing in Action. In 1994, a joint U.S./Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) team, lead by JPAC, surveyed the crash site and recovered human remains but was unable to fully survey the site due to the presence of dangerous unexploded ordnance. In 2006, Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel cleared the site and gathered additional human remains and evidence such as personal effects and crew-related equipment.

The number of Americans announced by DPMO as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 941. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of remains repatriated from the Vietnam War to 1,004. Of the 1,643 missing and unaccounted-for personnel, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,276 (VN-469, VS-807); Laos-309; Cambodia-52; PRC territorial waters-7; this number includes over 450 over-water losses that are among the 630 cases that DPMO lists as No Further Pursuit.



DON'T FORGET!

The deadline for this year's
**LIGHTER SIDE
OF VIETNAM ISSUE**

is COB
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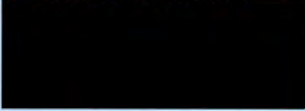
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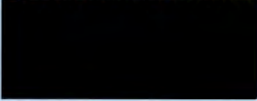
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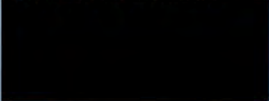
ALASKA CHAPTER
Victor Micol, President



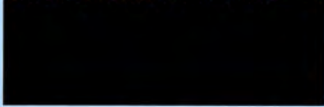
ARIZONA CHAPTER
Bill Sorenson, President



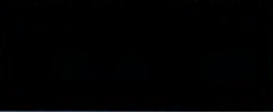
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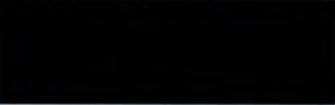
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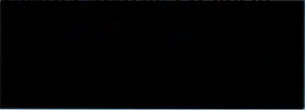


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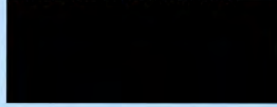


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MICHIGAN CHAPTER
Charley Martin, President



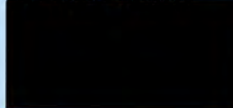
UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER
Ray Wilson, President



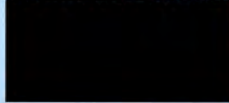
MONTANA CHAPTER
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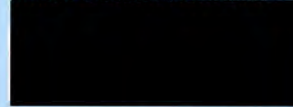
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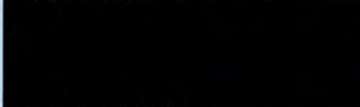
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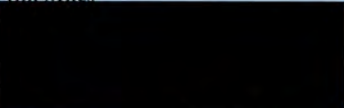


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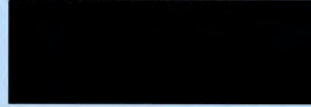
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
President: Don Agren



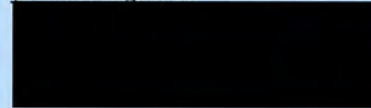
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Jim Miles



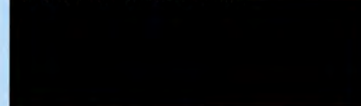
SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER
Bill Thompson, President



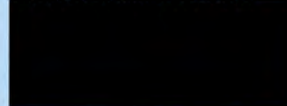
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER
John P. Hargleroad



THE ALAMO CHAPTER
San Antonio, Texas
Jim Martinson, President



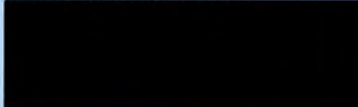
SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER
(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter
Larry Russell, President



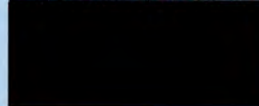
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
Sven Akesson, President



VHPA OF FLORIDA
Tom Rountree, President



WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER
Don LeMaster, President



IN DIRE NEED OF ASSISTANCE

We have closed three of our Chapters – Hawaii, Fort Rucker and New England.

All three closed from lack of interest, participation and/or leadership. I really would like to see some of you out there step forward and restart these Chapters and/or even start a new Chapter close to your home.

I know we're all getting older but we're not dead yet! How about it men – a little help would really be appreciated.

Jack Salm - National Chapter Liaison - E-Mail: Johnsalmjr@aol.com

The VHPA and Chapters share information and guidance with one another for the mutual benefit of each other. All of our Chapters are separate and independently managed organizations not under control of the VHPA. The VHPA is not authorized to act as an agent or a representative for any of the Chapters nor are any of the Chapters authorized to act as agent or representative for any of the other Chapters or the VHPA as a whole.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALASKA CHAPTER

We have finally reached a point in our early existence appropriate for holding Elections. Accordingly during our prime rib steak night, this past Friday, we opened the floor to nominations for various positions. Results of the voting will be announced at our December meeting and Christmas gathering. Those elected will serve for two (2) years. The VFW post in Eagle River, Alaska will host our December party. We'll be enjoying steaks with our wives. We also plan to take Chapter members and group pictures which will be the first pictures since our initial gathering.

The steak-out was a big success and the VFW chapters in Alaska worked with us to provide outstanding support and facilities for our get-together. Many of the wives' joined us in hardy conversation. We all enjoyed huge, perfectly cooked steaks! The beer was cold. We also gained three new members. Conversation included a look at those who might go Louisville, our local Veterans museum wall display, and other volunteer possibilities. Of course what would a meeting be without planning a halibut fishing trip next year!

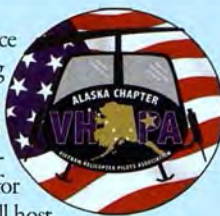
Our new patches are in and our bumper stickers were a big success. We are also seeking permission from our VA facility to put a small display up in the entryway. We're sure that there are probably one hundred (100) Viet Nam Helicopter pilots in our area; that we have not reached yet. As so often happens, we seem to meet coming and going from the VA!

It is starting to feel as though we are getting organized and we can spend more time enjoying each other's company and doing the fun things that Alaska provides. We have big expectations for next year! We certainly have the group to pull it off.

Until later There is pride in knowing that WE FLEW!

www.vhpa-alaska.org

*Vic Micol, President
Submitted by Lynn Kile*



and we encourage you to come check us out!

Bill Thompson, President

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

The Old Dominion Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association meets on the first Saturday of each month at Legend's Brewery in the Old Manchester Area of Richmond, VA. This fall, we will be presenting Legend's owner with a plaque to recognize him for his support of our group.

On October 5, 2013, we are planning a fall event with our wives. We will be taking a river cruise which will leave from Tappahannock, VA at 10 am. The cruise will take us to Leedstown, VA where we will, then, go to Ingleside Plantation Vineyards for a wine tasting and lunch. We will return later that same afternoon.

Our Christmas Party Dinner will be at the Meadowbrook Country Club, Cogbill Road on Friday, Dec 6th. We will be sharing the evening with the Military Officers Association of America.

As always, we will remember our founder and first President of the Old Dominion Chapter, J.T. Severin, whose relentless efforts brought our group together.

*Mel Anderson
Vice President Old Dominion Chapter of the VHPA*

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

We currently have over \$4000.00 in our chapter fund. A few months back we considered donating \$1000 and a member's match totaling \$2000 to the Wounded Warrior Project. Many of you contacted me and felt we should be donating to a more local organization. Many recommended Fisher House at the Long Beach VA. We plan to finalize this at our next meeting.

Thanks to Mike O'Neil, our web site is up and running. Check it out, it's very well done. www.vhpasocal.org. CW5 John Harris will be retiring after 44 1/2 years. That's gotta be a record for an Army Aviator! John's retirement party will be held at 1100 hour on 3 November at the Eagles Nest Country Club, Navy Golf Course, Cypress, CA.

On Saturday, November 16th, The Western Museum of Flight at Torrance Airport will have a lecture titled The Vietnam Air War. Our chapter will be there along with several Vietnam era aircraft on display.

In closing: I would like to thank everyone for their support and help. All of you have made it possible to have an outstanding VHPA Chapter.

Sven Akeesson, President

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The third quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA was held on August 24th, at the Hy-Vee Club Room in Columbia, Missouri. The meeting was very well attended by members, wives, and guests, and, as at each of our prior meetings, a first-time attendee and his wife.

It is during the third quarterly meeting, every other year, that the chapter has election of officers and a change of command. Bill Thompson added his presidential "battle streamer" to the chapter flag, symbolizing the change in leadership, and Lew Phillips was elected Secretary. Because of family health concerns, the nominee for Vice President asked to withdraw his name, and the Chapter Council decided to hold that election during the first quarterly meeting of 2014. If you have an interest in chapter leadership, and want to be considered for this position, please let a chapter officer know by the end of December, 2013.

Bill Thompson made a very interesting, and informative video presentation of the history of the blood chit. It was first used in the late 1700's, and is still used today. Curiously, many of our members never received one during their tour(s) in Vietnam. The Chapter Council welcomes your ideas for future program topics, and the memberships' participation in the presentation of future programs.

As his term as President came to an end, Russ Emory expressed his gratitude to everyone for their support of the chapter during his term. He also expressed confidence as we move into our fifth year of existence.

The fourth quarterly meeting will return to The Keeter Center, on the campus of the College of the Ozarks, just south of Branson, Missouri. The meeting will be held on November 9th and begin at 11:00. Later that evening, members and guests may attend the Tony Orlando Show, at the Welk Resort Theater. Show tickets will be discounted, if you wish to attend, please let a chapter officer know of your desire to join the group.

The South Missouri Chapter of VHPA is excited about moving into the future. We look forward to continued growth, chapter activities, and member participation. Recent accounting indicates that over a thousand (1000) items have been donated to Missouri Veterans' Homes and hospitals! We welcome any, and all, who would like to be part of our chapter. Above all else, we enjoy being together

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to hold a Saturday morning breakfast meeting every other month. We furnish speakers to high schools and colleges, Boy Scout Troops, other youth organizations, as well as civic groups. These groups want to learn more about the Vietnam War, from those who participated in it. Newnan High School teaches a course on the Vietnam War, and the Georgia Chapter provides our assistance to them whenever possible, such as their Student-Vet Connect activities planned for 3-5 October.

Our September guest speaker was Major General Larry Taylor, USMCR (ret.), who spoke on his experiences as an Air America pilot in 67-68. He reported to AA in Laos, hoping to fly fixed wing aircraft and ended up flying H-34's for about 20 months. General Taylor made a vacation trip into Vietnam for the 68 TET Holiday, taking advantage of the cease fire agreement, to relax and enjoy some time off in Vung Tau. The TET Offensive started and trapped Taylor in South Vietnam. The government would not let him travel without a visa, and the visa office was occupied by Viet Cong troops fighting the government. So, he was stuck at an Air America compound until they could get him back to his home base in Laos. General Taylor discussed the various types of AA missions, the AO (tri-border area of Laos, South Vietnam & North Vietnam), and stories about some of the "characters" working for AA at that time. He talked about search and rescue missions, including meeting a pilot that he had rescued years after the rescue. Taylor also talked about Site 85, which was an Air Force facility in northern Laos, and about an Air

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

America pilot who shot down a North Vietnamese plane which had attacked the site. All of his stories were both interesting and very entertaining.

I will be speaking at the October and November meetings of the Georgia Vietnam Veterans Alliance. My presentation will cover the battle at Ngok Tavak and the withdrawal/abandonment of the Special Forces and SOG facilities at Kham Duc on Mother's Day in 1968. I will have a survivor of each operation to help tell the story. The only way in or out was by air, and the NVA had all the approach and escape routes covered. LTC (ret.) Joe Jackson earned his Medal of Honor as the last aircraft in and out of Kham Duc, with the last of the trapped survivors.

Our breakfast meetings every other month continue to be our principal activity. The members who participate really enjoy the opportunity to get together with other combat helicopter pilots, swap war stories, discuss VA-related information, and maintain those bonds that were forged so long ago.

To those former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots in the Atlanta area, who would like to check us out and/or join our group, please see our web site at www.ga-vhpa.org, for the next meeting date or contact me at [REDACTED]

Bill McRae, President

ARIZONA CHAPTER

Our October meeting is planned at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson on October 19th. The museum opens at 0900 and lunch is planned at the cafeteria at 12:30. Anyone that did not receive a flyer, please contact me at the references below.

Our December meeting is planned in Phoenix on December 7th. The meeting will start at the Commemorative Air Force Museum by Falcon Field, followed by a lunch at the Golden Corral at 1300 hours. The flyers will be out mid October for this meeting.

Not on our Arizona Roster or E-Mail list? I am still trying to contact Arizona residents to see if they want to be placed on our roster so they can be informed of our activities. Also any VHPA members visiting our sunny state during the winter months that are not on our e-mail list can be placed on it by contacting me at [REDACTED]

Bill Sorenson, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

It's been a busy quarter for us up here in Washington State. We ended September with our annual Eastern Washington meeting in Spokane with 23 members in attendance. Our chapter treasurer and National Executive Committee Member, John Shafer, brought us up to date on our financials and reported out that the chapter is in good fiscal shape. John reported that we currently have 16 life members and 109 regular members on our chapter rolls. President Don LeMaster gave an overview of this year's 30th annual VHPA reunion and encouraged the membership to start making plans for next year's reunion which will be held in Louisville, KY. It was agreed by those who were able to attend, that the San Francisco reunion was a superb event and a good time was had by all. Don informed the members that we are initiating efforts to help establish an Oregon State Chapter. Mark Hansen explained how members can purchase chapter "challenge coins" and other items on line by going to our web site (www.vhpawa.org).

As this issue of the Aviator comes off the press our chapter is preparing to participate in the 48th Annual Auburn Veterans' Day Parade on November 9th. This event is the largest veterans' parade west of the Mississippi River and is designated by the Veterans Day National Committee and the US Department of Veterans Affairs as a Regional Site for celebration of Veterans Day 2013. The city of Auburn is proud to be a Vietnam War Commemorative Partner and this year's parade is paying special tribute to the Paralyzed Veterans of America. The parade has become a very special event for our chapter, affording us the opportunity to interact with the spectators and other parade participants. We've seen many older veterans rise from their wheelchairs as we pass by with our "Huey" and chapter banner, to salute and thank us for our service. The annual pre-parade breakfast is being hosted by the Auburn American Legion Post #78.

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The Chapter is busy getting our Cobra Gunships ready for the 2013-2014 school year. Our first visits are in Mauldin and Anderson, SC. We hope to present our SOaR program to four high schools there with dozens more to schedule. We're also helping out the Celebrate Freedom Foundation with its participation in two Veteran's day parades.

Nov 3rd we're having the Mayor of Lexington, SC ride with us and we're providing rides for the Gold Star and Blue Star Mothers. I'm proud to report that my daughter is now a Blue Star mother as my Grandson Devin Hass is aboard the US Ronald Reagan! We also have plans to fly "Maggie" our flying Cobra as escort for the parade. On Nov. 11th, we're participating in the Columbia, SC parade and are proud to have the Mayor of Columbia, SC, our state capitol, ride with us.

We're planning to have our annual Christmas party in the first week of December. We honor our hard working volunteers with "Spur Awards" and deserving wives with the "Order of the Yellow Garter". It's a night of Stetsons, silver and gold spurs, and all around good cheer. Drop me a line, give me a buzz, fly into KCAE and check us out, we need more volunteers. If nothing else, come greet our 4 Donut Dolly's who'll be in the parade in their own M38A1 Jeep.

Larry Russell, President

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER

The Louisiana Gulf Coast Chapter met last month along with the Louisiana Army National Guard Alumni folks. Combining these two groups of aviation retirees has been a fun and rewarding experience. The Louisiana Army Guard guys are great and have repeatedly commented that they have enjoyed having our Pilots and Crew-members joining in with them. Also, spouses are welcome at our gatherings. The next meeting is tentatively set for Thursday, December 5th at our CP located within Smile's Restaurant, 5725 Jefferson Highway, Harahan (New Orleans area), LA 70123. The food is great and come thirsty since we gather in the bar around 6pm before going to the dining area. Please email me (VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net), if you want to be on our alert roster for meeting updates.

Vic Lent, President



As always, we welcome all VHPA members to any and all of our functions and events. We anticipate that our next chapter meeting will be in February. Look for exact dates and times by visiting our website.

Don LeMaster, President
Submitted by: Steve Lodwig

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER

The Alamo Chapter members volunteered to support the Texas Vietnam Heroes Exhibit on two days, July 30th and August 3rd. The Exhibit consists of a set of ID tags, identical to the set that will be permanently entombed in the Texas Vietnam Veterans Capitol Monument (located in Austin) next year. The ID tags represent the 3,417 Texans killed in that war, including 287 San Antonio natives. The tags hang in an impressive Exhibit which is touring the State of Texas. On Tuesday our members joined a greeting line of honor when the tags arrived in San Antonio, carried in a flag-draped crate. We then greeted viewers who arrived at the Institute of Texan Cultures when the Exhibit opened on Saturday.

About thirty of our members and their ladies enjoyed a September weekend of fun and entertainment at the Hangar Hotel in Fredericksburg, Texas. Yes,

Alamo Chapter Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



the piano player and his guide dog were in the Officers Club Bar, and that dog knows every song. On Saturday we attended a rousing, patriotic, rock & roll show at the famous Rock Box Theater. The photos shown here were taken that evening by member Jim Boykin, one shows the Rock Box's welcome slide, another shows a performer doing a great Willie Nelson impression, the last shows us gathered for dinner after the show at the Wooden Nickel.

If any Alamo Chapter members reading this have not made plans to attend our Christmas party on December 13th, you really should make that decision today. Although the deadline has passed, we will make every effort to get you into the party. Contact Ben Treadaway, our treasurer, right away. See our website at www.vhpa-alamo.org for more details.

Jim Martinson, President



NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association continues with a record busy year! The NCVHPA joined the Traveling Wall and Cost of Freedom Tribute August 29-September 2 in Harrodsburg, KY. As in the past, Vietnam Veterans were greatly moved, sometimes to tears, seeing and touching the helicopters and viewing the traveling wall. This event was the fourth time we shared events with moving walls just this summer.

The NCVHPA is also in the process of preparing

helicopters for insertion into the Vietnam Corridor in the Pentagon. The two designated Hueys have been picked up, ragged as they are, and we have just finished transporting them back to North Carolina for their restoration. See attached photo. We will be sharing the progress in the Aviator as the helicopters take shape to become part of the history of, and honoring Vietnam Veterans in the Pentagon. Current plans are to dedicate this corridor on Memorial Day, 2014.

Brock Nicholson – President
Submitted by B. Seago

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH (CCN) CHAPTER

Our first order of business is to correct an error that was printed in the last Aviator - Our new webmaster is Dave Anderson, and not Dave Johnson! That mistake was all mine, sorry Dave - Ken.

We had a very busy September: Labor Day Parade in Nicolaus, CA, the POW Tribute Day at Fair Oaks VFW, and the Military Appreciation Day at Action Military Surplus in Sacramento. Next on our calendar: the Corvettes for Vets show at Red Hawk Casino, the West Sacramento Veterans Day parade, the Bryce VFW USMC Birthday party, and our Holiday Party in January. And sometime over the winter, we'll refurb the Huey's 540 blades, 540 rotor head, and a new C model tail boom. Then we'll attack the interior.

Our Holiday Party will be January 12 in Fairfield, CA. Thanks to Dave Anderson for adding all this to our website www.vhpacn.org. Go there to keep us with us - we always have something new cooking.

Ken Fritz, President



After cleaning up the MOC, our first event was displaying the Huey in the Labor Day parade at the small farm village of Nicolaus, about 20 miles north of Sacramento. L-R: Curt Knapp, Mike Nord, Ken Lake, Ed Morris, Al Doucette, Jim Stein, Mike Whitten, Greg Hutson. These handsome pilots did something right - we won first prize overall in the parade.



New VHPA-CCN member and ex-POW Mike O'Connor, discusses Syria with US Congressman Ami Bera at the Fair Oaks VFW. The day was the VFW's tribute to POWs from all services and all wars, even the Vietnam conflict. More than 300 people enjoyed BBQ, guest speakers, and the Huey on a fine day in Fair Oaks, CA.



Al Doucette, Minuteman 44 and VHPA-CCN member custom builds and flies twin rotor scale models. He took three of them to the Action Military Surplus military appreciation day. This CH-47 is a good example of his work. He also had his TH-55 and UH-1B on display.



September 21 saw the Huey and the MOC on display at Action Military Surplus for their Military Appreciation Day. The weather turned sour and that slowed the attendance, but families came and enjoyed free popcorn and sodas.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER - VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER AND THE HELICOPTER WAR MUSEUM (HWM): We announced that we would be showing our Helicopter War Museum at the Rocky Mountain Regional Airport Air Show (the largest in Colorado) scheduled for August 16-18, 2013. Due to Sequestration there was no military presence, so the Air Show had the lowest attendance in recent history. Additionally, on Sunday, The Museum became Micro Burst Central. The outside display was obliterated and became part of the perimeter fence. Due to the heroic efforts of the attending docents, Terry Olson, Walt Wise, Doug Neal, and Phil Lanphier, the tent canopy was salvaged. Other Docents who supported that weekend were Carl Cavalluzzi, John Grauff, John Hargleroad, Fred Lyssy, Greg Mann, Bill Robie, Rick Beaver and Dale House.

The Museum is currently in the shop for some needed repairs. The annual Department of Transportation (DOT) Inspection is being conducted by Sawaya Truck Repairs, at a tremendous discount off the normal cost.

Recent Chapter activities include: Our Chapter members hosted an Honor Flight Welcome Home Reception at Denver International Airport on September 16th. We host a reception for the veterans returning from Washington D.C. twice a year. Our monthly meetings were held at the American Legion Post #1 in Denver on September 21, 2013, and October 19, 2013.

Upcoming chapter Activities: We have been invited to participate in both the Longmont, and the Loveland, Colorado Veterans Day Celebrations. Since we cannot satisfy both requests, we will support the one that best helps to pro-



vides transportation for the Museum.

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Saturday of the month, at 1000 hours at the American Legion Post #1, located at Int. 25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, timed and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have holiday get-together's in December. Our Next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2013 at 1000 at the Legion.

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum. Please contact our Chapter President John Hargleroad or Dale House, Museum Curator, with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We are also looking for an OH-6 or

Huey that we can display outside the museum. Any and all contributions or ideas are welcome. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com

John Hargleroad, President

Submitted by Dale E House, Vice President, Museum Curator

VHPA OF FLORIDA CHAPTER

During all of August and the first three weeks of September we were working hard to get ready for our 21st Annual Reunion. The reunion took place September 26th - 29th at the Sheraton Tampa East Hotel in Tampa, Florida.

Thursday, after setting up our OH-6, Memorabilia room, Sales room, and Registration we met in our Hospitality room where we ordered pizza and over a few adult beverages we started to tell war stories! On Friday Registration, Sales, Memorabilia, and the OH-6 were all open for the entire day. That evening we all went to the Hillsborough County Veterans Park, where we were responsible in ensuring that the Vietnam Memorial was the first to be installed, and contains both a Huey and Cobra donated by the VHPAF. We all enjoyed a catered BBQ dinner with all the trimmings in the park that evening. Saturday started off with our Annual Meeting where we approved an updated Constitution and By Laws, voted in officers, and selected the site and dates for our 2014 reunion. The officers for 2014 are President: Tom Rountree; Vice President: Frank Hoover; Secretary: Mike Waugh; Treasurer: Tom Tomlinson; and Chairman of the Board: Gary Harrell. Next year's reunion will be held in Crystal River, FL at the Plantation on Crystal River from September 18th - 21st, 2014.

The week before our reunion we supported the

American Legion Post # 4, Lakeland, FL with the OH-6 where they had the Moving Wall. We had quite a few members there and we were visited by the Tampa Bay Lightning hockey team's mascot, "Thunder Bug".

We will have a Board of Directors meeting in October at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park to complete planning for our remaining events for this year and approving events for next year.

Upcoming events for this year include supporting the "Veterans In The Classroom" sponsored by the Citrus County MOAA. A few of our members living in Citrus County will support this event during the first two weeks in November. Then starting on November 9th we will be supporting the American Legion Post # 152, Tampa, FL with the OH-6. On November 11th - 16th we will be in Sarasota, FL supporting the Senior Friendship Center as they host the "Moving Wall" with our OH-6, sales, and the "Little LOH" ride for the kids.

We all plan to take the rest of November and December off to enjoy it with our families and friends.

Tom Rountree, President



Chapter Members and their guest enjoy a Bar-B-Que dinner at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park while attending the 21st Annual Reunion of the VHPA of Florida Chapter.



"Thunder Bug" the mascot for the Tampa Bay Lightning's hockey team, visited both the Moving Wall and our display at the American Legion Post # 4, Lakeland, FL.

WWII War Paint

How Bomber Art Jacket Emboldened Our Boys... By Lisa Hicks

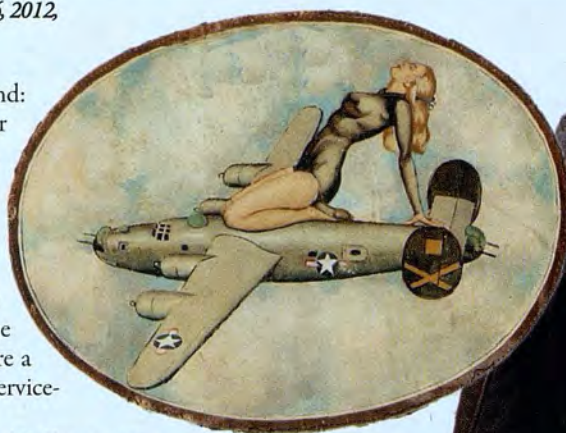
~ *Collectors Weekly magazine, December 6, 2012, excerpted and used by permission.*

Here's something to keep in mind: The "men" who fought and died for the United States in World War II, were just barely out of adolescence, as young as 18 years old—the same age as guys obsessed with "Maxim" and Grand Theft Auto today. The WWII flight jackets painted with provocative pin-up girls, favorite comic characters, or lucky charms are a reminder of just how young these servicemen were.

At the beginning of the war, Army Air Corps members were issued the most badass jacket in the military, the leather A-2—which had been the standard leather flight jacket since 1931. In WWII, these jackets became a canvas for teenage flyers to express their rugged individuality. They'd get the backs painted, and often these images included the plane's nickname and little bombs to tally how many missions the crew flew. On the front, personalized patches would often indicate one's squadron or bomb group.

On the bawdiest of these jackets, scantily clad babes gleefully ride phallic bombs. On others, cuddly cartoon characters charge forward, bombs in tow, driven by a testosterone-fueled determination to kill. Some jackets depict caricatures of Native Americans or Pacific Islanders, even rarer are those showing Hitler being humiliated—while the number of bombs designated missions flown, swastikas represented German aircrafts destroyed.

"I've talked to people who, when they got back from the war, hung their jacket up in the closet because they wouldn't dare ever wear it in public



again," says John Conway, co-author of Schiffer Books' *American Flight Jackets and Art of the Flight Jacket*. "When you're a teenager and you're 3,000 miles from home, having a naked lady painted on the back of your jacket is not that big a deal. But you wouldn't want your mom to see it."

You might think the concept of personalization would be frowned on in the U.S. military. After all, aren't soldiers stripped of their identities in boot camp, where they dress in uniform, fall in line, follow orders, and work as a cohesive unit? Conway's co-author Jon Maguire says American soldiers have always held on to their individuality in some way. "You saw the same thing in the Vietnam conflict nearly 200 years later. Infantrymen would take their helmets and decorate the camouflage covering with peace signs, playing cards, or rock bands, whatever they were into."

During World War II, the Army Air Corps commanders may have had deeper reasons for turning a blind eye to jacket paintings, the same way they ignored the nose art that adorned airplanes with similar motifs" says Conway, who's worked at the militaria-focused Manion's International Auction House in Kansas City, Kansas, for 33 years. All it took was one accurate aircraft shot, and a plane full of 10 guys was gone. "When you were up there in a plane, you'd get shot at, and you couldn't call field artillery to support you. You had no ambulance, no medic. During a world war, the rulebook often goes out the window".



An A-2 jacket worn by an American air gunner in the 86th Bomb Squadron, 47th Bomb Group. The dog was the squadron mascot, and the outline of Italy indicates where he served. From the collection of Jeff Spielberg.

Pete, a pilot in the 100th Bomb Group, flew a B-17 bomber "Goin' My Way" and had Bugs Bunny painted on his A-2 jacket. The bomb tail indicates he flew 33 missions. From the collection of Jeff Spielberg

The quality of work you see on painted flight jackets ranges from the rough-hewn and child-like to the lush, textured work of master painters. Some airmen painted their jackets themselves, while some hired gifted European street artists. It's most likely that most flyers just hired the guy in the squadron who knew how to paint.

On A-2s from the China-Burma-India Theater, you'll often come across silk banners known as "blood chits." These had the occupied nation's flag with messages on them in multiple languages intended to convey that a downed airman was not a threat, but someone who wanted to help them fight the Japanese. Usually, a reward was offered for helping the soldier get where he was going.

Painted flight jackets were always coveted by U.S. veterans, military men, and WWII and militaria collectors. Flawless painted flight jackets, which aren't attached to anyone famous like the American Volunteer Group "Flying Tigers," highly decorated airmen, or celebrities like Jimmy Stewart, will now sell for \$3,000 to \$6,000. But they're rare. Of course, that's created a market for counterfeiters who will buy an unpainted A-2 from the war, paint it, and artificially age the painting. That's why Maguire and Conway are more interested in jackets that come with a picture of the airman wearing it. "When Jon and I collect, we don't care who made it," Conway continues. "We don't care if it fit and if the zipper was broken. You're talking about a garment that's 65 years old. Why would you expect the zipper to work? It's not healthy to do that to yourself." For Conway and Maguire, honoring the stories of the soldiers who wore these one-of-a-kind painted flight jackets was always more important than the jacket's condition.

"My focus was really the people who wore them to remember them," Maguire says. "It's not about the jacket. For me, personally, if the jacket was documented with a photograph of the guy wearing it, it increases the value a lot. If an A-2 still has its name tag, it's possible to research that soldier through federal records. In the past, Conway and Maguire would turn to veteran's organizations, who would often help them track down a jacket's history just with a nickname. But sadly, the World War II vets are dying off, taking their stories with them. For Conway, unraveling the mystery is part of the appeal. Even the smell of an old leather jacket captures your imagination because it makes you wonder where it went, and who wore it."

Lisa Hicks

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

EDITOR'S NOTE: All but one of the photos shown here are from Jon Maguire and John Conway's "American Flight Jackets" and their "The Art of the Flight Jacket" books. Both books are available at Schiffer Books. The photo of just the flight jacket patch runs courtesy of my brother Mike Adams, it's a picture of the patch our Dad wore on his flight jacket during B-24 missions in WWII.

John Conway is the man that maintains our www.vhpaaviator.org website and regularly advertises for Military Memorabilia in the VHPA Aviator.

Hope you enjoyed the story ~

David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator.

Also - I deleted a lot of this story to make it more applicable to the readers of the Aviator. The full story, complete with a lot more full color photos, is still available on the Collectors Weekly website below:

www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/wwii-war-paint-how-bomber-jacket-art-emboldened-our-boys/



Glider pilot Nesbit L. Martin, from the 1st Air Commando, shows off his blood chits sewn inside his A-2.

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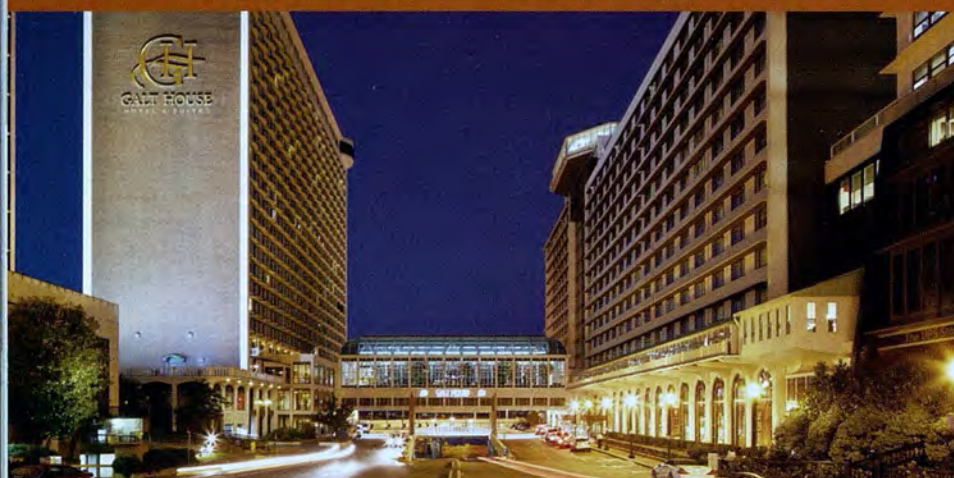
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2014 Reunion ~ VHPA's 31st Annual Reunion ~ Louisville, KY July 1-5th 2014



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR 2014 REUNION

Direct Hotel Room Reservation Link for VHPA Members
<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/VHPA14>

Galt House Reservations phone number:
800-843-4258 or 502-589-5200

Room Rates: Deluxe Room in the Rivue Tower for \$109 or a suite in the Suite Tower for \$129

Just Add Bourbon

From the Reunion Committee - Our Proposed Schedule of Events

The VHPA's 31st Annual Reunion in Louisville, KY from Tuesday, July 1st through Saturday, July 5th 2014 at The Galt House. "Just Add Bourbon" is a favorite expression of Louisvillians and Kentuckians usually said with a big smile!

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 July	2 July	3 July	4 July	5 July
AM	Set-up Day	Breakfast Day Tours HPF	Golf Gold Star Family Day Tours	Breakfast on the Bell Day Tours	Memorial Service Annual Business Meeting Spousal Luncheon
PM	Dinner Tours	HPF Day Tours Dinner Tours	HPF Writers Panel Dinner Tours		
EVE	Early Bird Reception Concert	1st Timers & Welcome Reception Concert	Dinner - Baseball Fireworks 	Waterfront Picnic & Fireworks	Closing Banquet Dancing

Tours:

Fort Knox, Museum Row, Bourbon Trail, Breakfast cruise on the Bell of Louisville, Churchill Downs, Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Group Breakfasts:

For the first time in several years the Reunion hotel is offering group meals at a reasonable price so we will offer more in-house group meals.

Golf:

Chariot Run golf course at the Horseshoe Southern Indiana, a Caesars Casino.

Helicopters:

American Huey 369 from Peru, Indiana will attend. Ohio River LZ Chapter's annual reunion will co-locate with the VHPA Reunion.

HPF's (Historical Presentation Forums)

Plans are being drawn up for at least six 90-minute presentations.

Baseball and Fireworks:

Special package includes transportation, dinner, tickets in the VHPA section for the 6:45 game, program, 10% discount in gift shop, plus post-game fireworks.

Registration:

Online starting mid-December 2013. Details in the Jan/Feb 2014 Aviator.

Hotel Reservations:

Now operational. The online link is:

<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/VHPA14> or phone 800-843-4258 or 502-589-5200 or fax 502-585-9022.

Plan on the lowest ticket prices and registration fees that you've seen in recently years.

Questions? Comments?

As always get in touch with HQ at 800-505-8472 or Mike Law at [REDACTED]

Visit ...

www.vhpa.org

for current Reunion details

Click on Reunion Information

(second down on the list to the left on the Home Page)

"Back to School" at the 2014 VHPA Reunion

Your 2014 reunion committee is pleased to announce that it will put special emphasis on reuniting flight school classmates at next year's reunion. Many of us who flew in the RVN spent more time with our classmates than we did with the pilots we fought with in Vietnam so the committee wants to provide the opportunity for all of us to go "Back to School" next year and relive those demanding and exciting years in flight school; whether in the Army's, Navy's, or the Air Force's flight training pipelines.

Our huge database of contact information for all of our members or potential members will allow us to bring the classes together and keep track of those who will be attending the reunion by class number. We will post class rosters on our website as the registrations roll-in so you will be able to find out who you will be meeting well in advance. The committee plans to set-up a special meeting venue for classes with tables marked by flight school year and number so you will have no problem re-

dezzousing with your classmates.

To make this effort even more comprehensive, the committee, with this announcement serving as the inaugural "kick off" for our BTS (Back to School) program, wants to recruit a member of each flight class to serve as class leader. The class leader will be supplied with a print-out containing the contact data of his classmates so he can personally contact them by e-mail, and/or if he so wishes, by phone as well. This will dramatically enhance the success of the BTS effort and is not time consuming at all as many of us who have organized such reunions can attest to. It's a lot of fun as a matter of fact!!

VHPA member, Rick Roll, rroll@comcast.net - 66-16B4, has volunteered to be the BTS project leader and is looking forward to hearing from all pilots interested in being a class leader. The sooner we get started, the bigger the turnout we'll get, so please e-mail Rick right away if you want to help him make this a memorable reunion.

RECREATING THE MAGIC OF A DAY LONG, LONG AGO

Back in 2004 I wrote a four-part article about a seven- Day R&R in Bangkok that went terribly bad for six pilots from the 361st Pink Panthers. To recap we had traveled to that Asian paradise to witness the wedding of our good friend and fellow aviator, LaRue "Lash" Wisener, to Dang, the exotic beauty who had stolen his heart. There were many delays

which are too numerous to list or discuss here but

suffice it to say 16 days later the seven of us posed for a now famous picture taken in front of the Opera Hotel as the six returning to the war said goodbye to one headed home. Little did we know at the time that we were about to become the "Infamous Pleiku Six" of which very little has ever been written or spoken over the last several decades. That was March 22, 1972.

Over the years all seven of the guys in the now notorious photo have joined VHPA. We have had as many as six make a Reunion but never all seven. THAT IS ABOUT TO CHANGE. All seven; Captain Teflon, Ziggy, Lash, the Pimp, the Gofer, the Little Blonde Headed Kid and the Colonel's Pet have committed to be in Louisville at the 2014 Reunion where we will again create the magic of that fateful morning so long ago. Also in attendance will be other participants and role players in this saga; the Unit XO, the Unit OPNS OFF, the Battalion Commander and a host of others. It will be a wonderful experience when seven really good friends finally all get together again. I love the VHPA!

Mike Sheurman, Panther 15

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator.....

Why we go to these reunions!!

Over the last few years I have made attempts to look up various guys I served with in RVN. I have used Facebook and other social media sites to try and find these individuals with no results what so ever. You know how some people just don't want to respond, for one reason or another.

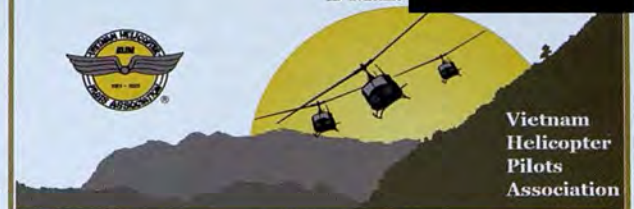
Well here I am standing in line at the hotel in San Francisco getting ready to get on a trolley to go on a tour. I just happen to look at a name tag. Tony Zarbano, one of the guys I have tried unsuccessfully to find for years. After a handshake and a big hug, we made arrangements to meet later on the boat for the fireworks display.

The last time I saw Tony was when he left the hooch to go home in 1969. It was a GREAT experience seeing him again!!

We caught up on who, what, when, where and we both promised to meet again next year in Louisville.

Howard D. Horton

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



Reunion of the men of D Troop, 1/10 Cav



Veterans of D Troop, 1/10th Cav gather at the wall in Washington D.C., April 2013.
The woman in the center of the group is Deborah Beach Jones, the sister of D Troop KIA Harold Beach.

by Doug Donnell

When I first joined D Troop 1/10th Cavalry at Fort Lewis in March, 1966, the unit had about 60 guys, 50 of whom were helicopter mechanics, all assigned to work on our two little OH-23's. A collection of career men, draftees, recent returnees from Vietnam, one-tour enlistees, and some that the Division just didn't know where else to put, D Troop's informality and unusual status as an aviation unit in an Armor Squadron in an Infantry Division made it "different", and I'm proud to say it has remained that way.

In 2003, I made contact with Alfredo Coy (DAT) on the web, one of those men I first met when I got to D Troop. Al and I were both from Texas and came to be good friends during our service together despite our differences in rank (he was an SP5, and I was a PVT) and age (he was a "grizzled" 24 year old, I was 19 when we met). From contacts Al had, we were soon in touch with more of our guys, and early in 2003, six of us got together in Las Vegas. From that core, what we called "The Original D Troop" has grown to have an active contact list of over 400 and a rowdy annual reunion teaming with ever expanding circles of re-found friends.

Though that founding group consisted of all former enlisted men, our group has benefited from a strong synergy between D Troopers of all ranks, career and life experiences. A full third of the personnel in D Troop were officers, all rated pilots for our compliment of aircraft. Our OH-23 "Scout" and UH-1B, C, and D Huey crews formed close bonds as rank and decorum gave way to relying on one another to accomplish – and survive – the missions assigned.

So when former pilot Duncan "Shamrock 21" Dowling III, showed up at our 2008 Las Vegas reunion, he found Manny Maldonado (Door Gunner/Armorer) and Bob Beck (Crew Chief), with whom he had flown many times during their year together back in '66-'67. Duncan has since immersed himself in the project

and, in addition to becoming an excellent banquet organizer, has enthusiastically helped bring many of our former pilots and other personnel into the group.

Almost since the beginning, some of us shared the vision of including D Troopers from all years ('66-'71) the unit was deployed in Vietnam. Through our website, www.theoriginaldtroop.com, several of our successors made contact, including Tim LaTour, a slick pilot from the 69-70 group. Tim and I exchanged emails and in 2008, as we were planning our third Las Vegas reunion, Tim asked if he and some of his "Shamrock buddies" could join us. We didn't know what we were letting ourselves in for, but when these "Newbies" drank the Clarion hotel's bar dry, we quickly accepted them as Brothers. Our group now includes participants from every year, and every duty station, of D Troop's deployment.

Ron Adams, retired West Pointer and D Troop Aero-Rifle Platoon Commander was one of Tim's Buddies, and I remember the moment Ron came up to me in Las Vegas and said "I would really like to help you with this if you would let me." Ron has since been instrumental in establishing communications with literally hundreds of former D Troopers from all years and all ranks. Universally known as "Ground", Ron has a passion for finding and involving former Aero-Rifle Platoon personnel. Our 2013 reunion in DC hosted our largest ARP contingent to date.

Ron also located original combat CO, and initiator of its "Shamrock" call sign, LTC (Ret.) Tom Shaughnessy. As a 19 year old PFC clerk, I remember when then Major Shaughnessy strode into the orderly room in Fort Lewis in 1966 and struck terror in my heart. As I grew in age and life experience, I often wondered how "The Major" really felt about taking his inexperienced and under prepared unit into combat. I was thrilled in 2011 when Tom attended our reunion in Fort Worth, and was fascinated to listen to his candid reflections on the challenges he faced then. Though closely bound together in the day to day operations of D Troop, rank would never have allowed the friendship then that we have now.

The "D Troop Project" continues to grow as we focus on making participation both enjoyable but valuable. Al Peterson, who was the first person I met when I got to D Troop, has become our VA expert and his information sessions have aided many of our group in learning about and obtaining benefits. Our "Break Outs", as we call these information sessions, banquets, side trips, and other social opportunities are planned to provide a quality reunion experience for all, and we continuously look for ways to extend to our Brothers some of the recognition and appreciation that was so scarce at the time they served.

Thanks to a team of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, our "Shamrock Stand Down" continues to grow. Our April reunion in Washington, DC, saw more new ("Old"?) faces and more enthusiasm than ever. We are D Troop – and we continue to serve and, well, frankly, to be different.

Doug Donnell

E-mail: [REDACTED]



"WO Pruet Helm, MAJ Thomas Shaughnessy, SP5 Robert Beck, and SP4 (later SFC) Steve Moreno in Fort Worth, 2011. WO Helm was shot down in a mission near Plei Djerrang in 1966; Tom Shaughnessy was our Original CO; Bob Beck crewed CH-34's in Korea before joining D Troop in Ft. Lewis; Steve Moreno, a Huey door gunner, was D Troop's oldest non-NCO enlisted man when the unit deployed to Vietnam - "Steve eventually served three tours in-country and has numerous decorations, including a Purple Heart."



"The seemingly always shirtless 1LT Duncan Dowling III and SP4 James Hamlin pause while preparing a Huey for departure from the USNS Core at Cam Rahn Bay in 1966" (my note: The "shirtless" thing is kind of an inside joke -- but he really is shirtless in about half of my photos!"

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Reflections on a Military Funeral

by Robert M. Lee



**Services for My Friend Mike Wheeler,
September 9, 2010, about 9:00 AM, EST
Old Chapel, Fort Myer, VA
on the edge of Arlington National Cemetery**

It is a crisp, fall morning in Washington DC and Virginia, not unlike the morning of 9/11 almost nine years ago when the homeland was attacked by a small band of foreign zealots.

Today is different because I am sitting in the last row of a military Chapel I have come to know all too well over the past thirty years of my life. I have witnessed many beginnings of life (weddings and baptisms) from this famous Army church. Sadly, I have participated in far more final chapters of life from these hard pews.

Today is different because I am listening to the words of a son-in-law celebrate the life of his father-in-law and the man that I knew well as a fellow soldier, patriot, aviator, combat veteran, DOT (FAA) employee, and longtime friend. It is hard not to tune out the words coming from a young man who clearly respected and loved his father-in-law because I already know what he has to say about the man; he was my friend.

Instead, I am quietly reflecting on the man I knew and deeply respected for a hundred different rea-



Mike Wheeler

sons. I cannot help thinking about how dumb and ironic death is when it comes knocking at your door. Mike was killed doing what he loved best, even as far back as Vietnam, and that was flying helicopters.

I wonder how an aircraft mishap could happen to a man that was the best and most experienced pilot among us; a pilot with tens of thousands of flying hours. A man that was the only one in our group of aging Cold War warriors that was still flying long after the rest of us had hung up our flying or cavalry spurs. He died doing a maneuver that we helicopter pilots learned to do in our

sleep and he could do better than any of us – how could this happen? The answer is the same as it always has been: life and death happen and that is it – no real answer.

I am snapped out of my thoughts by a young Army Chaplain taking the podium to speak. He is trim; well groomed and wears the medals of a Combat Chaplain. He is a young man but old before his time; I can see it in his eyes and the medals on his chest speak to me about his war. He has comforted and blessed men dying in Iraq. I remember Chaplains like him from forty years ago in a place called La Khe except we were the same age then.



He talks about Mike for 20 minutes like he personally knew him. The fact is he never knew Mike Wheeler but he sure has known men like him and that gave him the right to be listened to when he spoke. I am impressed with the manner in which he handles this difficult job of praising a man he has never met. I look at Barbara and the back of my friend's heads and shoulders; they seem to think so too.

The church service ends and the Old Guard Burial detachment enter the side rows of the chapel and move to the urn and the flag. They are young, tall, strong, and crisp. It is the right word for the 3rd Infantry Regiment soldiers; crisp. Every movement has a reason and is precisely executed to make sure the remains of our friend and the Nation's flag are treated with respect. We all stand and face the center of the church as Mike is carried by soldiers to the waiting caisson in front of the Chapel.

Outside it is a nice day for a funeral; the sky is clear and blue with a light breeze. The sun is strong but the trees cast wavy shadows across the procession as it starts the final trip for my friend Mike. Being the man he was; Mike would have been embarrassed by all of this ceremony for him.

Some of his friends walk behind the casket and the rest of us decide to follow slowly in our cars. It is an odd procession when you think about it; horses and a caisson from another era of history, led by a marching Infantry unit with a detachment from the finest military band in the world tapping out the rhythm of March to match the pace of the horses. The rest of us walk or idle our automobiles behind the professionals.

The procession slowly works its way down the hills of Arlington National Cemetery past the stone markers of America's past heroes; old and young, black and white, but all heroes for their service to the Nation. It is a place of profound reflection on one's place in the world of the living while among the dead. I can see the colors of our Flag covering Mike's remains. They are starkly bright against the black caisson.

The movement to the grave goes rather slowly and I think about the times in the winter that I have walked among these stones while removing wreaths from the markers after the holiday season has ended. The cemetery really is quite beautiful both in the winter and in the summer. This will be a good place for Mike; he will be happy here with other heroes.

We arrive at the grave site and the grass is dry with lots of dust in the air. The site is marked with a large and very green artificial turf rug covering the freshly dug grave. It also provides a spot for the chairs where Mike's family will sit for the sad and final good-bye to a husband and father. It is also a final salute to a good friend and soldier for a life well lived – one of which he can be proud and so can his family.

Once again the Old Guard does the same fabulous job they always seem to do here and the Chaplain presents the flag to Barbara. He thanks her, Mike's daughter, and his parents for Mike's service to a grateful nation. A parent should not have to bury a child – even a grown child; this is awful for them.

A 21 gun salute is fired in the background and the mournful sound of a final taps is played for Mike. It is hard to not to be deeply saddened by this last chapter of a great life. It is odd to have tears at my age but they are there anyway. I will miss him quite a bit but not half as much as his family will.

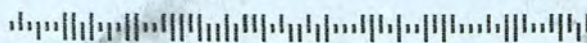
Quite a few tough words have been directed at the Staff of Arlington National Cemetery lately. But from my view of coming here for thirty years the National Cemetery staff has always done an excellent job of treating the families with respect and dignity; today was no different. They did a wonderful and professional job of directing the event. I continue to be impressed with their good work here.

Farewell my friend and have a safe flight home.

Robert M. Lee, Junior
September 10, 2010

E-mail: [REDACTED]





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Final Approach

The sky smiles as it welcomes you
You find your rightful place within the clouds above
You take flight just like a bird
Your methods different but your purpose the same
Simple flight, your one true love
As your heart guides you, your destiny grows just like your altitude
You feel your soul and the sky merge to become one
The bond grows with every moment
Only finding ground long enough to refuel
The grace you show compares only to that of eagles in flight
The joy in your eyes beams out like sunshine
Like song from a songbird you affect those around you
Sharing the joy, showing how to have joy
The freedom, the ability, the gift you have is undeniable
To deny them is to deny life
To look to the sky and no longer fly
To feel your heart break and a piece of you die
Unlike a bird with broken wings your ability does not fail
Your gift remains within you
Life as cruel as it is has chosen to spare your life, but has clipped your wings
Your purpose is empty
As you make your final approach you leave your soul, your joy, and your sunshine in the sky
A quiet darkness lays in your heart
As you look to the sky, you must say your goodbye
For clipped wings are no longer able to fly

By Christy Goldsmith

The enclosed poem is by Christy Goldsmith, daughter of Scott "Gomer" Goldsmith. She has watched her Dad go from a former VietNam helicopter pilot to Captain of a heavy jet airliner and then through a medical grounding. I met Gomer when he came in-country to Apache Troop, 7/1 Air Cav. He flew my front seat (Cobra), then as my wingman, then as a flight lead in his own right. He was, and still is, my best of friends. I watched him go from sky warrior, afraid of nothing, to commercial helicopter operator doing incredible things with rotary wing aircraft, to the pinnacle of aviation – airline Captain with America West. Then I watched him go through medical grounding and sat with him as he recovered from open heart surgery. Christy saw what it meant to her Dad to lose his ability to fly and put it into words. When she asked me to read it to see if I understood, it took my breath away. I'm still flying – doing the one thing I love above all else – but I know my time is coming for that last flight, soon. Her writing struck a deep chord in me and I asked her to allow me to send it to the VHPA, where I know you all will understand.

Rob Nelson, Apache 40