



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

*Welcome to the March & April, 2014 edition of the VHPA Aviator.
Where we take a "lighter look" at being a Helicopter Pilot in Vietnam.*

**Cover Photo details
found on page 44...**



IN THIS ISSUE...

Hello Old Friend	9
2104 Reunion Update	16-20
Landing to an LST	24-25
Looking For	26

Welcome to the VHPA.....	28
TAPS.....	29-37
VHPA Chapter Activities.....	38-42
Death from Above.....	46-47

VHPA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

MOON'S IDEA CONTINUES TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

The "One Dime A Day" idea put forth by VHPA President "Moon" Mullin continues to add to our membership rolls. In the last two months, seven of our Members have donated enough to sponsor thirty-one more new members. This is a very inexpensive way to grow our numbers. Moon wishes to thank those who have given and encourage others to consider helping.

PROGRAM TO RENEW NON-CURRENT MEMBERS

Several months ago the EC approved sending a "Come Home" packet to every one of the over 4,500 non-current members in our Association. The packet included a renewal form, a two-page status sheet concerning the changes in our organization, a Reunion Recruitment flyer, a VHPA Calendar ordering flyer and a current AVIATOR Newsletter. The response has been extremely positive; in one day alone last week we received twenty-one renewals from these men. To date over 300 of these pilots have again become dues current, many as Life Members.

SIDE BENEFIT

Another benefit of this program is the updating of addresses, contact information and individual historical data in our records. The ON-LINE Database at vhp.org is updated every Friday night with the all the information gained the past week. Please go on-line and check it out; many phone numbers and email addresses that are missing from our paper and CD directories can be found on-line.

HELP LOCATING OLD FRIENDS

We have a 90% success rate in connecting old friends so let us try and help. Give Membership a call or send an e-mail and we'll try and help.

Mike Sheuerman
Membership Chairman

AVIATOR PRIVACY STATEMENT

The VHPA Aviator contains member privacy information the VHPA considers proprietary and confidential. This information, including but not limited to the VHPA Chapter list, shall not be used for commercial solicitation purposes or for any correspondence related thereto without prior written authorization from the VHPA president. Correspondence relating to commercial purposes or solicitations shall only be sent to the VHPA Officers, Committee Chairmen and/or Staff listed in this publication.

E-mail items to The Aviator at:

Aviator@vhp.org

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FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

We still have a few t-shirts left from R2013 in San Francisco and R2011 in Orlando. If anyone is interested, call HQ to see if we have your size available.

Thank you so much to the members that have called or sent in their changes to contact information! This assures that you do not miss any issues of your newsletter. If you have not received an issue lately, give us a call to make sure we have your correct address on file. If you move, please let us know your new address!

Also, you can go on line to <https://directory.vhp.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under "Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information.

It is that time to begin making plans to attend the 2014 Reunion in Louisville, Kentucky! Be sure you sign up early, some tours have capacities and are selling out already! We hope to see you there!

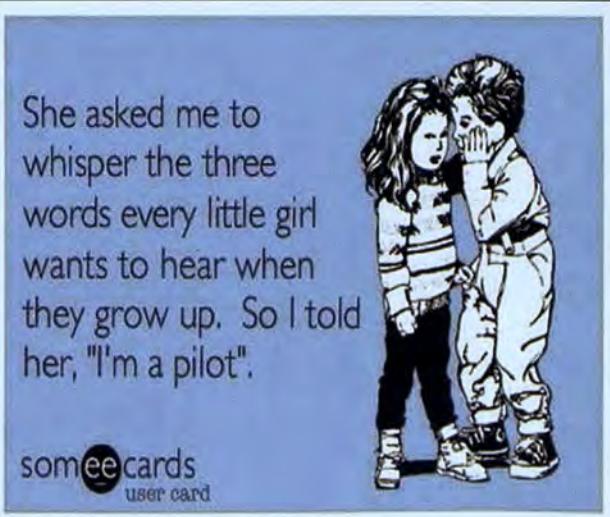
As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything that we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

Sherry Rodgers
VHPA
Office Manager

Corrections from information appearing in the last (Jan-Feb 2014) Issue

The E-Mail address listed for the POC for the "Class Blast" WOC reunion article printed incorrectly – the correct e-mail for their POC (Tom Pearcy) is: [REDACTED]

Our Member #16,000's name is correctly spelled as Peter Vandell and (not as Peter Vardell). Welcome Peter, we'll try not to let that happen again!



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Official Web Site of the VHPA

www.VHPA.org

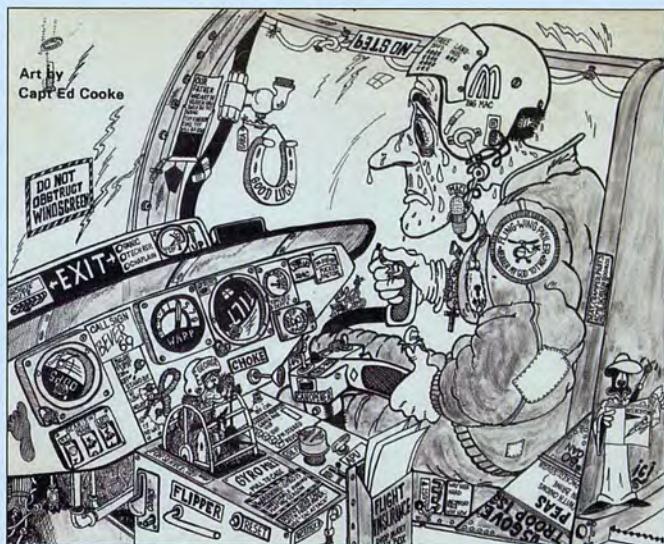


Illustration courtesy of VHPA Member Clyde Romero

Musings of an old Helicopter Driver...

Sent to us by VHPA Member Rudolph (Rudy) Ribbeck

Anything that screws its way into the sky flies according to unnatural principals.

You never want to sneak up behind an old, high-time helicopter pilot and clap your hands. He will instantly dive for cover and most likely whimper...then get up and smack you.

There are no old helicopters laying around airports like you see old airplanes. There is a reason for this. Come to think of it, there are not many old, high-time helicopter pilots hanging around airports either so the first issue is problematic.

You can always tell a helicopter pilot in anything moving: a train, an airplane, a car or a boat. They never smile, they are always listening to the machine and they always hear something they think is not right.

Helicopter pilots fly in a mode of intensity, actually more like "spring loaded", while waiting for pieces of their ship to fall off.

Flying a helicopter at any altitude over 500 feet is considered reckless and should be avoided. Flying a helicopter at any altitude or condition that precludes a landing in less than 20 seconds is considered outright foolhardy.

Remember in a helicopter you have about one second to lower the collective in an engine failure before the craft becomes unrecoverable. Once you've failed this maneuver the machine flies about as well as a 20 case Coke machine.

Even a perfectly executed autorotation only gives you a glide ratio slightly better than that of a brick. 180 degree autorotations are a violent and aerobatic maneuver in my opinion and should be avoided.

When your wings are leading, lagging, flapping, precessing and moving faster than your fuselage there's something unnatural going on. Is this the way men were meant to fly?

While hovering, if you start to sink a bit, you pull up on the collective while twisting the throttle, push with your left foot (more torque) and move the stick left (more translating tendency) to hold your spot. If you now need to stop rising, you do the opposite in that order. Sometimes in wind you do this many times each second. Don't you think that's a strange way to fly?

For Helicopters: You never want to feel a sinking feeling in your gut (low "g" pushover) while flying a two bladed under slung teetering rotor system. You are about to do a snap-roll to the right and crash. For that matter, any remotely aerobatic maneuver should be avoided in a Huey.

Don't push your luck. It will run out soon enough anyway. If everything is working fine on your helicopter consider yourself temporarily

From...
Bill "Moon" Mullen,
President of the VHPA

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, THEN DON'T FIX IT!

We are all familiar with that phrase, mainly because it makes a lot of sense.

For years the VHPA had contracted with a professional reunion site selection company to help us choose the sight and accommodations for our Annual Reunions. These Companies provided us a menu to choose from of top name cities coupled with a nationally recognized hotel chain and special room rates. The VHPA did not pay for this service, it was free.....well kind of free.

The hotel property that we eventually selected then gave a "finder's fee" kick back to that professional site selection company that represented a 10% rebate of the total room cost spent by our members attending the reunion. This is an accepted and approved industry practice; this "finder's fee" usually amounted to \$35,000 to \$45,000 per-Reunion kicked back to the reunion site selection company.

When the planning for the 2014 Reunion was about to start, our Executive Council felt that we had the ability and the brains in-house to bring this 10% worth of savings directly back to the VHPA and its Members. In other words, we had already had a system in place and working and since it was not broken, why fix it? These thoughts were first proven out when the Louisville Convention Bureau said they would give us a \$10,000 donation if we would select Louisville as our Host City. Then their local Galt Hotel followed up by pledging to work out their 10% rebate amount both through attractive room rates and lowered event charges. Once we received these commitments, the EC voted to take the 2014 site contract in-house with the guidance that any monies realized through this procedure would be specifically used to lower the costs of reunion events.

But there was one more hurdle to overcome, would the Members approve of this plan with their wallets if we moved the Reunion to a smaller city (Louisville, Kentucky) and to a non-national hotel (the Gault House)? That we wouldn't know until we opened up the Reunion Registration phase of our planning.

Well we opened up on-line Reunion Registrations in December and our first printed Reunion Registration Form appeared in the January 2014 Aviator. So far – the early registration numbers are terrific. As of 1 February 2014, we have 191 pilots and 178 guests registered for the Reunion, numbers that are ahead of the same time period numbers of our last two (New Orleans and San Francisco) Reunions. We have over 200 registered for the Waterfront shuttle service, which means the 4th of July Replica Wall opening ceremony, Combat Assault Reenactment and Fireworks will be a huge day! Our four group dinners are almost sold out, we also already have big numbers registered for the Early Bird, Welcome Reception, Breakfast Cruise and the Ballgame/fireworks events. Last, it has been a long time



since our Closing Banquet meal price has been as low as \$58.00 each and Members are favorably responding with over 250 already registered for this event. Please note that

March and April are historically our largest months for booking reservations for our Reunion. My message here is don't wait to register but if you do, don't be disappointed if your favorite event is SOLD OUT!

Now my favorite number...37. That is how many "first time attendees" have already registered for the Reunion. After 40 plus years and the 31 previous Reunions since we all left Vietnam, we still have new guys signing up! These 37 also will be welcomed with open arms. Remember, if each of us would call just one other man from his home town, or from his Vietnam unit and invite him to join us at Louisville, we would add a lot more first timers. The personal touch of a phone call from you makes it a great invitation.

Don't wait until next year to come to a Reunion, or to ask someone to join us at a Reunion.....next year might not come! See you in Louisville!

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

Let me know how we are doing.....

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Members are from all wars & all ranks.

THE SNAKE - Vinh Long, 1966

This story isn't about the Cobra attack helicopter. No, it's about a real - and deadly - snake that could also jump...

Walking out to the flight line one hot morning, I noticed an animated crowd standing a safe distance from my Huey. They told me that a large snake had crossed the ramp and jumped into the bottom. I decided to put the mission on hold until we located and evicted the unwelcome guest. After a lengthy and very cautious inspection, I found it wasn't in the empty 'Hell Hole' where a hoist once lived.

That damned serpent must've slithered elsewhere inside the belly. Snapping open a lower side access panel, I gingerly stuck my head in and, with aid of a flashlight, began looking for the intruder. Suddenly, someone yelled "SNAKE!" and goosed me at the same time! I still have a dent in my scalp where my head impacted the top of the small opening.

The next option I came up with - which seemed like a good idea at the time - was to smoke the bastard out! After unscrewing a floor panel, I pulled the pin on a smoke grenade (unfortunately, I forgot to check the

color), dropped it into the opening and quickly replaced the plate. Bright red smoke began to billow out of every orifice in the chopper! In seconds, the entire ship was enveloped in a thick crimson cloud.

Wow! It was really spectacular! I never realized there was so much smoke in those small canisters. When the airfield's emergency sirens began to howl moments later, I had a sinking feeling that my tactic was also a really bad idea! Soon, I was surrounded by fire trucks and huge firemen in their silver fire-proof suits, wielding big axes.

My feeble excuses about a snake didn't placate the rescue personnel - or my boss. Snake or no snake, I was ordered to fly. Although I never found that fork tailed straphanger, I did spend a lot of time nervously looking for it around the chin-bubble, and hoping my boots were fang-proof!



Jon F. Myhre

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

What's for Dinner?

An old Helicopter Pilot feared his wife wasn't hearing as well as she used to and he thought she might need a hearing aid.

Not quite sure how to approach her, he called the family doctor to discuss the problem.

The Doctor told him there is a simple informal test the husband could perform to give the doctor a better idea about her hearing loss.

"Here's what you do," said the Doctor, "stand about 40 feet away from her, and in a normal conversational speaking tone see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response."

That evening, the wife is in the kitchen cooking dinner, and he was in the den. He says to himself, 'I'm about 40 feet away, let's see what happens.' Then in a normal tone he asks, 'Honey, what's for dinner?' No

response.

So the husband moves closer to the kitchen, about 30 feet from his wife and repeats, "Honey, what's for dinner?" Still no response.

Next he moves into the dining room where he is about 20 feet from his wife and asks, "Honey, what's for dinner?" Again he gets no response.



So, he walks up to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away. "Honey, what's for dinner?" Again there is no response.

So he walks right up behind her. "Honey, what's for dinner?" "Bill, for the fifth time..."

CHICKEN!

Courtesy of member Ron Miller



The Pilot and The Priest

from Member Ron Miller

A priest dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket, and jeans.

Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, 'Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?' The guy replies, 'I'm Ron, retired Helicopter pilot from Jonesboro, AR.'

Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, 'Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom.' So Major Ron goes into Heaven with his robe and staff.

Next, it's the priest's turn. He stands erect and booms out, 'I am Father Bob, pastor of Saint Mary's for the last 43 years.'

Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the priest, 'Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom.'

'Just a minute,' says the good father. 'That man was a helicopter pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?'

'Up here - we go by results,' says Saint Peter.

'When you preached - people slept. When he flew, people prayed...'

Brain Transplant

Floyd was not the most intelligent person. At the urging of his friends he went to his family doctor to see what could be done. Floyd was then referred to a brain specialist. Following a number of tests and evaluations, the brain doctor informed him that he felt a brain implant would resolve his problem.

"Well, gee, Doc," Floyd questioned, "Just what are you talking about?"

The doctor said, "By my calculations you would benefit from three additional ounces of brain matter."

"Gosh, Doc, that sounds kinda expensive. How much is this gonna cost?"

The doctor responds, "Well there are two costs: the fixed cost and the variable. The fixed cost involves the actual surgery. That will run about \$35,000. The variable cost depends on the type of brain matter we use."

"I don't understand," Floyd replies.

The doctor states, "Well, I can get three ounces of plumber brain for \$15,000 or three ounces of mathematician brain would run about \$10,000."

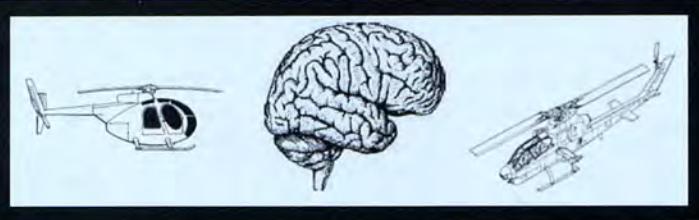
Floyd thinks a while and then asks the doctor "Is there any chance that this new brain matter would help me with a new career?"

"Why, yes!" the doctor answers, "We have found great evidence that happens frequently. What did you have in mind?"

"I've always kinda thought it would be cool to fly helicopters."

"Could you be a bit more specific?" the doctor asks.

"Yeah!" Floyd responds, "It'd be cool to be a Cav pilot."



"Now, son," the doctor cautions, "you know those Cav pilots aren't really anything more special than any other Army pilots. It's mostly just brag."

"Tell me, Doc," Floyd presses, "how much would three ounces of Cav pilot brain cost me?"

"Well," the doctor says, "I'll have to check the catalogue." He pulls a large book off the shelf, pages through it and states, "Three ounces of Cav pilot brain will cost \$382,000."

Floyd's chest puffs out a bit and then he asks, "Tell me, Doc just why is that there Cav pilot brain so expensive?"

The doctor smiles at him gently and says, "Son, do you have any idea how many of those Cav pilots we have to kill to get three ounces of brain?"

Al Roettger

Greyhound 17, '70-'71

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

I'll Give You \$20, If...

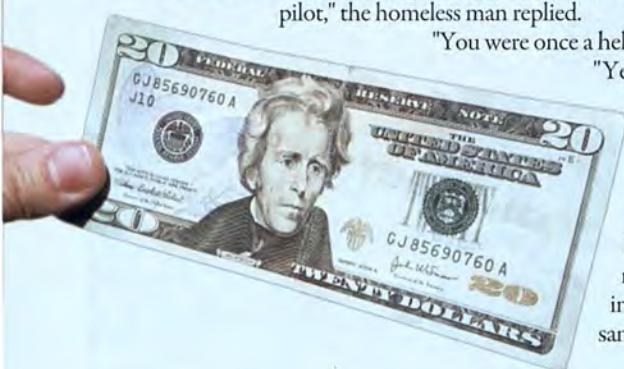
A newly retired helicopter pilot was walking down the street, on his way to a retired helicopter pilots breakfast, when he was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking homeless man who asked him for a couple of dollars for a meal.

The retired helicopter pilot took out his wallet, extracted a twenty dollar bill and asked the guy, "If I give you this money, will you buy some beer with it instead of food?"

"No, I had to stop drinking many years ago when I was a helicopter pilot," the homeless man replied.

"You were once a helicopter pilot?"

"Yes," the homeless man replied. "I flew for 12 years, until I was fired for drinking on duty and I lost my retirement after wrecking a helicopter the same day."



"Will you use this \$20 to only buy donuts and coffee instead of buying nutritious food?" "No, I don't waste time with sugary foods," the homeless man said. "I need to spend all my time trying to stay alive and eat as well as I can."

"Will you spend this \$20 on greens fees at a golf course instead of good food?" "Are you nuts?" replied the homeless man. "I haven't played golf in 20 years since I was fired from the company."

"Will you spend the money on a woman over in the red light Tenderloin District instead of buying good food?" "What disease would I get for a lousy twenty bucks? I hate hookers!" exclaimed the homeless man.

"Well," said the retired helicopter pilot, "I'm not going to give you the money now. Instead, I'm going to take you to a terrific helicopter pilot's breakfast around the corner and get you to tell the retired helicopter pilots your story, and then you get the money."

The homeless man was astounded. "Won't these fellows be furious with you for doing that? I know I'm dirty and I probably smell pretty disgusting, man."

The retired helicopter pilot replied, "That's okay. It's important for them all to see what a helicopter pilot looks like after he has given up beer, donuts, golf and sex."

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BASE JUMPING OUT OF A LOH

By John Shafer, Scalphunter 18

BASE jumping, also sometimes written as B.A.S.E. jumping, is an activity where participants jump from fixed objects and use a parachute to break their fall. "BASE" is an acronym that stands for four categories of fixed objects from which one can jump: buildings, antennas, spans (bridges), and earth (cliffs). Evidently Wikipedia needs to add a Loach to their definition – J. Shafer.

I was in B Troop 7th/17th Air Cav stationed at Camp Holloway near Pleiku. We flew most of our missions in hunter killer teams consisting of two LOH (OH-6) Scouts (callsign Scalphunter); two AH-1 Cobra gunships (call sign Undertaker) and one UH-1 Huey flying as C&C (call sign Pallbearer).

LOH's flew with the pilot in the right seat and an observer in the left seat manning an M-60 machine gun. When you started scout pilot training, however, the "trainee" usually flew a few hours in the observer position to learn how the scouts worked.

It was March 6, 1971. We were flying in the Tri-border area southwest of fire base Ben Het. Scalphunter lead was Capt. John Black with his observer Sgt. Rick Mills. I was flying his wing, as Scalphunter One Eight. My observer that day was WO1 Garland Hines. We called him 'GAY-LORD'.

While on a mission, we received a call regarding a South Vietnamese (ARVN) ground unit. They were retreating from an attack on their fire-base. Because they were still being chased, we decided to locate the unit. Once located, we would guide them to an LZ for an extraction by the Pallbearers. We found the unit on the side of the mountain and attempted to direct them down to the LZ. The terrain, however, was so steep, and the LZ was so far away, that there wasn't enough time to do so. Instead, the ARVN'S blew up some trees so we could take our LOH's in to where we could then touch the front of our skids on the mountainside. Then the ARVN's (2 at a time), could climb on board and be repositioned to the LZ.

NOW THIS AIN'T NO @#^&! This went well for three of four sorties and Scalphunter lead went in to take another load. As they were about to leave the mountainside, however, there was some gunfire. The ARVN's panicked and a few more jumped onto Lead's aircraft as he was pulling away. He immediately started to bleed off rotor RPM's as the added weight took its toll. Capt. Black headed down the mountainside trying to build up enough speed to fly out of there. Unfortunately, it did not work; they went down, crashing through over a hundred feet of trees and bamboo.

As Capt. Black was starting to leave the mountainside, I told Garland to "shoot the trees beneath Lead". Garland gave me this real strange look and said "What the hell are you talking about". Again I said, "Shoot the trees, THIS AIN'T NO @#^&! Shoot the trees, shoot the trees"! I wanted him to shoot the trees to scare the ARVN's so they would let go of the LOH's skids and Capt Black would have the power to fly away. You need to understand, that Garland was this good ole boy from Missouri ... and



Five Scalphunters share a lighter moment back at Camp Holloway in 1971. (From left to right) Garland Hines, Bob Van Schoick, John Shafer (our Author), Leroy Westra (KIA 5/25/71) and Bob Stevens.



how do I say this, real deliberate and slow on the draw with his M-60. That was 'GAY-LORD'. I still believe it would have worked.

After Capt. Black crashed through the trees, Garland and I could see the flames and smoke from the burning LOH; so we started to lower our way down through the trees. All the time I'm asking Garland to tell me how to keep the tail rotor clear. Garland gives me the strange look again, but he tells me which way to move the tail rotor and how close the trees are to the rotor blades on his side. I'm watching my side and the front. We both see the burning LOH below us with Sgt. Mills out cold and trapped inside, along with a couple of ARVN's. We could not see what happened to Capt. Black but we knew he was down in that mess somewhere.

I start telling Garland "jump"; and again the strange look. He tells me "We are too high for me to jump". So, I continue letting down while I again tell him to "jump"; bless his heart, he is still giving me this real strange look. He repeats the "It's too high" response. So, I continue down, he's still clearing the tail rotor and the rotor blades, but now we start cutting bamboo with the rotor blades. I again tell him to "jump"; he gives me this wild-eyed look like you crazy blank-a-d-blank. The blank-a-d-blank was not "you crazy FNG" but more like you "crazy Mfer", and now thinking back about

it, I should have corrected him at the time by telling him that Barbara and I had not had any kids yet so I could not be "a crazy Mfer".

So, I continue cutting more and more bamboo as we go down, then all of a sudden my LOH really starts rocking back and forth, I look over and THIS AIN'T NO @#^&! - Garland was gone. He had jumped from over fifty feet high!

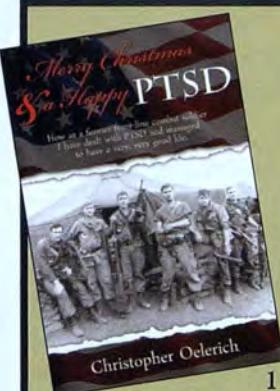
Upon hitting the ground, I mean reaching the ground Garland went over and pulled Sgt Mills and the ARVN's out of the wreckage, and then found Capt. Black in all that mess as well. He managed to drag all of them away from the aircraft just before it exploded. He went on to give them first aid, positioned them under a hovering Pallbearer and lashed the injured people to a jungle penetrator so they could be taken out. Garland later climbed out on a rope ladder.

I don't believe Garland ever flew as my observer again. I have never understood why, I guess that was just him being 'GAYLORD'. Twenty-three days later Garland got into another one of my war stories and this one ended his Vietnam tour. That is a story for another time.

Garland Hines continued on in the military to serve our country for over twenty-seven years facing combat in both Desert Storm and Somalia. I also understand that both John Black and Rick Mills went on in the military and served our country until their retirement.

This was the first War Story told at the 2006 reunion in Washington DC; the first reunion that had War Stories along with the HPF's. VHPA HQ may still have that DVD available for purchase. Give them a call at 1-800-505-8472 to order.

John Shafer, Scalphunter 18
Oct 70 – Oct 71
EC Mid-Term Member at Large



Written by Christopher Oelerich, who served with B/7/17 CAV in 1969-70, *Merry Christmas and a Happy PTSD* is about his 40-year struggle with alcoholism and PTSD, and the ways he has learned to lead what he now calls "a pretty darn good life." His initial challenge was fully accepting the fact that he had a drinking problem and PTSD. Only then was Chris able to make any real progress in dealing with them.

This book is written for all veterans of combat, in a blunt, straight forward "how to" guidebook style, that is both practical in its language and in its message. Chris believes the veterans of today's conflicts and those of the past, including Vietnam, are not unique when it comes to PTSD. His message is clear; the only person who can begin to deal effectively with your PTSD is you and if you don't care about your problem; nobody else will either.

Merry Christmas & a Happy PTSD, (ISBN: 978-1492385523), is priced at \$11.69 for the 150-page printed version or \$9.95 for the Kindle version; \$2.00 from each sale will be donated to veteran's charities/causes. The book is available from Amazon.com, your local book store or other on-line book suppliers.

All four of Bill's Books,
The Afgan Deception, Tank Witch,
Causel Connection and Toltancina
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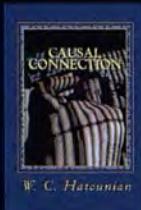


TANK WITCH

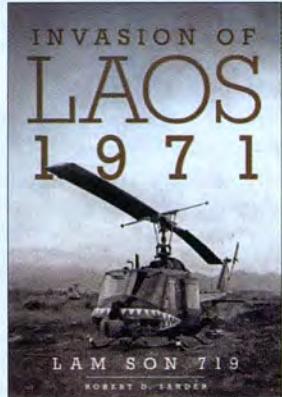
Doug Baker, a Vietnam War veteran and his National Guard tank crew are whisked through a warp in time and into another dimension. They have been summoned by a hag witch and find themselves in a medieval land, where they are unwittingly thrown into the social conflicts of the kingdom.

CAUSAL CONNECTION

Detective Milo Necalli, an energetic veteran investigator with the Phoenix Police Department's Night Detective Unit, is secretly delighted when he is assigned to investigate the death of a man who was found asphyxiated and shrink-wrapped inside an empty waterbed mattress.



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.



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Hello Old Friend

- I must say you're looking a lot better than when I last saw you....

By David Adams

On November 7th, 2013, the incredible flight team of Austin and Travis County, Texas' STAR FLIGHT program had the pleasure of hosting a Reunion between one of their helicopters and a man who once served with her in Vietnam almost forty five years earlier.

The Front Cover photo of our July/August 2013 issue of the VHPA Aviator documented their last meeting. Huey 67-17659 was looking pretty bad after being almost completely destroyed in a crash on May 19, 1969. Three days later, a very grateful Reggie Kenner posed for a photo from the Crew Chief's position of his aircraft he had been occupying during the crash, 17659 was on her way stateside for a complete rebuild.

STAR Flight's offer to host the Reunion was met with not only Reggie's acceptance, but accompanying him and his wife Carroll were others familiar with either 17659, her crew and/or her unit (B Company, 158th Aviation Battalion) on that fateful day. Among those were Donna Sakenes, the wife of the A/C (WO1 Ed "Snake" Sakenes) the day of the crash and who has since passed away; Sandra Schultz, the sister of Ed Sakenes and her husband Rich (who is himself a Purple Heart recipient earned while serving in the Cav in Vietnam); Greg Moody, a pilot who flew in Vietnam with C Company, 158th "Phoenix" and was a flight school classmate of Ed Sakenes and Jim Thurman, a former Comanchero gunship pilot who flew with Reggie before he moved over from the Comancheros to the Lancers.

Representing Travis County's STAR Flight group that day were Lisa Block, The Public Information Officer for Travis County Emergency Services and Willy Culberson, STAR Flight's Director of Flight Operations and Chief Pilot. It should also be noted that just six days before this Reunion, Travis County's STAR Flight team spent 16 hours making 32 flood rescues when Onion Creek, located just 12 miles south of downtown Austin, swelled to a level of 41 feet above flood stage. The men and women of STAR Flight did an incredible job of saving lives that Halloween evening, they also did an incredible job of hosting this Reunion.

I won't go into a lot of details about our Reunion, most of the highlights you can discern for yourself just by reading the photo captions. I will let you know that Reggie felt the entire event was a little too much about himself and he would have preferred that it be more about every member of the crew that day, something I feel almost any Vietnam Vet would feel in similar circumstances.

While permission had been obtained for both Reggie and Dave Wilson (Ed Sakenes' co-pilot that fateful day) to ride in STAR Flight's Huey, illness forced Dave to miss the reunion. Instead Reggie and Jan had to settle for a ride in one of STAR Flight's newer aircraft, an EC 45 Eurocopter. Seems that 17569 revealed a broken transmission oil filter mount during her preflight earlier that morning. "That wasn't the first time this has happened" commented Reggie, her old Crew Chief, "but I suspect that she might remember the last time we all went flying together and like me, she also doesn't want to go through THAT again!"

David Adams

Editor of the VHPA Aviator



Front Cover photo - Issue 31-04 of the VHPA Aviator. Reggie, in his combat flight position, has his photo taken a few days after the crash of Huey 67-17659



Wow - does sitting here bring back some memories!



On the night before the Reunion, Reggie salutes the memory of their pilot that day Ed Sakenes. "It it wasn't for his incredible flying skills, I probably wouldn't be here 45 years later to enjoy this day".



Reggie and Jan Kenner pose before boarding for their ride in a STAR Flight Eurocopter



Reggie shares his copy of the VHPA Aviator and talks about his tour in Vietnam with the others attending the Reunion and their STAR Flight hosts.



Guests of the STAR Flight hosted Reunion gather around 17569 for a group photo. They included Willy Culberson, STAR Flight's Chief Pilot (in his blue flight suit 3rd from the left), Lisa Block, PAO for STAR Flight and Travis County, Texas (5th from left) and Reggie Kenner himself (6th from left).



Willy Culberson and Reggie Kenner share a few minutes after visiting 17659

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"Maddog"

We had a little pooch who flew with us. Guess you could say he was mine because he slept beside my bunk and was small enough to curl up under my seat in the slick - but he was beloved by all. And of course we chopper crews all remember peeing under the tail boom whenever we could, and Maddog would line up there to go with us, but because he was a native he squatted to pee like a bitch. And here's a brief bit about how else he could be a bitch:

One fine day we were doing a little shark hunting off the coast of Quinon, but didn't score so headed back to shore at about 15 feet ASL. Well, up to this time Maddog had only ever crawled in and out from under my seat from the rear - until then, when Murphy's Law took over. From how I've set this scenario up you can probably guess what happened - but now add this element for some serious drama:

At only 15' ASL and doing 100 knots, we were about 500 yards and 50 feet below the height of a beach side bluff when Maddog chose to climb into my lap between the seat and the cyclic. And I chose for us to not die on account of a dumb dog, so at the last possible instant I yanked back on the stick as hard as I could regardless of whether this action broke his neck or not.

We cleared the bluff by inches. Maddog let out a screech of shock and pain that sounded like he'd been grievously injured, and he did tread delicately for the next few days, but fully recovered and never did that again. Instead he became a lush, begging beer from the all too willing pilots who loved watching him struggle to get his legs to function in synch.

Roger Stockham

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



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High Times in the O Club

July 17, 1971, dark thirty, Lane Army Airfield, An Son, RVN, II Corp, 61st AHC, 1LT, Pete Thompson, Starblazer 15, gunship platoon all is calm for a band at the O Club. No stand by tonight. The O Club was located at the top of a steep hill from our hooches down below. The more a person imbibed the steeper the hill. About halfway down there was a long large iron I-beam should a pilot lose his footing on the pea gravel and began to leave DNA on the steep slope until the I-beam put a halt to his accelerated descent.

On the way up to the O Club, being a novice naturalist, I noticed a large amount of bullfrogs croaking and leaping about looking for love or avoiding it, either way just doing what bullfrogs do at night. ...I wonder why female bullfrogs aren't call cowfrogs?...

I went into the O Club and saw the band had set up their instruments in stands on stage. They were from the some country in the region and I believe their knowledge of english was very limited except for the current popular tunes of the day.

I had played in a dance band in high school and seeing all the instruments set up took me back to those days. The saxophone was sitting in its' stand with the large opening called the bell just waiting to be played, or played with. I went outside and captured a bullfrog and put it in the sax without anybody noticing me.



IT'S NOT THAT I'M OLD
YOUR MUSIC REALLY DOES SUCK

The band came out, picked up their instruments, most all eyes turned to them. The very first song was "Jeremiah was a bullfrog, was a friend of mine, never understood a word he said but I helped him drink his wine..." suddenly all eyes were on the sax player and everybody laughing pointing at the band that began to freak out at the gush laughter of all us crazy pilots. The bullfrog had crawled up to the lip of the bell and was looking dazed at all the noise. The sax player looked at his horn and saw the bullfrog and dumped him on the stage. I immediately grabbed him and put him outside with an honorary Air Medal. Anybody out there remember that night?

The date was my birthday which was not celebrated except for me giving the guys a gift of laughter.

Pete Thompson
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Pete Thompson in the summer of 71 in the "ghost town" of what was LZ English. "My first week in country we flew cover as the last of the 173rd, the last Americans on the ground, out of the mountains. At night you could hear nails being ripped out of boards as LZ English was being moved to Bong Song along with an occasional burst of gun fire over the top of the LZ. Notice the guy sleeping under the chopper as we sought shelter from the hot sun. I did not like it there."



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The day my Draft Board ordered me home from Vietnam.... to be drafted into the Army *by Bill Bengtson*

It was a dark and stormy night - actually it was just a rainy day in Vietnam when my CO stormed over to take a bite out of my butt - but I digress... Here's the full story, and truly this is how it happened.

I graduated High School back on 1969. Since I was only seventeen at the time and I planned to immediately join the Army, I never bothered to register with the Selective Service. My older brother was already well through OCS and about to leave for Vietnam. He had enthralled me with enough tall tales and funny stories that I never thought of doing anything else.

Sure enough, six months later, still only seventeen years old and now fresh out of High School, I joined the Army. I was even "promised" a shot at Warrant Officer Flight Training" after Basic Training. Turns out that early Army Life was for me - I breezed my way through both Basic and Warrant Officer Flight Training. I did so well, in fact, that I was selected for CH-47 Qualification. Of course, along with the offer (carrot) was the requirement (stick) that I had to change my status from being a Soldier with a set ETS date to a Regular Army Officer with a Voluntary Indefinite end of service date. Again - that wasn't a problem - after all I loved the stateside/being in-training part of the Army.

But all too soon the inspections, the training and the Parades were all over and it was also time for me to deploy to Vietnam. March of 1971 found me reporting into my new/first ever combat unit - the 2nd Brigade of 101st Airborne Division stationed at Hue City, Vietnam.

I won't lie by saying that I was still "in love" with being a Chinook Pilot in the Army in Vietnam when December of 1971 rolled around. Yes the missions were still exciting and the combat was addictive, but the ins, outs, and frustrations of being a small part of a big machine had grown pretty old pretty fast. Then...one day I went to mail call and discovered my ticket home.

There is was - a letter from my 'friends and neighbors' of my local Draft Board. It advised me that I had less than two weeks to report for induction into the United States Army - or else! Never mind that: the letter was mailed directly to my APO address, never mind that the letter was addressed to CW2



1



Billy Bengtson, never mind that I already was an officer in the Regular Army of the United States - In less than two weeks I was being ordered to report to our local induction station for in-processing - or else!

Always being one to obey an order, I immediately went to our Unit Orderly Room, showed them my letter and asked for their help in getting me released from the Army and ticketed for travel back to stateside. I just couldn't wait to report for induction! "Cool!" said our clerk, "I will be glad to help you go home Sir!"

Then another orderly room clerk noted while he was preparing my paperwork for the CO's signature, that one of the blocks on the letter said that I had also "volunteered for induction" and from that little entry he deduced that all one had to do to get out of Vietnam, was to fill out the same form showing that they also "volunteered for induction". Surely the same process would work for them as well as it had for me. And as they say - the rout was on! By two days later that guy and at least 44 other enlisted men in our Company had submitted their own forms to "Volunteer for Induction"; after all, the draft boards back home evidently needed lots of warm bodies to fill all those combat slots in Vietnam!

My dreams of going home all came to an end when my very angry and red-faced CO finally cornered me in our little club. He took a big bite out of my butt while telling me in no uncertain terms that I wasn't going anywhere - and to quit filling his men's minds with pure B.S.!

I have never found out just who was responsible for sending me that draft notice, I suspect it was my brother. He was dating one of the secretary's of our draft board at the time and he probably talked her into sending it to me as a joke. But for one or two glorious nights I really had dreams of going home early, and not even caring if my butt would be fully intact when I got there.

Report from our President....

Respectfully submitted: Moon Mullen

Maggie and I were proud to represent the VHPA at the Vietnam Memorial Wall Education Center Fundraiser held in Washington, DC on 21 November 2013. The VVMW Education Center project is sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (The VVMF) which you may be familiar with through their advertising in our Aviator concerning their efforts to solicit donations for their programs.

We had the honor of sharing our table that evening with Christopher White, the Vice-President of the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association, Forrest Snyder, a VHPA Life Member and his wife Donna. Forrest is also our VHPA scholarship liaison to AAAA and sits on their Scholarship Selection Committee. Through his efforts, this year twenty three dependents of VHPA Members were awarded both VHPA & AAAA scholarships.

The fundraiser we attended that evening was for the Education Center at the Wall. The Center is designed to ensure our Vietnam Veteran's legacy for future generations, it will stand forever as the nation's most fitting and recognized tribute to our fallen. The Center will extend the Vietnam Memorial Wall's tradition of honor, education and healing. Physically located on the

National Mall itself, the Center will insure our stories and sacrifices will never be forgotten. The Center is being entirely funded with private donations and for addition information on how you can help this project, go to: www.vmf.org



Left to right...Moon and Maggie Mullen, Christopher White, Donna Snyder and Forrest Snyder

“Farmers Daughter”

Once upon a time, after the Vietnam War, there was this former helicopter pilot caught by nightfall's rapid approach with commensurately dwindling visibility, he knew he had better find a field FAST! Our intrepid aviator at the last minute gets a glimpse of a field of new mown hay through a hole in the clouds and drops down.

Relieved at his good fortune, he lands and hovers close to a nearby farmhouse. The farmer comes out onto the front porch and says, "You can spend the night in the barn, but stay away from my daughter."

As he lay down, starting to doze off, said daughter brought him a plate of supper. The conversation led to romance and the farmer's number one rule was broken. As dawn broke our hero got long gone.

Some seven years later, the pilot passed over the farm and decided to land and pay a visit. However, on short final on an approach to the house, he saw a six-year-old boy standing in the front yard with the object of his former passion. The daughter, sensing his question said, "Yes, this is your son."

"Why didn't you let me know, I would've done the right thing," he said. The daughter then replied, "Our whole family discussed it, even prayed about it in church, but in the end we thought it was better to have a bastard in the family than a helicopter pilot."

Author unknown, story sent to us by Member Ron Miller.



Two older veterans began reminiscing about their military experiences while sitting in the local park.

Jim asked Bob, "Do you remember that stuff they used to put in our coffee during the war, to make us forget about women?"

Bob replied, "Hmm, I think you mean saltpeter."

Jim replied, "Yep, that's the stuff. I think it's beginning to work!"



While I was in the third grade, our teacher said, "Quit staring out the window, because when you grow up, no one will pay you to sit there and just look out the window" ..

Guess I showed her.....

Courtesy of Member Clifford Gaston



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An Update on the 31st Reunion of the VHPA

By Mike Law, Chairman of the VHPA Reunion Committee

Speaking for the VHPA Executive Council, the Headquarters Staff, and the entire Reunion Committee – I cordially invite you to attend the VHPA's 31st Annual Reunion in Louisville from Tuesday, July 1st through Saturday, July 5th 2014 at The Galt House. We have a wonderful party planned for you, your family, and your friends! "Just Add Bourbon!" is a favorite expression of Louisvillians and Kentuckians usually said with a big smile!

The Jan/Feb issue of The Aviator devoted ten pages to the Reunion. The Reunion has five in this issue – by design. The leadership team determined years ago that there is little value in reprinting the same information in issues after "the big one" in Jan/Feb. Therefore, the Reunion information in this issue is more along the lines of a sitrep with an updated event schedule and registration form. So, here are SEVEN points for your consideration.

First, THANK YOU! – please don't procrastinate!

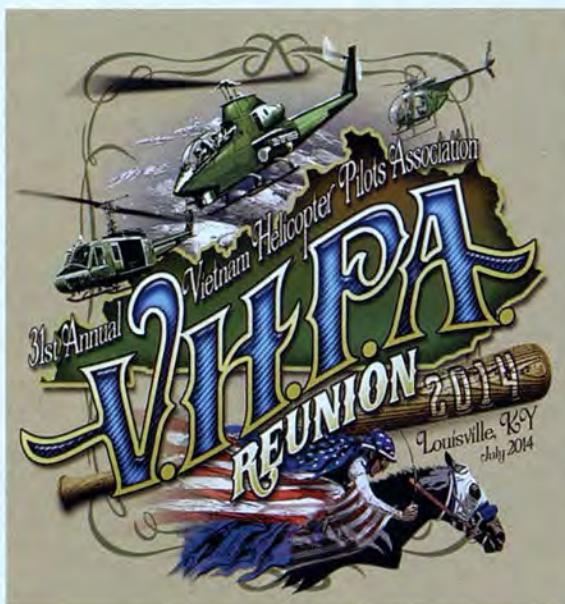
WE THANK ALL who registered early! We have now sold out six events; both Jim Beam tours on 3 July, the Breakfast on the Belle cruise, the trip to Fort Knox, the dinner at the Garage Bar and the #2 UPS facility tour. To help we have added a Victorian Tea with the DAR event and we've beefed up the Night at the Ballpark event. This one should be a lot of fun, only \$34 per/person for round trip transportation, an all you can eat buffet dinner, great seats for the ball game and a fireworks show to close out the evening. More than 50% of the VHPA's hotel room block has been reserved. I'd guess 150% of the Northern Alabama Chapter has already signed up! [They put a smile on my face!!] The Ohio River LZ Chapter has their final "ready, get set, go" meeting coming up soon. All good! We spend 100's of hours planning your party ~ it's nice to see people turning out in large numbers!

Second, the VHPA Reunion Committee wants you to VOLUNTEER

Ya gotta love Bob Hamilton, President of the Ohio River LZ Chapter. He has 'camped out' on my email inbox and won't go away until the Reunion Committee provides a "Duty Roster" – dates, tasks, number of people needed, etc. Well – the list of volunteer opportunities is LONG! Big party – big list – go figure?!? Some are easy – Bus Captain on a tour bus. Some are critical – redeeming T-Shirt tickets or passing out packets to those who preregistered. Some get to work with the HQ ladies – taking tickets at the door. Some can get dirty with Mike Law – installing and removing The Traveling Wall in Waterfront Park. All are ENJOYABLE and a special opportunity to WORK with and for other VHPA'ers. Yes it is true – the Ohio River LZ guys and gals get 'first crack' at filling the slots on the 'Duty Roster', but by the end of February it will appear on www.vhpa.org along with a form you can submit to Rebecca Bittle to volunteer.

Third, the start time for the Combat Assault reenactment has moved to 4 pm on July 4th.

After further review, the Waterfront Park officials decided to relocate American Huey 369's Combat Assault Reenactment from the North Great Lawn to Big Four Lawn and to adjust the time from 5pm to 4pm. [Refer to Waterfront



Park Map on www.vhpa.org and/or Google "waterfront park map Louisville."] The ramifications to the Reunion are that we need to move people earlier than planned and farther away from the hotel. I had to smile! How many times did we launch for a CA in Vietnam (hundreds a day I'd guess!) and actually go into the designated LZ at the planned time? Stay flexible my friends.

Fourth, please look to www.vhpa.org for all your Reunion needs

This VHPA Reunion literally has a hundred 'moving parts' and several 'first time' events beside the obvious – coming to Louisville and The Galt House hotel. Previously all the Reunion event details were only in the Online Reunion Registration Application (ORRA). Once you've registered, you can't go back into ORRA and see those details. Dumb! Now we copied all those details onto www.vhpa.org. See the "Tour and Event Details" on the Reunion Information page. Both ORRA and the Reunion Information pieces are updated several times a week. So as GREAT as The Aviator is [and it is GREAT!!] – there is no way we can communicate details and status to you with printed media. Please, please use www.vhpa.org.

Fifth, book your Mini-Reunion NOW!

VHPA Reunions are all about renewing old and making new friends based on our common bonds forged when we were soldiers once and young. The Morning Report helps you see who is currently coming. Common 'mistake' – I run an article in The Aviator telling everyone about our flight class reunion ~ but I get to the Reunion and nothing is scheduled!!! Dah! You have to communicate with Rebecca. If you want a Mini-Reunion room form and procedure – where? "Click here" on the Reunion Information page just under the Reunion Logo. Please, please invite your friends and plan on having a good time.

Sixth – We have some confusion arising over the prices for the Group Dinner's planned for the evening of Tuesday, July 1st.

The price shown in last issue's Aviator's version of the Reunion Registration Form shows both restaurants are priced at \$39.00 per/person. Turns out that price is only for dinner at Patrick O'Shea's, the price for dinner at Doc Crows is set at \$46.00 per/person. Please fill out your Registration Form accordingly.

Seventh - We are in "Full Recruitment Mode" for the Vendor Room at this year's Reunion!

If you have a product that you feel our Members and their guests would love to see, or if you know of a vendor that you would like to join us at the Reunion or even if you know of a product you think would be well received by our Members and their guests, please let us know.

There will also be an 'Authors Area' in the Vendor Room. Please let us know if you have written a book or know of someone that has written a book and would like to display it in the Vendor Room. This is the perfect time for our Members and their guests to add an "Author signed and dedicated" copy of a book to your collection!

If you would like to sign up as a Vendor, Book Seller or Exhibitor for this year's reunion, please go to our website at www.vhpa.org and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules & Regulations. Questions? Call HQ at 800-505-8472 or email Sherry Rodgers at sherry@vhpa.org.

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

TAKE A TRIP BACK IN TIME ~ WITH AMERICAN HUEY 369



Imagine for a moment one of your grandchildren saying, "Grandpa, I see that picture on the wall of you in Vietnam standing next to a helicopter but I would really like to know...How did they fly? What did they sound like? How did you carry soldiers in them? What was it like to land in a combat formation?"

Today, most of the Vietnam Era helicopters your grandchildren will ever see are "on a stick" in a park, a photo in a book or maybe if they're lucky, a video clip on YouTube or TV.

But this year, as part of our Annual Reunion, you can take your grandkids to Waterfront Park on the 4th of July and answer a lot of their questions the right way. First they can look at the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) Wall, an 80% sized replica of the famous Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. where you can point out the names of those you knew from flight school or while you were in Vietnam. It is important that your grandkids "know" that these men have a special place in your soul and will never be forgotten. Then you can walk towards the river and check out the static display of two of the American Huey 369 Foundation's UH-1H's along with VHPA member Peter Bales' OH-6A LOH. Here they can also speak with the "Wolfhounds" a group of living historians that portray the "grunts" of the C Company, 1/27 Infantry, 25th Infantry Division as they were in Vietnam.

After lunch and perhaps some ice cream, you can all go back to the VHPA bus stop and catch the next ride to the Big Four Lawn because there, at about 4 pm on the 4th of July, all the 200,000+ assembled spectators will thrill to the sight of a Combat Assault Reenactment. Now that's what we're talking about - these special events will go a long way towards answering everyone's questions.

When we were soldiers once and young, we filled the sky with Huey's. Frankly, we don't know if the members of the VHPA will ever have an opportunity like this again.



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

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

See our Website at: www.VHPA.org for the latest details and to register for the Reunion

Monday – June 30

2:00 pm - 8:00 pm Registration & Tour Desk open
2:00 pm - 8:00 pm Pre-registration open (no T-shirt pickup)

Tuesday – July 1

8:00 am - 8:00 pm Registration & Tour Desk open
8:00 am - 8:00 pm Welcome Desk & Pre-registration open
8:30 am - 2:30 pm Fort Knox Tour w/lunch
9:00 am - 2:30 pm Jim Beam Extended Tour #1
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Museum Tour Pass Shuttle
9:30 am - 1:30 pm Jim Beam Basic Tour #1
11:00 am - 11:00 pm O' Club open
11:00 am - 2:30 pm UPS Tour #1
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Vendor Room open
1:00 pm - 8:00 pm T-shirt pick up available
5:30 pm - 8:00 pm Group dinners Bourbon Row - Doc Crow's or O'Shea's
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Early Bird Gathering - Elvis Presley

Wednesday – July 2

7:30 am - 5:00 pm Registration open
7:30 am - 5:00 pm Welcome desk & Pre-registration open
8:00 am - 9:00 am Breakfast w/Speaker - Clovis Jones
8:00 am - 11:00 pm Mini Reunions/TOCs
7:30 am - 4:30 pm T-shirt pick up available
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Vendor Room open
9:00 am - 12:00 pm Churchill Downs #1
10:30 am - 12:30 pm HPF #1-AH - 64 Apache Development - Bob Stewart
10:30 am - 3:30 pm City Tour #1
11:00 am - 2:30 pm UPS Tour #2
11:00 am - 11:00 pm O' Club open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Horseshoe Casino #1
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Churchill Downs #2
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm DAR Victorian Tea Tour
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm HPF #2 - The Early Years - CH-21s - John Givham
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Banquet seating
4:50 pm - 7:30 pm Group dinners - Garage Bar or English Grill at the Brown Hotel
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm 1st Time Attendee Reception
7:30 pm - 10:00 pm Welcome Reception - Eric Clapton

Thursday – July 3

7:00 am - 2:00 pm Golf Outing
7:30 am - 5:00 pm Registration Desk
7:30 am - 9:00 am KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
7:30 am - 9:00 am Breakfast w/Speaker - Joe Ponds
8:00 am - 11:00 pm Mini-reunions/TOCs
8:30 am - 4:30 pm Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:30 am - 4:30 pm T-shirt pick up
9:00 am - 2:30 pm Jim Beam Extended Tour #2
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Vendor Room open
9:00 am - 10:30 am Wall Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Waterfront Park Static Display Shuttle
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Museum Tour Pass Shuttle
9:30 am - 1:30 pm Jim Beam Basic Tour #2
10:00 am - 3:00 pm Horseshoe Casino #2
10:30 am - 3:30 pm City Tour #2
11:00 am - 12:30 pm HPF #3 - History of HA(L) - 3 - Tom Phillips
11:00 am - 11:00 pm O' Club open
11:30 pm - 3:30 pm Jim Beam Basic Tour #3
12:00pm - 4:30pm Baseball Ticket Exchange (VHPA : Ball Park)
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Quilters Show & Tell
5:00 pm - 10:30 pm Slugger Ball Park Special Event

Friday – July 4

7:00 am - 4:00 pm Registration/Pre-Registration/T-Shirts pick-up
7:30 am - 10:15 am Breakfast on the Belle
8:00 am - 11:00 pm Mini-reunions/TOCs
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Vendor Room open
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Museum Tour Pass Shuttle
9:00 am - 11:00 pm Waterfront Park Static Display Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm O' Club open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Horseshoe Casino #3
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Writers Presentation
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Mini-reunions/TOCs
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Banquet seating
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Combat Assault Reenactment
8:30 pm - 10:30 pm Fireworks @ Waterfront Park

Saturday – July 5

7:00 am - 8:30 am Breakfast w/Speaker - Bob Hasselbein
8:00 am - 9:30 pm Memorial Service
8:00 am - 11:00 am Mini-reunions/TOCs
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Vendor Room open
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Waterfront Park Shuttle
9:00 am - 5:00 pm Museum Tour Pass Shuttle
9:30 am - 1:00 pm Registration/Pre-Registration/T-Shirts pick-up
10:30 am - 1:30 pm Spousal Event - Fun & Lunch
10:00 am - 12:30 pm Annual Business Meeting
12:30 pm - 11:00 pm O' Club open
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm Presidents Recognition
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm Chapter President Meeting
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Mini-reunions/TOCs
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Banquet Seating desk open
5:45 pm - 10:30 pm Closing Banquet & Dance

Reunion Continuing Events:

Unit Mini-Reunions and Unit TOC's are scheduled daily at various times – see schedule posted in the Registration Area

The Vendor Room - first opens on July 1st at 1:00pm and remains open daily from 9:00am - 5:00pm through the last day of the Reunion, July 5th

The O' Club - Open from 11:00am till 11:00pm on July 1 through 4, on 5 July open 12:30pm till 5:00pm

A daily schedule for the Museum Tour Pass shuttle and the Waterfront Park shuttle plus all other bus schedules will be posted in the Registration Area.

Visit ...

www.vhpa.org

for current Reunion details

Click on Reunion Information

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

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

SOLICITING CANDIDATES

for open positions on the VHPA's Executive Council for this year's elections
at our 2014 Reunion in Louisville, Kentucky

Ever consider volunteering to assist in running VHPA? Ever feel you have something to contribute to the Association? Ever want to make changes in how things are done? Do you have THE IDEA where VHPA is concerned? Now is the time to step up and get involved.

The VHPA Executive Council is made up of six members elected by those who attend the Association's Annual Business Meeting at the Reunion each year. These six people vote on where the VHPA hold Reunions, approve the Reunion content and activities, approve annual budgets, oversee and protect VHPA assets, direct the actions of HQ and 101+ other things that keep your Association running well.

There are three to four appointed positions on our Executive Council; Secretary/Treasurer, Legal Counsel, HQ Manager and Reunion Chairman. Of these positions only the Secretary/Treasurer can vote on Association matters and then only when there is a 3-3 deadlock among the elected Board members.

This year, and every year, we need members who are interested in getting involved and helping manage VHPA and are willing to step up now. Every year we will hold elections for two positions; our Junior Member At Large (a three-year commitment as you will advance to both the Junior and the Senior Member at Large positions) and the Vice President (another three-year commitment as you will advance through the President and the Immediate Past President positions). Here are the requirements to be elected to one of these positions:

- 1) Be a dues current member of VHPA.
- 2) Care passionately about VHPA.
- 3) Notify HQ of your intentions of running for one of the two offices in writing, by June 16, 2014.
- 4) Attend the Annual Business meeting in Louisville.
- 5) Make a two minute address to the members present of why you want to serve.
- 6) Get the most votes.

This is your chance. If you feel you have something to offer, please volunteer.

Mike Sheuerman

Junior Member at Large and Election Manager
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

or 1-800-505-VHPA

We've added a new Event to the 2014 Reunion

Join us for a Victorian Tea at a historic house with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)! After learning we were coming to town for the 4th of July weekend, they contacted us because they wanted "to do something nice for y'all." This is not a fund raising event. This is a gift to the Reunion attendees.

On 2 July, from 1 to 4 pm, you can join the Daughters of the American Revolution for a special Victorian afternoon tea at the Women's Club of Louisville. The Woman's Club was built in 1920 next to a Victorian home that had previously been used as their club house. They took the lot next door and built the present club, but still kept and used the Victorian home next to it for special events. You will have the chance to tour the Victorian house, the adjacent carriage house, and the gardens. During the traditional afternoon tea, Ms Lynn Renau is going to talk about "The Southern Exposition" held in Louisville on the site of the present day Old Louisville. The "Southern Expo" was in the later part of the Victorian Era. The structure was a "green house" that covered several acres of land and Thomas Edison installed his brand new invention, electric lights. The President of the United States came to Louisville for the grand opening and he ceremoniously threw the switch to light up the Expo. The Carriage house has been converted into a Boutique containing some vintage jewelry, purses, and scarves, and much more. There will be ample time to shop at the Carriage house before returning to the hotel. This tour is limited to 50 people so register early.

Gold Star Family Breakfast

I don't get to my brother's grave very often - he's buried 250 miles from my home. But it makes me feel good that, as a fellow Vietnam helicopter pilot, VHPA incoming president Bob Hesselbein makes sure David's grave is kept neat, and decorated for Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Bob never knew David. But they were both Vietnam helicopter pilots, and that's enough. It's just part of the bond between aviators. Sometimes, that bond includes their families.

Nearly 2,200 helicopter pilots who flew in the Vietnam War lost their lives. Did you know any of them? Who did you lose? Have you contacted their families to let them know how often you still think of them?

The Gold Star Family Breakfast gives you the opportunity to do just that. It's for families of the fallen, and VHPA veterans - TOGETHER - to share not only a meal, but also memories of those whose lives were lost - the young aviators whom we all wish were still among us.

Each year, I seek out families of the KIA and MIA helicopter pilots who were from the area near where the reunion is taking place, to invite them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast. Donations cover the cost of breakfast for the Gold Star Families. I encourage veterans like YOU to invite Gold Star families that you're already in touch with - wherever they happen to live. Bring them to the breakfast with you. It gives them the opportunity to experience, firsthand, the camaraderie that you pilots enjoyed, and to see what their loved one was a part of. And it gives YOU a chance to say, "I served with him, I cared about him, and I miss him, still."

Kentucky lost 25 of its sons to piloting helicopters during the Vietnam War; there were 34 from Indiana, 82 from Ohio and 34 from Tennessee. I am looking for families for each of these men. Wouldn't it be nice if one of their loved one's fellow helicopter pilots invited them to come and see what being a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War was all about? This year, the Gold Star Family Breakfast will be followed by a special ceremony at the AVTT Traveling Wall.

What better opportunity to show a buddy's family that you still honor his memory?

I encourage you to make arrangements for KIA/MIA families you know personally, to attend the reunion in Louisville. This is the year to do it. If you need encouragement I'll be happy to help. Just send me an email. *See you there!*

Little sister,

Julie Kink, sister of WO David Kink
C Troop 1/9th CAV KIA 8-3-1969
member of Family Contacts Committee
<http://www.VirtualWall.org/contacts>



RV Parking Options near The Galt House Hotel in Louisville, KY

The Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau provides the following information on three RV parking options closest to the Galt House Hotel. Contact information and web sites are listed below. They note there are additional options in greater areas but are all about 20 minutes or more outside of downtown.

KOA RV Site

900 Marriott Drive, Clarksville, IN 47129
800-562-4771 (TF) 812-282-4474 (Local)
<http://koacom/campgrounds/louisville-metro/>
*3 Miles about 5 minutes from Galt House Hotel

Kentucky Exposition Center
937 Phillips Lane, Louisville, KY 40209
[REDACTED]

<http://www.kyfairexpo.org/visitors/parking.aspx>
*7 Miles about 10 minutes from Galt House Hotel

Add More Campground
2411 Addmore Lane, Clarksville, IN 47129
Phone 812-283-4321
<http://addmorervpark.com/>
*8 Miles about 10 minutes from Galt House Hotel

**Motorcycle Rides
Return to the
Reunion!
See Ohio River
Chapter
notes on page 39
for full details!**

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

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

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Information and register online at www.vhpa.org or mail completed form to:
VHPA Headquarters, 2100 N Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050

Toll Free (800) 505-VHPA (8472)
Email HQ@vhpa.org
Fax (817) 200-7309

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DAR Victorian Tea	(July 2)	@\$52																																																																																																																																																																																																
Group Dinner at The English Grill	(July 2)	@\$65																																																																																																																																																																																																
1st Reunion Attendee Reception	(July 2)	No Charge																																																																																																																																																																																																
Welcome Reception with Eric Clapton Tribute	(July 2)	@\$5																																																																																																																																																																																																
Golf Outing with Lunch	(July 3)	@\$82																																																																																																																																																																																																
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast	(July 3)	@\$20																																																																																																																																																																																																
Gold Star Breakfast Sponsorship**	(July 3)	@\$20																																																																																																																																																																																																
Breakfast w/Speaker #2	(July 3)	@\$16																																																																																																																																																																																																
Jim Beam Basic & Extended Tour #2	(July 3)	SOLD OUT	@\$42/\$60 SOLD OUT																																																																																																																																																																																															
Wall Opening Ceremony***	(July 3)	WPS																																																																																																																																																																																																
Wall & Huey Static Display Sponsorship**		@\$25																																																																																																																																																																																																
Louisville and Frankfort Kentucky tour #2	(July 3)	@\$33																																																																																																																																																																																																
Jim Beam Basic Tour #3	(July 3)	@\$42																																																																																																																																																																																																
Take me out to the Ballgame Special Event	(July 3)	@\$39																																																																																																																																																																																																
Breakfast Cruise on the Belle	(July 4)	SOLD OUT	@\$45 SOLD OUT																																																																																																																																																																																															
Writers Presentation	(July 4)	No Charge																																																																																																																																																																																																
Combat Assault Reenactment***	(July 4)	WPS																																																																																																																																																																																																
Pre-Memorial Service Breakfast	(July 5)	@\$16																																																																																																																																																																																																
Memorial Service	(July 5)	No Charge																																																																																																																																																																																																
Annual Business Meeting	(July 5)	No Charge																																																																																																																																																																																																
Spousal Event w/Lunch	(July 5)	@\$37																																																																																																																																																																																																
Closing Banquet – Adult	(July 5)	@\$58																																																																																																																																																																																																
Closing Banquet – Child	(July 5)	@\$18																																																																																																																																																																																																
Non-Registered Guest at Banquet	(July 5)	@\$68																																																																																																																																																																																																
Total From Sidebars		XXXXX	XXXXX																																																																																																																																																																																															
VHPA Dues (if not dues current)**		1 year	@\$36																																																																																																																																																																																															
VHPA Dues (if not dues current)**		3 years	@\$99																																																																																																																																																																																															
Life Membership (Call HQ for exact amount)**																																																																																																																																																																																																		
2014 CD Directory Fee**	(# of Years x \$10)																																																																																																																																																																																																	
2014 Paper Directory Fee**	(# of Years x \$15)																																																																																																																																																																																																	
		GRAND TOTAL \$																																																																																																																																																																																																
<p>* Each person 21 and older must pay the full registration fee, except banquet-only guests.</p> <p>** Denotes a contribution, donation, or fee that is not refundable as part of any cancellation process.</p> <p>*** Denotes an event where the Waterfront Park Shuttle Pass can be used.</p>																																																																																																																																																																																																		

HPF Event Fee \$25
One \$25 PER FAMILY fee buys access to any or all HPF events for 2014. You will also receive a DVD of all last year's HPF events.
Total \$

T-Shirts **Total \$**
____S@\$18 ____M@\$18 ____L@\$18
____XL@\$18 ____XXL@\$19 ____XXXL@\$20

Banquet Meal
____Beef ____Fish ____Special

Horseshoe Casino \$10 per adult per day
____July 2 ____July 3 ____July 4
12 to 5 pm 10 am to 3 pm 12 to 5 pm
Total \$

Voluntary Contributions:
VHPA Membership Fund \$
VHPA Scholarship Fund \$
Vietnam War Museum \$
VHPA Reunion Sponsorship \$

REFUND POLICY
IMPORTANT: Please review the details of the Refund Policy, including the limited opportunity to purchase a Refund Guaranty available only on a one-time basis at the time of registration, which is posted online at the official VHPA website: www.vhpa.org

Refund Guarantee Fee
(10% of Total Events) \$

**OFFICIAL REGISTRATION
CANCELLATION DATE IS Noon,
CST, Wednesday, 18 June 2014**

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT
MC/Visa #: _____
Exp. Date: _____
Signature: _____

CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYMENT
In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA" with completed form.

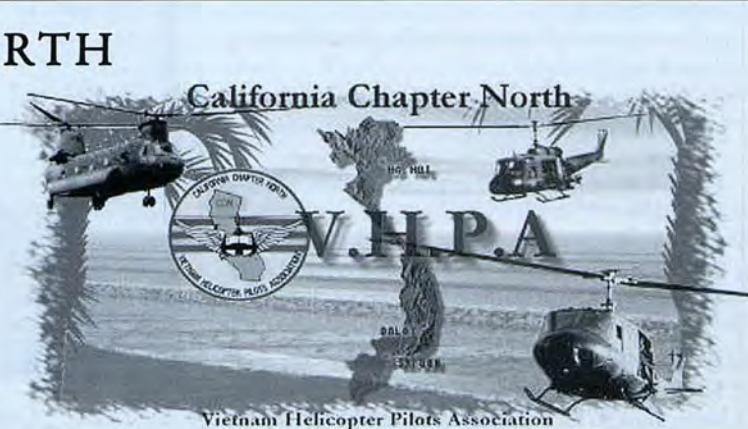
* Each person 21 and older must pay the full registration fee, except for banquet-only guests.

The following three short stories were sent to us by Member Curt Knapp.

Curt's photo was taken at LZ Sally in 1968 during his Vietnam Tour under the Tadpole 795 call sign with the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Curt was fortunate to be able to fly the same aircraft for another seven years when it was being flown by the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation back in the early 2,000's.

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH

Our local VHPA chapter is called the California Chapter North. It's an odd-sounding name, but we decided not to call it the Northern California Chapter since the initials NCC could easily cause confusion with those of the already-established North Carolina Chapter. I guess we're still causing confusion. We were displaying our trailer-mounted UH-1C in a local small town Labor Day parade a few years ago when we rounded a corner and approached the announcer's stand. The master of ceremonies glanced down at his program then up at us as he exhorted to the crowd, "And now let's give a round of applause for this UH-1 Huey crewed by members of the California Chapter of the North Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association!"



Loach Transition

All of us are familiar with the standard cyclic grip with the 2-position mic trigger switch, remember the first detent was for the intercom, pulling the switch all the way back allowed you to broadcast on the radio. However a chosen few of us are also familiar with the nonstandard one on the OH-6.

Up until my Loach transition at beautiful Vung Tau I had flown only the UH-1 and OH-23 in country. One of the Loach school courses was operation of the mini gun. My IP and I were but one of several OH-6s making a racetrack pattern on our target, an old partially-sunken ship just off the coast. Imagine my surprise when I pulled up out of my first gun run, squeezed the intercom button to yell, "WOW!", and instead heard BRRRRRRRRRRR!

It's a good thing I didn't shoot down the Loach ahead of me. I hear the paperwork is overwhelming.

Liquor Store Heist

In 1968 as Maintenance Officer for the Aviation Section, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division I had to make many surface trips between our base at LZ Sally and Division HQ at Camp Eagle. During one memorable trip my crewchief brought one of his notorious trouble-making friends along. Bumping down Highway 1 just before Hue the guy wanted to stop for some Tiger Piss. We pulled over at one of those roadside Papa San's Liquor stores, and he dismounted the Jeep with his M-16 and a sly grin on his face. I should'a known. A couple minutes later he comes running out with a bottle in his hand yelling, "LET'S GO!"

As we tore out'a there he was followed by the proprietor firing his rifle at us. I guess our passenger neglected to reimburse him. Well as you can see I was not struck by any projectiles. However I always wondered what my parents' reaction would've been to the telegram: "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Knapp...The Secretary of Defense regrets to inform you of the death of your son, WO1 Curtis R. Knapp, during the attempted burglary of a South Vietnamese liquor store..."



Curt Knapp

AVIATION TRUISM'S

Sent to us by Member Mike Whitten

As a pilot only two bad things can happen to you, and one of them will:

1. One day you will walk out to the aircraft knowing that it is your last flight.
2. One day you will walk out to the aircraft not knowing that it is your last flight.

There are only three things the copilot should ever say:

1. Nice landing, Sir.
2. I'll buy the first round.
3. I'll take the fat one.

There are Rules and there are Laws:

The Rules are made by men who think that they know better how to fly your airplane than you. Laws (of Physics) were ordained by God.

You can, and sometimes should, suspend the Rules, but you can never suspend the Laws.

About Rules:

- a. The rules are a good place to hide if you don't have a better idea and the talent to execute it.
- b. If you deviate from a rule, it must be a flawless performance (e.g., If you fly under a bridge, or under a power line, you must not hit the bridge or the power line) !!!

Words of Wisdom From Aviators:

- Flying is a hard way to earn an easy living.
- Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the airplane; the pessimist, the parachute.

And...

Ever notice that the only experts who decree that the age of the pilot is over are people who have never flown anything? Also, in spite of the intensity of their feelings that the pilot's day is over, I know of no expert who has volunteered to be a passenger in a non-piloted aircraft.

*If helicopters are so safe,
how come there are no vintage helicopter fly-
ins?*

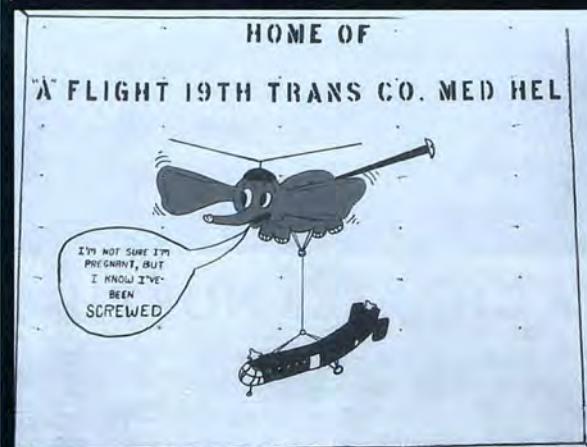
There are certain aircraft sounds that can only be heard at night.

An old pilot is one who can remember when flying was dangerous and sex was safe. !!!!!!

Airlines have really changed, now a flight attendant can get a pilot pregnant.

I've flown in both pilot seats, can someone tell me why the other one is always occupied by an idiot?

*Son, you're going to have to make up your mind
about growing up and becoming a pilot.
You can't do both.*



In 1963, four H-37 helicopters, eight pilots and sixteen crew members boarded a ship in Korea and sailed to Vietnam. Our mission was to sling load any aircraft that needed a lift from a combat area back to a secure airfield.

We were soon being used for all types of additional missions, some good, some worthless. Most of our recoveries in 1963 were shot-up H-21's, hence their part in the artwork.

Our home airfield was Vung Tau where we maintained a small ready room. The longer we worked out of there, the more we realized that "higher" was keeping us so busy hauling their "junk" around that we never seemed to have time to keep up the maintenance on our own aircraft. That frustration soon led to this sign being painted on our ready room door. Enjoy! Moon

Give Back To Veterans

Jim waited patiently at the Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona for the doctor to discuss his latest test results. As the doctor entered the room, he was still reading the papers in his hands. He sat across from Jim and looked into his eyes as he placed the papers on his desk.

"It is not good news," he said. "You have stage four liver cancer."

Many things went through Jim's mind at once. Is there a treatment? Is a transplant possible? How much time do I have? How will I manage without a family?

The doctor interrupted his thoughts. "Jim, there is nothing we can do. Without a support system, you will not be considered for a transplant. All we can do is help you be as comfortable as possible."

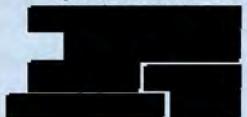
Discussions like this happen often at VA hospitals around the country. Does this upset you as it did me? Something must be done to help veterans like Jim who do not have the support of someone to walk with them through this difficult time.

I am seeking volunteers who are willing to be the support system for someone like Jim, which would allow him to be considered for a transplant. Duties include transporting the veteran to all scheduled hospital appointments, traveling with the patient for evaluation by the transplant team, and traveling with them if they are selected for a transplant. The liver transplant operation would take place in Houston, Texas or Portland, Oregon and require a stay of three to five days.

The ideal volunteer would be a retiree in reasonably good health and would be trained on the program. The VA Transplant Coordinator would match the volunteer with a veteran based on geography and other considerations. Cost of the transplant trip for the volunteer would be covered by the VA, however meals would not be covered. Leading up to the transplant, the volunteer would have vehicle expenses to and from appointments.

If you believe this is a worthwhile program and want to learn more please email me, John Strickland, at RetireesForVets@yahoo.com. Thank you for your interest in this program.

John Strickland



Editor's Note: The above was sent to us for publication by Member Bill Sorenson, President of the Arizona Chapter of the VHPA. Bill has known John for over 40 years and has asked us to publish the story of a project John started while he is working with a liver cancer patient person. John is trying to get his program going "Nation Wide" through the VA, however, as you well know he's being continually tied up with "Red Tape." Bill hopes that by publishing this program in our magazine, someone might see it and help John get his program started.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

Old Aviator Reunion, Fort Rucker, Alabama

Once called the W-4 reunion, new life has been brought back to the Reunion ever since it was re-named the Old Aviators Reunion. I would think that if you served in Vietnam 40 or 50 years ago, you could very easily consider yourself an old Aviator!

We have reserved the old Officer's Club at Fort Rucker for the first weekend in June of 2014. Complete details are available by contacting me, Gerald Meador. E-mail: [REDACTED]

121st Aviation Company Reunion

Veterans who served with the 121st Aviation Co. (AML), 121st Assault Helicopter Co., 93rd Transportation Co. (Lt. Hel.) (known as the Tigers and Vikings), 80th Trans. Det. (Avn. Maint.) and all other attached and supporting units. Everyone who served with these units in Da Nang and Soc Trang RVN 1961 through 1970 is invited and encouraged to attend. Families are also invited.

Branson, Missouri, June 12 – 15, 2014. June 12-15, 2014

The Reunion is being hosted by the members of the 121 Avn Association, Inc. Details of the reunion and hotel information may be found on their web site: 121avn.org or by contacting secretary John Schmied: [REDACTED]. Please call between 10:00 AM and 9:00 PM EST.

A Flock of Pelicans Reunion in Louisville, July, 2014

As a part of the VHPA Reunion in Louisville, KY; 1-6 July, 2014, the "Pelicans" of A Company, and the "Warlords" of B Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion, Americal Division will hold a reunion. POC is Richard Elgin, E-Mail: elgin@rollanet.org

2014 USABAA (United States Army Black Aviation Association) 2014 Reunion, August 6-8, 2014

Sheraton Atlanta Hotel, 165 Courtland Ave, NE, Atlanta, GA 30303. POC is CW5 (Ret) J Nance, Secretary, 256-759-0639

Reunion of the Outlaws, Mavericks, Bushwackers and Roadrunners who flew from Vinh Long, Vietnam 1964-1972 (the 62d –

A502d – 175th Assault Helicopter Companies)

50th Anniversary Reunion, Washington, D.C., September 18-22, 2014.

Contact: Tom Anderson (Teander@cox.net)

Info: VinhLongOurlaws.com (Click: Reunions)

Members of helicopter flight school class 66-12 (green hats), December 1965 through August 1966.

Hugh Smith and I are planning a class reunion in San Antonio for the last half of 2014. Please contact me (Al Flory) at: aflorey54@satx.rr.com or by phone at 210-599-9673 if you are interested in joining us.

Attention all Outlaws Mavericks Bushwhackers of the 185th AHC

We are trying to get the largest attendance ever at the VHPA reunion in Louisville, KY.

POC is Richard Waldo, Outlaw20 (70-71)
E-Mail: outlaw20@outlook.com ~ Phone 218-230-8408

Bring all your old photos!

174TH AHC ASSOCIATION 2014 REUNION

Dolphins, Sharks and Witch Doctors
from the Vietnam Viet Nam timeframe (1966 – 1971)

We're meeting on 1-4 May 2014 in at Fort Walton Beach, FL

POC: Al English, [REDACTED]

Registration Details available at: <http://www.174ahc.org>

Reunion of FLIGHT CLASSES 64-4W, 64-5W, and 64-6W

We're joining together at the VHPA National Reunion, in July of 2014

This is the 50th anniversary of the graduations of our flight classes. Most of us served together in Vietnam, back to Mother Rucker and Wolters to teach, and eventually we moved on. If you are interested in getting together at the VHPA Annual Reunion then please email [REDACTED]

Flying Circus Aviation Unit - Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade - 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)

Our reunion will be held in St. Charles, MO, on the weekend of 26 to 28 September, 2014. Details can be found on the Flying Circus web site at www.flying-circus.org. Simply click on "Next Reunion" to go to that page. POC for the Reunion is Tom Kuypers, phone (636) 947-1617 or E-mail: tok-pachyderm@aol.com

Want to see your Reunion publicized here?

Send details to: Aviator@VHPA.org

Are you a pilot ?

An old Army Pilot name Ron sat down at Starbucks, still wearing his old Helicopter Pilot hat and flight Jacket and ordered a cup of coffee. As he sat sipping his coffee, a young woman sat down next to him. She turned to the pilot and asked, 'Are you a real pilot?'

He replied, 'Well, I've spent my whole life flying helicopters and fixed wing airplanes, first H-23's, H-13's, H-19's, H-34's, Hueys, Baron, Queen Air, King Air, with 3 tours in Vietnam. I've taught more than 260 people to fly, so I guess I am a pilot, and you, what are you?'

She said, 'I'm a lesbian. I spend my whole day thinking about naked women. As soon as I get up in the morning, I think about naked women. When I shower, I think about naked women. When I watch TV, I think about naked women. It seems everything makes me think of naked women.'

The two sat sipping in silence.

A little while later, a young man sat down on the other side of the old pilot and asked: "Are you a real pilot?" He replied, 'I always thought I was, but I just found out I'm a lesbian.'

Sent to us by Member Dale McKnight

INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN THE VHPA AVIATOR?

The Official Newsletter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

Prices range from \$135.00 for a quarter-page to \$475.00 for a full-page, color advertisement.

Our staff Graphic Designer will help design your Aviator ad at no cost, other price discounts are available.

Full Details available at: Aviator@VHPA.org or HPilot1963@aol.com

Flattop Army Helicopter Pilot

by Ira McComic



Even though I was an Army helicopter pilot, I tell people I was qualified for Navy aircraft carrier operations. That's because I was trained to land and take off from the deck of a Navy LST. In fact, I think I could make the case that I'm more than carrier qualified because it's harder to land and take off from an LST than it is for one of those waterborne airfields on a carrier. Not only is an LST deck barely bigger than a ping pong table, it bounces around more than the little white ball itself. And, as a practical matter, I am convinced that an LST is a much better vessel than an aircraft carrier for satisfying

the Navy's desire to exterminate Army helicopter pilots. I speak from some experience on this issue.

First, let me give you a little background. At one time in my young life, I wanted to be a naval aviator, and for plenty of good reasons. I thought I would look good in one of those white dress uniforms, and it was my observation that sailors invariably had their choice of women. Also, it was my understanding that the Navy had the best food of all the services. I could just see myself as a naval aviator, dressed in a spotless uniform, Miss April clinging to me, while I dined on lobsters and clams.

Then, my dream was shattered when an Amarillo Army recruiter pointed out to me that naval aviators spend a considerable amount of their career flying over large bodies of water.

I do not like large bodies of water. As far as I am concerned, they are unnatural, something to be feared. You see, I grew up in Texas, and in my formative years, was heavily influenced by my West Texas relatives. In West Texas, where it precipitates only every third May, large collections of water exist only as mirages. Children there marvel when old codgers in rocking chairs tell these youngsters about the one time when it actually rained two days in a row.

Since water there is such a precious commodity, children are not taught how to swim; there is no need. Furthermore, in order to prevent youngsters from polluting the few, small bodies of water that do exist there, they are encouraged to avoid those bodies. Adults tell them stories of drowning and other watery hazards that convince youngsters that bodies of water are more dangerous than rattlesnakes. I simply explain all this to help you understand my mindset. To me, flying over water was as terrifying a thought as Prohibition.

So, instead of becoming a Navy pilot, I became an Army helicopter aviator. But I don't intend to imply that this was a second-rate outcome. On the contrary, I am eternally grateful that fate placed me in this position of superiority among all aviators.

As fate would have it, I was assigned to the 235th Aerial Weapons Company at the Can Tho Army Airfield in Vietnam. As an all-Cobra gunship company, we "Delta Devils" were hired guns, supporting anybody in the Vietnam Delta who wanted helicopter gunships to come and shoot up stuff.

Eventually it came to someone's attention—likely someone whose job bore the heavy responsibility of deciding whether a sheaf of papers placed on his desk ought to be bound together by a paper clip or a staple—that we Army aviator Devils sometimes helped out the Navy's Riverine Forces with its gunboat excursions in the Delta, and since these operations used an LST as an offshore support craft, he must have reasoned that there could be times when we might be called upon to park a Cobra or two on an Navy LST. Then he must have found a regulation somewhere that Army pilots had to be trained and qualified in order to perform such a feat. And, thus, from these precepts, the adventure began.

Only a few of us Devils were selected for this training on how to land to, and take off from, an LST. The Army selected us because we were the ones who had the most flying time; that is, we were the ones nearing the end of our tours and had not yet been eradicated. The Army, holding that against us, thought there might still be an opportunity to get its money's worth out of us. And, since we were so resistant to demise, the Army obviously felt it necessary to enlist the aid of its sister service, the Navy, to accomplish that purpose.

For our training, we were told that we would receive a ground school (or was it a water school?) on Navy aviation operations, followed by flight instruction involving landing on, and taking off from, an LST.

Late one afternoon, the Army gathered us together and some Navy officer, not even an aviator, conducted a two-hour school, beginning with Navy terminology, explaining things like "port", "starboard", and "poop deck". It was during this school that I learned the principle difference between an LST and an airfield: an LST moves. Unlike an LST, land-based airfields do not try to run away from you when you are attempting to land on them. And, generally, airfields stay in one place when you leave them and don't tend to move somewhere else the minute you turn your back. You can usually find an airfield right where you left it. That's not true of an LST.

This whole concept of a moving landing site was an eye-opening revelation to me. Oh sure, just like any other helicopter pilot, I had on a few occasions misplaced an airfield or two, but I had never had one get up and move of its own volition.

In the school, the Navy officer explained some of the communications protocol in contacting an LST. For example, a typical radio contact might be, "Navy LST One-Two-Three, this is Delta Devil One-Three. I would like to land now, and by the way, where are you?"

He also informed us that an LST deck could hold only two helicopters. Then, as an afterthought, he mentioned that, as we were making an approach to an LST, if we happened to notice there was already another helicopter on the deck and we intended to occupy the other spot, we should take an interest in observing whether the preceding helicopter's rotor was turning or if it was tied down. If it was tied down, he assured us we could proceed with the landing. However, if it was still turning, he suggested we might reconsider our intention to land since the deck of an LST did not have enough room to accommodate the diameters of two turning helicopter rotors; at least, without causing vital parts of both helicopters to be cast upon the waters. We pondered that for a moment.

Then someone looked at the time and commented that the club was about to open so we rushed the Navy officer through the remainder of the school. He fluttered his hands in the air, simulating the flight pattern for a landing to an LST. On the approach, he said we should come in perpendicular to the length of the LST and terminate the approach in a hover over the deck. Regarding the height of the hover, he urged us to keep an open mind on that subject since it depended upon the depth of the waves on which the LST was riding. Some of those swells could make an LST bob up and down like the fishing cork on a line with a hooked a turtle. The actual termination of the landing (that is, putting the skids on the deck and making them stay there, all without bending something), he left to our imaginations. Finally, the Navy officer assured us that there was really nothing to worry about, citing the statistic that almost half of those who attempted a landing to an LST did, in fact, achieve this purpose.

When the school ended, we chosen few retired to the club. There, we discussed the perils of LST operations. After a few drinks, the unanimous conclusion was that if Navy helicopter pilots could do it, it couldn't be that hard for us.

The next morning, we were up early for our flight instruction. All of us—except one—were picked up by a Navy slick helicopter, hauled out, and deposited on an LST in the ocean off the coast near Soc Trang. The plan was that these pilots would wait there and then each one would take his turn practicing landing and taking off in the Cobra which the one other person would fly out to the LST. A key component of this plan was that the person who initially flew the Cobra out to the LST would actually be able to land on the craft to begin with. And it was me who was the one who would fly the Cobra out to the LST and, supposedly, make the first landings and takeoffs.

The day was full of rain and the wind was gusty. In fact, the Army probably selected this day for our LST training because the Viet Cong wouldn't let their boys go out on such a miserable day.

With an instructor pilot in the front seat, I departed Can Tho. I found my

way to Soc Trang on the coast, passed over it, and then headed out over the gray watery expanse where, the instructor assured me, there was an LST somewhere beyond the mist shrouded horizon. I think I knew what Lindbergh felt like as he left New York behind.

Flying out over the ocean like that, I discovered that a helicopter sounded different than when flying over the ground. I found myself hearing surges in the engine, grindings in the rotor, whistlings in the cracks of the canopy that I had never noticed before. And I had never before noticed so many twitches of the needles; each one, I was sure, a prelude to an engine failure and a plunge into the eternal sea.

Eventually, the LST appeared straight ahead. I keyed the mike to make contact with the radio operator. I identified myself and asked for landing directions. He replied with some nonsense about "stern" this and "port quarter" that, which I suppose was somehow related to landing on the LST, but as far as I could discern, might as well have been directions for making porcupine gumbo. Besides, who was the Navy to try and tell an Army aviator how to do things?

I simply set up an impromptu left-hand landing pattern, flew toward the tail end of the LST, then turned away from it as a downwind leg, and eventually rounded off the corners to make a hundred-and-eighty-degree left turn back toward the vessel. This actually worked out better than I anticipated. I was flying parallel with the LST's length, and when things looked about right, I turned another ninety degrees so I could make an approach perpendicular to the length of the ship. This was going to be a piece of cake.

I began my descent toward the deck and that was when something unexpected happened. The spot on my sight picture to the deck began slipping away. I turned the aircraft to line up again, and just when it looked right once more, the spot moved away again. That's when reality met theory; I realized the LST was moving. Oh sure, I knew that it could move, but I had assumed they would at least start me out on this training by anchoring the thing down. I was a little aggravated with the Navy for this oversight on their part.

I soon discovered, though, that I really didn't have to re-aim the aircraft at the deck. I could set up the approach, get the sight picture, and just let the aircraft drift sideways with the moving LST. With this discovery, the rest of the approach went well. I was lined up on the deck, sliding along sideways at the same rate as the LST was moving forward, and at just the descent angle to clear the railings around the deck.

I was feeling pretty good about the whole thing until I got about fifty feet from the deck. That's when I noticed that the deck was moving up and down faster than the sucker rod of a West Texas goose-neck oil pump when the spot price for crude jumped to over fifty dollars a barrel.

I brought the helicopter to a stop over the LST's landing deck, which from my perspective appeared to be about the size of a card table at a church bingo party. I held the helicopter at the highest hover I could maintain and waited for the oscillating deck to come meet me at its earliest convenience. Shortly, the deck rose to the occasion, pitching up toward me. It stopped briefly at its apex and I pushed down on the collective to land. But before I could light, the deck plunged down again, leaving me suspended in the air.

Then, I saw the deck coming back up toward me faster than I could spend money on payday. In a panic, I pulled as much collective as I could to escape it, and by the time I looked down again, the deck had fallen away once more as the LST hit a trough, and there I was suspended so high above the deck I could barely see the sailors down there. However, I could still see them well enough to determine that they thought my predicament was terribly funny. And I could see also that money was exchanging hands between them regarding the outcome of my predicament.

I lost track of time as I alternately chased and fled from the plunging and lunging deck. During this time, the instructor up in the front seat offered encouraging comments such as "You know, you're not being paid by the hour to do this."

Just when I thought I would never get the skids of my aircraft and the deck to agree upon a common altitude, I felt the deck knock gently on the skids.



Quickly, I seized the opportunity, shoving down the collective to latch onto the deck before it could drop out from under me again. Immediately, I felt the aircraft falling as the LST plunged into another trough, but this time the skids were on the deck and we were all—man and machine—riding the waves together.

At this point, I had logged one LST landing and there was so much sweat in my flight gloves they were sloshing. But I had done it. I let out a sigh of relief and rolled off the throttle to flight idle in preparation for letting another victim have a shot at this torture. That's when the instructor said, "Now, make a takeoff."

Although I was drained from the landing, I thought to myself, how difficult can it be to make a takeoff? I would just get the aircraft light on the skids, wait for the LST to rise up on the peak of a swell, pull pitch as the deck bottoms out again, and I'd be on my way. It seemed simple enough, and once I was airborne, I would simply refuse to return to the LST. I would fly back and land at Can Tho, where the ground stayed put under me.

Having thus resolved, I was ready to begin when I noticed this sailor standing a few feet in front of the helicopter, between it and the railing, watching me intently. I suppose he had been there all along, even while I was trying to find the deck earlier, but I was so engaged in that quest that I hadn't noticed him.

He stood there and I waited patiently for him to move out of the way. After a while, he hadn't moved, and I began to suspect that he might have some purpose related to me.

I asked the instructor about him. The instructor explained that he was there to direct my takeoff. His purpose was to give me signals designating when I should come to a hover and when I should take off from the deck. I had never had someone do this for me before. I considered him to be a sort of cheerleader for helicopter takeoffs.

I rolled on the throttle and waited for him to signal something. He simply stood there with his hands on his hips. The instructor said I should give him a thumbs up when I was ready to go. So I flipped him a digit, and in response he began wagging his arms up and down with his palms up, which I took to be the Navy signal encouraging me to come to a hover. Either that, or he was attempting to become airborne himself.

The Cobra strained to lift off the deck and I managed to get it up to a four-foot hover. The torque meter was almost pegged. I was struggling to maintain even four feet, yet the sailor still stood there in front of the helicopter, flapping his arms, and insisting on more altitude before he would give me the signal to take off. I did the best I could and managed to coax the Cobra another inch or two higher before the rpm began to bleed off. The sailor still stood there, flapping.

I considered the situation. I estimated the railing behind the sailor to be about three feet high and I calculated that, from a four-foot hover, I could just clear the railing. So, neglecting for my purpose the fact that the sailor in front of me stood six feet tall, I nudged the cyclic forward and headed for the open sea.

As the skids cleared the railing by about a foot, I looked back and saw the sailor sprawled on the deck. I admired the fact that, for a man his size, he could move pretty fast. If he hadn't ducked when he did, he would have had a shortened naval career. (Based upon that experience, for years I thought the term "midshipman" referred to a sailor who had been chopped off at the waterline—so to speak—by an Army helicopter pilot attempting to take off from an LST.)

To shorten the story, I did in fact return and managed to make a second landing on the LST. Thereupon, I gratefully gave up the aircraft to the next person. After that training, I was never again called upon to land on an LST, something for which I am profoundly grateful.

Ira McComic

235th Aerial Weapons Company
Republic of Vietnam 1968-69
WORWAC 68-7

"Looking For"

Looking For....Help with building a memorial for Allen Dyer



WO Allen Dyer, A Troop 7/1st Cav, KIA 17 July 1971

anyone that served with him and can write a sentence or two about him or has pictures/patches etc. that I can add to the memorial board I am putting together for him. I already have obtained his service record and built a shadow box for his decorations and casket flag. I am also trying to decorate his flight jacket in a manner that would be reflective of what it would look like in Nam (he wasn't there long enough to go through the cold season, so his jacket still has flight school patches).

If Allen's family desires, I will be submitting the Shadow Box to the Vietnam Memorial Museum for its grand opening in 2015.

Glen Veno (A/2/17, 101st ABN – RVN 71)

With the help of his family, I am building a memorial to my flight school classmate (70-41), WO Allen Dyer. Allen was killed in action in Vietnam on July 17, 1971 while serving as a scout pilot with A Troop, 7/1st Cav out of Vinh Long.

I am looking for

would like to thank them personally. If you have any information on this action, please respond to: dr.bob@cebridge.net via E-Mail, or by calling him at: (785) 331-5256

Looking for...the Indiana Farmboy

This man was a former helicopter pilot I met and flew with as a soldier in Vietnam. The only information I recall from forty-seven years ago was the name or moniker on the back of his helmet which read "Indiana Farmboy."

The reason for my inquiry on this pilot is that on more than one occasion he was instrumental with inserting and in some cases extracting us from hot LZ's. He would have been assigned to the 4th Infantry Division, 4th Aviation Bn, the ones with the Black Ace of Spades painted on their aircraft nose during 1967.

I was assigned to the Division LRRP's, 1/10 Cav as an NCO during 1966-67 in the Central Highlands of Pleiku, Kontum and Dak To area of operation. If this individual is or was a former member of your association please convey to him my heartfelt thanks and from the hundred or so LRRP's from the Division our deepest gratitude. If any member of your association knows or knew of this pilot I'd truly appreciate knowing if he made it out of Nam safely? Were it not for men like him, I seriously doubt many of us would be here today and I can assure him, my wife of 46 years, my four adult children and my thirteen grandchildren thank him for his dedication and bravery, I never knew his name, but I've never forgotten him all these years.

Two of my son's are active duty Army and both work Spec Ops and often speak of the actions and bravery of the pilots they work with. It was some of their stories that brought back the faces and times of many of the pilots and especially the "Indiana Farmboy" who inserted our LRRP teams in some scary places. At our reunions with the 75th Ranger Regiment Association, every man has spoken fondly with a little jaded humor occasionally of the men who flew us on our missions and resupplied us, and we speak so highly of your skills and bravery. When the copters were inserting us at dusk in places like the Ia Drang they made so much noise and we were glad when you left and it got quiet fully knowing we were safe in the bush. But we were extremely grateful for all the copter noises when you were coming to get us because we knew we were going home to our firebase and relative safety. Spending five to seven days and sometimes longer in the bush with only four other men and carrying a hundred pounds of equipment it was always good to see the smiling or worried looks of the airmen as they pulled us out of some really difficult situations. If anyone knows of the status of this pilot please let me know. From one soldier to another, Thanks for all you did.

RLTW Sua Sponte
Bryant E. Middleton
CPT, USA (Ret.)

Looking For...Anyone knowing of Thomas Richard Stunda

My name is Jane Ellen (Stunda) Vernier and I am the biological daughter of Thomas Richard Stunda (his DOB was 1/24/1938). He graduated flight school with flight class 66-21, the VHPA data base also shows that he served with the 281st AHC in 1969-1970,

We have been estranged since my childhood but I'm now interested in obtaining copies of photos or any other additional information regarding both his Vietnam Tour and his Army life. VHPA records also that he passed away on 9-26-2011 while he was married to Inga Stunda, to the best of my knowledge he resided in the Houston, Texas area at the time of his death.

Any information you can pass back to me is greatly appreciated.

Jane Vernier

Looking for.....Medivac crew from September 8th, 1966

My name is Robert Christensen and I am a long time member of the VHPA. My neighbor Jim Walker has asked me to try and locate a crew which medevaced him on Sept 8th 1966. He was a medic for the 101st ABN and was severely wounded that day, a crew finally recovered him on their third attempt, all under heavy hostile fire.

The recovery occurred just short of half way between Tuy Hoa and Tuy An and about 1 klick to the west. In the first recovery attempt the Huey landed on north side of gulch Jim was laying in, it was immediately shot up and they took off; they then landed on south side of gully and while Jim's stretcher was being carried to the Huey, they were forced to again lift off due to heavy fire. On the aircraft's third attempt, they again landed on south side of gully and were finally able to load Jim aboard where he was immediately flown to the Battalion Aid Station at Tuy Hoa to be stabilized, then on to the 7th Field Hospital in Qui Nhon for more life-saving treatment.

Jim He is deeply grateful to the crew for saving his life that day and

Looking For....CW4 David Daugherty

I served with a CW4 David/Dave Daugherty at Finthen Army Airfield West Germany from 1984-1985. He was one of our pilots. Great guy! I know he is also a Vietnam Vet and that maybe you would know where or how I could contact him. I am trying to re-connect with some of the people that I became close with while stationed there.

Thanks in advance for any help! SP4 Sizemore (67Y) Attack Helicopter Crew Chief

Lane Sizemore

Letters to the Editor...

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

The story on the back page "Vietnam through the eyes of a child..." by Margo Phipps Meyers was very interesting and quite well written.

My oldest was only three when I returned from my last tour. I don't think she thought much about the possibility of me being killed; only that I was gone for a long time and she sometimes cried about that. Margo was in the first grade in 1967 and was sent to sit in the hall because "(the teacher) has decided a left handed person should sit in the hall until they can learn to write with their right hand". I was amazed this idea still existed in 1967.

I was in the second grade in 1944 and my parents apparently learned I was left handed and decided to "reform" me. They instructed my teacher to make me write with my right hand. In those days, little was done to make life easier for left handed people. The desks, ball gloves and many other items were made with only right handed people in mind. This may have been the reason for their attempted "intervention". Anyway, it didn't work. My teacher could barely read my scribbling with my left hand and for sure couldn't read what I wrote with my right hand.

During my 40 years as an instrument instructor and/or examiner, I found it to be an advantage to be left handed as I could take extensive notes and fly at the same time. Quite an irony.

I wonder if the attempt to get Margo to change worked and if she felt the experience was helpful. The short effort they made to get me to change about drove me crazy (and some would likely say it worked!).

Carl L Hess
114th Aviation Company 64-65
A and B Co, 228th ASHB, 1st Cav. Div. 67-68

Editor's Note - Margo replies:

I am still a "lefty." It must have been the teacher's idea, and if I remember correctly, something (my mother, maybe?) changed the teacher's mind, and I was allowed to carry on as I wished.

I do remember, though, being confused about transitioning from left to right. In trying to switch it in my mind, I would begin writing on the right-hand margin of the page, and write everything right to left and backwards (so one could then hold the paper up to a mirror and read it). Everything was backwards, letters and all.

Funny, though. The only things I now do left-handed are write and eat. Everything else (scissors, doors, sports, etc.) I do right-handed. Thankfully left handed people are so much more accepted today.

Follow up on last month's

"From the President of the VHPA" column.

This was sent to us by Member Jeff Murray who just retired from Bank of America/Merrill Lynch and I think it contains a lot of great advice. In his e-mail Jeff says:

"Moon - I agree with a lot of things you mentioned in your last President's column, but I also noted that you didn't address the problem of probating any remaining financial accounts.

The easiest thing to do in this area is to check the titling of your bank accounts. Everything in joint name accounts bypasses probate meaning your will does not affect them. So if it is in your name plus wife, no problem, you die and all that your wife needs to do to put everything in her name is to take a death certificate to the account trustee. If your wife is dead but still on the account when you die, then it goes to probate. If wife is dead and you put junior's name on the account, and you have 3 other kids, all the money in that joint account goes to junior. Do you really trust junior enough to share equally (because legally he does not have to)? A solution is to give your kid a Power of Attorney that expires on your death so once

you're gone, that account is frozen. Then add Transfers on Death to the account, which gives the beneficiaries no power at all over your finances, but when you die they get it in whatever percentage that you established, without probate. Brokerage accounts work the same way.

On insurance policies, check your beneficiaries. I cannot tell you how many clients I have had die and their ex-wife is the named beneficiary on a life insurance policy, leaving current wife hanging in the wind, not to mention the kids. The same with IRA's and 401-K's, check those beneficiaries. Also add contingent beneficiaries and specify what happens to a leftover percentage if one of the beneficiaries dies before you do. Does it all go to the remaining children, or to the kids and/or wife of the deceased beneficiary? You can add beneficiaries to CD's just by just walking into your bank.

In short, a will only covers stuff you have than has no beneficiary listed. But if you die without a will and have any money at all the state gets to decide where it goes, and that doesn't always end well.

Jeff Murray
Wolf Pack 33, 281st AHC 1968-69

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

Thanks for publishing the story of the rescue of LT Ron Ball from the harbor of Haiphong, one of the most heavily defended places in North Vietnam, or the World in 1966 when this rescue happened.

Now a few comments on that story...

The photo captioned to be USS Rogers (DDR-876) is actually USS Coontz (DLG-9); you can see her hull number in the photo. She was a guided missile destroyer leader and you can see her surface-to-air missile twin launcher on her fantail in the photo, and one of the most modern ships in the Navy at the time. Rogers was a World War II vintage Gearing Class destroyer which had been modernized to extend her life after that war and service in Korea. She was in her third war in Vietnam. I caged a few shots of her from the internet <http://www.navsource.org/archives/05/876.htm>. These are from 1969, not 1966 but show her configuration at the time of the Ron Ball story.



Probably even more interesting, I have the photo taken by the combat photographer of Ron Ball being hoisted into Big Mother 68 of HS-4. Ron appears calm and collected in the photo. The structure at the left is the M-60 machine gun mounting, and its light armor facing, which has been rotated back out of the cargo door to allow use of the rescue hoist. His "water wings" are inflated and he is grabbing the hoist hook where the rescue "horsecollar" is attached.



The "Bill Terry" mentioned in the article actually is Rear Admiral Bill Terry USN (Ret) and was my skipper when I was an instructor in HS-10. Great guy and great officer. I hope to send you another rescue mission story that Bill was involved in that same cruise.

Best regards,
Tom Phillips - see you all in Louisville

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 37 new Members to our

Association! All have joined the VHPA during the period from 3 December, 2013 through 5 February 2014

Bausch, John W. Sarasota, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-8 Vietnam unit(s): B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 69-70	Carr, Michael A. 'Mike' Oakhurst, California, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 68-524 Vietnam unit(s): HHC 52 CAB in 1969; HHC 17 CAG in 70	Hansen, Chris J. Fallon, Nevada, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 71-30 Vietnam unit(s): D/17 CAV in 71-72	Vietnam unit(s): E/82 ART 1 CAV in 68-69 Quattlebaum, Joseph O. Wagener, South Carolina, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 70-37 Vietnam unit(s): 180 ASHC in 72-73
Bielecki, Paul M. Danville, New Hampshire, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-5 69-3 Vietnam unit(s): D/3/5 CAV 9 INF in 69-70; 498 MED CO in 70-71; B/227 AVN in 71	Challgren, Stanley A. 'Chick' ** Evergreen, Colorado, US Marine Corps Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): VMO-1 Det in 59-60	Hooker, George A ** Largo, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 61-2 Vietnam unit(s): 179 ASHC in 70; 82 MED DET in 66	Richardson, Gerald A. 'Jerry' ** Shawnee on Delaware, Pennsylvania, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 67-22 Vietnam unit(s): 71 AHC in 68
Bierlein, James R Caledonia, Michigan, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 65-4W Vietnam unit(s): 119 AHC in 65; 498 MED CO in 66	Clayton, Dennis C. ** Tucson, Arizona, US Marine Corps Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): HMM-161 in 68-69; HMM-165 in 75	Jewel, Denver Lubbock, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 66-13 66-15 Vietnam unit(s): B/3/17 CAV in 67-68	Roggengamp, Robert J. Fisherville, Kentucky, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-23 Vietnam unit info not provided
Bijak, Joseph W. Chicago Heights, Illinois, US Marine Corps Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): HMM-161	Couture, Donald J. 'Coutch' ** Scottsdale, Arizona, US Air Force Flight Class(s) info: 59-1 Vietnam unit(s): 3 ARRS in 66	Krausz, Allan E. Enterprise, Alabama, US Army Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): Flight Class(s) info: 70-49 70-47	Roof, William L. ** Destin, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 67-12 Vietnam unit(s): 271 ASHC in 68-69; HHC 101 ABN in 71-72
Bleckert, Gordon E. 'Gordo' Maineville, Ohio, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-1 68-43 Vietnam unit(s): 335 AHC in 69-70	Davis, Joseph P. ** Henrietta, New York, US Air Force Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): 20 HS 14 ACW in 66-67	Lillie, Norman C. Griffin, Georgia, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 68-513 68-23 Vietnam unit(s): 121 AHC in 68-69	Scott, Allan E. Lynden, Washington, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 67-7 Vietnam unit(s): 54 MED DET in 67-68; 498 MED CO in 68; 173 AVN in 70-71
Burridge, Charles W. 'Wayne' ** Herndon, Virginia, US Air Force Flight Class(s) info: 64-H 65-BH Vietnam unit(s): 38 ARRS in 67-68	Evans, Richard E. 'Dick' Louisville, Kentucky, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 70-50 Vietnam unit(s): 129 AHC in 71-72	Lindsay, Henry T 'Tom' ** Nellysford, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 63-2W Vietnam unit(s): 173 AHC in 66-67; 73 AVN in 69-70	Stefanski, Michael C. Sturgis, Michigan, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-7 Vietnam unit(s): A/7/17 CAV in 69-70
Burton, Lawrence E. 'Larry' ** Bath, New York, US Marine Corps Flight Class(s) info: 39-54 Vietnam unit(s): HMM-162 in 62-63	Feigley, George S Aurora, Illinois, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 68-2 Vietnam unit(s): 9 INF DIV in 68-69	Mantooth, Glen W ** The Villages, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 55-A Vietnam unit(s): 155 AHC in 65-66; 540 TC CO in 68-69	Storm, Richard M. 'Rick' ** Indianapolis, Indiana, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-2 Vietnam unit(s): C/228 ASHB 1 CAV in 69-70
Buza, Raymond F. West Palm Beach, Florida, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 68-521 Vietnam unit info not provided	France, Robert A. Lodi, Wisconsin, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 68-39 68-521 Vietnam unit(s): 195 AHC in 69-70	Mosness Dusty L. Byron Georgia, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 69-37 Vietnam unit(s): 175 AHC in 70	Thomas, Charles A. Conroe, Texas, US Army Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): D/17 CAV in 72
Campbell, Harold T 'Hal' ** Williamsburg, Virginia, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 54FW 54QC Vietnam unit(s): UTT in 63; 140 TC DET in 64; 8 TC CO in 64; 604 TC CO in 67; 14 TC BN in 68; 117 AHC in 64	Haglof, Richard B 'Dick' ** Corpus Christi, Texas, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 66-7 Vietnam unit(s): 1 CAV DIV in 66-67; D/1/10 CAV in 69-70	Pankratz, James A. Madison, Wisconsin, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 68-503 68-4 Vietnam unit(s): Americal in 68-69	Wampler, Dennis F. ** Burke, Virginia, US Army Flight Class info not provided Vietnam unit(s): B/2/20 ARA 1 CAV in 69-70
		Polinsky, Lawrence J. Glendale, Arizona, US Army Flight Class(s) info: 67-501 67-23	

TAPS

ADAMCIK, Merrill Travis
Graduated flight training with Flight Class 60-2FW & 68-1, flew in Vietnam with the 1244-th Avn (19-65-66) and the C/159th ASHB, 101 ABN (1968-60) under the Rough Rider and Playtex callsigns.



Merrill Travis Adamcik was born in El Campo, Texas and passed away on October 22, 2013 due to complications from heart disease.

Merrill attended El Campo High School where he was a member of the Ricebird band and Future Farmers of America. He attended Texas A&M where he was a member of the Corps of Cadets and played saxophone in the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band. Upon graduation in 1958 he attended and graduated from Army Flight School in 1960. As an Army Aviator, he was then assigned to the 14th Armored Cavalry in Germany. In 1963, he returned to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma for Advanced Artillery School, and upon graduating, was assigned to Ft. Benning, Georgia. There he began flying the Caribou or CV-2B (cargo aircraft), which he flew in Vietnam for one year. Later he spent his second year in Vietnam flying the Chinook helicopter. He also served in Korea. He and Doris, his companion of 49 years, married March 1964 in Houston, Texas. In 1972, he attended and graduated from the Army's Command and General Staff College. Upon his retirement in 1978 as Lt. Colonel, he and his family moved back to El Campo, Texas where he farmed for 15 years. He also served as Wharton County Commissioner, Pct.3. He was a lifelong member of St. Paul United Methodist Church and also a member of the Texas A&M Association of Former Students, Army Otter-Caribou Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Elks Lodge #1749, Czech Heritage Society, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 72 and American Legion Post #251, where he served as Past Commander. He also served as Board Member of the El Campo Heritage Center.

Through the years, Merrill made time for family and friends and especially enjoyed gardening and traveling. Watching Texas Aggie football was a favorite pastime. He shared his passion for gardening by giving away his prized homegrown fruits and vegetables to family and friends. His tremendous love for his grandchildren was evident by their numerous pictures hung, taped and framed around his office desk.

Merrill is survived by his wife, Doris; his three daughters and their families, four grandchildren, one sister and one sister-in-law. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Paul United Methodist Church, American Legion Post #251, Elks Lodge #1749 or a charity of choice.

BELL, Fred O. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 54-A, flew in Vietnam with the 8th TC CO in 1962-63.

Fred O. Bell, passed away Dec. 28, 2013. Fred's childhood was spent in southwest Arizona, in and around Bisbee, Ariz. He grew up on a ranch, where his dad was the foreman. He had the freedom of growing up in the wide open spaces, and the responsibilities of a ranch hand and cowboy in his early years. Those formative years made him the man he was — decent, caring, loving, stubborn and inquisitive. At 17 years old, he joined the Air Force and was ready to fight for our country.

Honor, Courage and Commitment; these three words were engrained into Fred's DNA. He served our country in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, and to this day these three words exemplify who he was. He had a significant military career in the Army, as a Mandarin Chinese linguist, a pilot who flew airplanes and helicopters, and instructed, in both types of aircraft for many years. Joe Galloway said at one of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Washington Reunions: "You helicopter guys are a Special Breed Of Madmen, One of God's Lunatics."

The Helicopter Square Dance Team was one of the highlights of his military career. He was the team captain in the mid '50s, and the team performed in air shows along the East Coast, demonstrating the amazing capabilities of this unique flying machine. Recently, a documentary film has been made of the team's adventures, with Fred as one of the few spokespersons here. This documentary has won first prize in two film festivals in 2013, and is entered in several more this year. If accepted it will be in the Seattle film festival in the spring.

Fred's military career took him all over the world, and his post-military career took him to Katmandu, Nepal, 1966-67 and Vientiane, Laos, 1967-1972. He flew in both countries, and became the Director of Flight Operations for Continental Air Services in Laos. His flying career came to an end after he lost his hearing in one ear.

In 1972, Fred and Bette returned to the States and moved to Montana where they went into real estate, and Fred became a broker. He was the President of the Montana Association of Realtors. After 11 years, the cold, snowy winters became more challenging, and Fred and Bette decided it was time for a change. This prompted them to pack up the contents of Bette's antique shop and hit the road. They traveled for 3 years, buying and selling antiques from Bar Harbor, Maine to Key West, and from New York to California, with intermittent stops to further their knowledge in the fields of their interest. Fred spent several months at the Gemological Institute



of America and became a graduate gemologist and Bette took several classes in appraising through the International Society of Appraisers and Indiana University, and became a certified appraiser of personal property. With the completion of these objectives, they headed for Seattle, finally settling in Edmonds in 1986. They opened Guildmark Appraisal & Estate Sale Services, LLC, and have had an active appraisal business since then. Fred always was a man who got involved, and moving to Edmonds did not stop that sense of community. Fred was a member of the Chamber for many years, and ran the 4th of July parade for the Edmonds Chamber for 10 years. He was president of the Edmonds Museum for five years, and it was under his watch that the Edmonds Museum's Farmers Market started. He remained active in the community until his health issues made it impossible. He was a member of the American Legion China Post 1, the USO, the Military Officers Association of America, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, and the NRA.

Fred is survived by his wife, Bette, two daughters and five grandchildren. The family requests that donation be made in his memory to the Wounded Warriors or the USO.

Submitted by Bette Bell

BENTON, William B. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 57-2, flew in Vietnam with 118th AHC (1966-67) and HHC, 164th CAG (1971-72) under the Thunderbird 16 and Delta 6 callsigns.

William B. "Bill" Benton, Jr. LTC (USA Ret.), a resident of Dothan, died Thursday, January 30, 2014 at Flowers Hospital. He was 81.

Mr. Benton was born January 23, 1933 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and was a graduate of Baton Rouge High. In 1956, he entered the U.S. Army and served in Korea, Germany, and three tours in Vietnam before retiring in 1979 at Lt. Colonel. He was the recipient of numerous awards during his military career including twice awarded the Legion of Merit, seven Air Medals and Master Army Aviator Wings.

In 1988 he was asked to manage the Southeast Alabama Regional Airport (formerly Opp/Andalusia Airport). He served as their director for 20 years and the terminal there is now named "The Bill Benton Terminal". Mr. Benton was named "Airport Manager of the Year" in 1996 and was inducted into the "Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame" in 2011. He was both fixed and rotary wing rated and a Master Army Aviator. He was a member of Covenant United Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn R. Benton of Dothan, one son and three grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Museum of the U. S. Army, Ft. Belvoir, VA or the Wounded Warrior Project.

TAPS

BOWLING, Billy J. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 60-6, flew in Vietnam with B/1/9 Cav (1966-67), B/7/17 Cav (1968-70) and HHT 17th CAV (1970) under both the Charger 6 and the Saber 6 callsigns.



Billy J. Bowling, Major (USA Ret.) passed away January 3, 2014. Bill served in the US Army as a Master Aviator in both rotary and fixed wing retiring in October 1980. After military retirement he flew for Petroleum Helicopters, Hughes Helicopters and retired from McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Co. as a Sr. Manager for Military Programs.

During his military career he was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Master Army Aviator Badge, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/Palm and Gold Star, Korean Service Medal, Air Medal w/V Device and Numerals 35, Vietnam Service Medal w/1 Silver & 2 Bronze Service Stars, United Nations Service Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Presidential Unit Citation and others. One of his proudest accomplishments was forming and commanding the US Army Helicopter Demonstration Team, The Silver Eagles.

Bill was well known for his very quick wit and natural ability to tell captivating stories of his many life adventures. Bill is survived by his wife of 28 years, Angela T. Bowling, two sons, two daughters, two step-children, two sisters, one brother Dwight C. Bowling, eight grandchildren and 1 great grandson. Memorials may be made in Bill's name to the charity of your choice, Mayo Clinic Hospital, 5777 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix, AZ 85054 or Hospice of the Valley, 1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, A second Memorial Service is planned April 5, 2014 in Dothan, AL.

CALLENDER, William Edward Graduated flight training with Flight Class 63-4T, flew in Vietnam with A/227th AHB, 1st CAV DIV (1966-67) and the 175th AHC (1968-69) under the Chickenman, Outlaw 6 and Maverick callsigns

William Edward Callender Sr. COL (USA, Ret.) died on January 17, 2014. He will be deeply missed by friends and family. Known as Bill, Billy, Willy, Dad, Granddaddy, and most often and affectionately 'THE' Colonel to family and friends, Colonel (US Army Retired) Callender was known for his work for veterans, his service on the Battleship Commission, his decorated military career, and his love of fishing and Alabama football.

He was born in Mobile, Alabama on September 17, 1937, he was a graduate of Murphy High School, Class of 1956 and the University of Alabama, Class of 1960. Colonel (US Army Retired) Callender also has graduate degrees from Kansas State University and the University of South Alabama. He and Jacqueline were married in 1958 and he began his military career in 1960.

He served multiple tours in Vietnam and was the recipient of the Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldier's Medal and the Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star Medal. He was also awarded the Gulf Coast Veteran of the Year in 2006. After his military career, Colonel (US Army Retired) Callender moved into a second career working at the University of South Alabama and the Baldwin County School Board. When he fully retired, he and Jacqueline moved to Orange Beach, Alabama where he spent his time serving on the Battleship Commission, advocating for veterans, traveling with his wife, and fishing.

He is survived by his wife Jacqueline Bachar Callender; his three daughters, 12 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren. Bill served as president of the Alabama Battleship Commission and was selected for inclusion in the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame. Bill was very active in South Alabama Honor Flight and gave key support in securing the South Alabama Veterans Cemetery.

CHARLTON, Donald G Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-6, flew in Vietnam with the 173rd ABN BDE (1969-70) under the Casper 571 callsign



Donald G. Charlton LTC (USA, Ret.) passed away on July 17 while undergoing a surgical procedure in Reno, Nevada. Don was an alumnus of the University of Georgia and proud Sigma Chi Brother. After graduation Don enlisted in the Army and graduated from OCS and then Officer Rotary Wing Aviator Course 69-6. Upon completion of flight school, he was assigned to the Aviation Platoon of the 173 Airborne Brigade. Known as the Casper Platoon from the unique tactical call sign, Don served with distinction in several positions of responsibility, finishing his tour as the Brigade Commander's pilot.

After his tour, Don continued to be selected for further positions of responsibility; including company and battalion command positions in both aviation and non-aviation units, in CONUS and in Korea. His famous ski school smile and smooth southern charm served him well when he was selected to direct the personal staff of General John Vessey during the later's command of the Eighth U.S. Army and of U.S. Forces, Korea. Don's last military assignment was as the Commander of the Atlanta Army Recruitment Command.

After retirement, Don worked in leadership positions, primarily in the petroleum management industry. Residing in Reno, Nevada, he became passionately involved in the Hidden Valley Wild Horse Protection Fund, an advocacy organization for the well-being of the wild mustangs of the Nevada high country. Additionally, he maintained close connections with his many friends and colleagues, both military and civilian.

His friends have missed the frequent telephone and Skype conversations that maintained the Charlton Circle of Friends.

He is survived by his wife, Shari Charlton; his children Christian, Elizabeth, Jonathon, Derek and Keven; grandchildren Campbell and Kyle and brother Lee.

Submitted by VHPA Member Bill Fielding

COLVIN, Jerrie L. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-22, flew in Vietnam with B Co, 123rd AVN BN, 23rd INF DIV (1969-70) under the Warlord callsign.

Jerrie L. Colvin, former resident of Lakewood, Florida, lived in Florida for over 40 years. Born in Denver, Colorado, he passed away in Kissimmee, Florida on August 24, 2013.

Former helicopter pilot, serving in Vietnam in 1973. He is survived by his mother Ann H. Colvin, Lakewood; one brother, one sister, 2 nieces and 2 nephews.

DUKES, David Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-39, flew in Vietnam with HHC, 228th ASHB, 1st CD.

David Dukes, LTC (USA, Ret.) 83, of Jonesborough, died March 4, 2013 at the Johnson City Medical Center. He was a graduate of Christian Brothers High School, Memphis, TN, he attended East Tennessee State University and received Masters of Arts Degrees in both Reading and Educational Administration. LTC Dukes was a member of Central Baptist Church, Johnson City, TN.

LTC Dukes was a 1951 Distinguished Military Graduate of the University of Tennessee. He retired from the Army in 1971 after more than twenty years of service and was a Korean and Vietnam War veteran. LTC Dukes was the recipient of the Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, The Air Medal with eleven Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Occupation Medal (Japan), the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Korean War Service Medal. He was also a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College, a Senior Army Aviator, and has served on the Army General Staff.

After retirement from the Army, LTC Dukes was a teacher and administrator in the Washington County School System. He was preceded in death by: his wife, Janis Hale Dukes; one daughter, Amanda Dukes; and a grandson, David Ashton York. Survivors include his daughter, Dana York, and his granddaughter, Amanda York. The family has requested that memorials be made to the Children's Ministry of Central Baptist Church, 300 N. Roan St., Johnson City, TN 37601 or WUOT Public Radio, 209 Communications Bldg., Knoxville, TN 37996-0322 which he helped found when he was a student at the University of Tennessee.

TAPS

GALLOWAY, Michael J. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 670501 & 67-23, he flew in Vietnam with D Troop, _ Cav (1968-69) and F Battery, 79th ARA (1971-72) under the Centaur and Blue Max callsigns.

Michael (Mike) J. Galloway of Surprise Arizona passed away on Monday, December 9, 2013 after finally succumbing to a long battle with cancer. No further details were available from his family.

Mike was widely known to be one of the best Cobra Pilots in the United States Army.

GARNER, James Andrew Graduated flight training with Flight Class 55P, he flew in Vietnam with C/229 AVN 1 CAV in 1965-66.

James "Andy" Garner, CW3 (USA, Ret.) died January 30, 2014 of congestive heart failure. Andy was born in Jacksboro, TX, he graduated from Jacksboro high school in 1947, earning a bachelor's degree in general education from University of Nebraska in 1965.

HARRIS, Richard William III Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-13, flew in Vietnam with the 116th AHC (1967-68) and A/228th ASHB, 1st CD (1971-72) under the Stinger 91 callsign

Richard William Harris III, age 67, of Dacula, GA passed away Thursday, December 12, 2013. He was born November 7, 1946, in Palatka, FL and graduated from Clay High School in Green Cove Springs, FL in 1964. He also graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 1977, with a degree in Professional Aeronautics.

Richard retired from the US Army in 1987, as a Major after twenty-one years of distinguished service, including two tours in Viet Nam as a helicopter pilot with the Stinger 91 Unit and also the Wildcat Unit. At the time of retirement, he was serving in the Unified Command at MacDill AFB, under the command of General Schwarzkopf. Upon retirement from the military, he pursued a second career with Ricoh Electronics, Lawrenceville, GA.

He was an avid golfer and a member of the Senior Golf Association of Atlanta. Fishing was another passion, providing him many hours of enjoyment with family and friends. He was also a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association and an ardent supporter of Wounded Warrior Project.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Juan Saye Harris, Dacula, GA; two sons, one sister, several sister and brothers-in-law as well as numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. Donations may be made to Wounded Warrior Project, www.woundedwarrior.org.

HENRY, David C. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 62-A, flew in Vietnam with the 38th ARRS DET 5 (1965-66) under the Jolly Green callsign.

David C. Henry, Major (USAF, Ret.), was born in Abington, PA and died on Friday, December 13, 2013 of a massive heart attack.

He graduated from Abington High School in June, 1955 and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force November the same year. David's Air Force career took off when he was accepted into Officer Candidate School; he graduated in June, 1960 as a 2nd lieutenant. Pilot training followed and he won his silver wings in August, 1961. Education was important to Dave and he continued his studies, earning a BA in business in 1973. David distinguished himself during the Vietnam War as a member of the first Air Force long range helicopter combat rescue unit, the Jolly Green Giants. His decorations as a Jolly Green include the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross (3 awards), the Air Medal (8 awards), and the AF Commendation Medal. He was also awarded the National Defense Service Medal with four battle stars, the Vietnam Service Medal (US), the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm (South Vietnamese), the Vietnam Service Medal (South Vietnamese) and the AF Presidential Unit Citation (the highest AF unit award). A daring flood rescue earned David the Airman's Medal for Heroism not involving an armed enemy. He later received a second award of the Commendation Medal; a second award of the AF Presidential Unit Citation; the AF Outstanding Unit Award (2 awards), the Good Conduct Medal; and the Small Arms Marksmanship Ribbon. After crew duty as a B-52 Aircraft Commander and various staff assignments, David retired after twenty-one years of service in July 1976.

Following retirement from the AF David began his second career as a pilot for Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. (PHI). After completing 18,000 accident free military, commercial and private flying hours, he hung up his headset on his 56th birthday! He continued flying for pleasure following retirement. In retirement his greatest pleasure was his loving wife Eulalie "Lee" Henry until her untimely death in October, 2007. In January, 2011 David met the lovely Eleanor Hubbard, they married in August the same year. They were a joyful loving couple sharing the last 3 years traveling and celebrating life together.

David is survived by his wife Eleanor Hubbard Henry; one brother, one sister and special friends Lisa and Leon Ferguson. David's birth family was small but his "chosen family" was large and diverse; he loved each one with devotion, wit and humor. Always the great brother, "uncle", and gracious host - whether the event was planned or more often, spontaneous. He possessed a rare gift that formed bonds and strong brotherhoods that spanned decades, most remember him as their best friend. David will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery (date to be determined). The family requests that donations be made in Dave's name to your local SPCA or SpayNation.



LAMAR, Richard Eugene Graduated flight training with Flight Class 55-L

Mr. Richard Eugene Lamar, 81, passed away at his home on December 3, 2013, after a valiant struggle with Parkinson's disease.

Born in El Paso, Texas, CW4 Lamar retired from the Army in 1974 with over 25 years of service. He was a rotary wing pilot with two combat tours in Korea and two in Vietnam.



After retiring from the Army, his professional career focused on government contracting services. He was President/Owner of Greystone Consultants, Vice President of SIMCO, Inc. and Executive Vice President of Hawthorne Services. In his later years, he served as Mayor of Blackville, Executive Director of the Barnwell County Chamber of Commerce and Director of the Woodside Plantation Property Owner's Association. He volunteered over 5000 hours at the VA Hospital in Augusta and the Aiken VA Outpatient Clinic. He was a kind, loving man and an eternal optimist. He loved playing tennis and laughed that all the lessons never helped him get any better.

He is survived by his wife, Edeltraud "Edie" Lamar; one daughter, one son, three grandchildren and one great grandchild, Mr. Lamar was predeceased by his son, Ronald Lamar. Memorial contributions may be made to Aiken's First Baptist Church, 120 Chesterfield Street, NE, Aiken, SC 29801.

LANGSTON, Gary E. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 56-10, flew in Vietnam with the 170th AHC (1965-66) under the Bikini Red callsign

Gary E. Langston, LTC (USA, Ret.) passed away December 16, 2013 in Arvada, Colorado. He was born in Westboro, Missouri and grew up in Hamburg, Iowa. Gary was a graduate of Hamburg High School in Hamburg, Iowa. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a Master's Degree from the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

LTC Langston was a decorated aviator who flew both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, including Hueys, during two tours in the Vietnam War. He served in the US Army for 22 years and then taught U.S. Government and Social Studies at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, SC, for 20 years before retiring.

He was proud to have coached Little League baseball teams in McLean, VA, and Pony League teams in Columbia, SC. During retirement, he served for over 10 years as a volunteer at the Richland County Public Library and was a huge fan of The University of South Carolina Baseball Team. He is survived by two sons, one granddaughter, three grandsons, one and his wife's sister. His wife of 55 years, Kathleen (Grah), passed away in 2012. Interment will occur at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. The family requests memorials to the Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org.

TAPS

LOVETT, Michael L. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-43, flew in Vietnam with D Troop, 1/10th CAV (1970-71) under the Shamrock 3A callsign



Michael Lovett was a brilliant, kind, loving and brave man. He lived a rich and varied life, anchored by his love of family and a strong faith. Mike faced many challenges in his life but he viewed them as opportunities to learn and grow, and his curious mind and strong personal values kept him constantly moving forward. Mike began his career in the Army in Viet Nam and went on to command aviation units in Central America, Europe and the U.S. He served as liaison to the House Armed Services Committee and retired as a decorated Lt. Colonel. Mike then made a successful transition from the Armed Forces to a career in financial services as a senior advisor at Merrill Lynch. He completed several degrees and professional designations including Masters Degrees in Business Management from Central Michigan University and Systems Management from the University of Southern California. He was a former Chairman and Commissioner of the Palm Springs International Airport Commission and a Trustee of the University of California Riverside Foundation. Mike adored his family and they adored him. As they mourn his loss they gain comfort from each other and from the legacy of the full and meaningful life he lived.

He is survived by his wife Juanice, his three children, his mother and eight grandchildren. Mike was a long time member and former Cobra driver as a 1st Lt with the 1st Air Cav in 1971, Sent to us by Thompson – a friend of the family.,

MARSOLAIS, Harold Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-2, flew in Vietnam with the 173rd ABN BDE (1965-66) and the 11th CAB (1969-70) under the Red Dog 3A callsign

Harold "Hal" Marsolais, 71, of St. Augustine, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family from complications of Parkinson's disease on Jan. 2, 2014. Hal was born in 1942 in Troy, N.Y., and grew up in Sheffield Lake, Ohio. He spent his adult life serving his country in the U.S. Army and married the love of his life, Susan Lemieux, at Ft. Bragg, N.C., in 1964. He retired to St. Augustine, Fla.

Hal graduated from Brookside High School in 1959 in Sheffield Lake, Ohio. In 1973, he graduated Cum Laude from the University of Southern Mississippi with a degree in business. He holds a master's degree in management and is an honor graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He was an author and lecturer, and he holds numerous academic and community awards including selection for Omicron Delta Kappa, the national honorary leadership fraternity.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Susan Marsolais, and his cherished dog, Tillie. Also surviving

him are one son, two daughters, two beloved granddaughters, three brothers, his sisters-in-law and several nieces and nephews.

Hal served in the military for 22 years. He was a paratrooper, a helicopter pilot and a highly decorated Vietnam veteran. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal for Valor, three Bronze Stars, three Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Awards, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and numerous other decorations. His foreign awards include the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry and the Vietnam Medal of Honor. After retiring from the military, he had a 20-year career in association management, serving as managing director of several regional and national associations.

Interment with full military honors will be held at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C., on a beautiful spring day.

McCormick, Dale Graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-48, flew in Vietnam with the 92nd AHC (1970-71) under the Stallion 24 callsign

Dale McCormick died on January 25, 2014 at 11:02am, God called one of his own home. May he forever soar with the eagles and keep us safe from above.

Dale M. McCormick was a loving husband, father and friend. Although we teased him often of being like Archie Bunker, he cared deeply for his family and friends and truly had a great sense of humor. Dale will be missed by many. He learned to fly helicopters in the Army and loved being a helicopter pilot. He is a decorated Vietnam Veteran. His flying career included Search and Rescue, KREM 2 News Pilot, Forest Fire support and extinguishing Christmas tree harvest and crop dusting. Not to mention other odd jobs of a pilot. Dale loved animals, mostly his two dogs Paco and Simon. He loved going to the Spokane Indians games with family and friends and tolerated camping and fishing. Rest In Peace Dale!

NILES, Malcolm Bruce Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-4, flew in Vietnam with the 280th AHC (1968-69), the 214th CAB (1969), the 165th CAG (1971) and the 120th AHC (1971-72) under the Greyhound 26, Cougar and Dean callsigns.

Malcolm Bruce Niles, CPT (USA, Ret.) died Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2013, at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, following a long illness. He was a 1961 graduate of Bennington Catholic High School.

A Vietnam War veteran, Capt. Niles retired from the U.S. Army in 1983 after serving as an officer and an enlisted man. He attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Field Artillery Officer Candidate School, Field Artillery Officer Advanced School and served as a combat helicopter pilot for 12 years. His military awards included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star, Air Medal with Valor and 27 Oak Leaf Clusters and the Vietnam

Cross of Gallantry.

Following his military career, he was employed for the next 20 years by the U.S. Postal Service, retiring from the North Bennington Post Office. He served as past chairman of the parish council and youth ministry leader for St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. He was also a member of Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's Association, Distinguished Flying Cross Society, VFW Post 1332 in Bennington, American Legion Post 13, NorShaf Lions Club and Shaftsbury Veterans Committee. Capt. Niles was an avid outdoorsman.

Survivors include his wife, Nancy (Fierro) Niles of Bennington, five children, eight grandchildren; two brothers and many nieces, nephews and cousins. A private burial will be at a later date in Arlington (Va.) National Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Cardiac Rehab, in care of Mahar & Son Funeral Home, 628 Main St., Bennington, VT 05201.

OTT, Robert F. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 3-57, flew in Vietnam with HMM-263 (1965), HNN-161 (1966), VMO-3 (1968-69) and VMO-3 (1970)

ROBERT OTT LTC (USMC, Ret.) U.S. Marine Corps, of Henderson, passed away Dec. 25, 2013. Bob was born April 19, 1937, in Cincinnati, and attended Archbishop Elder High School. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Cincinnati at age 19. He originally joined the U.S. Navy to become a naval aviator, but while attending flight school transferred into the U.S. Marine Corps to become a helicopter pilot. He graduated as a second lieutenant in 1958, not yet 21 years old. He served 26 years in the U.S. Marine Corps as a naval aviator and naval intelligence officer. A graduate of the Naval War College, he also earned two masters degrees from the University of Maryland. Bob amassed over 4000 flight-hours in the H-34, CH-46, A-4 and F-4 aircraft. He earned the Bronze Star with Valor, 10 Air medals along with many other distinguished awards.

As a young lieutenant, he was part of the task force that was on the one-hour alert to invade Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He then served three tours in Vietnam before heading to Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington, D.C. After the U.S. Marine Corps, he continued to serve, but this time as the senior Marine instructor for the Basic High School Marine JROTC program. Along with a great team, he was able to help build a foundation for the program to grow and guided it to multiple national championships. More than a teacher, Bob mentored many students, taught life lessons and, to many, was a second father. He served his community while on the Henderson Parks and Recreation board for many years as Henderson grew through the 1980's and '90's. He also served on the American Cancer Society Board of Southern Nevada for several years. Bob was actively involved with his parish at Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church, and

TAPS

served as a grand knight of the Knights of Columbus.

LTC Ott was survived by his loving wife, of 49 years, Patricia; two sons, one daughter-in-law and four grandchildren. Bob is also survived by one brother and two sisters. The family has requested donations be made to the American Cancer Society of Southern Nevada in his memory.

PUGH, Walter J. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-5 & 67-7, flew in Vietnam with C Troop, 1/9th Cav (1967-68) under the Cavalier 50 callsign.

Walter James "Jim" Pugh, 69, of Sylvania died Monday, January 27, 2014, at his home. He was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma and went to Oklahoma State University after high school but was called into action in Vietnam prior to graduating. He served proudly and honorably in the Army as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam - was part of the 1/9 Cavalry, 1967-68. He earned many honors in the military, including the Silver Star.

Jim flew helicopters as a civilian for many years, both in the oil and EMS industries, accumulating more than 10,000 accident free flight hours. His last EMS flight service was at St. Vincent Life Flight in Toledo. After being unable to fly due to medical reasons, he spent several years working for Brondes Ford in Toledo, and All American Coach in Sylvania, OH.

After retiring, Jim became active with Vietnam veterans groups and helped to present services on Memorial and Veteran's days both in Sylvania and in Cushing, OK. He also enjoyed working with the Cushing High School alumni association. Jim served proudly as a deacon and an elder at Sylvania First Christian church for many years. Jim was part of the all Vietnam Veterans flight to Washington, DC sponsored by Honor Flight of Northwest Ohio in October, 2012. He had never been to see the "wall", and this trip was a wonderful blessing for him.

Surviving is his wife of 24 years, Dayle, two daughters, two stepchildren, four grandsons and was looking forward to a 5th grandson due this May. The family requests memorial donations to First Christian Church of Sylvania or to Honor Flight of Northwest Ohio in lieu of flowers.

SHERMER, Michael, R. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 70-7 & 70-9, he flew in Vietnam with the Charlie Troop 2/17th Cav, 101 Abn Div (1970-71) under the Condor 28 callsign.

Michael "Mike" R. Sherrer died suddenly on December 12, 2013 of heart failure at his home in Panama. His final resting place is in Santa Fe, Veraguas, Republic of Panama.

He joined the Army in 1969, graduated flight school the following year and arrived in Vietnam on 4 August 1970 where he was assigned to the Condors of Charlie Troop, 2/17th Cav. While with Charlie Troop, he was a large part of their efforts during Operation Lam Son 719 in Feb-Mar 1971,

he was also shot down in the Ashau Valley on July 4th, 1971. The awards he received during his one-year tour in Vietnam included The Soldier's Medal, the Purple Heart, the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Medal with 22 oak leaf clusters, the Vietnam Service Medal w/2 Bronze Service Stars and many others. In short, Mike was a true warrior.

After he left the active Army, he worked as an instructor pilot for the National Guard. In April of 1980, Mike and his wife also founded (the) Wings Aviation Store just outside the Daleville Gate to Fort Rucker. From there they supplied pilots worldwide with aviation supplies, gifts and apparel. In 1983, he went on to develop the Wings Professional Park, also in Daleville, AL.

Mike is survived by his wife, Anita, his mother, Agnes, his brother, Douglas, his sister-in-law, Gail, his nieces Tracy and Crystal and his nephew, Troy.

SHERROD, Dale E.

Dale E. Sherrod, LTC (USA, Ret.) passed away on January 12, 2012 after fighting a long, courageous battle with cancer and COPD.

He was born December 17, 1934 in Odessa, Texas and was predeceased by his brothers: George, Richard, David and Bobby; and sisters, Esther Lea, Mary and Johnnie. He is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Dian Bateman Sherrod; one daughter, two grandchildren and one brother.

Dale played football in Odessa High School and for Oklahoma University, and continued to enjoy it as a spectator sport all his life. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army after college and was an Army aviator during the Vietnam era. In 1983, he retired from the Army. When Dale was healthy, he enjoyed playing golf with his friends ~ he will be missed by all who knew him. Donations may be made to Friends of Hospice San Antonio, P. O. Box 40487, San Antonio, TX; First Presbyterian Church, 404 North Alamo Street, San Antonio, TX or a charity of your choice.

SELLON, Eugene L. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-9 & 68-11, flew in Vietnam with C Troop 3/17th CAV (1968-69), H Troop 16th CAV (1972-73) under the Charlie House 35 and White Robe 6 callsigns.

CW3 Eugene (Gene) L. Sellon 75, passed away on 16 November, 2013. Gene started flight school like all the rest of us at Ft. Wolters. Next came the second half at Hunter Army Airfield; upon completion he went straight to Cobra transition. Next came a seven month stint at Ft. Hood as part of two new Air Cav. troops that formed and then deployed to Nam; only to be sent South and infused to C troop 3/17 Cav. He distinguished himself as "Charlie Horse" Assassin 35. His first DFC was an impact award with the offer of a Direct Commission to Cpt. on the spot; he remained true to WOPA and took only the DFC. After his first tour he "got stuck" delivering helicopters all over the States (tough job). His second tour was with H/16th Cav.

Later he got caught up in the "RIF's" but stuck it out as an Air Traffic Controller. When he got his time in, he retired as CW3 Senior Aviator.

He died on 16 November 2013, at River Regions Hospital in Vicksburg MS. He left behind his wife Jacqueline (Jaqi) Sellon who he was married to for 16 years. Together they raised his two step children and his three daughters. He is also survived by two sisters, 5 grandchildren (#'s 6-7 are due in Jan and June).

Gene served 2 tours in Vietnam and was awarded several medals. The Bronze Star, Army Achievement, Vietnam Service Medal with 4 bronze stars, National Defense Metal, Vietnam campaign medal, Vietnam Cross Gallantry with Palm air metal with (V) 46 Oak Leaf Cluster, good conduct medal (2nd award), 2 Distinguished flying cross, Army Aviator badge, Senior Army Aviator Badge, Army Service Ribbon, Over Seas service ribbon, Meritorious service medal.

Gene lived his life to the fullest. He enjoyed the VHPA Reunions where he would refer his wife as his "Trophy wife". He loved to tell Jaqi about all the fun he had in Vietnam, along with the beer and B.S. with all of his brothers. He was a member of the Eagle Lake United Methodists Church in Vicksburg. Avid outdoors man enjoying fishing, woodworking and taking care of the yard.

Gene's last words to his wife before his death were "I love you" and then "Charlie horse 35 headed to base Mission Complete." Gene will surely be missed by his family and friends. He wanted to go out CAV style so please drink a beer in his honor then party.

Sent to us by Jaqi Sellon

TROTTER, Kenneth

Edward Graduated flight training with Flight Class 65-18, flew in Vietnam with the 498th Med Co (1966-67) and the 228th ASHB (1969-70) under the Dustoff 49 and the Longhorn callsigns.



Kenneth Edward Trotter LTC (USA, Ret.) peacefully passed away on September 21, 2013, in Houston, Texas, surrounded by his loving family. Ken was born on March 25, 1941 in Mexia, Texas, he grew up in Tehuacana, Texas and graduated from Mexia High School in May of 1959. He married his wife Sandra at the First Methodist Church of Tehuacana on July 17, 1959. They then attended Sam Houston State Teachers College in Huntsville, Texas and he graduated from there in January, 1963 with a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture, a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army, and a baby girl, Kimberly Anne.

The family moved around the country several times as Ken received training to become a helicopter pilot and his second daughter, Camille Arlene, was born. In March of 1966, Ken began his first tour of duty in Vietnam. He served as a pilot in the Army's Dust Off program, flying in air

TAPS

ambulance rescue operations into battle and helping to save countless lives. In December of 1968, Ken began his second tour of duty in Vietnam, again flying helicopters and moving soldiers and supplies for the Army.

Ken returned to the United States and served in several more positions and cities for the Army. During this time, his third daughter, Jennifer Rebecca, was born. His duties were as a high level Army officer and included leading a unit of Chinook helicopters in Schwaebisch Hall, Germany and serving as the Chief Aviation Officer at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.

For his service in the Army, Ken was the recipient of numerous commendations including the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Master Army Aviator Badge, the Senior Army Aviator Badge, the Army Aviator Badge, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Order of Military Merit.

After 20 years in the Army, Ken honorably retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He embarked on a second career by working at Texas Instruments and Raytheon Company. During this time, Ken decided to return to school in his spare time and become a lawyer. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Texas Wesleyan University and became a member of the Texas Bar in 1994.

Ken retired once more, in 2004, and moved to Tomball, Texas to be near his family. His fondest memories were of his time spent with his wife, his daughters, his sons-in-law, and his grandchildren. He was happiest traveling with them, enjoying holidays and vacations with them, and caring for all of them. He was a kind, generous and loving friend, husband, son, brother, father and grandfather. His warm, kind spirit and his positive attitude toward life will be remembered and cherished by all who knew them. He is survived by, his high school sweetheart and the love of his life, Sandra Arlene Romain Trotter, three daughters, five grandchildren, his sister and brother-in-law Judy and Maurice Fife; and his brother and sister-in law. The family requests that donations be made to be the Muscular Dystrophy Association, ALS Support and Research, P.O. Box 78960, Phoenix, AZ, 85062-8960.

WALKER, James Madison Graduated flight training with Flight Class 62-2W, flew in Vietnam with 8 TC CO (1962-63), the 11th ACR (63-65), the 1st BDE 1 CD (1967-68), the 1st ANVN VO (1971-72) and the 1AVN BDE (1973-74).

Colonel James Madison Walker COL (USA, Ret.) passed away on December 29, 2013, at the age of 77. Born in rural Lincoln County, Colonel "Big Jim" Walker rose to prominence as a highly decorated Army combat veteran, helicopter pilot, avid hunter, outdoorsman, and owner of the Quail Valley Hunt Club in Petersburg, Tennessee.

A 1959 Graduate of the University of Tennessee, Colonel Walker served on active duty in the United States Army from August 1959 until October 1981. He loved his Country and he loved the Army. He commanded soldiers at every level from platoon to brigade. He served as a combat helicopter pilot for three years during the Vietnam War and received many awards and decorations for heroism, gallantry, and high achievement in aerial combat operations against a hostile enemy. In addition to being a Master Army Aviator, "The Colonel" was also a tough as nails Army Airborne Ranger.

A lifelong hunter, Colonel Walker owned and operated the Quail Valley Hunt Club in Petersburg for over 25 years. He chose to open the hunting club just a few years after his retirement from the Army, and after a successful stint as an army aviation consultant. Big Jim shared his passion for bird hunting with thousands of hunters from every skill level. Hunters came from around the country to bird hunt at Quail Valley, but more importantly, they came just to spend time and make friends with the legendary "Big Jim" Walker.

"Big Jim" Walker lived large, loved life, and loved people. He was an American original and truly one of a kind. He had thousands of friends and friendships that he loved and cherished very much, but his proudest accomplishment was his family. He is survived by a sister and a brother; as well as his wife of over 58 years, Jane Gillum Walker. He also leaves behind three sons, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. The family requests donations be made to either the Sarah Cannon Fund, 310 25th Avenue North, Suite 103, Nashville, TN 37203, or the Army Aviation Association of America Scholarship Foundation, Inc., 593 Main Street, Monroe, CT 06468.

WASHER, Lloyd Nichols
None of Mr. Washer's flight class or Vietnam combat unit information was posted with the VHPA

Lloyd Nichols Washer, 73, died Thursday, December 5, 2013 after a valiant battle with cancer.

Born in Hackensack, NJ, he had been a Hampton resident since 1985. Lloyd served 27 years in the US Army including three tours to Vietnam, receiving the Legion of Merit and Meritorious Service Medals before retiring in 1988. He was a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and most recently enjoyed driving for Suttle Motor Corp in Newport News.

Lloyd is survived by his wife, Sally Washer; five children and nine grandchildren. Interment with full military honors will take place in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. The family requests donations be made to the American Cancer Society or National Museum of the United States Army.

WEBSTER, Geoffrey R. Graduated flight training with Flight Class 68-6, flew in Vietnam with the 68th AHC (1968-69) under the Mustang 6 and Top Tiger callsigns

Geoffrey "GR" Webster, a resident of Frostproof, Florida and Grasse, France, passed away at his home in Grasse, France, surrounded by his wife and children, after a brief but valiant battle with cancer.

He was a graduate of the Gunnery school in Washington, Connecticut, attended Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and received his MBA from the University of Chicago. Mr. Webster was a native Floridian and great-great grandson of the Governor of Florida during the civil war, John Milton. He was a Frostproof resident for nearly 15 years.

He was a retired executive, as well as an author, artist, renowned collector of antique aviation toys, and highly decorated Vietnam War pilot. He was an American patriot and military man through and through. He enlisted in the Army and was later commissioned from Officer Candidate School and went to the US Army flight school. As a U.S. Army pilot stationed in Vietnam, Capt. GR Webster commanded the Mustang Gun Ship Platoon of the 68th Assault Helicopter Company, flew about 950 hours of combat, and received 31 air medals, including two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal w/V. He later served as an aide de camp to a Major General attached to the US Embassy in Brazil.

After completing his military service in Vietnam, he began his career in the fragrance industry culminating in the post of CEO of Givaudan Fragrances, an international firm. In 2000, Webster was elected to the Fragrance Foundation's Hall of Fame. During his career, he lived in Illinois, New York, Connecticut, and Paris, France and retired to Frostproof, Florida and Grasse, France.

He also published The Miniature Aircraft Quarterly, a full-color magazine with an auxiliary club membership for toy airplane aficionados.

When he retired, at age 55, he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, honing his skills in painting, specializing in portraits. His portraits and other paintings are in some of the finest private collections and were treasured gifts to special friends. He also pursued his avid passion for collecting antique and vintage toy aircraft, writing a definitive text about this area of collecting as well as contributing to various publications.

Webster had been a lifetime collector of antique and vintage miniature toy airplanes and aviation models, and had amassed one of the most comprehensive collections of toy airplanes and aviation models ever assembled, containing numerous rarities made in Germany, France, Japan, Great Britain and the United States. GR Webster remained an active pilot most of his life and he could fly anything with wings or propellers. He flew his amphibious airplane all over the United States.

Mr. Webster is survived by his mother and stepfather, his wife Agnes Costa Webster, their three children, two sisters, one brother, and two step-sisters. The family suggests that donations be made to their favorite charity in GR Webster's memory.

TAPS

WORKING, Howard W. Graduated Flight Training with Flight Class 68-507 & 68-7

Howard W. Working CW4 (USA, Ret.) a resident of Sierra Vista for 31 years, passed away on Dec. 24, 2013 from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. He was born in Coon Rapids, Minn., and attended school in Coon Rapids, Anoka, Minn., and The University of Minnesota.



He joined the Army warrant officer program in 1967. Howard flew helicopters and fixed wing aircraft in Vietnam, Colorado, Alabama, North Carolina, Germany and Fort Huachuca. He received his master's degree in education at Fort Huachuca.

WOTKYNS, Anthony L. Graduated Flight Training with Flight Class 63-7W, flew in Vietnam with A/101, 114th AHC, A/502 & the 540th Trans Co starting in 1964 and continuing off and on through 1971,



Anthony Ludington (Tony) Wotkyns, Major (USA, Ret.) passed away on December 7, 2013 at this home in Corona de Tucson, AZ. Tony was born in Pasadena, CA on July 20, 1938. In his 23 years of service (USN & USA) Tony was the recipient of Two Purple Heart Medals, The Bronze Star Medal, The Legion of Merit Medal, The Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, The Air Medal with Forty-Eight Oak Leaf Cluster, The DFC Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, to name a few.

Several companies he served with were Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion, (pilot, UH-1B helicopter), 114th Airmobile Company, Company A, 502d Aviation Battalion and 540th Transportation Company. Anthony was in Vietnam during 1964- 1971.

Major Wotkyns was preceded in death by his parents and three brothers, he is survived by one brother Grosvenor, two sisters and numerous nieces and nephews.

WRIGHT, John MacNair Jr.



Lieutenant General John MacNair Wright, Jr., (USA, RET.) died 27 Jan 2014 at Riverside, CA. He married Helene Tribit on 28 Jun 1940 at Beverly Hills, CA. John grew up in Hollywood, CA, and was active with the Boy Scouts of America, reaching the rank of Eagle Scout. He graduated from Fairfax High School and obtained an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, in the Class of 1940. While at West Point, he starred in varsity soccer, becoming an All-American.

Soon after graduation, he was commissioned in the Coast Artillery Corps and sent for duty in the Philip-

pines, assigned to the 91st Coast Artillery, Philippine Scouts. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on 7 Dec 1941, the Philippines were invaded by the Japanese. The American forces withdrew to the Bataan Peninsula and then to the island of Corregidor, where they were besieged by the Japanese. The American forces, then under the command of Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainright, were forced to surrender on May 6, 1942. Prior to doing so, however, with most of the American artillery already destroyed during the final assault on Corregidor, John MacNair Wright, Jr. was given a roving 155mm gun and given authority to position it anywhere he had effective fire on the Japanese at Bataan. He fired the last artillery salvo at the Japanese before being forced to surrender. Following the surrender, he was taken prisoner. He remained a prisoner of war for the duration of World War II, surviving disease and incredible deprivation. He was ultimately liberated at a POW camp in Korea in September 1945, six weeks after the war ended. For his actions at Corregidor and leadership afterward, he was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart.

Following a year of hospitalization and recovery, he transferred out of artillery and into the infantry and became parachute qualified. In 1948, he was posted as the Military Attaché to the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay. Upon his return to the U.S., he attended The Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA, and then commanded the 3rd Battalion, 508th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. As the Korean War broke out in 1950, he served as Executive Officer for the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, and Division G-1 and G-4, 7th Infantry Division.

In 1961, after an assignment on the Department of the Army Staff, Colonel Wright attended the National War College, following which he served in Germany as Chief of Staff for the 8th Infantry Division, followed by assignments as G-3 for the VII Corps and then G-3 for the Seventh Army. In 1964, he was promoted to Brigadier General and transferred to Fort Benning as Assistant Division Commander of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test), serving under Major General Harry Kinnard as the Division Commander. It was the purpose of this unit to test, evaluate and develop what would become the airmobile doctrine first used by the U.S. Army in Vietnam. Brigadier General Wright was determined to become a helicopter pilot himself. With a senior CWO4 as his instructor, he took the same course of instruction as pilots going through the U.S. Army Flight School at Ft. Rucker, AL. When he was ready for his final flight checks, he returned to Fort Rucker for those checks. He was then designated a U.S. Army Aviator. In 1965, the division was reformed as the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and deployed to Vietnam.

Following his tour in Vietnam, he was promoted to Major General and was assigned to command The Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA. After this tour, he was given the assignment in 1969 as the CG of the 101st Airborne Division, the "Screaming Eagles", during combat operations in Vietnam. For his leadership, courage and professionalism, he was awarded his

second Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and 47 Air Medals.

Following his second tour in Vietnam, he was promoted to Lieutenant General and transferred to the Pentagon in Washington, DC, to serve as Comptroller of the Army, a post he held until his retirement from the Army in 1972. Upon his retirement, he was awarded his third Distinguished Service Medal. For his contributions to Army aviation and the development of the airmobile concept of helicopter combat operations, he was inducted into the U.S. Army Aviation Hall of Fame in 1986.

Upon his retirement from the Army, he served successively as the National Director of Research and Development, National Director of Programs and National Director of Exploring for the Boy Scouts of America, initially in Princeton, NJ, and later in Dallas, TX. Lieutenant General Wright was also awarded the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award in 1971, the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge, and in 2007 was presented the Distinguished Graduate Award by the U.S. Military Academy Association of Graduates.

Notice of the passing of the following fifteen Vietnam 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 their TAPS information to 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).

GREEN, Dan Max Graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-15 & 66-17, flew in Vietnam with B/229th AVN, 1 CAV (1966-67) under the Preacher 3 callsign.

Dan Max Green was born October 25, 1942 in Nueces County, Texas and passed from this life on November 16, 2013. Dan grew up living in Corpus Christi and San Antonio, Texas and graduated from East Central High School. He served four years in the Marine Corps and then served nine years in the Army. As an Army Warrant Officer, Dan flew helicopters in Vietnam where he received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He trained many helicopter pilots at Ft. Wolters where he received his commission as Captain. Upon leaving the military he moved to Beaumont, Texas and worked for a local newspaper as a reporter. He later moved to North Little Rock, Arkansas where he worked flying helicopters and small aircraft monitoring power lines and was an airport manager. After spending a short time in New Orleans and Oklahoma City, Dan moved to Kearney, Nebraska where he flew an EMS helicopter (Sikorsky S-76) for several years until two heart attacks grounded him and he moved

TAPS

back to Texas where he found a home in San Antonio. He worked for a time as a security guard for the Bexar County Detention Center. In 1996 Dan joined Woodlake Baptist Church where he played the guitar for worship services and sang in the choir. In 2002 he began working for Woodlake Baptist Church first as Church Secretary and for the last six months as Minister of Hispanic Ministries. Dan was licensed to the ministry on July 17, 2013.

Throughout his life Dan wrote articles for several magazines including General Aviation News and Air Progress where he was the editor. At one time he wrote for the Jewish Community News. He also wrote several manuals and books including "In The Footsteps Of Angels" (about EMS flying and life in general), "The Great American Air Circus" (a bit of biography about his flying career and the people he learned from), "The Red Tavern" (our own story with Bravo Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, First Air Cavalry Division V.N.) and many others. He learned Spanish and loved to paint. (All three of the

books mentioned are available online). Dan was accomplished at a great many things and lived by the saying, "If it was easy, everyone would do it."

He was preceded in death by his sister Jimmie Lynn and father Jack. He is survived by his wife Rachel, son Bobby, brothers, William and Joe and sisters, Jeannie Valle and Cynthia Richards, an aunt, Ruth Routh along with many nieces, nephew and cousins. His services were well attended; all his surviving siblings and his son were there. Many of the church congregation attended, including many Hispanic members. (Dan learned Spanish specifically to bring the Spanish speaking folks in to the church)

Johnny Hubbs (the 229th "point of contact") and his wife were there. Sharon spotted a fellow with a Master Army Aviator tie tack and we spoke to him. Frank "Pappy" Badder, CW-4 (Ret.) enlisted after V.N. and knew Dan only as a civilian pilot. Dan used his own experience getting his medical certificate restored to help Frank get his returned.

With no prior coordination, I literally bumped into Dan in 1973 at the Dallas airport. He was in uniform with Captain's bars. He said he had taken a direct commission ("it'll be good for your career" they said!) but was caught in the "reduction in force" and it ended his effort to make the Army a career. Even though he and I were instructing at Ft. Wolters at the same time ('68-'69), I had not seen him since the "Hail and Fairwell" party in An Khe for Jim Bracewell, Dan and I at the end of Oct. '67.

While living in Beaumont, he was befriended by Gordon Baxter whose last page "Bax Seat" commentary was a mainstay of "Flying" magazine for years. Dan began "ghost-writing" the column with Baxter.

One day before his last emergency hospitalization, Dan took Rachel flying in their Piper Cub.

*Submitted by Member Joe Kane,
Preacher 10, B/229th*

The night Dan Greene earned the Distinguished Flying Cross

By Rick Beaver

My tour started in March 1967. I flew for Bravo, 229th AHB 1st Cav, 1 of 6 Slick companies in the 229th. My earliest flights in country were with Dan Greene during a quiet time while the unit was moving from An Khe to LZ English in the Bong Son valley. I had just returned from my Mother's funeral which occurred my 3rd week in country and Dan was a new Contact Instructor Pilot in the unit. Dan was a really great person and a great IP. He taught me a lot and was checking me out to see if I was OK after the funeral.

I was really motivated to be the best pilot possible because I thought I'd live longer that way. We had all D-models back then and to see what Dan could do with a heavy load on takeoff was impressive. Dan made sure I got to fly some heavy loads during simulated extraction takeoffs out of tight Landing Zones, (LZ), over near trees while we were supporting the unit move to English. A week of hauling stuff from An Khe to LZ English and back, map reading, SOI use, and radio practices the Cav used. He thought I was ready to haul Log, (supplies), for combat units; all green LZ work carrying PACs, (troops), food, mail, ammo, water, etc.

I complained to my new platoon leader because I was being held out of the rotation for combat missions and so there must have been some conversations between Dan and the CO as I was told I would soon go into the rotation. About a day later, Dan and I took a mission to Quy Nhon, Dan's favorite town. We flew log support for units west and north of Quy Nhon all day, flying



and standing by. About 1830 we were headed back to English and got a call for an emergency support mission for a platoon pinned down, casualties, need ammo, etc. Dan had explained this kind of mission during our time together and he looked at me for a sign, I gave him a thumbs up and he took the mission.

We flew into POL at English, took on 600 lbs of fuel, got clearance and high hovered to the Unit supply pad somewhere on English and loaded ammo, a couple replacement troops, and took off. As we started into the An Loa Valley we made radio contact with the gun ship on VHF and then the platoon radio operator on FM. The unit was holding a small clump of trees with 30 meters open space to more trees and cover and every other direction was open paddies with more trees 200 meters away. All the tree clusters were full of Charlie. The unit was pinned and we had to land next to their little clump where the ground was dry and level but no cover. Dan took the 1st run into the LZ after letting the Tomcats, (Delta 229th gunships) know the plan and what he would like. He coordinated with the Black

hat on the ground and told him we wanted to be no more than 6 seconds on the ground pushing the ammo out the left and receive only wounded on the right. My job was switching his selector from one radio to the other. As we got to short final on a fast approach, (we didn't have trees to get down over just straight in and straight out), Tomcats where maintaining daisy chained suppression on the sides Charlie held. I really saw everything because my eyes must have been big as dishes. The light from M 79s in close, mortar rounds and Quad M-60 gunship fire hitting 200 meters away was intense. This was the first time I saw green tracers and they were all coming at us. The noise was surreal. The black hat blinked a red lens flashlight and we had no lights at all. Dan said we would not need a landing light and preferred I not turn it on. We could make out the ground for landing. On very short final our left door gunner started adding suppression and the right gunner was ready to push ammo out the left. Dan did a perfect approach to the ground faster than I had seen before, the 2 Pac's helped push ammo boxes out the left and helped load the wounded on the floor, no stretchers, and jumped out as Dan pulled pitch. As soon as Dan got tree top high he broke right over the trees and let the aircraft dip down until we were just brushing a few tree top branches. As we turned I heard a couple "thunk" sounds coming from the rear and then heard the door gunner call out we took rounds in the tail boom.

Dan was giving gunships updates on his course and status and I was talking with the

TAPS

unit "6", (don't remember the call sign), He had 2 new wounded and needed another ammo run. Once Dan cleared the area and got some altitude he asked me if I could take the controls. I was glad to as I stopped shaking once I had hands on a cyclic and collective. Dan checked with the Crew Chief who was inspecting the ship, checked my flying and heading, and let the Tomcats know that we would be right back and do it again. Short flight to English and I was focusing on flying. Dan told me to call the unit supply pad with our ETA and what we wanted for a load since we could land heavy. He was calling for a straight approach into the Hospital pad at English with info on the wounded. He vectored me until I was lined up, took the controls and told me to look at where I was and where we were going. I don't remember the landing or anything until we were back in the air headed for the LZ loaded with ammo, water, and some M-79s. The plan was I was going to take the next lift in. We were getting some artillery prep on Charlie's tree line and more gunships. I would just talk to the Black Hat and Dan would coordinate everything else. For some reason I thought this would be easier with the extra support and we would take less fire.

Dan vectored me back to the LZ and lined me up. More radio chatter than I could follow and I just focused on the briefing from the Black Hat. I told him I knew where to park and he could stay down, same drill, ammo out the left, wounded in the right, out in seconds. I didn't have any idea how long we were on the ground, seemed like one of those real long eternities. My voice started to crack a little on

short final as there was a lot more smoke, noise and bigger explosions all around. I didn't come in as fast as Dan did but pushed it as much as I thought I could. I went to ground with a bauble and bump which later added to my admiration of how Dan set it down so fast yet smooth. This time the crew chief was again firing and the right door gunner was pushing ammo and helping load wounded, yelled to me we were up and as I pulled pitch Dan was light on the controls and pointing out the mortar rounds that were walking across the LZ toward us to the Tomcats who were looking for the tubes. The take off and turn was smooth. I stayed low but didn't touch any trees on the way out. Dan knew I didn't realize how close the mortars were getting when we left in the nick of time, he shared that later. I had actually seen them but was not processing the information to its conclusion. I was just taken by the concussion I could feel in my chest from the explosions and the total noise was amped up to some unbelievable level.

As Dan vectored me out and toward English he had to shout because our ears were ringing and there were screams of pain from behind us. The Crew Chief was trying to get the wounded guys comfortable on the hard floor and I never looked in the back. On the way back to English we got instructions to do one more resupply. This time at the hospital pad I watched the Crew Chief and Door Gunner pour buckets of water over the cargo deck to wash out the blood and stuff. It was the "stuff" that I thought was about to make me loose it so I looked straight out the windshield and got my stomach under control. I don't remember thinking about it then but I am amazed my

pants were not wet during this night. We did a third resupply and it went much quieter, less green tracers, no mortar, but still went in and out fast. On the 3rd run I think he let me do that one too because I seemed less scared flying.

The next day at English the XO called me in after talking to the crew chief. He told me the CO of the grunt platoon let him know the guys we brought back lived and the unit was not overrun and made it through the night because we made 3 runs. He wanted the pilot awarded for the action. The XO said I was the only one on the scene and I should write up the facts of what happened, no adjectives, no story, just facts in chronological order.

42 years later I went to San Antonio to visit Dan Greene. We had played guitars together in Vietnam, wrote songs and made music whenever we could. He showed me his Distinguished Flying Cross award that he had received for the night he and I did my first combat mission. I congratulated him and told him how I was instructed to write just the facts and I did. I flew with some great IPs in our unit, Charlie Foster comes to mind but I will always be grateful to Dan Greene for making me a better pilot and being the calm effective leader that he was. He got to fly most of the years of the rest of his life including taking his wife Rachel up in their Piper Cub the day before he passed. I think he was blessed to have a life flying on his own terms. He will be missed dearly by many.

Rick Beaver
B/229th, 1st Cav Div. Mar 67 – Feb 68

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).

BELL, Lawrence A. LTC (USA, Ret.) passed away on Dec. 9, 2013

BOEHM, Charles Edward Boehm, USAF, passed away on 5 Dec 2013

COLEY, Alvin Lester, USMC, passed away on 14 Dec 2013

DANIELS, Bobby Leon, Major (USMC, Ret.), passed away on 15 Jan 2014

DOWLESS, John A. passed away on 21 Dec 2013, graduated flight training with Flight Class 54-D FW.

GILL, Norman R. "Bud", passed away on 15 Jan 2014

HAGEE, Robert D. LTC (USA, Ret.) Hagee. Passed away on 12 Dec 2012, flew in Vietnam with the 68th AHC (1967-68) and the 190th AHC (1968)

JESSUP, Morris Michael "Mike", LTC (USA, Ret.) Passed away on 1 Jan, 2014, flew in Vietnam with the 178th ASHC (1968-69) under the Boxcar callsign.

LEACH, George C., LTC (UA Ret.) passed away on 27 Jan 27, 2014, graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-2.

PERRYMAN, James Marvin Jr., COL (USMC Ret.), passed away 31 Dec 2013, flew in Vietnam with VMO-6 (1965-66)

SNIDER, James Freeman, passed away on 8 Dec 2013, graduated flight training with Flight Class 67-17 & 67-19

TEFFEAY, Arthur Robert, passed away on 08 Jan 2014, graduated flight training with Flight Class 69-20.

THRASHER, Billy John, passed away on 16 Jan, 2014

WHITE, Randolph (Randy) Clifford Sr., passed away on 13 Jan 2014

WILLIAMS, William G. II, passed away on 18 Dec 2013, graduated flight training with Flight Class 66-3, flew in Vietnam with C Battery, 2/20th ARA, 1CD (1966-67)

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ARIZONA CHAPTER
Bill Sorenson, President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH
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CHAPTER, it's now:
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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 Laison - 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

ARIZONA CHAPTER

The Arizona Chapter had a meeting in Mesa, AZ on December 7th. We had about twenty plus people attend. We started out at the Commemorative Air Force Museum for a tour and then continued to the Golden Corral for lunch. The gracious people at the Commemorative Air Force Museum organized a great tour of the facility. The Golden Corral also treated us equally well. All of our members enjoyed the day.

Robert Simon is planning a coffee clutch down in Sierra Vista. This will provide the Fort Huachuca area members the opportunity to gather for coffee and storytelling. Hopefully we can do the same at another of our members locations.

We will try to schedule a cookout (before it becomes too hot) for the next meeting in either March or April. Call or E-mail me for details.

Bill Sorenson, President

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

The June chapter meeting will be held at the National Vietnam War Museum site just outside Mineral Wells, Texas, on Saturday, June 7th, 2014. The main event is the ceremony to update the Memorial Wall, which begin at 10:00 hours. The chapter meeting will be held immediately after the ceremony. Meals for members will be catered at a cost of \$20 per person. Everyone is invited to attend the ceremony. Since it is Texas in June, dress accordingly. Bring the adult beverage(s) of your choice should you wish (BYOB).

Details will also be available later on the museum site at <http://www.nationalvwnarmuseum.org/news.htm>

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER NEWS

By the time this update is printed, the Ohio River LZ Chapter would have met during the third week of February. This reunion/gathering was in preparation for the National Reunion in Louisville this July. Our chapter is excited to welcome the National VHPA Reunion to Louisville for the first time EVER and look forward to assisting the National VHPA in making the Louisville reunion memorable and fun.

Our group will assist with the Golf Tournament, bus loading, registration T-shirts and any other activities required by the National organization.

In addition, the Ohio River Chapter will conduct a spectacular motorcycle ride on the back roads of Kentucky on Thursday, July 3rd, 2014. Departure from the Galt House is planned at 10:30. The route will take the group up a scenic by-way to the Bedford, KY area. From there the group will go to New Castle, KY for a lunch catered by the "Smoke Doctors." After lunch, if anyone in the group desires to return directly to Louisville, they can split from the group and take a very easy route back to the Galt House from New Castle. From the New Castle lunch stop, the remaining group will ride to Frankfort, KY to the Vietnam Memorial. The Kentucky Vietnam Memorial is a unique memorial as it is set up as a giant sundial that only casts a shadow thru a certain portion of the name of the veteran on the Day of his death. All MIA names are placed so a shadow never reaches that area.

After a visit at the memorial, the ride returns to Louisville in time to attend the reenactment on the Great Lawn in Louisville. Please go to the www.ohrvlvz.org website for additional information and lunch reservations. It will be necessary to communicate with the Ohio River Chapter about the ride and lunch reservations and payment. This motorcycle ride is NOT sponsored by the National VHPA in any way.

It is important to remember that Louisville has so much more to offer than what could ever be scheduled during a reunion. There are activities from underground tours and underground zip-lines in the 17 miles of caverns under Louisville to Glass Works, Louisville Pottery and so many other possibilities too numerous to mention here.

If you wish to volunteer for a support function during the reunion, please contact us via our web site. We plan to "spread the wealth" amongst many volunteers so we all can participate in making this a success and also enjoy the Louisville reunion activities..... See you in July !!!!!

Bob Hamilton, President

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter met on 15 January 2014 at the Historic Fort Snelling Officers Club. We had eleven members present for a very nice lunch and social/business meeting. New Officers were elected for the coming term: President – Bert Leach, Vice President – Don Abrams, Treasurer – Jim Bankston, Secretary, – Russ Jowers and Immediate Past President – Ray Wilson. The Chapter has established a Speakers Bureau. We hope to educate interested organizations such as schools, towns, Rotary and Lions Clubs concerning the lives of Helicopter Pilots who flew in Vietnam. The Chapter is continuing to organize and establish its base membership. The next meeting will be also at the Officers Club on 21 March 2014. Anyone interested in joining our Chapter should contact our new President, Bert Leach, at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Anyone interested in attending our next meeting should RSVP to Russ Jowers at [REDACTED]

Bert Leach, President Submitted by Russ Jowers

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (SoCal) Chapter

The SoCal Chapter has had a fundraiser going since November for a new Fisher House at the Long Beach VA. As I write this our members have donated \$530, our chapter fund is donating \$1000, and the VA is matching our contribution for a total of \$3060.00 which all will be donated to the Fisher House in Long Beach in mid February. This facility will be built on the VA property and have 21 units of living quarters for family members to stay while visiting injured and sick veterans. Think of it as a Ronald McDonalds House for Veterans.

In late February the SoCal Chapter members will be assisting VHPA National at the HAI Convention (Helicopter Association International) in Anaheim CA. We will have an information booth to recruit new members and show the helicopter industry we're still around.

On Saturday March 15th at 11am, the SoCal Chapter will have our Annual St. Patty's BBQ and meeting at Wings and Rotors Museum at French Valley Airport. This is the home of the UH1-B Gunship that still flies to many events throughout California. It was the lead ship of Flying Thunder accompanying Rolling Thunder to The Wall in DC a few years back. The museum also has a CH-34, OH-58, TH-55 and F4 which they plan on flying soon. Even if you are not a chapter member please come by and check us out and enjoy the BBQ with us. Full details on the gathering are available at: Wingsandrotors.org.

Sven Akesson, President

SOUTH CAROLINA (CELEBRATE FREEDOM) CHAPTER

The SC VHPA Chapter is looking at an even busier year than 2013. As you know, our guys help the

Celebrate Freedom Foundation's SOaR program (Student/School Opportunities and Rewards) visit schools in the South East. We transport one of our Vietnam Vet Cobra helicopters, on a custom built trailer, to schools all around South Carolina. Mostly as part of a USAREC recruiting mission, sometimes as a push for poor performing schools to do a better job of teaching STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

We've acquired a new prime mover to transport "Annie" our 2/20th ARA bird. It's a huge improvement from "Bubba" our 1989 Army surplus tractor with power nothing and an even less amount of cushioning springs. It has been replaced with a 2005 GMC 4500 custom hauler with power everything, satellite, multi cd, DVD TV back seat/bed combo – oh boy! What a difference. Too bad we didn't have it when I went to Maine last year when we honored an ARA POW.

Larry Russell, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The year 2014 looks to be a great year for the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA. Soon, we will welcome our 100th member (we are currently at 96). Some of our chapter members are moving into leadership positions. We are continuing to collect books for our state Veterans' Homes and Hospitals. Our meetings provide the joys of fellowship and camaraderie. We welcome new members and visitors to be our guest at Quarterly meetings. Details of our meetings, other chapter events, and additional activities of interest can be found on our website, vhpsmo.org.

The chapter has held some very interesting and informative programs during our luncheon meetings. One member made a slide presentation on his return trip and bicycle tour of Vietnam. Other programs dealt with the Freedom Birds, the history of the blood chit, and the history of Vietnam prior to the U. S. involvement. If you have a topic you would like to discuss, or know of a topic you feel would have interest to our members, please contact someone on the Chapter Council.

This year's National Reunion is being held in Louisville, KY, a few driving hours east of St. Louis. Let's put the reunion dates, July 1st through 5th, on our calendars and show our support for the Ohio River LZ Chapter, as they support our National Reunion.

Bill Thompson, President



ALASKA CHAPTER

The weather and the "snow-bird" status of many of our members have slowed down activities significantly! In our last meeting there was a lot of interest in the July National VHPA reunion and hopefully a big turnout from Alaska will grace the beer truck! Our Chapter plans to meet again the first week of March to nail down our summer activities.

Meanwhile, last year the State of Alaska set aside the 29th of March, 2014 as Vietnam Veteran's Day and plans a big celebration in downtown Anchorage. Some of our members will be volunteers and working on a Veterans panel. More information on how that goes in the next newsletter.

Our Chapter has also been actively engaged in setting up a Vietnam Display at our local Veteran's Museum and find that it is an on-going process. But we have a display up (see accompanying photo) and running and it has received favorable reactions from all our visitors.

To all you Northeast CONUS guys, get out of cold ... come up and visit our museum ... it's a balmy 40 and blue sky today Not so sure about tomorrow! But we know helicopter pilots can adapt to changing situations! <http://VHPA-Alaska.org>. There is pride in knowing that We Flew

Lynn Kile, President

ALAMO CHAPTER

Our Chapter closed out 2013 with a beautiful Holiday Dance on 13 December 2013 at the Army Retirement Center here in San Antonio, Texas. Close to 50 members and guests joined our hard-working host Chuck Oualline for a fun night of good music, great food and tasty libations.

2014 started out when we met at the famous Barn Door Restaurant on 16 January to elect new officers. Kirk "Chip" Brown has moved up to our office of president, Dave Whiteney was elected vice president, Al Flory was re-elected as secretary, Ben Treadaway was re-elected as treasurer, and Charles "Chic" Carter was elected junior member-at-large.

We will travel to the Texas Gulf Coast on 4 and 5 March to view one of the world's only two small flocks of the endangered Whooping Crane. These rare birds winter at a wildlife refuge near Rockport, Texas, and we have reserved seats on an excursion boat to view them from just off-shore. Alamo Chapter members should consult their e-mails or the Chapter website for details: www.vhpa-alamo.org

We plan to form a group to travel to Austin for the dedication of the Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument on the grounds of the Texas Capitol on 29 March. Other plans for the year include members visiting Gainesville, Texas, for their annual hosting of Medal of Honor recipients, culminating with a parade on 12 April.

Members were informed that the Vietnam Helicopter Crewmembers Association (VHCMA) will meet in San Antonio 24-28 June of this year, in case anyone wants to attend and find any crewmembers with whom we flew. Also in June, our Chapter plans to meet and socialize in a local country/western dancehall, which also offers indoor bull riding (not for our members). The exact date has not been determined.

Another election meeting for 2015 officers likely will be held at the Barn Door in September or October, and a Christmas party is



planned in December. Chapter members will receive details and updates for all these and other plans by e-mail, and they will be posted on the website.

Kirk "Chip" Brown, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH (CCN)

The chapter was very busy this past fall displaying our Huey at several community events. We participated in the Just for Corvettes for Vets show at the Red Hawk Casino near Placerville. It was very well attended by veterans from all the services and the Huey was a big hit. A golf tournament held in Lincoln Hills to support disabled vets was the next venue for the Huey and, as always, it was well received. Next up was the Bryte VFW birthday party for the USMC followed by the Veterans Day parade in West Sacramento. There was good turnout and participation by the community and on the parade route through town where we only caught one overhead power line with the rotor. Our final 2013 Huey display was a Marine sponsored Toys 4 Tots drive held at the Citrus Heights Veterans Center. This event included a children's choir from a local school, our local United States Congressman, and a visit from Santa to prepare us for the holidays. The Marines had to rent a van to collect all the toys that were given and they said it was the best toy drive of the year for them.

We kicked off 2014 with a holiday party in Fairfield on January 11th with good food, good friends, and good conversation. Plans for the year were discussed that included continuing to upgrade the Huey and participation in community events for the coming year. One new idea being explored is "Huey tailgate" parties throughout our area to promote the chapter and the VHPA.

With a new webmaster at the controls our webpage at www.vhpaccn.org is now current and informative. The latest membership information is available as well as pictures from past events. A simple check of our site and you'll have the latest information on current and coming events and activities.

Ken Fritz, President



Shown in this photo taken at our Holiday Dinner Party in Fairfield, CA are (L to R) Ken Lake, Leslie Lake, Jim Stein, Jim Barger, Barbara Barger, Mike Whitten, Al Doucette, Marilyn Doucette, Darlene Darata, Joe Bilitzke, Marcia Fritz, Ken Fritz, Kathy Anderson and Dave Anderson.



Photos taken at the Toys 4 Tots toy drive in Sacramento, CA in early December 2013. Here we participated in their Christmas Parade and also set up our Huey static display. Our participants included (L to R) Al Doucette, Ken Lake, Santa "Big Guy" Claus, Curt Knapp and Ed Morris.

VHPA OF FLORIDA

We have started off 2014 running. On January 4th we started by supporting the Wounded Warriors Family Support program Golf Tournament Sign-up in Sarasota, FL with the OH-6 on display. What a great turnout! The tournament itself was held on January 26th and ended up collecting over \$20,000.00 for their program. Both of these events were Co-Chaired by one of our members BG Jim Hesson and we all enjoyed being a part of such a needed and successful veteran's event.

Then on January 16th we held our first meeting of the year at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park in Tampa where we had as guests the Hillsborough County Veterans Affairs Managing Director, Frank Strom and the Hillsborough County Manager of Parks Services, Ian Hallett as guests.

Then on January 31st we supported the EMS/Military Expo in Orange City, FL with the OH-6. We were expecting over 3,000 High School juniors and seniors from the University High School in Orange City and from other area STEM schools in the area. However, we were rained out while we set huddled in the parking lot from 7-12:00 pm when the event was cancelled. We supported this event last year on a nice sunny day where we enjoyed the questions and curiosity from the very talented students.

On the February 1st we were in Plant City, FL with the OH-6 supporting the "Grand Opening" of the AMVETS Post 44. What a turnout we had hundreds of guests and well over two hundred bikers in attendance.

We have our really big season coming up in the next few months our next event will be on February 8 when we will have the OH-6 at the American Heroes Air Show in Gainesville, FL (Home of the Gators). The show is designed to showcase the helicopter critical role in law enforcement, fire safety, national defense, homeland security and emergency response.

Then on March 1st we will support the largest and longest running Washington's Day Parade in the United States in Eustis, FL. There we will have the OH-6 as well as our "LiL LOACH", and a motorcycle escort. This is a great parade and is chaired by our member Fred Breuche who has

been doing this for many years.

Then on March 22nd we will start the set up for Sun-N-Fun in Lakeland, FL with our Tent-Up, BOD meeting, and Cook Out. This is normally a big turnout if for nothing else other than to watch a bunch of grey-haired ole men erecting a GP Medium tent. (It was easy when we were in Vietnam 50 years ago and younger!)

Then starting April 1st thru April 6th we will support Sun-N-Fun International Fly-in and Expo activities at the Lakeland Airport with the OH-6, Memorabilia Tent, Sales, and the "LiL LOACH". April 7th will be our tear-down day. Anyone visiting FL during that period will sure enjoy the event and please stop by and say Hi! (We have supported this event for over 20 years now.)

On April 28th thru May 4th we will be in Melbourne, FL at Wickham Park with the OH-6, "LiL LOACH", and sales supporting the Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion. This is the largest and longest lasting Veterans Reunion in FL. Again if you will be visiting FL during this period make plans to attend.

Although not our next event, just as a heads-up the VHPAF Reunion will be held from September 18th thru September 21st in Crystal River at the Plantation Golf Resort & Spa. As always any member of VHPA is invited to attend. (For your information, Crystal River is the only place in the United States where you are allowed to swim with the manatees.)

Tom Rountree, President



Tom Tomlinson readying the OH-6 for the Wounded Warriors Family Support golf fundraising event.



Bob Johnston reading the OH-6 for the Grand Opening of AMVETS Post 44 event

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Work continues on the UH-1C/M. The latest effort is overhead soundproofing in the cabin and disconnecting the flight controls from the servos. We have so many folks who want to move the controls, once the servos are disconnected we'll be able to better explain the way a helicopter flies. We have also run 110 Volt A/C power supply from the heater blanket receptacles to the external power door. This will allow us to operate a laptop or flat screen and play video clips from Vietnam. We think these improvements will help better serve the community.

I need to give a shout out to several people who have helped the chapter in the last few months. First, thanks to Military Machines of American Freedom, Inc. We have provided them with some parts and advice on a sister ship to ours that they are restoring to display status, in return they have made a generous contribution to the chapter. Kevin Vislocky is the president and, if you can help him with parts, please contact him @850-510-8651. Next is a gentleman named Jeff Biles. He has provided both our trailer and a tailboom for our Huey. Most recently he is given us a "chicken plate" for our display. Third is Don Mong. He is providing the Buccaneer nose art for us. Lastly, we would like to thank



the 170th AHC, specifically George Crawford, Henry Winther, and JJ Johnson. All have been more than helpful in our quest for information. Again, thank you all.

I feel the chapter has accomplished many things this year and we are looking forward to the spring display/social outing season. I hope the rest of the chapters have as hard-working and generous a group of fellow aviators and wives as the North Alabama Chapter. It makes my job easy.

Should you care to contact us, our email is NAVHPA@gmail.com.

Les Haas, President

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

THINK SPRING! The North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (NCVHPA) held its annual meeting in Raleigh and Clayton, NC, on Saturday, February 1. The day began at 12:00 noon on the capitol grounds in Raleigh with the reading of the names of those still missing in Vietnam. The NCVHPA reads the names every first Saturday in February at the Vietnam memorial. We had four new members joining the loyal group of former pilots who turn out every February for this very moving monthly ceremony honoring MIAs from North Carolina. The NCVHPA then adjourned to Clayton to Brock and Colleen Nicholson's home, our President and First Lady. After lunch, the annual meeting began with standard reports and discussion about upcoming activities, which include mounting Huey nose sections in the Vietnam Corridor of the Pentagon. The nose portion of the aircraft that will be mounted in the Corridor has been severed from the main fuselage. See attached photo. Work is continuing to get the helicopter pieces of the Hueys down to size to fit through doors at the Pentagon. We hope to be doing this installation the last of March or the first of April. As of this writing, we still do not have a date when the dedication will occur, perhaps in Fall 2014. The NCVHPA feels honored to be able to construct this everlasting tribute utilizing the Huey which are such a symbol of that conflict, dedicated to all those that fought in Vietnam.

This year again promises to be a busy one with many events where we will share the helicopters with veterans and the public. We are in the process of firming up the schedule shortly.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a DVD entitled "ENTERTAINING VIETNAM" was presented for everyone's viewing. The video shared the non big name entertainers (those other than Bob Hope, etc.) lifestyle and viewpoint while they were yet young and carefree, both the adventure and sadness they suffered. We recommend this



Members of the North Carolina Chapter greet the Huey nose-section destined to one day be displayed in the Vietnam Corridor of the pentagon. Follow the progress of our preparing the display both on our website (NCVHPA.org) as well as our FaceBook page. The NCVHPA has enjoyed the support received for this effort by the personal at Indian Town Gap PA., Bell Helicopter in Ala., and Pax River Naval Air Station, Maryland.

DVD to all who served in Vietnam. It is available online through Amazon and other vendors.

Election of officers included Brock Nicholson, re-elected for another year. (He went to the bathroom at the wrong time!) Larry Pigg is the Vice President elect; Secretary, Bob Inglis; and Treasurer, Carl Seegar continues his dedication of more than 25 years. For more information regarding the NCVHPA activities, please contact Brock Nicholson at [REDACTED]

Brock Nicholson, President

Submitted by B. Seago



VHFA SCHOLARSHIP QUESTIONS

Many in our Membership are asking questions about our annual Scholarship program, who is eligible, how is it awarded and when can you apply. Ok, here goes –

VHFA MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Currently, the VHFA has five endowed annual scholarships of \$1,000 each. All of the VHFA scholarship funds are managed by the AAAA Scholarship Foundation. The Executive Council has also authorized that all funds donated at the Annual Business Meeting, by passing the "CAV HAT", be used to increase future scholarships to \$2,000 each. All other funds received at the reunions and throughout the year, other than the ones donated at the Annual Business Meeting, will be used to increase the VHFA endowed scholarship account with the AAAA Foundation. It is the plan of the Scholarship Committee, if possible, to continue to offer at least five \$2,000 awards every year.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for all VHFA MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS, all student applicants must meet one or more of these requirements:

- 1) The Sponsor (Father or Grandfather) must be a dues current member of VHFA.
- 2) The Sponsor must also be a dues current member of AAAA and/or the student applicant must be an Associate member of AAAA at the time of application.
- 3) If a Helicopter Pilot (Father or Grandfather) lost his life while serving in Vietnam or SE Asia between 1961-1975 as a helicopter pilot, the student applicant must be (a) a descendant of the deceased pilot and (b) be an Associate Member of AAAA at the time of application.
- 4) If a helicopter Pilot (Father or Grandfather) who served in Vietnam or SE Asia between 1961-1975 but died after his tour (DAT) but, before 1982, the student applicant must be a descendant and be an Associate member of AAAA at the time of application.

5) If the student applicant is a descendant of a VHFA member who died after 1982 (DAT) and who was a dues current member at the time of his death, he is eligible, but they must also be an Associate member of AAAA at the time of application.

HOW AND WHERE DOES SOMEONE APPLY

Go to www.vhfa.org, scroll down to VHFA scholarships and follow the prompts. Or you can go to www.quad-a.org and follow the prompts for "How to Apply". All applications must be submitted to the AAAA Foundation before May 1 of the year the person is applying.

NOTES OF INFORMATION

- 1) All scholarships are awarded by MERIT, not need and you are making the application based on how well you have done at school grades, activities and honors. Be sure to be truthful and include all activities (school or church or other types) and honors received
- 2) PLEASE be sure the name of your Sponsor (Father, Grand Father, Great-Grand Father) is on the application. Each VHFA student application will be checked for eligibility.
- 3) Be sure you state that you are eligible for the VHFA Scholarship.
- 4) All VHFA applicants are ALSO eligible for all of the other AAAA awards. This means that you could be awarded a scholarship other than a VHFA scholarship. In the past almost 55% of all VHFA applicants received non-VHFA Scholarships.

It's never too early to get started on your application. Contact the AAAA Foundation now and GOOD LUCK!!!

Mike Sheuerman,
Scholarship Committee Fund Raising



Vietnam Heli Operations "Rotorheads Return"

24 Aug—6 Sep 2014 Tour Leader: John Powell, 1/9 Cav

"The bottom line is, the war is over. It really wasn't over till I came back," General Norman Schwarzkopf, during his 1993 return.

Above:
(L): Helos
were first
units in (R)
:The best
"cyclo" ride
Right: VHFA
pax on
The 2013
Rotorheads
Return in
front of
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The story behind this issue's Cover Photo



First, let me make it perfectly clear that I didn't crash this Cobra, we lost this aircraft one night when it meshed rotors with a hovering Huey in our aircraft parking area. Thankfully no one was hurt in the accident, and I think that's why I felt comfortable enough to have my picture taken as if I was solely responsible for "bringing down" that aircraft.

As David Bales, one of the best Safety Officers we ever had in the Army, once told us "We almost never have a new accident in the aviation business, we just keep having the same old accident over and over". In this case the cobra landed just before dark and aircraft maintenance, knowing it would have to be pulled into the hanger first thing the next day, positioned it close to the hanger and what they thought was "enough out of the way" to make it through the night. Well, sure enough our Night Hawk Huey took some hits that night and was forced to return at about 03:00 AM. Their crew also figured the aircraft would have to be towed into the hanger first thing, and while looking for a place to touchdown, they missed seeing the Cobra parked where it shouldn't have been – and the blades of the two aircraft meshed. This story sound familiar? Perhaps the same thing happened in your unit as well.

Last, let me close with publically thanking Ned Crimmin for his outstanding job of bringing my old, dusty, scratched up, faded and age-spotted slide back to how it looked 35 years ago. Please don't let your memories fade into history, go through your photos and slides from Vietnam and get them preserved. Neither Ned, or I care if you take them to Wal-Mart, send them to Ned or do anything in between those two options, just do all you can to save your photos and slides, and our place in history.

David Adams, Editor of the VHPA Aviator

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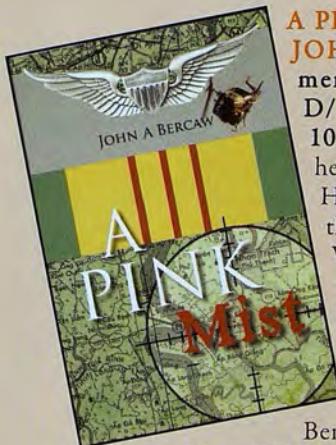
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MEMBERS - HAVE A BOOK FOR JOHN TO REVIEW?
CONTACT HIM AT: BOOKREVIEWS@VHPA.ORG

By VHPA Life Member:
JOHN PENNY



A PINK MIST BY VHPA MEMBER JOHN BERCAW, class 67-13, is a memoir of his service in RVN with D/1/4 CAV 1 INF and A/101 AVN 101 ABN in 67-68. Bercaw saw his first helicopter in 1950 and was fascinated. His journey from a farm in Illinois to the cockpit of an Army helicopter in Vietnam included a youthful run-in with the law followed by four formative years in the USMC. He credits the USMC with turning his life around, but flying helicopters still called to him.

Bercaw joined the Army and reported to Class 67-13 at Ft. Wolters, TX, sweating through controlling and guiding squirrelly training helicopters all around west Texas. Like many of us, Bercaw had his getting lost and low on fuel training experience. Advanced training, at Ft. Rucker, introduced the mysteries of flying solely by a few instruments; something Bercaw found very challenging but overcame. His real training would come in Vietnam.

Assigned to D/1/4 CAV 1 INF at Phu Loi in September of

As promised, the second volume of **VIETNAM WAR HELICOPTER ART**, by John Brennan who served with the 114th AHC in Vietnam as a Flight Operations Coordinator, has arrived.

This is Brennan's continuing tribute to all Vietnam helicopter pilots and crew members. He put out a call for photographs and received what he calls a "treasure trove" of hundreds of color photographs, many contributed by VHPA members, of this unique form of American folk art along with stories of the pilots, crew members, and "flight line artists" who created the art. Although Brennan has worked for the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum Library in the past he still considers himself more of a conduit than a curator. His books are a lasting legacy to all of those who served in helicopter units in Vietnam.

1967, he joined the aeroscout platoon flying an OH-13S – the first night there he learned about "incoming" and the etiquette of entering a bunker rapidly. Other lessons about so called "safe areas," BDAs after Arc Lights, keeping your cool under fire, and looking for enemy .51 caliber weapons – something he found absurd, awaited. Early in 1968 Bercaw was reassigned to A/101AVN 101 ABN and headed north to Phu Bai, flying a UH-1H. His missions west of Da Nang in the often rain shrouded mountains were intense. Combat assaults, extractions of troops in contact, the wounded, and the dead were the order of the day. The book title directly reflects one of his more intense missions.

Bercaw has done an excellent job in this articulate narrative of his tour of duty. He is candid about the many absurdities of the military and the war he encountered during his tour of duty. The abrupt transition from intense combat and the reception he and many Vietnam veterans received at home were troubling to him for a long time. I highly recommend this book.

A Pink Mist (296 pages, \$11.85, \$2.99 Kindle) by John A. Bercaw, ISBN 978-1482772809 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

Brennan is also the author of U.S. Army Helicopter Names in Vietnam (Hellgate Press). **Vietnam War Helicopter Art**, Vols. 1 or 2 (ISBN: 978-0811713498, Stackpole, 208 pages, \$26.95) by John Brennan are available by order from the publishers, the author (johnmailman@yahoo.com), and your local/online book suppliers.



Michael Lazares, a VHPA Member and retired CW5 has a new book, **WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE**, a collection of 45 stories from helicopter pilots, crew chiefs, and gunners who served and sacrificed in what we know as the "helicopter war." There are a wide range of stories from intense narratives of combat, rescues, escape and evasion, and a few very funny incidents. Sadly, some of the authors have passed on.

Lazares, who served with C/2/20 ARA and E/82 ARTY in 67-68 and 196 ASHC in 69-70, has included stories from crew chiefs and gunners; men,

who put their lives into the hands of some very young Army helicopter pilots in Vietnam. We are privileged to hear their important voices. Lazares has done a good job with this book which I highly recommend.

Lazares, who is also the author of *Goodbye, My Darling; Hello, Vietnam*, has been keeping busy and Volume 2 of *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* is in the works. Lazares is looking for stories for Volume 2. His post-Vietnam memoir, *Tacoma Blue*, has just been published and will be reviewed in an upcoming edition of the Aviator. Lazares may be contacted at mdlazares@comcast.net

We Gotta Get Out of this Place (282 pages, \$15.00 at Createspace.com/books/store and Kindle version \$3.99 at Amazon) by Michael D. Lazares, ISBN 978-1492922261 is available from the author at www.mdlazaresauthor.com, or other book suppliers. All profits from this book go to the Wounded Warrior Project.



OUR FLIGHT HELMETS STILL FIT

by Member John Wilkes

There is a place, a very special place where an Old Vietnam Helicopter pilots still put on a US Army uniform, strap on a US Army Helicopter and as the old poem says, "slip the surly bonds of earth to dance the skies on laughter-silvered wings". That place is the US Army Aviation Center of Excellence at good old "Mother Rucker".

With all the talk about the last Vietnam Aviator on active duty hanging up his wings, I thought our group of rare old birds should get an honorable mention. Dear reader, there are many of us who only surrendered our Warrant or Commission but managed to keep our Aviator Wings firmly affixed to our chest. When I went through Flight School in class 66-21 there was a joke often told around Rucker, that all Old Army Helicopter Pilots return to Mother Rucker to die. The wisdom of years has taught me that I heard the joke wrong. The truth is all Army Aviators have the honor of returning home to Mother Rucker. A privileged few among those retirees who return to Alabama will be able to instruct new Flight Students, if they can pass their Annual Army Standardization Check Ride and keep an FAA Class II Flight physical in their pocket. Today many of us still call Cairns (Shell, Hanchey, or Lowe) Tower for an ATC clearance each and every morning. Gentlemen, it still seems this new crop of fledgling flight students need to learn the lessons we learned the hard way in the jungles of Vietnam. The sound of the ping-ping and your door gunner yelling in your ear, "Sir, we're taking fire" seems to have changed little over the past few decades. It would appear we old war dogs still have a few flights left in us over southern Alabama skies. Some Flights in the Advanced Division even have a special nick name for any Instructor Pilot still in his sixties; they call him "Boy".

Today all US Army and Air Force Helicopter Pilots as well as the Pilots from many other Nations start out Flight School being trained by Contractors who work for URS Fort Rucker. URS Fort Rucker is a large Defense Contractor providing Instructors for Primary Flight Division, Advanced Instruments Division, Basic War Fighter Skills Training, Flight Simulator Training and Academic Training to the US Army Aviation Center of Excellence. Of the 330 or more active Contract Flight Instructors still on flight status with the US Army Aviation School, almost one third are former Vietnam Combat Pilots. That number does not include the Department of the Army Civilians (DAC) who still faithfully serve America in an Army uniform every day. Thirty eight years after the last soldier left Vietnam we have the same Pilots still flying the TH-1 (UH-1) and TH-67 (OH-58C) providing quality training to a new crop of Army and Air Force Aviators. Along with a few old Maintenance guys and Test Pilots, Vietnam still has quite a foot print in Flight Training here at Fort Rucker. Even after all these years some of us have been blessed by our GOD with enough good health to keep passing a Class II Flight Physical each year.

The Flight Instructor who wins the award for being the oldest Vietnam veteran is Mr. Hjalmer R. (John) Blad of Daleville Alabama. For a man approaching his seventy ninth (79!) birthday, that is an accomplishment most of us will never experience. John entered the Army as an enlisted man on July 3, 1953 rising to the rank of E-5. He started his flying career with Flight Class 65-4W and crossed over the big pond with the 1/9th Cav. to fly UH-1 slicks and OH-13S scouts out of An Khe through out 1965-66. After spilling his blood in three shoot downs John spent his second tour flying real helicopters (CH-47) with the "Big Windy's" of the 180th ASHC in II Corps during 1967-68. Completing another tour in Germany and one in the states John took his chest full of medals into retirement as a CW3 in 1974. Like many of us, he continued to serve our nation as a civilian with tours around the world. After flying Hueys in the nation of Iran for three years John left Iran as a passenger on one of the last planes out of that hot spot during the Iranian Hostage crisis in the late seventies. With his world travels complete, John returned to his roots at Mother Rucker in 1980 to begin his new career training US Army Aviators. For the last 33 years he has placed his special mark on many of the Army's finest. Not one to slow down, John just passed another of our coveted FAA Class I Flight Physicals to go with his Airline Transport Rating (ATR) and plans to complete his 79th year of life teaching Instrument flight to the next generation of Avia-

tors whose grandfathers have not lived as many years on our makers green earth as John. If you're counting, that's 48 years on flight status. Just so you will know John is really human, at Seventy Eight he is now required to wear eye glasses when he flies.

Like John Blad, each of us old Vietnam guys have a story to tell of war and love of country but the one common denominator is, when we look in the mirror to shave every morning we see a Helicopter Pilot smiling back at us. I'm sure I speak for all the Vietnam guys when I say I truly love having the opportunity to still teach these very exceptional young men and women. Each day as I give primary instruction to my students in how to make a steep approach or straight in touch down autorotation my mind may drift back to the winter of 1966 when I was flying CH-34's around Europe with the 350th AVN CO. or to 1968 when I was flying A-model Chinooks through the central highlands of II Corps with the "Shrimpboat's" of the 179th ASHC. This job allows those memories to stay fresh in my mind. At almost 68 years I stand amazed that the US Army will still entrust me with America's finest young soldiers and then tell me to take this Multi-Million dollar Helicopter and go make Army Aviators out of these pedestrians. The Army has retired the Huey but we old war dogs may never wear out. It's like living the famous lines from that old poem each day. "Oh I've slipped the surly bonds of Earth to dance the skies on laughter-silvered wings. Sunward I've climbed to join the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds, - and done a hundred things others have only dreamed about". All these past years and all those hundred wondrous things have made for an exciting and fulfilling life. Who knew retirement could be this enjoyable.

ARMY AVIATION



FT. RUCKER, AL



Our Author, John Wilkes in Vietnam. Taken in the summer of 1968 while he was flying with the 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company from Camp Holloway in Pleiku.



John Blake receiving his retirement certificate from the Army in 1974.



John Wilkes today with WOC student Peter Blickhahn at Allen Stage Field on family day 2013.

John W. Wilkes
STINGRAY 27

Primary Division
Cairns AAF, Fort Rucker