



The VHPPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



A Year in The Life of an RLO
See page 24 for this issue's cover story

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INTERESTING LINKS ON THE WEB

Blue Angel Cockpit camera
www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4D0yx4DvBk

Navy X-47 UCAS video
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WC8U5_4lo2c

Face book: Vietnam Reflections Through Their Eyes
Ned Crimmins, a professional slide restorer has created a number of face book pages showing the photo history from all types of units and services from the Vietnam War as well as various related forums... Check out the title above.



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

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AAAA/VHPA SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE ALERT

by Mike Scheuerman

The deadline for applying for a VHPA Scholarship is right around the corner. You can request Scholarship packets from AAAA after January 1, 2015. Applications are due NLT May 1, 2015. VHPA will have five \$3,000 awards available for 2015. Last year, over forty people applied for our scholarships. Five received our scholarships and another twenty received AAAA awards totaling over \$35,500. In addition, another ten people whose parents or a grandparent we consider eligible to be members of VHPA, were awarded a further \$26,000 in scholarships. This included the recipient of a \$12,000 - four year award.

Last year VHPA members donated over \$20,000 to the VHPA scholarship fund. The Executive Council (EC) voted, last year, to match membership donations. To say the least we, the EC, did not expect the membership to be that generous. One member gave \$10,000. This year the EC will match up to \$15,000.

To be eligible for a VHPA Scholarship there are only two requirements to apply. The recipient must meet both of the following requirements:

- 1) You must be the descendant of a dues current VHPA member or a descendant of a helicopter pilot who died in Vietnam while serving as a pilot.
- 2) You or your sponsor must be a dues current member of AAAA. There is an Associate Membership classification for students.

Encourage your descendants to apply. If you know of someone who qualifies as stipulated above, please let them know about our scholarships.

GOOD LUCK!

FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

It is that time of year again – Reunion Registration! Be sure to register early! There are numerous events that have maximum capacities and you don't want to miss out on these special events! If you have any questions concerning tours or events, be sure to give us a call, we will be happy to help. We hope to see you there!

Don't Forget - if you move, be sure to call HQ with an update to your contact information! This assures that you do not miss any issues of the Aviator. If you have not received an issue lately, give us a call to make sure we have your correct address on file.

Also, you can go on line to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. 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. 2014 directories can no longer be ordered at the reduced price. We do have a few of these paper and CD directories available at HQ. The price is now \$25. Give us a call if you would like one. You can now pre-order the 2015 CD Directory for \$10 and the 2015 Paper Directory for \$15.

If you know of anyone that served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and they are not a member of VHPA, give us a call and we will check to see if they are in our database. We would love to send them membership information and a copy of the Aviator for their review; and of course, we would love for them to become a member!

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

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From the President of the VHPA -
BOB HESSELBEIN



BUILDING THE ANNUAL REUNION

Each year the subject of VHPA Annual Reunion planning arises with questions regarding city locations, dates and events. As your VHPA President, I get to witness the storm of activities, first hand, that result in our outstanding annual reunions. I want to share some of the details with you.

The overwhelming majority of VHPA reunion participants fully enjoy our gatherings, finding the calendar dates, locations and activities perfect for their attendance. We occasionally do, however, receive a letter asking why (a) the dates of the reunion are always in the summer (at a time inconvenient to that writer), (b) the VHPA Reunion Committee did not change the location hotel (although the writer requested it two months before the gathering), or (c) why certain activities were/were not offered within the reunion schedule? In advance of our upcoming Washington DC reunion, here are some details of the reunion-building process.

Each annual reunion is the culmination of over two-plus years of work by unpaid VHPA member volunteers. The process begins years in advance by seeking out locations that satisfy our lodging needs while providing needed conference space and the breakout rooms used for unit mini-reunions. To make sure our generally-retired members can afford to attend, we must seek out quality venues with room prices far lower than rates normally charged to corporations and other organizations seeking conference facilities. Fortunately, we have excellent negotiators like Bill "Moon" Mullen who spend a great deal of their own time to find and negotiate remarkable reunion facilities at considerably low prices. We should all be grateful for their work.

The dates of the annual reunion are generally established based on the criteria of members' ability to participate. It is clear the overwhelming majority of our membership find summertime gatherings to be optimal; many want the event held over the 4th of July—a great time for getting conference space as most organizations seek alternate dates—and others want it towards the end

of summer before schools reopen. A significant portion of our members bring children and grandchildren to the event to make it a family experience, so the summer season continues to be the target window for our annual reunions.

Mike Law, VHPA Reunion Committee Chairman, works tirelessly, far in advance, to find event venues that will please our membership and their families. Building individual events is a risky business; there are upfront costs to be paid before the event whether members attend or not, and cancellation fees are costly, indeed. Mike carefully calculates the total costs and then breaks it down to breakeven points; following that, he sweats the registration numbers. Fortunately, he has the barometer of past events to gauge what will work in the future based on the past, but it is an imprecise science. Sometimes, his plans to negotiate one "block" of 50 or 100 participants expands, due to a sell-out early in the registration period. It is a carefully refined gamble in many cases.

Just like rotary-wing combat, numerous problems can arise at any given moment. Small reunion 'snafus' will happen with an operation this big. Fortunately our organization's experience in building and managing complex gatherings allow us to generally resolve the situation with a positive outcome.

I am extremely proud of the handful of volunteers who accomplish so very much, and I am certain you are too. Look for the volunteers wearing those ugly yellow VHPA hats at the upcoming annual reunion and thank them for their hard work on all of our behalf.

WANTED

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Touching Someone

We go through our lives and we are touched by other people. It may be over a long period of time, or, it may be just a short encounter. This happened to me when I was going through Basic Instruments in flight school.

I was in basic instruments and dreading what people were saying about flying the gages. My flight instructor, a Mr. Norbert Woodruff was a "crusty" old DAC and a retired Army pilot. He tried to assure us that the fear of flying instruments was worse than actually doing it. On one of my training flights he said something to me that I took with me my entire flying career and never forgot it.

We were bouncing around on a sunny afternoon in the skies over Fort Rucker in the old TH-13T. There was a lot of turbulence with the afternoon thermals. I guess my instructor thought it would be a great day to put me on "Emergency Panel". I was bouncing all over the sky, trying to keep the turn needle bouncing equally on each side and watching the mag compass oscillating all over the place trying to maintain a heading, while also trying to keep my altitude. I was really frustrated thinking I was doing so badly that I said, "Aw S**t." He came back and said, "Candidate, I should give you a U (Unsatisfactory) for Composure. When composure is lost, everything is lost." He then told me that "I was doing well and that most other people would have had the aircraft upside down by now." This made me feel a lot better, but I never forgot what he said about losing composure.

He taught me other things about flying in the short time we were together. Even though I just had the old "Tac Ticket", it saved my and the pilot's life in a Cobra on a dark night in the middle of I Corps. There were absolutely no references and the pilot got vertigo. We got into settling with power and with just the instruments in the front seat I was able to recover the aircraft until the pilot had his bearings. I placed everything on what Norbert taught me.

I respected Mr. Woodruff so much I kept a flight plan he filed. I had tried to find him, but the search was negative. He talked about flying in Vietnam, but he wasn't in any of the VHPA's records. Finally, since my wife was using the Ancestry.com website I thought I'd see if I could track him down somehow, and I hit pay dirt.

Unfortunately Mr. Woodruff was deceased. I found his

place of burial in a small Arkansas cemetery that I was told is no longer used. They also had a picture of his grave marker. I learned he was in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He retired as a CW3. He was 61 when he passed.

I finally found a flower shop close by, The Groovy Little Flower Shop, and had them make a wreath for Christmas to be placed on his grave. I sent them a laminated card with a pair of Master Army Aviator Wings to be placed on the wreath which said, "To the Master, From a student he taught so well."

I don't know when he was in Vietnam. It may have been before the years we recognized our Brothers-In-Arms.

Again, it is strange how people we may only meet for an instant in our lives can touch you so much.

*By William D. Sorenson
CW5, U.S. Army (Ret.)*



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A Memorable Job Interview with Air America

By Jack Johnstone

Continental Air Services and Air America were contracted and used by civilian DOD contractors in Vietnam during the war. The missions of their flight crews were as varied as their "off the wall" destinations throughout the outback regions of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. At some of my haunts in Saigon, Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong I had been known to turn down a few jars with their pilots and air crews.

One of these places was the British Flying Club at the Hong Kong airport. I could get a pint there, play some darts and put my ear to the "bamboo grape vine". I heard that a "Kickers" job with Air America was paying \$2,300 per month-tax free. That is \$13,000 a month in today's money. The actual job title was "Air Freight Specialist". The job description entailed loading heavy drop supplies on pallets, rigged with parachutes, to be dropped to remote locations in South-east Asia. The downside of this job was occasionally the Air America cargo aircraft would be shot down, crash somewhere in the jungle, and never be heard from again. My untutored brain storm was to land this job and work it for six (6) months adding both the job to my checkered resume and some cash to my wallet.

Sitting at the Chin-Chin Bar, at the new Hyatt Hotel in Singapore I was privileged to meet an American who worked for Air America back at their headquarters in Vientiane, Laos. Chewing the fat with him, I shared my ambition to become a Kicker with Air America. I briefly went over my qualifications that I had gained in the 82nd Airborne Aviation Battalion and my experience working on weight & balance of aircraft. He advised me that he felt I was more experienced than the ex-special forces people currently doing that work. He went on to say that an ex-special forces clique had taken over that phase of their operations. He added that the load and preparation of heavy drops had never been the specialty of Special Forces so others were tasked with that phase of their missions. He also explained that an old smoke jumper from Montana was the only exception to the Special Forces clique at Vientiane, Laos. He then

allowed that he had heard many complaints from pilots and crews about the quality of work from the current people performing these heavy drop tasks. He felt, that with my background, I was more qualified than anyone they had.

That was all the incentive I needed, add to that, I had always wanted to visit the White Rose Bar in Vientiane. This infamous establishment was reputedly a hell hole of most debauchery known to mankind. In its dark booths anything could happen. The White Rose could make the bars of Bangkok and Saigon look like a pre-school facility in suburban America. So... with a mission that was twofold, 1) Go to the White Rose Bar and 2) Apply for a Air Freight Specialist position with Air America; I found myself waiting to board a old C-47 looking aircraft with Air Laos painted on its side at the airport on the outskirts of Bangkok.

As I sat there I noticed the oil stains coming out of the engines and streaking back over the wings. An American embassy employee standing next to me was chug-a-lugging beers as fast as he could and muttering something under his breath, as he looked over the old C-47 parked outside on the apron. I said to him: "You're hitting that beer pretty hard". He replied that "If you'd ever been on this flight before you'd be drinking hard also"

When they started boarding the aircraft I was taken aback by the humanity and animals getting on the plane. It was Hmong Tribal people with chickens and piglets in small cages being loaded on board, with them jamming into the overhead racks everything they could. I'll never forget our landing in Vientiane. The pilot was landing in a strong crosswind; he came straight in just clearing the roof tops and antennas of the houses surrounding the airport. When he eventually wandered over the runway, the plane tilted dramatically to the right and we were now flying sideways down the runway with things falling on the passengers from the overhead racks. If you had the guts to look out the window, you could see the wing tip - just barely off the ground. This attempt at landing was repeated three times with passengers crying and screaming their lungs out. When we finally taxied in and stopped at our gate, the pilot, co-pilot and engineer would not come out of their cabin and face the passengers.



Air America Cargo Drop



Jack in the 82nd



Air Laos DC3

Two of my fellow passengers on the Air Laos flight decided they wanted to go with me to the White Rose. One was from France and the other from Switzerland. At our hotel we found out that the White Rose had just reopened. Apparently a bar girl had been stabbed to death by a Laotian army officer at the front door and the bar had been closed for a couple of weeks. This incident made me welcome the company of these two strangers. After a taxi ride to the bar we found ourselves sitting at a coffee table near the only source of light, an old jukebox. An attractive well endowed lady put on a sex show for five dollars, after stripping to just her high heels.

The next morning I headed out to Air America's offices at the airport with a bad hangover. Two ex-Special Forces, Air America employees (kickers) let me know I was in a no-fly-zone since these Air Cargo Jockeys had no intention of hiring someone from outside their clique.

I flew back to Singapore, stopping by way of Saigon, knowing I

would be there for the last show. It was early April of 1975 and "Operation Frequent Wind" was at hand, it was the largest helicopter evacuation in history. Chuck Neil the Broadcast Director of American Radio Service had arranged a small gathering of friends at the Olympic Bar in Saigon, with him as MC saying goodbye on the radio waves. I couldn't believe that some of the Americans believed we would be in Saigon for another few years. They were like Nero fiddling while Rome burned; the North Vietnamese were 60 miles outside of Saigon in tanks.

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Although Jack Johnstone was not a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, we felt his story of some of the workings of Air America were informative and entertaining.

Jack served in The Army from 1961 to 1964. He spent some time in the 82nd Airborne in Airframe Repair and was jump qualified.. While attending college, he worked as a cargo loader for TWA in SFO. In March of 1966, he signed on with DOD and worked for both the Army and Navy in RVN for the next seven years. He later moved on to the Middle East working again for DOD and the Arabian American Oil Company. While in Saudi Arabia, he started writing short stories as a hobby.

Ed.

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Swamp Landing

by Ira McComie

Most aviation units in Vietnam probably had at least one “hangar queen”, an aircraft with chronic maintenance issues. At Can Tho Army Airfield, among the 235th Aerial Weapons Company’s fleet of Cobras, ours was Six-O-Eight.

Pilots avoided Six-O-Eight (the last three digits of the Aircraft’s tail number) whenever they could because it was notorious for being a weak ship. Often, a pilot assigned Six-O-Eight, would find some reason to red-X it. Placing that mark in the logbook and the reason for doing so effectively grounded the aircraft. On those occasions when pilots did fly Six-O-Eight, they usually red-X ed the aircraft on their return; complaining that it was “under-powered”.

The maintenance folks, however, never found enough evidence to substantiate these claims. It became an irritation for them to constantly investigate a ‘vague’ problem they couldn’t solve. It must have been a particular nuisance for the maintenance officer. A red-X condition required him to test fly the aircraft; clearing the status before placing the aircraft in a flyable status.

On one fateful day, the wing ship pilot of my fire team had been assigned Six-O-Eight. He couldn’t find anything during preflight to justify grounding it, and was stuck with it. When we were returning to Can Tho, he told me he was going to red-X the aircraft, citing its anemic performance. As we neared the airfield, I radioed Operations the status of our aircraft, including the fact that Six-O-Eight was being red-Xed.

At Can Tho, we usually parked our Cobras in the revetments along the side of the runway. The revetments were a collection of head high sandbag walls arranged perpendicular to the runway and a few yards from it, sort of like hash marks along the sideline of a gridiron field. Each revetment had two open ends, one of which fronted the runway. A few yards behind the rear ends of the revetments lay “the swamp”.

The swamp was a piece of stagnant marsh trapped inside the airfield. It was rectangular shaped, about thirty yards wide, and about a hundred yards long (basically the entire distance behind the revetments). This also separated the revetments from the larger parking ramp on the opposite

side of the swamp. We made our approaches to the swamp, terminating in a hover above it. We then pedal turned ninety degrees to enter the revetments, allowing the Cobras to face the runway.

Dumping anything into the swamp was officially prohibited. It proved,

however, too handy a place not to tempt mechanics to pour used aircraft fluids into it. People on the ramp with pressing business also found the swamp to be more convenient than walking all the way back to a latrine. Due to base-wide vermin eradication campaigns, it wasn’t uncommon to see bloated rat carcasses floating on the surface as well.

Loathsome waste of almost every kind imaginable had been dumped into the swamp...and it reeked! Its foul composition ranked among the top five worst smelling things that ever affronted my snout. It enjoyed this distinction along with—in no specific order of odoriferous rank—the distinctive aromatic assault that wafted from my grandpa’s fungus infested feet; the eye-watering stench of sun ripened, congealed coyote wretch; the almost visible waves of gag inducing vapor radiating from a rancid vat of Vietnamese homemade nuoc mam sauce; and one particular, unforgettable episode of passed gas emitted by my front seat gunner inside the Cobra’s enclosed cockpit on a hot day in July that nearly rendered me unconscious.



On the day, we had just parked our helicopters in the revetments and gathered our gear when the maintenance officer raced up in his jeep. He screeched to a halt near the revetment where Six-O-Eight sat and jumped out. He appeared aggravated, because he had to deal with Six-O-Eight yet again. He didn't say anything to us and didn't even look at the aircraft. He jumped in and took off for the mandatory "test flight" to clear the red-X.

We shrugged and began walking to the Operations building, but we only got as far as the crossway connecting the runway with the ramp when I saw him returning in Six-O-Eight. He had simply taken off, flown an abbreviated traffic pattern around the airfield, and was already returning. He was obviously in a hurry to finish the test flight, return Six-O-Eight to its revetment, and sign it off as flight ready. Due to excessive airspeed, he had to execute a significant flare. He nearly stood the aircraft on its tail to stop. As a result, by the time the aircraft did stop, it had ballooned to a height of fifty feet. There he was- no forward airspeed and fifty feet too high. He next discovered that he had insufficient power to hover. As soon as I saw him terminate and dangling above the swamp, I knew he was in trouble. He was in a predicament that pilots describe as "Out of airspeed, altitude, and ideas all at the same time".

Six-O-Eight began settling toward the swamp. As it did, I could imagine the maintenance officer desperately pulling up on the collective, practically ripping it out by its roots. This was to no avail, as the aircraft sank lower and lower and he with it. It kept descending, slowly and surely, toward the swamp. Its skids touched the surface, slipped underneath, and kept on going. Ol' Six-O-Eight settled into the swamp like a tired pig in a hog wallow. It sank until its skids reached the bottom, coming to rest with the swamp's slimy surface half way up to the bottom of the canopy lid. I hadn't known exactly how deep the swamp was until that maintenance officer provided Six-O-Eight as a measuring stick.

As Six-O-Eight sat in the swamp, bubbles, bigger than a bullfrog's bellows, belched around it. Oozing from the putrid depths, the thick blisters burst open, flinging forth fresh floods of fetid fumigation.

The Can Tho Airfield was always a beehive of activity during the day. Aircraft, vehicles, and people were everywhere. As soon as Six-O-Eight began sinking into the swamp, all the activity came to a standstill. Vehicles stopped. Maintenance personnel and flight crews paused to watch. People stood suspended in slack-jawed amazement, watching Six-O-Eight slip slowly into the swamp. Then, as soon as it came to rest and as if with a common cue, everyone grabbed his camera. Practically everybody in Viet Nam carried a camera with him wherever he went.

The maintenance officer, at the helm of Six-O-Eight, went

down with the ship. When it settled into place, he sat there a while before he finally shut down the engine. Then he removed his helmet, raised the canopy, stuck his head out of the cockpit, and examined his plight. Eventually, he stood up and placed one foot out of the cockpit and tentatively onto the step-up at the side of the fuselage, which was just above the filth line. He pulled his other foot out of the cockpit and tried to place that foot also on the step-up, but the short, narrow platform was only made for one foot, so there was only room for the tips of his boots. He stood there, pigeon-toed, trying to decide what his next step would be. Inevitably, he concluded what it had to be; there was no other choice. He must abandon the ship.

Like a man walking a short plank, he stepped off the perch and plunged into the morass, landing in it chest deep. He stood there a while, feeling for footing. Then he began wading slowly through the quagmire, struggling as he slogged through the bog, the bottom muck sucking at his feet. Eventually, he reached the shore of the swamp. As he waded out, there were more cameras snapping him than McArthur when he returned to the Philippines. Covered with black, slimy swamp goop from his name tag down, he went trudging off across the ramp, dripping a trail of slime behind him.

All of us in our fire team stood mesmerized by the spectacle of Six-O-Eight landing in the swamp and could only gawk as the maintenance officer emerged from the aircraft, splashed into the gooey lagoon, and waded out. But when he began walking away, leaking evidence of the misadventure from his soggy bottom, we started laughing so hard we had to plop down right there on the crossway.

It was a while before we could compose ourselves enough to get out of the way so we wouldn't be run over by a C-123 that had just landed. It turned out, though, we weren't in any danger; its pilot had stopped and was aiming his camera out of the side window to get a picture of Six-O-Eight sitting out there, forlorn, in the swamp.

By Ira McComie
235th Aerial Weapons Company
Republic of Vietnam 1968-1969
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Remembering the Fallen

Replica of The Wall to be Constructed in Punta Gorda, Florida



With three million visitors a year, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., commonly referred to as The Wall, has become a popular place to visit and pay homage to the fifty-eight thousand plus men and women who gave their lives during the conflict.

In 2009, after the Traveling Wall had visited Punta Gorda, Florida, a group of Vietnam veterans wanted to construct an exact replica. This will be scaled to size and located at Laishley Park, near the Kiwanis' Veterans Garden and Purple Heart Memorials.

The idea fizzled for a few years. Then, a year ago, the various veterans groups, under the auspices of the Charlotte County Veterans Council began discussing the possibility of a memorial. From those discussions the Vietnam Wall of Southwest Florida was created. The effort was headed by retired Air Force Major General Richard "Dick" Carr. General Carr was a F4 pilot credited with over two hundred combat missions in Vietnam.

A variety of sub-committees were formed: fundraising, design, and publicity, to kick start the project. The hard work and determination of veterans, city officials and local businesses bore fruit - in just eight months we have raised \$122,000 of the estimated \$300,000 that it will cost to build it.

We have purchased the granite from Eagle Granite in Athens, Georgia for an estimated \$85,000. The Wall will be a fifty percent scale replica of the one in our nation's capital. Each granite panel will be twenty inches wide and two inches thick. It will slope downward exactly like the memorial in Washington, DC.

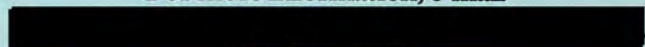
"At its apex, the Punta Gorda Vietnam Memorial will be nearly 6-feet high," William Barnett, sales representative of Eagle Granite said. "It will slope down eighteen inches at each end."

"I figure we still need about \$150,000 to \$175,000," Bill Akins, chairman of the fundraising committee said. "Site work is expensive, such as labor to install the Wall. The landscaping, lighting, trees, walkways, and hanging the granite will cost us from \$15,000 to \$20,000. We have requested grant money but so far we have received nothing. Every penny collected so far have derived from private donations and pounding the pavement."

I feel that The Wall needs a raised Huey (Huey on a stick) as well. I am in the process of acquiring one and plan on dedicating it to the pilots and crewmembers who gave their lives supporting the ground troops in Vietnam.

This memorial will be a permanent reminder of the sacrifices made by those who served. This will serve as a legacy for our many brother pilots, so that the will be remembered for generations to come.

For more information, e-mail



To donate, visit

www.vietnamwallofsouthwestflorida.org.

or call [redacted].

By Richard Madore, Life member

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Vietnam Easter Offensive of 1972 and the SA-7 Missile Threat

By David Anderson

BACKGROUND

As a Signal Corp 1LT and freshly minted UH-1 pilot, I arrived in Vietnam in October 1971 and was assigned to 1st Signal Brigade Aviation Detachment located at Long Thanh North AAF.

Our unit had two missions. Our nine U-21 fixed wings supported all of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand with long haul passenger and small cargo service and when required; airborne FM tactical radio relay. Our five UH-1 and two OH-58 helicopters provided passenger, cargo and emergency repair support to all the signal sites in III and IV Corp area. There were other smaller 1st Signal Brigade helicopter units in Nha Trang (21st Signal BN) that supported II Corp and Da Nang (37th Signal BN) that supported I Corp.

Long Thanh North was primarily a fixed wing base. In early March of 1972, however, the Command Airplane Company (U-21's) moved out and the 362nd Aviation Company of 3rd Brigade 1st CAV (call sign 'United') moved in. They were the last CH-47 unit in country. Also, at about this time, F/79th ARA, 1st CAV ('Blue Max') moved into the northwest side of the field with their AH-1Gs. We finally had some more helicopter pilots at the Officers Club!

On March 23rd, 1972, I started new duties as the 1st Signal Brigade's Aviation Liaison officer. This was an important sounding title for mostly doing flight scheduling and yet another extra duty. We took support requests all day and scheduled U-21 flights all over Southeast Asia and UH-1 support flights in III and IV corp. I was already the unit Safety officer and assistant Operations officer. This meant, I commuted by helicopter to work in the Long Binh headquarters six days a week to fly a desk and only really flew on my day off!



SA-7 "Strella"



1LT Anderson on the flight line

EASTER OFFENSIVE

The Easter offensive officially began on March 30th 1972, when the NVA began to move south over the DMZ. That day also happened to be the six year anniversary of 1st Signal Brigade. Down at Long Binh an Army band was parading in the Brigade HQ parking lot for the ceremony; and the O'Club was prepping for a big party that night. Was I really in Vietnam? I did not know what the NVA was up to, and really didn't care. Owing to the good steak and too much Mateus wine, our group of nine from Long Thanh North, only cared about catching the 22:30 chopper back home. Back in Long Thanh North and ready for bed, we had a "Red" alert for VC in the wire. Seems like the VC only caused these events when I had drank too much! I do not recall what happened but we finally got the all clear and I went to sleep at 02:00.

On the morning of April 3rd, 1972, the 1st Signal Brigade Aviation office received a message from the 37th Signal BN aviation detachment. They had dispatched two UH-1's to evacuate a signal site near Quang Tri, because, capture by the NVA was imminent. The first aircraft off (UH-1H 68-16330) stayed high to avoid the reported SA-7 missiles in the area and their last call to Hue control was they were not able to get a good fix on their position due to heavy cloud cover. Unfortunately, we believe the NVA used a radar guided SAM or a .51 Cal gun to shoot that A/C down. CW3 Larry Zich and CW2 Douglas O'Niell went down south of the signal site. I found out from 1LT Larry Cheek (a flight school classmate) was in the second aircraft dispatched, and they went into the site at low level, extracting as many as possible. The Federal Electric employee, who was running the site, abandoned it and went South on foot with the remaining South Vietnamese soldiers just before the NVA overran their location. They were picked up by Air Force rescue later that day. He related seeing an

orange nose cover (our unit UH-1 identification) and other helicopter wreckage about one mile south of the site. He could not investigate due to the proximity (about five hundred yards) of the enemy troops. The crash site and crew were never found.*

On April 5th, a Cobra from F/79th stationed at Long Thanh North was shot down near Loc Ninh. This was about 100 miles NE of us. The NVA were beginning their push towards An Loc. This was in III Corp and in an area that we supported with our helicopters.

On April 8th, the war got even closer for us. I flew all day and then got 3 hours sleep, before working all night in Operations. I got off duty at 08:00 the next day. We began twenty four hour radio relay operations with the U-21's north of An Loc to support the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN). The NVA were now coming in force towards Saigon.

One of my jobs, as assistant operation officer and because I had a secret crypto clearance, was to reset the mechanical code keys for the secure radios. I had that secret crypto clearance from my short time as a signal platoon leader back in Ft. Gordon. I would



Mr. and Mrs. Anderson FT Rucker 1971

issue the secure gear and monitor the aircraft by radio until they were on station. When the last aircraft returned, I would secure the gear in the safe. In between, I would listen in to the ground forces on the clear traffic channel. I recall several times when someone would transmit the frequencies to use in the clear. It never took long after that for the NVA to block communications on that frequency with Vietnamese music-not high tech, but very effective.

By April 9th, since all the fixed wings guys were flying or sleeping between missions, we only had six helicopter pilots left in the unit to fly all their missions (and pull guard duty) until we got off radio relay. I guess helicopter pilots don't need to sleep! We were on 'Yellow' alert. That meant the club was not open in the evening (a scheme to keep us all sober)! War is Hell! This continued for several weeks.

I recall an April mission to Lai Khe which was being used as a staging area for the battle in An Loc. There were many US and VNAF helicopters coming in and out. I remember that at least one CH-47 was evacuating civilians from An Loc. There seemed to be at least seventy-five Vietnamese civilians, along with many live pigs and chickens that poured out of one CH-47! Many VNAF UH-1s were also ferrying refugees from An Loc. The remaining 1st CAV helicopters were also supporting the ARVN combat assaults from there.

On May 11th, after a short break, we were back on radio relay. The NVA battle to take An Loc was in full swing. As a result, this kept us working all day, sleeping a few hours, and then returning at 02:00 for the rest of the night. I was spending a lot of time in OPs and also flying every two or three days. We were hard up for U-21 pilots and started putting helicopter pilots up as their co-pilots and even radio operators. I even got a couple of hours of co-pilot time in a U-21. About this time we did get a helicopter and crew back from up north. That helped. On their way down from Nha Trang, they took at least one round that lodged itself in the pilot's seat mounting bolt. This grounded the aircraft. The big event of the day, however, was the loss of an F/79th Cobra over An Loc to an SA-7 missile. Again, on May 24th, an F/79th Cobra suffered the same fate.

On May 23rd, I attended a 'Hail and Farewell' party in Long Binh. The Brigade's General, my Brigade boss LTC Watson, and my CO Cpt. Woods were all leaving. This time we made it through dinner, before we got called out early to return to Long Thanh for Radio Relay time again. This idea of working every day sucked.



Mr. and Mrs. Anderson in the Georgia Chapter UH1C, 2013

This kept me working OPS both day and night. I flew eight hours on the 27th in between working in OPS to around 3:00AM on the 28th. All this just to get up a few hours later to fly all day the 28th, then back to Brigade on the 29th for the day.

On June 5th, I went on R&R in Hawaii. I was back on the 13th and flying on the 14th. The battle around An Loc was still in high gear. The nearest Signal site was at Lai Khe and we spent a great deal of time supporting that area. On June 20th, the Blue Max lost two more AH-1s near An Loc. My records show, that I flew 10.1 hours on June 20th. That was my record day! I had many long days both prior to and after that date. I remember the night of June 21st, that the Blue Max lost yet another to an SA-7, but the crew survived. The Cobra had its tail boom blown off and luckily landed upright in small trees which cushioned the crash. The pilot (Mike Brown) was OK and his co-pilot was wounded. We shared our O'club with the Blue Max pilots-always time for a cold beer after an eventful day! The talk at the club that night suggested (jokingly) that they must be ready to turn their wings. Much has been written about this event.

At some point in June, we were tasked with the mission to standby at night in order to drop MK-45 flares during an

attack. I was assigned to do a training class...never mind the fact that I had never dropped a single flare! The only flare mission occurred on June 24th. A Blue Max AH-1 crashed into a river during a nighttime maintenance test flight, killing the pilot. We helped find the crash site.

By July 11th, massive B-52 strikes around An Loc pushed the NVA back. We, however, continued to be busy. The last US combat units stood down in early August. The 1st CAV units left Long Thanh North. That left the 1st Signal Corp Aviation Detachment on its own! My last mission on August 16th was to Lai Khe to deliver an emergency repair specialist to the signal site; and wait for him. This happened in the midst of an NVA rocket attack. The ARVN were lobbing 155mm shells just outside the perimeter and A1-E's were strafing the wire. No matter what some said...The Easter offensive was not over!

More on the SA-7 Threat

I think it was in March or April 1972 when we were finally officially advised of the SA-7 IR missile threat and our UH-1H's were retrofitted with a passive IR suppression kit. The kit consisted of an exhaust scoop to direct the engine exhaust into the blades (aptly called the toilet bowl!) and a heavy metal heat-spreader shield on each side of the engine. We also began discussions about the best defense(s) against this new threat. We flew higher and above clouds, whenever we could. Dead-reckoning and blind descent through cloud cover was scary, but not so bad in the Delta without tall obstacles. Go low and avoid missiles or go high and avoid small arms fire-a dilemma! Our only real defense was for the crew to keep a keen lookout for missiles and .50 cal (stolen US) or .51 cal (Russian) tracers. If you spotted a missile soon enough, you might have enough time to turn towards it and break the lock. As it turned out, the IR suppression system worked OK, but not good enough.

After Vietnam, I was assigned to the US Army Aviation Test Board in Ft. Rucker, AL. My first assignment, in October 1972 was to take a UH-1H with dark IR suppressant paint and a full passive IR retrofit, down to Eglin AFB, Florida to test this setup with recently captured SA-7 optics. I found out that the board had been testing these kits and approved deploying them to Vietnam. The problem, however, was that the system was never fully tested. Because it was better nothing, it was quickly employed against the SA-7 threat in South Vietnam. On the instrumented range, the technicians never broke lock on my helicopter from takeoff to over 5,000 feet.

To get a base line, they asked for me to hover at 3,000 ft. Of course on a hot Florida day, the density altitude was much higher. This is the only time that I experienced settling-with-power. This is a rare aerodynamic problem causing a loss of lift, while maximum power is applied. I dropped like a rock and was finally able to recover at about 1,000 ft...very scary!

The exhaust scoop and paint seemed to work very well. They concluded, however, that the IR signature from reflected heat off the windshield and bubble plexiglass was the problem. Nobody believed that a Chinese or Russian designed IR sensor could be

that good...yet it was. They were all set to paint all the Plexiglas black, however, that left no way for the pilot to see anything. The engineer's response was that we could leave a small square opening unpainted. I told the engineer who was doing the test that he was crazy and if the optics were that good, we were just screwed! That ended the test. We did go on testing many other IR suppression schemes during my time at the board, none of them were one hundred percent effective solution, but they all helped.

** The notes in the VHPA data base on the accident of UH-1H 68-16330 do not match what I recall. Their mission along with a second aircraft was not a routine resupply mission, but it was to extract the men from a signal site near Quang Tri, before the site was lost to the NVA regiment moving south from the DMZ. I was the 1st Signal Brigade Scheduling officer on that day, when we got the word that the 37th Signal BN had dispatched two helicopters to extract the men from Quang Tri and later that one aircraft was lost. We were briefed on the details at 1st Signal Brigade HQ in Long Binh several days later by the Federal Electric employee who had escaped on foot and was rescued by the Air Force. I still do not know if the crash site of 16330 has ever been discovered.*

David Anderson Satellite 33

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The Best Helicopter Door Gunner of all Time Goes to Heaven

The "Best helicopter door gunner of all time" died and went to heaven. St. Peter greeted him there and said "Welcome to heaven! Your terminal assignment orders indicate you were the best door gunner in human history and did wonderful things for your fellow crew members, your unit, and your country your entire life. For that reason I am authorized to let you choose in which part of heaven you would like to spend eternity."

"Well", the gunner said, "I'd love to bunk somewhere where I will never see another helicopter pilot – they are loud, contemptible, and generally a pain in the ass, and I don't want to see, hear, or have to deal with one ever again!"

"No problem, Specialist!" St. Peter replied. "We don't get too many helicopter pilots up here anyway, but just to be sure, I have the perfect place for you – a deserted tropical island where you will never be bothered by them".

The gunner floated off to his island paradise, a happy lad. But about 1 week later he was back at the pearly gates, demanding to see St. Peter. "What's wrong?" St.

Peter asked.

"Well" said the gunner, "You said I would never have to deal with a helicopter pilot again. But, as I was walking along the beach this morning, I looked up and there, swaggering towards me, was this obnoxious looking fellow wearing a flight suit, sporting a sidearm and a 16-function wrist watch, with a girl on each arm, and telling war stories that all started with "There I was...."

St. Peter appeared puzzled and said "Let me check something" then queried his computer to determine the recent whereabouts of the only two helicopter pilots in Heaven. He wasn't coming up with any answers when finally it dawned on him.... "Oh, that wasn't a helicopter pilot you saw this morning... that was God! – Sometimes he likes to dress up and pretend he's a helicopter pilot."

*Submitted By Robert Lanzotti,
President Georgia VHPA Chapter*

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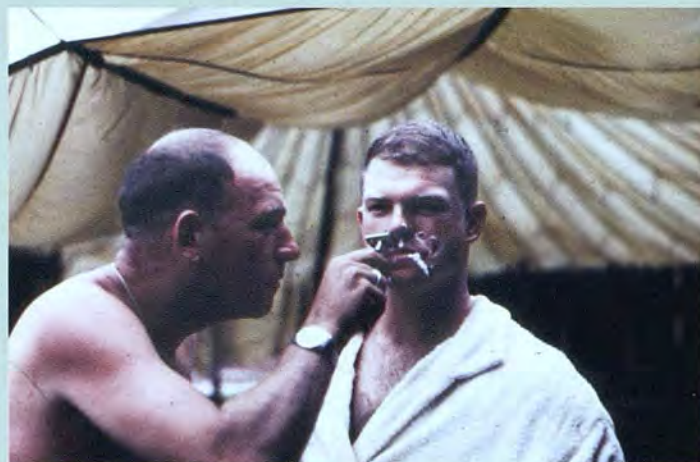
I Plan to Take Advantage of the VHPA's Trip to Arlington National Cemetery

By Mike Law

After participating in the VHPA's Memorial Dedication at Arlington, I plan to visit some very special people currently housed there. As a Christian, I certainly plan to "look them up" after the Resurrection. I'm also something of a long range planner, so I thought it would be cool to mention to them that I also went to their grave site.

The first guy will be Joe Lachu. I wasn't terribly close to him but for a few times. In flight school whenever we had a formation we always lined up in alphabetic order - Lachu, Law. We became acquainted. When an Air Cav Troop was preparing to deploy to Vietnam (late 1967 and early 1968) we became better friends. We both made Captain about the same time. I was the Gun Platoon leader and Joe was in Maintenance. The guy was one funny human being!

I have a fuzzy memory of an event that happened at a VHPA Reunion in the late 1990s. Fuzzy because I don't remember the city or year, but I can play the video of the event with great clarity in my mind to this day. What a hoot! We had done something of a "full court press" to get as many pilots as possible from the original C/7/17th Cav to this reunion. It really worked! I'd guess of the 40+ that deployed together, we had a strong 20 or so attend. Our Troop Commander was a hard charging Major named 'Jack' Frost. Jack came to the reunion wearing what looked to be old horse cavalry trousers. They were basically a light blue with two thin yellow stripes running full length down the outside seam on both sides. He had on some comfortable black



L. Joe Lachu R. VHPA member Robert Botnen

leather boots and possibly a set a short silver metal spurs. About ten of us were standing near one of the hotel's watering holes having a ton of fun telling stories. Out of the corner of my eye I see Joe coming towards us with a bottle of beer in each hand. I hadn't seen him in years, so I raised my arms and started moving toward him. He saw me and gave me a quick sign to cool it by putting one figure across his mouth and I 'stood down'. He calmly walked up to Jack's side but didn't say a word of introduction or salutation to anyone of us. He just hands one of the beers to an old friend saying in a low voice, "Here - hold this a second for me?" Jack is still talking and laughing a mile a minute. He was always the center of attention whenever any of us 'originals' were with him, yet he doesn't notice Joe at his side. Joe surreptitiously opens the flap of Jack's trouser pocket and inserts the mouth of the beer bottle top down into the

opening. Only about half of us could see what Joe was doing! I exploded with laughter and took a step back to avoid any collateral damage. Amazingly enough, Frost doesn't break stride with his part of the highly animated conversation for at least four or five seconds. Suddenly a combination of: cold wet beer running down his right leg, the feel of an emptying beer bottle in his pocket, and Joe hugging him firmly with his left arm while planting a big kiss on Jack's right cheek, breaks the trance! Joe says: "Hey Major he told me to buy you a beer the last time we saw each other in Camp Enari" What a hoot!



Lt. Pedroso's stone showing detailed reverse side



A beautiful tribute to Lt. Pedroso's

The second will be 1LT Carlos Pedrosa. The 7/17th Cav had no less than 108 KIAs during its time in Vietnam including B Troop that was reflagged H/17th and C Troop that became H/10th Cav. I've researched each in some detail. The gunner on the C&C Huey on 26 Oct 1972 told me the following: "LT Pedrosa was a Lift pilot who joined H Troop in late August (He arrived in country on 14 Aug 1972 immediately after flight school). He always flew on the right side. He was a friendly guy and spent a lot of time with the Enlisted men. I remember him sharing his letters with me while I was cleaning the guns on my Huey. He had grown up in a rough section of Queens in New York City. He had a habit of walking out on the flight line and giving a thumbs-up sign to each team as they left for the Area of Operations. I'd suppose we had become lax whenever we staged at Kontum because we didn't use the old revetments located there. We just parked out in the open. While my Huey was lifting off and at about a 20 foot height LT Pedrosa walked out in front of his own AC to give us a thumbs-up. I remember seeing his Cav hat on the front of the Huey. I hear the swish



Marker used for collective remains. Note MOH award

of the in-coming rocket. He must have heard this as well because I watched as he turned to get his hat and started moving for cover then BANG. I literally watched body parts fly. His Huey was blown over on its left side and most of the nose was gone.

The third will be CPT Jon E. Swanson. Jon and I were in Army ROTC together at Colorado State University in the early 1960s. We were in the flight training program for only six guys during our senior year. I completely lost track of him until about ten years ago when the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the VHPA requested that I prepare an article on him. This was for a special presentation that the chapter conducted at Jon's high school, near my house in Denver. Jon and his observer were shot down in a B/1/9th Cav LOH in Cambodia on 26 Feb 1971. Many people witnessed their bravery and dedication while supporting an ARVN mechanized unit in a serious fire fight. In 2002 their remains had only recently been recovered for burial in Arlington and Jon's posthumous award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Rest in Peace brothers

"A little bit of nostalgia"

NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS' OPEN MESS		SOCIAL CALENDAR FEBRUARY 1967					FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
		THERE ARE PRIZES FOR YOU TO WIN AT BINGO !! 2000 to 2200 HOURS	Two For One Nite 1 1830-2000 Hours 1700-2100 Hours Delicious Steak Dinner \$1.75	Special Tonite 2 1/2 Golden Fried Chicken W/Mashed Potatoes, Vegetables and Salad Adults . . . 75c Children . . . 50c (Under 12)	Happy Hour 3 1615-1845 Hours Dance To The Music of "Dale McBride" 2100-0100 Hours	BAR SPECIAL 4 "Whiskey Sour" 25c 1930 to 2100 Let's Dance With Music By "Dale McBride" 2100-0100 Hours		
FAMILY DINNER 5 1200 to 1800 Hours Family Bingo 1600 Hours Dance Music By "Dale McBride" 1900-2300 Hours	HOT ROAST 6 BEEF SANDWICH W/Mashed Potatoes Vegetables & Salad Adults . . . 75c Children . . . 50c (Under 12) So Bring the Family!	WONDERFUL 7 PRIZES TO WIN AT BINGO 2000 to 2200 Hours	TO-NITE 8 1830-2000 Hours Two For One Nite Also Your Delicious Steak Dinner 1700-2100 Hours \$1.75	Tonight's Special 9 For The FAMILY Hamburger Steak W/French Fries Vegetables & Salad Adults . . . 75c Children . . . 50c (Under 12)	It's Happy Hour 10 For You!! 1615 to 1845 Enjoy The Music By "Louie Weaver" 2100-0100 Hours	TODAY'S BAR 11 SPECIAL—25c "Bloody Mary" 1930 to 2100 Music By "Narvel Felts" 2100 to 0100 Hours		
FAMILY DINNER 12 1200 to 15 Hours Bingo—1400 Hours Dancing with Music by "Narvel Felts" 1900-2300 Hours	NCO CLUB 13 SPECIAL Barbecued Spare ribs W/French Fries Vegetables & Salad Adults . . . 75c Children 50c . . . (Under 12)	You Can Win 14 MONEY or MERCHANDISE PRIZES At Your Friendly Bingo Tonight 2000 to 2200 Hours	Delicious Steak 15 Dinners \$1.75 1700 to 2100 Hours Two For One Nite 1830 to 2000 Hours	DON'T FORGET 16 "Wayne King and His Orchestra" 2000 to 2400	Happy Hour 17 1615-1815 Hours —ALSO— Dance To The Music of "The Classics" 2100 to 0100 Hours	SCREWDRIVER 18 Is Our Bar Special For Today—25c 1930 to 2100 Enjoy Music By "Bob Garber" 2100 to 0100 Hours		
FAMILY DINNER 19 1200 to 1800 Hours Family Bingo 1600 Hours Informal Dance With Music By "Dale McBride"	Enjoy the Monday 20 SPECIAL Chicken Fried Beef Steaks W/Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable and Salad Adults . . . 75c Child 50c (Under 12)	BINGO 21 Prizes For You! At Bingo Tonight! At Your NCO Club 2000 to 2200 Hours	Every Wednesday 22 Two For One Nite 1830 to 2000 Hours —Also— Steak Dinners 1700 to 2100 Hours \$1.75 Each	Country Fried 23 Steak W/Mashed Potatoes, Vegetables and Salad Adults . . . 75c Children . . . 50c (Under 12) Bring The Family*	Enjoy Your 24 Happy Hour With "The Top Hats" 2100-0100 Music Enjoyment—2100-0100 Happy Hours—1615-1845	BAR SPECIAL 25 "Tom Collins" 25c 1930 to 2100 Hours Music By "Shades of Brass" 2100 to 0100 Hours		
BINGO 26 1400 Hours Dinner for the Family 1200-1300 Hours Informal Dance With Music By "The Del Reys"	Dinner Special 27 Adults . . . 75c Children 50c (Under 12) Liver & Onions With Home Fried Potatoes, Vegetables and Salad	PRIZES 28 For The WINNERS! AT BINGO 2000 to 2200 Hours						

An Update on the 32nd 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 32nd Annual Reunion in Washington, DC from Tuesday, August 25th through Saturday, August 30th, 2015 at The Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. We have a wonderful Reunion planned for you, your family, and your friends! By way of a status report, here are **SIX** points for your consideration.

First: THANKS to all who have registered early and reserved your hotel room! For the rest of you, Please don't procrastinate!

As you can see in the Morning Report on www.vhpa.org, almost 500 members or subscribers are registered. Including guests, we expect almost 1,000 adults. We have signed a contract addendum with the Marriott Wardman Park to add over 400 room nights to the block. Most of these are for the "shoulder nights" (prior to 25 Aug and after 29 Aug). We'd like to think that because of this good room rate, folks are coming earlier and staying later to take in more of the sights. As of 23 Mar, **75% of the VHPA's room block is taken.**

Second: Status of the tours.

Most of the "small event" tours (meaning they are capacity controlled for one or two buses) are sold out or will be by 30 April. For example, 2 of the 6 Memorial Collections, 2 of the 4 Monuments by Water, 2 of the 4 Mt. Vernon and the National Archives tours are sold out. As you read this, the Kennedy Center tour will also be sold

out. Some good news – we've expanded the Gettysburg tour from one to six buses. The cap is now at 280.

Third: Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum near Dulles.

Last week I visited the museum with the caterer chosen for the 27 Aug event. My last visit was during the VHPA 2006 Reunion. WOW!! Be prepared to be impressed! Three hangars are FULL versus the wonderful but some-

what sparse collection that I recall. You have three options for dining locations: alongside the iconic SR-71 Blackbird, behind the rocket nozzles of the Space Shuttle Discovery, or near the Vietnam Era helicopters. In addition to the hundreds of aircraft, rockets, and space craft, you will have options to visit with docents in each area (or not), to watch the IMAX movie (or not), to visit the gift shop (or not). My favorite is a second story view of the entire Restoration Hangar. They have Flak-Bait (google 'Flak Bait Smithsonian') completely disassembled. If I understand it correctly, this Martin B-26B Marauder

sustained more battle damage (yet was repaired and remained operational) than any other bomber in WW II. Please look for specially prepared VHPA maps and guides we'll have available at the Marriott to help you to: (1) not get lost! (2) be able to quickly find where you want to eat, and (3) know exactly where the exhibits you are interested in are located.

Fourth: Your Legacy ~ A Free video of YOUR ORAL HISTORY!!

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS REUNION

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WASHINGTON D C

AUGUST 28, 2015

With all my heart, I beg each of you to seriously consider visiting with Martin Madert (770-628-0024) of the Witness to War. www.witnesstowar.org. This organization is all about **preserving the stories of combat veterans**. Their website says, "Witness to War has performed over 1,500 interviews and currently performs over 30 new interviews a month, preserving stories that might otherwise be lost." At zero cost to you or to the VHPA and with no commercial goal in sight, Martin will setup his video and audio recording equipment during this Reunion as he did last year in Louisville. A normal interview lasts about 60 minutes. It costs you nothing save time. After the recording is processed in their Norcross, GA office, you receive two FREE DVD copies of the interview. A copy will also be donated to the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. While you can sign-up for an interview slot at the Reunion, it is best to call ahead to make the reservation. Please do so.. Recording your history is important!!!

Fifth: the VHPA Reunion Committee really needs VOLUNTEERS – please and thanks.

We already can't thank Don Agren, President of the Virginia Old Dominion Chapter, and the Chapter leadership enough. They have 'taken up' where the Ohio River LZ Chapter left off last year. Please go to www.vhpa.org and see the "Volunteer schedule" just to the right of the Reunion logo. It contains a "Duty Roster" listing dates, tasks, number of people needed, etc. Some are easy – Bus Captain on a tour bus. Some are critical such as redeeming T-Shirt tickets or passing out packets to those who preregistered. We update this roster about every two weeks, so you can see where we still need help. Please call Melissa Allen at HQ (Mondays and Fridays are her normal days or send her a message at ReunionInfo@vhpa.org). THANKS!!

Sixth, 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 lists the attendees. Here's a common mistake: I run an article in The Aviator telling everyone about our flight class reunion. When I get to the Reunion nothing is scheduled!!! Dah! You have to communicate with Melissa if you want a Mini-Reunion room. See the Mini Reunion Request Form on the Reunion Information page just to the right of the Reunion Logo. Please, please invite your friends and plan on having a good time.

In closing, please look to www.vhpa.org for all your Reunion needs! This VHPA Reunion follows our pattern of having literally a "hundred moving parts." 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, then the Reunion Information page. For example, see the Everything you need to know about the 2015 reunion line. The underlined and bolded "2015 reunion" is a link. Double clicking on it lets you see the entire document.

Questions or Comments...?

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



The Witness to War Foundation will be attending the 2015 VHPA Reunion in Washington D.C. to record your stories at no cost to you.

Participants will receive:

- 3 Free DVD Copies
- Library of Congress Archival
- Publication on our Website

For more information, please visit www.WitnessToWar.org and contact Martin Madert at 770-628-0024 or Martin@WitnessToWar.org



Bring your Existing Lanyard to the DC Reunion

Lanyards cost the VHPA approximately \$2.50 to \$3.00 each. Reusing them saves our Association money. It costs Membership about \$3.00 every time we send out a Membership Packet in an attempt to add a potential member to our



organization. The Reunion Chairman, Mike Law, expects over two thousand attendees at the DC Reunion. If half of those reuse their lanyards we can devote over \$2500 in savings for recruiting efforts. In addition, it's a great way to keep up with your Reunion pins.

Please bring your lanyards and reuse them.

Official Schedule

Visit our website at: www.VHPA.org for the latest details and to register for the reunion

Time	Event
Monday, August 24	
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration & T-shirt Pickup
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Registration & Tour Desk
Tuesday, August 25	
7:30am - 8:00pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration & T-shirt Pickup
7:30 am - 12:00 pm	Registration & Tour Desk
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Memorial Collections Tour #1
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Pentagon Tour #1
10:00 am - 5:00 pm	Mall & Monuments Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club open
11:15 am - 2:15 pm	Memorial Collections Tour #2
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Pentagon Tour # 2
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Registration & Tour Desk
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Memorial Collections Tour #3
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Café Paradiso
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Lebanese Taverna
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Open City Diner
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Petit Plats
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Registration & Tour Desk
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Early Bird Gathering w/Entertainment
Wednesday, August 26	
7:30am - 8:00pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration & T-shirt Pickup
7:30 am - 9:00 am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast w/Speaker #1 SGT Barry McAlpine
7:30 am - 12:00 pm	Registration Desk
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Memorial Collections Tour #4
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Gettysburg Tour
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Pentagon Tour #3
9:00 am - 3:00 pm	Mt. Vernon #1
9:30 am - 11:30 am	Writers Presentation
9:30 am - 3:30 pm	Museum of the Marine Corps @ Quantico #1
11:00 am - 5:00 pm	Mt. Vernon #2
11:15 am - 2:15 pm	Memorial Collections Tour #5
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Pentagon Tour # 4
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Registration
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Memorial Collections Tour #6
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Café Paradiso
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Lebanese Taverna
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Open City Diner
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Group Dinners @ Petit Plats
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	1st Time Attendee Reception
7:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Welcome Reception w/ Entertainment

Of Events

Time	Event
Thursday, August 27	
6:30 am - 3:00 pm	Golf Outing - Andrews South Golf Course
7:00 am - 12:00 pm	Registration Desk
7:30 am - 9:00 am	VHPA Legacy Breakfast
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration & T-shirt Pickup
9:00 am - 3:00 pm	Monuments By Water Cruise # 1 via Alexandria
9:00 am - 3:00 pm	Mt. Vernon #3
9:30 am - 1:00 pm	National Archives College Park Tour
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Monuments By Water Cruise # 2 via Georgetown
11:00 am - 5:00 pm	Mt. Vernon #4
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Registration Desk
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Quilters Show & Tell
5:30 pm - 11:30 pm	Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Dinner
Friday, August 28	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast w/Speaker #3
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:30 am - 12:30 pm	Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Dedication
9:00 am - 3:00 pm	Monuments By Water Cruise #3 via Alexandria
9:30 am - 3:30 pm	National Museum of the Marine Corps @ Quantico #2
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Monuments By Water Cruise # 4 via Georgetown
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
5:00 pm - 11:00 pm	US Marine Corp Evening Parade
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Double Feature Movie Night "The last Days in Vietnam" & "Soldiers' Sanctuary"
Saturday, August 29	
7:30 am - 8:45 am	Pre-Memorial Breakfast
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Memorial Service
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting
10:00 am - 2:00 pm	Spouse/Guest Event at Kennedy Center for the Arts
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm	Presidents Recognition
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Chapter President Meeting
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-reg & T-shirts
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 - Will be open from 1:00-5:00 pm on August 25th.

The hours are 9:00 am-5:00 pm on August 26, 27,

and 28, and from 12:30 pm to 10:00 pm on August 29th

Mall & Monuments Shuttle will run August 26 through August 28 10:am-5:00pm

Mall & Monuments Shuttle will run August 29 12:00pm-5:00pm

The O'Club - Open from 11:00am - 11:00pm on August 25 through August 28,
open 12:30pm -11:00pm on August 29

VHPA'S 32nd Annual Reunion ~ Washington, DC ~ August 25-30, 2015

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

For information and to register online: www.vhpa.org or mail completed form to:

VHPA Headquarters, 2100 North Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050

Toll Free: (800) 505-VHPA (8472)

Email: HQ@vhpa.org

Fax: (817) 200-7309

Member name:	DOB:	Member No:
Address:	Telephone:	Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
City:	State:	Zip: Address Change? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Email address:	Phone:	
Spouse name:	City:	DOB: 21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> yes Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB: 21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> yes Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB: 21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> yes Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB: 21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> yes Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB: 21 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> yes Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes

EVENT	DATE	NUMBER	PRICE	TOTAL
Registration through 6/30/2015 **			\$ 25 EA	
Registration for under age 21 **			\$ 15 EA	
Registration 7/1/2015 and after			\$ 35 EA	
Mall & Monuments Shuttle	Aug 25-29		\$ 26 EA	
Memorial Collections Tour #1	Aug 25	Sold Out	\$ 26 EA	Sold Out
Pentagon Tour #1	Aug 25		\$ 17 EA	
Memorial Collections Tour #2	Aug 25		\$ 26 EA	
Pentagon Tour #2	Aug 25		\$ 17 EA	
Memorial Collections Tour #3	Aug 25	Sold Out	\$ 26 EA	Sold Out
Early Bird Gathering w/Entertainment	Aug 25		N/C EA	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast	Aug 26		\$ 22 EA	
Breakfast w/Speaker #1 SGT Barry McAlpine	Aug 26		\$ 22 EA	
Memorial Collections Tour #4	Aug 26		\$ 26 EA	
Gettysburg Tour	Aug 26		\$ 48 EA	
Pentagon Tour #3	Aug 26		\$ 17 EA	
Mt. Vernon #1	Aug 26	Sold Out	\$ 52 EA	Sold Out
Writers Presentation	Aug 26		N/C EA	
Museum of the Marine Corps Quantico #1	Aug 26		\$40 EA	
Mt. Vernon #2	Aug 26		\$52 EA	
Memorial Collections Tour #5	Aug 26		\$26 EA	
Pentagon Tour #4	Aug 26		\$17 EA	
Memorial Collections Tour #6	Aug 26		\$26 EA	
1st Time Attendee Reception	Aug 26		N/C EA	
Welcome Reception w/ Entertainment	Aug 26		N/C EA	
Golf Outing - Andrews South Golf Course	Aug 27		\$121 EA	
VHPA Legacy Breakfast	Aug 27		\$22 EA	
Water Cruise # 1 via Alexandria	Aug 27	Sold Out	\$38 EA	Sold Out
Mt. Vernon #3	Aug 27	Sold Out	\$52 EA	Sold Out
National Archives College Park Tour	Aug 27	Sold Out	\$26 EA	Sold Out
Water Cruise # 2 via Georgetown	Aug 27	Sold Out	\$38 EA	Sold Out
Mt. Vernon #4	Aug 27		\$52 EA	
Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Dinner	Aug 27		\$143 EA	
Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Dinner-Child	Aug 27		\$100 EA	
Breakfast w/Speaker #3	Aug 28		\$22 EA	
ANC Memorial Dedication	Aug 28		\$26 EA	
Water Cruise #3 via Alexandria	Aug 28		\$38 EA	
Museum of the Marine Corps Quantico #2	Aug 28		\$40 EA	
Water Cruise #4 via Georgetown	Aug 28		\$38 EA	
US Marine Corp Evening Parade	Aug 28		\$40 EA	
Movie Night - Double Feature	Aug 28		N/C EA	
Pre-Memorial Service Breakfast	Aug 29		\$22 EA	
Memorial Service	Aug 29		N/C EA	
Spouse/Guest Event at Kennedy Center for the Arts	Aug 29		\$55 EA	
Closing Banquet - Adult	Aug 29		\$75 EA	
Closing Banquet - Child	Aug 29		\$19 EA	
Non-Registered Guest at Banquet	Aug 29		\$85 EA	
Total From Sidebars				
VHPA Dues (if not dues current) *** 1 year @ \$36 or 3 years @ \$99			\$36/\$99	
Life Membership (Call HQ for exact amount) **				
2015 CD Directory Fee *** (# of years x \$10)			\$10 EA	
2015 Paper Directory Fee *** (# of years x \$15)			\$15 EA	
GRAND TOTAL				

Aug 25 Group Dinners	
Café Pardadiso @ \$62	\$
Lebanese Taverna @ \$56	\$
Open City Diner @ \$58	\$
Petit Plats @ \$62	\$

Aug 26 Group Dinners	
Café Pardadiso @ \$62	\$
Lebanese Taverna @ \$56	\$
Open City Diner @ \$58	\$
Petit Plats @ \$62	\$

Banquet Meal	
___ Beef ___ Fish ___ Pasta	
Banquet Seating Preference	

___ S @ \$18 ___ M @ \$18 ___ L @ \$18	
___ XL @ \$18 ___ XXL @ \$19 ___ XXXL @ \$20	
T-Shirts Total \$ _____	

*** Voluntary Contributions:	
Gold Star Sponsorship @ \$22	\$
Membership Fund @ \$10	\$
Reunion Sponsorship @ \$10	\$
Scholarship Fund @ \$10	\$
Vietnam War Museum @ \$10	\$

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 VHPA website: www.vhpa.org

REFUND GUARANTEE FEE
10% of Total Events \$ _____

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CANCELLATION
DATE IS CLOSE OF BUSINESS, CST
FRIDAY, 14 AUGUST 2015

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT	
MC/Visa # _____	
Expiration 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 your completed form

* Date of Birth must be provided for each person registered. Certain tours require this info.

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

*** Denotes a contribution, donation or fee that is not refundable as part of any cancellation process.

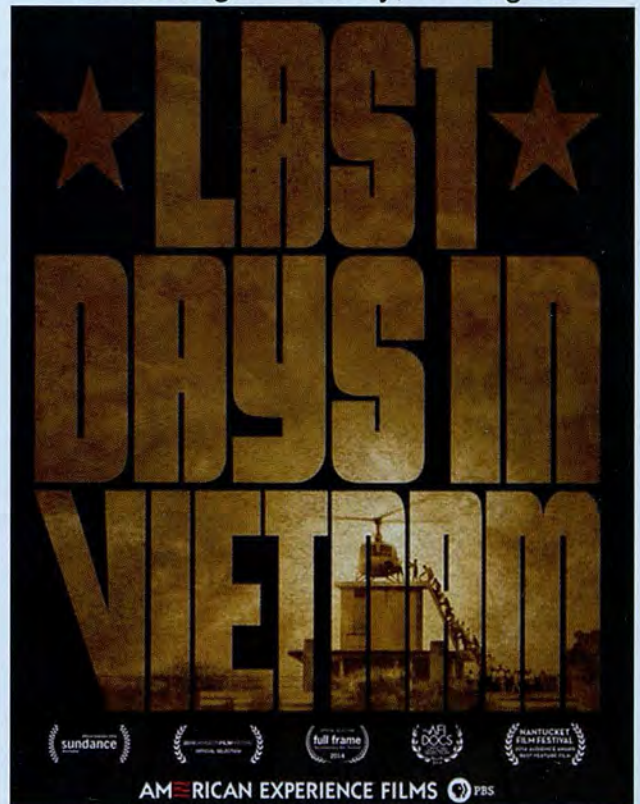
Due to publication lead times, the status of tour availability may have changed in the interim. Please consult the VHPA.org website for the most current information.

Film presentations during the 2015 VHPA Reunion in Washington

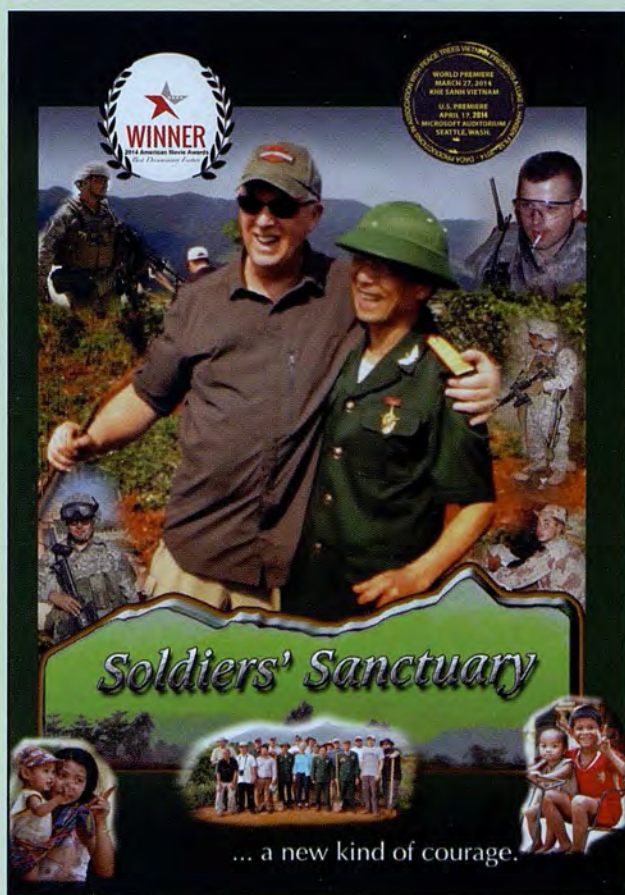
Friday, August 28

Double Feature Movie Night
"The last Days in Vietnam" &
"Soldiers' Sanctuary"

Movie Night ~ Friday, 28 August



VHPA Member Gerry Berry will introduce
this PBS film and answer questions



This 45 minute documentary is about a group of US veterans of the Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam wars who travel together to Khe Sanh in March 2012. They meet with People's Army veterans and together place incense in honor of fallen friends and plant a grove of Avocado trees on the old combat base. Luke L. Hansen is an actor and director with films promoted by IMDb (Internet Movie Database). He is the son of VHPA Member Dave L. Hansen. Dave will introduce the film as he did at the VHPA Reunion in Louisville. PeaceTrees VietNam, who have attended many VHPA Reunions, was a big help in the production of this film that won the 2014 Documentary Feature section in the American Movie Awards.

PeaceTrees VietNam is a Seattle-based humanitarian organization working in Central Vietnam to assist those whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by the explosive remnants of war. They sponsor demining and mine risk education, survivor assistance, and community building projects, such as kindergartens and libraries, in partnership with the people of Quang Tri and Quang Binh Provinces. 1LT Daniel Cheney was a US Army helicopter pilot killed during the Vietnam War in 1969. Dan's mother, Rae Cheney, and sister, Jerilyn Brusseau, committed themselves to honoring his memory. When relations were reestablished with the country in 1995, Jerilyn and friends realized this commitment by traveling to Vietnam on a mission of peace and compassion. Their idea was simple: Clear the land of the scars and remnants of war. Plant trees and fresh hope in their place. That was the beginning of PeaceTrees VietNam.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF AN RLO

It's been 40 plus years: some memories have faded; some have come back and some have changed American lives. I've long stopped driving with my knees and usually use the windshield wipers when it rains. I look at Vietnam as the one opportunity to do a job that I truly enjoyed. As it is with most pilots, I loved to fly. I flew with C/ 158 101st and later with B 101/101st. The conflict was winding down, and I considered myself pretty lucky. Most of the flying occurred without taking much hostile fire. A majority of my missions occurred during the first month in-country. Having read various accounts of the flying experiences in Vietnam, I realized that not much had been said about the day-to-day experiences. Here then is my attempt to recall those aspects of my tour.

Before arriving in country

My experience, like many others began in ROTC, then on to infantry Officer Basic at Ft Benning, followed by Primary Helicopter training at Ft Wolters and lastly, Ft Rucker. At Ft Wolters it became obvious that everyone didn't make it through training. My roommate and friend from the Officer Basic course was one of them. Upon graduation from Rucker, I found myself headed for Ft Hood. Mine was one of the first classes after which most graduates received orders for RVN.

Though I didn't realize it at the time, the Vietnam experience began at Ft Hood. As XO (Executive Officer) of a rifle company, I dealt with messy situations involving returning soldiers. Most soldiers spent a short time in the unit and then left the Army. In six months, my company saw eight-hundred and ten soldiers pass through the rifle company consisting of two -hundred and ten men. Some soldiers had severe drug problems and some had kept their Army-issued weapons from Vietnam. We had .45s but the Army in its great wisdom wouldn't issue ammo with the weapons. I had to bluff in order to maintain control. While I was battalion OD (Officer of the Day), a soldier walked into Headquarters twirling a .45 on his finger. I was able to send three of my staff out of the building and then spent the next five hours with the soldier. He eventually came down from his drug high and went to sleep. Years later I realized I had been a hostage and that the experience of spending five hours with a soldier holding a .45 on me wasn't just another day at work. I learned a very valuable lesson which gave me the ability to resolve life threatening situations with a positive outcome while working in law enforcement in civilian life. That is: never piss-off a guy holding a gun on you. My orders for Vietnam arrived in the fall of 1971. I spent a few days at home and reported to McCord AFB.

Arriving in Country

While at McCord Air Force base, the dangerous reality of my destination was underscored. I met an Air Force pilot that had been in the same unit as a friend who was killed in action in Vietnam. The Air Force Major related the unreleased details of the pilot's death. The next morning I was crammed on a 707 for the next twenty-three hours, enroute to Cam Ranh Bay with short stops in Anchorage and Tokyo. The trip was short, consisting of one night at McCord, a one day flight to Vietnam, and one short day at Cam Ranh Bay. On the next day, I was airborne in a C-130 headed to

Camp Evans and the 101st Airborne. As I crossed the runway to the C/158 housing area, I picked up nickel and dime coin tubes. I asked the escort "What are these?" He answered, "Heroin-just dump 'em on the ground". The heroin was another weapon in this war. I received my in country flight orientation/check out on the next day. Our AO (Area of Operation) consisted of the northernmost twenty miles of South Vietnam, to include the DMZ. The standardization ride soon revealed some 'differences' from my training. The autorotation to the runway was typical. The IP cut the power while we were over the jungle, saying: "If you look at where we are, the only place to land is far beyond normal autorotation glide distance". He continued, "Here, we can't do everything the way you learned it". He further explained: "We need to reduce rotor speed to extend our glide"; this, while pointing out a clearing in the distance. As the rotor slowed and the low RPM warning blared in our helmets, the instructor reached up and calmly pulled the low speed warn-



Typhoon damage at Camp Evans

ing breaker; stating: "That noise is annoying." After that extended period of listening to the low RPM warning, it never seemed the same after that orientation.

Actual missions began the following day. We were short of pilots in the 101st. As a result flight time maximums were waived. We resupplied long range patrols, FOs (forward observers) and ferried both U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers. Some days were twelve to thirteen hours long. Most missions were pretty standard, such as moving soldiers or supplies to LZ's or from PZ's. Occasionally, we made trips to Da Nang though the Hai Van pass with VIPs. Of course all missions started with the pre-flight inspection. I can clearly recall the day that we changed ships, because I found the security wire missing from the Jesus nut! That incident definitely insured that my pre-flight inspections were very thorough.

Experiences

Soon after arriving in country, I was introduced into the 'hover hole'. In our AO hover holes were about two- hundred feet down into vegetation cleared by C-4. The door gunner and crew chief were crucial in clearing the main rotor from contacting trees. I picked up an FO on the top of a moun-



The streets of Hue



1LT Lauren Heerman

Flying low level in the DMZ north of Quang Tri was a real adrenalin rush. The body of the helicopter was placed in the trees with the skids only inches above the ground and the rotor above the trees. We passed the hostiles so quickly that they didn't have time to react. The "Oh my God" factor soon came into play when going into an LZ while passing another aircraft leaving. Only one route could be used going in and out. The rotors passed each other only inches apart. Another "Oh my God" incident occurred when the air around us was sucked out of the copter from the shockwave of the shells passing overhead. An additional "Oh, s***!" was warranted the first time I observed the door gunners walking on the skids without safety harnesses.

When I think of crazy missions someone thought up, I can recall a day we sat at a location near/in the DMZ waiting for orders. Four helicopters sat at that location for over half an hour. We had on flack vests though the outside temperature was 125 degrees. We never shut down because we needed to depart quickly if / when the radar unit caught artillery rounds being fired.

Songs of certain artists from the 70s bring back memories of an eventful day when we had a seventy plus ship insertion. We were spread out across the sky from one horizon to the other on the south edge of the DMZ. About halfway to the LZ one chopper dropped out of the daisy chain to land on a hilltop then shortly after returned to the formation. We found out later it was a bathroom break—was he in trouble! A short time later there was a significant "Oh my god" moment, when an Air Force F-4 fighter, heading north, streaked low level through our daisy chain. As we approached the LZ, cobras from D/158 were prepping the area of two-hundred foot trees causing the trees to fall like match sticks as the 20 MM sparklers hit. While closing on the LZ, the music on one of the four radios we were monitoring began to blend with the chatter of the door gunner's M-60 on the right side returning NVA fire. The song "Staying Alive" takes me back to those times.

tain in the DMZ. The PZ was less than a foot wide at the top of that mountain. I fondly recall the FO's face reflecting the joy of leaving an unhealthy location; much like the joy of the grunts when they received their supplies or were extracted.

I recall my experience with Agent Orange less fondly. After a quick trip to Quang Tri a ground crew installed a spray rig. Off we went to the fire bases in the mountains of the DMZ. The spraying went well until we had to circle around the firebase, resulting in rotor wash covering the helicopter and crew. For the remainder of the mission, each pilot took a turn leaning with his head out of the side window. Using our windshield wipers would ruin the windshield, for which, we had no replacement. We breathed the spray and it invaded our eyes. When asked about my Chloracne I state "It's a souvenir of Vietnam."

We took a lunch break, whenever possible, at the Quang Tri Mac V compound. We were the "Quang Tri bunch for lunch" flight crews. Their food was great if we could find a place to park the helicopter. In the dry season we parked in the rice patties.

During my tour, two typhoons hit our area. On the occasion of the first one, no helicopter flew until it was over. Afterwards, crews made many spectacular rescues of Vietnamese caught in the flooding. My additional duty kept me busy during this storm. I did fly, however, when the second one hit. In the middle of that typhoon a bird colonel was ordered from Camp Eagle to Da Nang. The weather in Da Nang was sunny but we had 105 mph winds and sheets of rain. Our weather was 0/0 - we couldn't see past the windshield to the nose of the helicopter. The good part about the flight was we didn't have to worry about any other aircraft in the air. We ascended to 100 feet, took a heading off the radio beacon at Phu Bi and flew toward

the ocean. About forty-five minutes later we reached the beach in sunny skies (the difference in temperature between land and the ocean had cleared the storm). We took a right turn and followed the beach to Da Nang. We couldn't return that day. Returning the next day, we enjoyed a beautiful photo op of the green lush vegetation of the Hai Van pass to Hue.

Just as on Thanksgiving and Christmas, I was assigned to fly on the day of the Bob Hope show. On that day I was off the ground early, headed to resupply grunts in the hills and jungle providing security for the show. After a couple of sorties, we picked up Donut Dollies; taking them to sites of the security soldiers. We dropped Donut Dollies off with special meals for the soldiers, returning them later. There were two groups of Donut Dollies so we had a leap frog pattern going back and forth. On one of the trips back to Eagle for meals and fuel, I did get to see the Bob Hope show—from two miles away! But life was good, even on a thirteen hour flying day. Every time I went into a LZ or PZ that day I thought how blessed I was to be a pilot, while increasing my respect for the soldier on the ground.

Missions at night were colorful with green tracers flying into

the night. (A good reason we never flew with marker lights.) A flare was dropped every two to three minutes for two hours. After the two hours we landed for refueling and reloading flares. Then it was back over the firefight to drop flares for another two hours. Fireworks have never been the same after the view of the green and red tracers at night. Flight during the night in the mountains took on special meaning after a night mission to pick up North Vietnamese shell fragments at a fire-base on top of a mountain near/in the DMZ. On a night with no moon and near total darkness we leveled out approximately 1000 feet over the height of the tallest mountain west of Quang Tri then headed west on the heading to the fire-

base. Then we shut off all our lights including all instrument lights to prevent receiving ground fire. Flying what we hoped was straight and level, we continued until we saw the strobe from the fire-base. We then landed at the firebase, picked up the still hot shell fragments



North Wall of the Hue Citadel

and headed back to have the fragments analyzed.

Living Conditions

I lived in a former Marine housing area, which was better than most housing. The food was acceptable but I remembered rations prepared by a Lt. that was a phenomenal chef. Entertainment was what we made of it. The Korean girls in their bikinis at our company officers' club still bring a warm chuckle to my heart. Black Label beer still makes me consider if I ever want to drink beer again. We didn't have much water, and no ice, but we had an abundant supply of hard alcohol. One morning after a night of consuming too much Scotch, I hugged the mast with both arms to pre-flight the helicopter. Thank God, we were weathered in that day and couldn't fly. Near the end of my stay in Vietnam I went on R&R to Thailand. There were so many pilots in the unit we were running out of places to stay, so getting away on R&R was easy.

One of the happy but yet sad times in Vietnam was the last night before the Phoenix, C/ 158 stood down. We were all going different assignments the next day, so together we burned the plaque of the Phoenix, hoping that like the Phoenix, we would rise together from the ashes another day.

Additional Duty

Initially, because I was a RLO (real live officer), I had an additional duty as the Assistant Mess Officer for the 158th Aviation Battalion. Later I became the Mess Officer. At that time the soldiers of the 101st at Camp Evans were not allowed off the compound except for missions. To obtain necessary food and supplies, I had to take convoys between Evans and Eagle at Phu Bi (Hue). When the roads were closed, I hitched a ride via helicopter to Eagle, walked to the supply buildings, and obtained a supply truck to put the supplies on a helicopter pad. I then asked every helicopter pilot coming into the pad if he had room to take the supplies to Evans. I got the supplies back to Evans every time. One of the highlights of the Vietnam experience was when the mess hall had the honor of serving Thanksgiving dinner to the orphans of the area. The happy faces and warm hearts of the children hold a very special place in my memory. The chow hall approached "Mission Impossible" as we came to or imminent stand down. The staffing for pilots and crew stayed about the same but support staff was reduced. The mess staff was cut to twenty to thirty percent. The mess Sgt. that worked for me performed miracles, serving twenty or more hours a day. It was an honor to work with a man who somehow kept it all together. As we were standing down from the many years of the unit's time in Vietnam, I discovered I would be held accountable for all the equipment shortfalls through the years. The Sgt. gave me insight to the matter gained from years of service in the Army: "Don't worry about it. I've stood down before. It will all be buried along with all the records." He was right. The Sgt. also gave me advice that I have used almost every day of my life - "Don't sweat the small stuff."

One of the more interesting events while I was the mess officer occurred during the first typhoon. In true pilot fashion, we naturally convened a typhoon party for which we arranged our lawn chairs out in the storm. We had been enjoying ourselves for a considerable amount of time when we looked up to see what appeared to be sparklers coming toward us. As the sparklers got closer we realized the sparklers were sheets of tin. The entire helicopter hanger roof had come off at once! The sparklers headed our way were about to cut us in half. We all dived behind a concrete light pole as the pieces of tin hit. We then opted to retreat into the Officers' Club. A short time later my mess Sgt. appeared with a request. He asked me, "Would you steal the brigade post office?" We had been ordered to build a permanent mess hall because the one we had consisted of tents. The Army left one thing out...it didn't supply us with any materials to build the mess hall. The Brigade post office had already been damaged in the typhoon. The post office would be replaced immediately while the mess hall would not receive any material. A short time later a crew of

men and trucks carefully disassembled the collapsed post office, placed it in trucks in the middle of typhoon rain and wind and trucked it away to repurpose it as a mess hall. There was only one pause in our project when a jeep passed through; it was my CO! Thank God he chose not to see us. Several weeks later with help from 158th maintenance staff and the material maintenance obtained, the chow hall was complete. I was blessed to be out flying the day the Brigade commander came to inspect our miracle mess hall. I don't know how I could have answered him with a straight face if asked where the material came from nor how we had such a great mess Sgt. Too bad I can't put this on my resume, "I stole a post office."

When C/158 stood down I worked with the South Vietnam Air Force, helping them acquire the unneeded US equipment that their pilots needed. In appreciation, two Vietnamese Air Force Officers took another pilot officer (who hadn't been off compound for eleven months) and me on a tour of Hue. We went through the city, ate at a Vietnamese restaurant and then toured the Citadel where few were allowed. It was a special day.

Personal

The personal side of the Vietnam Experience I am sure mirrors many of those who served. A short time after I received orders to Vietnam, my then pregnant wife decided she had to move on. While in Vietnam, my estranged wife at six months along lost the baby. I got a "Dear John" letter. A day before I left Vietnam, I was told I was going home and would be discharged from the Army. Twenty-four hours later I was on a 707 to McCord. I stayed overnight at McCord and the next morning I had an exit physical; which confirmed I was breathing and hadn't been shot. Only seventy-two sleepless hours after I was told I was going home, I was a civilian. I made a short trip to San Francisco to see the parents of my college roommate, who was an Air Force Pilot, and get some much needed sleep. A day later I flew to the Southeast US by redeye 747 to sign divorce papers which my ex had filed while I was away. I said good bye to my son then I flew to my home in the Rocky Mountain region. When I got home, my parents were visiting another state so I went off to graduate school. I signed up for the GI bill and found a part time job. A short time later I received a letter from the Department of the Army asking if I would come back. The discharge orders were written in Vietnam. Although the Army didn't say it had made a mistake, one can easily arrive at that conclusion. I didn't want to go back—I had started a new life and wasn't going down that road.

I covered the everyday, the unique, and special Vietnam Experiences but we know they weren't all good. Some memories we carry with us every moment of every day. I remember putting the collective down and shutting down

the helicopter after a mission and not being able to hold my feet still on the floor of the helicopter because of the adrenaline rush. I knew I had met Dr. Death that day but he didn't take me with him. My heart cries when I read the names of classmates, pilots and crew killed in action, in the Republic of South Vietnam. I remember the flight classmate on his third tour; two tours in Special Forces, and the third as front seat cobra for only one month. I remember the high school friend who was KIA at Khe Sanh, the place where things weren't that good for me either. I remember the mission at Khe Sanh when we were chase ship of a three ship Long Range Patrol insertion. Not a shot fired during the insertion, yet we were going in to pick up wounded with both pilots on the controls, just in case, only thirty seconds after the last ship left. We increased the airspeed above red line to get the wounded to the field hospital a few minutes sooner; maybe it saved their lives. I remember the crew chief and door gunner trying to stop the bleeding. And then there were times that haunt me unaware, coming into the PZ and having a body bag come in. I don't talk about it but it will always be there.

We are all older now and I recall my Vietnam Experience because I have the time to sit back and remember. As a pilot I realize that my experiences were summed up one day dur-

ing a job interview conducted by two Vietnam grunts. They marveled and thanked me for being a pilot and for the pilots that had saved their "asses" multiple times. They stated: "They always came in." I didn't say anything other than "I'm glad we could do it." I realized that not going in was never an option; we always went in. We were young. We were bullet proof.

By Lauren Heermann



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I just got my latest VHPA Aviator (#3) in the mail. I was REALLY surprised to see my best friend from grade school to the present day on your front cover! The guy on the left side of the group of grunts, slightly bent over, with his face toward the camera, and blonde hair is Gregory Gieffers. He believes the location is Song Be', Binh Phuoc, Vietnam. Time period is 1969-ish.

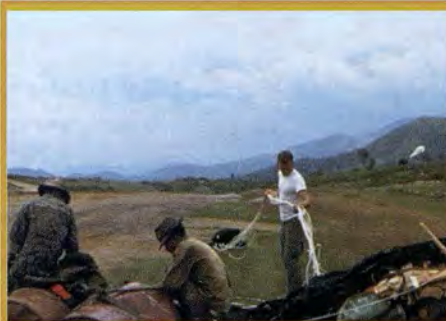
Leland McCown
VHPA # L06746

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I retired in '88. I have always rendered a hand salute during the playing of the National Anthem at military and public events and at military funerals (Taps) while in civilian clothes. It is just in me. In 2008 the US Codes [National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 (H. R. 4986), Sec 594 amendment to Title 4, Sec. 9 and Title 36, Sec 301] were changed to permit and acknowledge this privilege and honor. Some people, even vet spouses, have questioned/challenged me on some occasions. I am

old school. My dad was a navy chief. I went to retreats, tattoos, and funerals as a kid, and followed the rule of "remove your hat, stand at attention with your right hand over your heart." I then saluted for the next 23 years while on active duty. I continue to salute as a vet and retiree. I encourage other retirees and vets to do the same. There are too few of us remaining who have served. The public needs to know we are among them. Unfortunately the codes, based on a three hour Internet search, do not address hat (baseball cap: Army Vietnam Vet/retiree) on or off. Most of the national vet organizations (American Legion and VFW) say it's OK "while wearing one of THEIR hats." That is an OPINION on their part, and not part of the US code. If anyone has any FACTS regarding the hats on or off protocol, I would appreciate hearing from them.

Mark Keeney
LTC US Army (Ret)
Panther 26 '69
361st Avn CO (Pink Panthers)



Vietnam Helo Operations "Rotorheads Return"

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Introduction

On December 13, 1969 the Screaming Eagles completed their second year in Vietnam as a full division. In the first year Operation Nevada Eagle had begun the process of expelling the VC and increasing numbers of NVA from the coastal lowlands and other populated areas of Thua Thien Province. So successful was this operation that Tet of 1969 found the city of Hue to be one of the most peaceful population centers in Vietnam. The communists dared not—and, perhaps, could not—strike here.

In spring, 1969 the 101st began its most ambitious attempts to pacify northern I Corps by moving into the communists' mountain base camps and supply areas. Here, in the mysterious tangled jungles of the mountains and valleys just east of Laos, was the key to the security of the entire region.

And here the 101st first subdued and then tamed the famous A Shau Valley, the 35 mile long home, base camp, infiltration route and supply house of the communist forces. In the jagged mountains surrounding the valley and on its lush walls and fertile floor the Screaming Eagles pursued, found and destroyed the enemy and his ability to interfere with the peaceful people of the lowlands.

The Screaming Eagles' second year in Vietnam is largely the story of this valley and the men who fought and died there.

EXCERPTS FROM THE 101ST AIRBORNE YEARBOOK



Publisher's Note – at last year's Reunion a long-time friend and VHPA member Bill Bengtson handed me his copy of the 1969 Yearbook of the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. Being a man of very few words he said "Here you go David, do something nice with it for the Aviator – and be sure and send it back when you are finished!" So much for Author Guidance..... Well, the yearbook sat around on my desk for a couple of months (as things are often apt to do, but that's another story), before I could spend some time on the project. Once I started, I noted that the yearbook is broken down chronologically according to the twelve major military operations carried out by the 101 Air-

borne Division during 1969. It is also filled with photos of both combat and combat support life in Vietnam.

Once I got started visualizing a layout I realized I was a more than a little out of my league, but the best I could come up with follows next. I have included just one of the twelve sets of script that describe each of the major Division Operations, along with many of the photos found throughout the book that I thought the membership would be interested in. Enjoy this glance back in time, just remember the book itself is over 200 pages in size and this is just my feeble attempt to share a little of it with you.

David Adams, Publisher of the VHPA Aviator

Kentucky Jumper

In March *Operation Kentucky Jumper* began and Screaming Eagles returned to the A Shau Valley for the first time since their daring raid into this communist sanctuary the previous August. But this time the assault would be merely the first of hundreds. This was not a raid; Screaming Eagles would not leave the valley until the enemy's supply lines had been cut, his caches uncovered and his base camps leveled. The A Shau would become Screaming Eagle country.

For the men of the 101st the A Shau was a place with a mystique. Here in March of 1966 the Special Forces-CIDG at A Luoi, Ta Bat and then A Shau had been closed as the VC drove the allies from the valley. Then, for two years, the valley belonged to the communists who openly shipped tons of supplies down their own highway, Route 548, running down the length of the A Shau. In May of 1968 the 1st Cav. Div. (Ambl.) aided the 101st's 1st Brigade, probed with men and machines into the green lushness and then pulled out. The valley returned to the communists until August when the 101st's *Operation Son of a Gun* brought Screaming Eagles into the valley again for a raid. But again the area was returned to the communists.

In March, 1969, when the Screaming Eagles set out to conquer the A Shau, they knew the struggle would be a difficult one. In 167 days three operations would be conducted under *Kentucky Jumper*. The first of these was *Operation*



Kentucky Jumper Ends

On the evening of August 14, *Operation Kentucky Jumper* passed into history after 167 days of action in and around the A Shau Valley. The three operations conducted under *Kentucky Jumper*, *Operations Massachusetts Striker*, *Apache Snow* and *Montgomery Rendezvous*, completed the A Shau trilogy. The invasion and conquest of the A Shau have become a part of division legend to live on alongside the great campaigns of World War II and the exploits of the 1st Brigade in Vietnam between 1965 and 1967.

But of greatest importance is the effect this struggle has had on Thua Thien Province. With communists no longer able to use the A Shau as a highway for infiltration and a launching point for attacks on the lowlands, the people of Thua Thien have been able to advance along the road toward rebuilding their shattered land. On September 24 the 3rd Brigade command post at Fire Base *Rendezvous* closed and was returned to Camp Evans. Three days later men of the 3rd Brigade's 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 187th Inf. were airlifted back to Evans, completing the withdrawal of division troops from the valley.

Infantry and artillery raids into the valley would continue, blocking any communist attempts to reassert their control of the strange and beautiful landscape that Screaming Eagles had subdued. An airstrip, road, hundreds of landing zones and closed fire bases remained, ready should men of the 101st ever need to return.



An Eagle's Vietnam

A man—a soldier—travels thousands of miles to a land unlike any he has ever known. There, he finds a land of baking heat and smothering humidity which can change over the course of a few weeks into a flooded, chilled wasteland of mud and cold, driving rain. He finds poverty and despair and, yet, hope and progress. He finds that which is familiar and that which is very, very strange. An Eagle's Vietnam is a land of wonder and contrasts.

From the rice paddies and sweeping coastal plains to the dark, sleeping jungles this is a land of sensual and sometimes savage beauty. Huts of poor farmers stand next to temples where civilizations, dead before our culture was born, celebrated the wonder of this exotic land.

A trooper in a helicopter flying over the convoluted mountains and valleys looks with awe on the weird landscapes which seem to writhe in their coating of morning mist. The jungles could be those of the Earth a million years ago where dragons might walk beneath the triple canopy.

But this is today, in an Eagle's Vietnam.

Arnau, Robert

Flight Class: 57 (USAF)

RVN: 69-70 21 SOS 14 ACW

Colonel Robert (Bob)

Arnau sadly passed away on February 24, 2015 at Riverside Community Hospital. He was 81. Colonel Arnau was the former Riverside



County General Services Agency Director who oversaw the construction of numerous buildings that are still in use today. His direction helped reshape downtown Riverside.

Bob Arnau was born on June 3, 1933 in Hollywood, Florida to Julian and Leona Arnau. He was his high school class president and became the first person in his family to attend college, earning a full scholarship to the University of Miami (Fla). He graduated from the "U" with a Civil Engineering degree in 1955. After completing ROTC, he entered the US Air Force and earned his pilot wings in 1956 at Webb Air Force Base, Texas. Bob married Mary Angela Mascaro in 1963 in Lubbock, Texas and they spent the next 52 years traveling the world together, very much in love. Colonel Arnau served 29 years in the Air Force as a pilot, engineer and commander. He was a highly decorated Vietnam Veteran helicopter pilot, receiving multiple medals of valor earned in combat, including three distinguished flying crosses. Colonel Arnau honorably retired from the Air Force at March Air Force Base in 1984 and went to work for Riverside County as the Director of the General Services Agency. During his ten year service, he supervised the construction of the Riverside Hall of Justice, the Robert Presley Detention Facility, the Health and Welfare Administrative Center, the Victor Miceli Law Library addition, multiple sheriff stations and numerous other buildings. He retired from Riverside County in 1993 and taught at the UC River-side Adult Extension Program for several years.

Bob enjoyed his retirement years traveling with Mary, continuing his association with numerous organizations such as the Order of Daedalians and the Military Officers Association and proudly enjoying his very close family and many, many friends. Colonel Arnau is survived by his wife Mary; two sons his one daughter two grandchildren.

Bob was a hero, a patriot, a loving husband, father and pop-pop. He was a true officer and a gentleman. He will be dearly missed.

Memorial donations may be made to the City of Hope Cancer Center (1500 E. Duarte Rd, Duarte, CA).

Carey, Gordon T

Flight Class: 57-13/59-C3

RVN: 65 A/501 AVN, 66 71 AHC,

69 145 AVN BN, 3/17 CAV,

70 12 AVN GP, 69 3/17 CAV

Callsign-Rattler 6/Red Horse 6

Gordon T Carey LTC (USA Ret.) died on February 12, 2015, in Austin, TX. He was a true patriot and admired leader, and he embodied the best of the Greatest Generation. He will be deeply missed as a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, and remembered as a respected Army Officer, businessman, and friend. His great sense of humor and engaging personality drew people around him wherever he went.



Gordon retired after more than twenty years of service, in 1972. His final assignment was in the US Army Research and Development, Special Projects Group, in Washington, DC. Trained as a multi-engine airplane and helicopter pilot, he logged approximately 3400 hours flight time and over 800 hours of combat flight time. As a veteran of the Korean War and Vietnam (3 tours) in the Army Air Cavalry, he received several commendation awards and medals, including his highest achieved, the Silver Star, for gallantry in action in Vietnam on 07, May 1970. Gordon served as a Commanding Officer of Company "A", 2nd Battalion, 66th Armor, 4th Armored Division in Germany, the 71st Assault Helicopter Co in Vietnam, and the 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry in Vietnam.

Gordon was born on a farm in Nash County, NC. He graduated from Kenwood High School in Baltimore County, Maryland. Gordon attended the University of Maryland and graduated from the University of Nebraska.

Gordon's interest in service to his country began at a young age. He served as the Cadet Captain of the Civil Air Patrol, and later joined the Maryland Air National Guard. He entered the US Army in 1952.

Subsequent to service, Gordon spent over 30 years in real estate management in the Washington, DC metro area, San Fernando Valley, California, and Las Vegas, NV.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Crete Strawhecker Carey, two daughters a son a brother, two sisters, and three grandchildren.

Internment, service, and Military Honors will be at ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, Washington, DC on JUNE 19, 2015, at 13:00, at the Old Post Chapel. A formal reception will be held following the service at the Women's Memorial at the entrance to the Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church, 5600 Ranch Rd 620 North, Austin, TX 78732, in his honor, for all the support and numerous visits made during the last months of his illness.

It is greatly appreciated from those who remember Gordon Carey to send messages, memories, stories, etc., to place in his memorial book. Please send email to:

In previous edition, we ran the obituary for Tim Dallas. At the time his photo was not provided. We are reprinting a condensed version with photo for the benefit of his many colleagues.

Dallas, Tim

Flight Class 68-13/68-21

RVN 68-69 D 227 AHB 1 CAV

Callsign-Lobo 37

Tim died peacefully in his room, among friends in Boulder, CO on November 30, 2014. He was diagnosed with Leukemia in September of 2012 and wasn't expected to live beyond August of 2013. Like all things in Tim's life, he defied the odds by living a full year beyond what was expected. After being diagnosed as terminal, he traveled the U.S. extensively visiting friends and many national parks while remaining reasonably healthy for 18 months. He maintained good spirits and kept his quirky sense of humor to the very end. He frequently reminded those around him to live life to the fullest. He often told others, "...we are all terminal; I just have the advantage of knowing it".



Gee, Randall, Stewart
Flight Class: 67-7
RVN 67-68 1 CAV
Callsign: Potato Masher

Randall (Randy) Stewart Gee passed quietly at home surrounded by family and loved ones on Sunday, March 8th, at 5:00pm after his second courageous battle with cancer.



Randy will be remembered for his kind heart, outgoing personality and his lifelong support and commitment to his friends and colleagues within aviation, military, boating and business communities. He was a team player, always willing to lend a hand, make a connection, and share his passion and experience. He is truly a survivor of many acts of valor and life's little adventures which he loved sharing with others.

Randy grew up in Fiskville, Rhode Island. Born on January 29, 1946 he was the son of Richard Gee of Cranston, RI and Juanita Gee of Middletown, RI. He attended Cranston East High School after which he joined the Army to pursue his life's dream of flying.

He graduated from the U.S. Army Officer Pilot Training School, Fort Rucker, Alabama in 1966 where he went on to fly UH-1 helicopters with the 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile) 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion. A highly decorated military pilot, he received The Air Medal with 25 clusters, the Bronze Star and The Air Medal with "V" device for his heroism and meritorious achievements during combat operations in Vietnam. He was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1968 for heroism while participating in aerial flight evidenced by voluntary action above and beyond the call of duty by exceptionally valorous action while serving as a pilot of an armed helicopter during a combat mission in the A Shau Valley. While air assaulting troops into enemy controlled terrain, Warrant Officer Gee constantly exposed himself to the intense hostile ground fire as he air lifted troops and supplies into the embattled area. Although his aircraft received over 200 hits from the hostile ground fire, he successfully completed his mission. His outstanding flying ability and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Randy served as a U.S. Army instructor pilot for two years at Hunter Army Base in Savannah, Georgia and continued to serve as an Officer with the Connecticut National Guard for thirteen years. Type rated in many aircraft including Shorts 360, L1011s, Cessna Citation, Falcon 20 and Boeing 727, Randy lived his passion for flying with Federal Express in the early years, Air Transport International and American Airlines.

After retiring from commercial flying, he founded Global Sourcing Solutions and American Quality Standard Products, sourcing component parts for manufacturing operations in the U.S. and abroad. He continued to stay active within the aviation community, often flying is Piper Arrow named "The Juliet" across the country for any reason, and had over 20,000 flight hours.

Randy was a member of the Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association, AOPA, EAA, Newport Yacht Club, and a past corporate sponsor to the US Naval War College Foundation. He is survived by his son. He will be interned at the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery at 301 South County Trail, Exeter, RI. A special memorial is also planned in May, which will be noted shortly on the Connors Funeral Home website.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Associations (AOPA) or the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, 44 Binney Street, Boston, MA 02115

Jaburg, Conrad John "Con"
Flight Class 4-50 (USN)
RVN: 67-68 HA (L)-3
RVN: 69-70 HA (L)-3

Conrad Jaburg CPT (USN Ret.) died on 4 March 2015. Con was raised in West Palm Beach, FL, and graduated from Palm Beach High School in 1949. He enlisted in the Naval Reserve in Dec. 1948, and transferred to the regular Navy in the summer of 1949. Following recruit training in San Diego he was sent to Mineman "A" school in Yorktown, VA. While there, he received further orders to Pensacola to begin Naval Aviation flight training as a Naval Aviation Cadet. Capt. Jaburg earned his U. S. Navy "wings of gold" on Nov. 16, 1951, and was ordered to Fighter Squadron Thirty



Three (VF-33) where he flew the famous F4U-4, Chance Vought "Corsair." In 1954 he reported to the Naval Air Training Command where he served as a primary, basic and instrument flight instructor, and aviation safety officer until spring of 1956. At that time he volunteered for duty in the Antarctic with "Operation Deep Freeze," and transitioned to become helicopter qualified. In April 1958, he reported to Pensacola, and served as a helicopter flight instructor and maintenance test pilot until 1960. In 1958 he was also fortunate enough to meet and on Dec. 26, 1958, marry the love of his life, Terri. In early 1960, he was assigned to Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 5 (HS-5) as pilot and Aviation Safety Officer, deploying aboard the USS Lake Champlain with the Atlantic Fleet. Next, in 1962, Con entered a Navy college degree program and received his BA from Ole Miss in 1964. This was followed by duty at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, where he flew Search and Rescue missions and served as ComFair-Carib Safety Officer. Here he also first flew combat missions during the April 1965 Dominican Republic revolution. In summer of 1966, Jaburg reported to HC-1 at San Diego where he was instrumental in forming what was to become Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3, the "Seawolves." In April 1967, following transition to the UH-1 Huey Gunship, he reported to South Vietnam where he flew combat missions for a year as the first Executive Officer of the Seawolves. After this combat tour, Jaburg returned to Pensacola as Commanding Officer of Helicopter Training Squadron 8 with assets of over 1200 personnel and 90 aircraft. The squadron was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation during his year as CO. In June 1969, Jaburg returned to South Vietnam as OINC of FASU Binh Thuy where he again flew combat missions with HA(L)-3 as well as medevac missions with an Army helicopter "Dustoff" unit. In June 1970, he joined the staff of the Chief of Naval Air Training until 1972 when he was promoted to the rank of Captain (O-6). He then was assigned as the Executive Officer of NAS Key West. He remained there until he retired in July, 1974. During his career, Capt. Jaburg flew over 4500 hours and was awarded 19 medals and decorations. After retirement he acquired a Master's Degree and taught for some years at the high school and college/university level. Capt. Jaburg was a member of the Masonic Order, The

TAPS

MOAA, The Old Antarctic Explorers Association, The Seawolf Association and the Quiet Birdmen. Con is survived by his beloved wife of fifty-six years Terri, three children, three grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He was a devoted and active member of Perdido Bay United Methodist Church, and anyone who wishes to make a contribution, can do so in his name.

Mizejewski, Max III

Flight Class: 67-05

RVN 67 176 AHC

Callsign: Minuteman 17A

Mike Mizejewski died on Sep. 20, when the plane he was piloting crashed. He was the sole occupant.

Mizejewski, his wife said, was constantly on the move: as an entrepreneur who sold everything from air conditioners to cellular phones, he also hopped from Orange County to Oregon to Argentina – where he met Rebeca, who had applied to be his Spanish-speaking secretary. The couple met in Argentina 1992 and married in 1997. They have an 11-year-old daughter, Elizabeth.

After spending more than a decade in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Rebeca said, the family moved to Rancho Santa Margarita five years ago for the better “arts, culture, schools that the islands couldn’t provide.”

Besides his wife and daughter, Mizejewski is survived by 2 daughters and a son from his first marriage.

The only consolation is he died doing what he wanted to do,” Rebeca Mizejewski said. “He died in the skies. So we’re happy for that. It was just too soon.” He was buried in the Riverside National Cemetery.

Mizell, Louis L.

Flight Class: 56-10

RVN 65-66 498 MED CO

Callsign: DUSTOFF 26

LTC Louis L. Mizell, died on March 19, 2015. Louis was born in Oshkosh, NE in 1931. He joined the Army in 1948 as a Private. The major part of his career was spent in the Medical Service Corps, where he flew medical evacuation helicopters in Germany, Iran, Korea, Vietnam and a number of US locations. He



was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal for Valor with 12 Oak Leaf Clusters, and many other awards. He was a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #318, Olympia, the Military Officers Association of America, the Dustoff Association, and the Solo Pilots Association. He served as an Elder in several Lutheran parishes at various duty stations and most recently the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Tacoma. He died on March 19, 2015. He is survived by Doris, his wife of forty-nine years, four children, thirteen grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

He is interned at Tahoma National Cemetery. Donations may be made to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Endowment Fund. For a detailed obituary or leave memories, please visit millsandmills-funerals.com. - See more at: Louis L. Mizell's Obituary on The Olympian

Price, Frank H

Flight Class: 56-12

RVN: 65-66 B/227 AHB 1 CAV

RVN: 68-69 120 AHC

Frank H Price CW4 (USA Ret.) died on 26 July 2014. He was born Oct. 3, 1927, in Johnson County, Ky. Frank served in Korea and Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and was shot down three times. He retired in 1974 after 28 years of service. Thereafter, he served as a helicopter pilot for 12 years with A.E.P. in the Lancaster, Ohio, area. He belonged to Southside Southern Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife: Vera Morgan Price, a son, a stepson, three grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, a great-great-grandchild, and three brothers. He proudly served his Country for 28.5 years. He was deeply admired by both my family and many friends, some whom still survive after their Military Service. There are a lifetime's worth of his Military items, awards and accomplishments to cherish his memory.

Condolences may be sent to the family online at lamberttatman.com

Raetz, Paul

Flight Class 63-2/67-8QC

RVN 63, 64, 68-69 120 AVN, 145 CAB, 12 CAG, 135 AHC

Callsign: Blackhorse 6/Blackjack 7/Emu 6



Paul Raetz USA (Ret.) was born in Hong Kong on August 3, 1937 to Erwin and Florence Raetz. Together with his mother and sister, he was captured by the Japanese in December 1941 and held prisoner for seven months. They were sent back to America as exchange prisoners of war and the family lived in a variety of locations until returning to Canton, China in 1946. Forced to leave by advancing Chinese Communist forces in 1946, the family moved to Hong Kong, returning to America in December of 1950. Upon graduation from Gobles High School (Gobles, MI) in 1954, Paul entered Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL) from which he graduated in 1958 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry in the U.S. Army. His 20 years of service in the army included training as a paratrooper, Ranger, and fixed and rotary-wing aviator, with foreign tours in Korea (twice), France, Germany, Vietnam (twice) and Thailand. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Joint Services Commendation Medal. He is survived by his wife, Susan Miller Raetz, two step daughters, a step son, a sister, two nieces and eight grandchildren. He was buried at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

Ross, James E

Flight Class 66-13

RVN 65, 66-67, 69-70-B/2/503ABN, 282 AHC, 273 HHC

Callsign Black Cat / Alley Cat

James Earl Ross USA (CW4 Ret.) 74, of Williamsburg VA, passed away on February 21. James served as a Warrant Officer W4 in the US Army for over 33 years as a helicopter pilot. After retirement James flew a medevac helicopter for Med-Star in Pennsylvania. He had a love and passion for flying, spending time with his family reading, wood work, and working on his yard. James is survived by his wife of 56 years, Anna three daughters, six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, two sisters, and a brother. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, Kansas 66675. Online condolences may be offered at www.nelsencares.com.



TAPS

Swarts, John Lloyd

FLIGHT CLASS: 70-41

**RVN 72, HHC 1 AVN BDE, 72, 48AHC, 72-73 D/1/17 CAV, 73 ICCS
CALL SIGNS: PENETRATOR 4,
BLUESTAR, SABREBLUE**

John Lloyd Swarts III USA (Ret.) age 74, resident of Fort Scott, Kansas, died Monday, March 23, 2015, as the result of a traffic accident near Deerfield, Missouri. He was born February 23, 1941, in Kansas City, Kansas, the son of John L. Swarts, Jr. and Marjorie M. Miller Swarts. He married Hazel N. Denton on November 23, 1963, in Manhattan, Kansas. John retired from the United States Army and later served as Bourbon County Attorney.

John's Aviation career included duties as a 'slick' pilot, a gunship pilot, scout pilot and a maintenance test pilot. All of these duties were performed during the twelve months he spent as pilot in RVN. He had the unusual opportunity to fly one of the earliest antitank missile system equipped gunships. John spent an additional twenty-two months before his aviator tour as an NCO for various units. His military qualifications include: Tanker, Scout and Infantryman, prior to receiving his wings.

Survivors include his wife Hazel of the home: a son, a daughter, and two sisters,

Committal services were held at 1:30 PM Tuesday, March 24th, in the U. S. National Cemetery, Fort Scott. Military honors were provided by the Olson Frary Burkhart Post #1165 V.F.W.

Walker, James Robert
Flight Class 19-60 (USN)
RVN 67-68 HA(L) 3
Seawolf 75



James Robert Walker CDR (USN Ret.) passed away on February 6, 2015 at the age of 76, at his home on Table Rock Lake, due to prostate cancer. Jim was born in Indianapolis, IN on September 21, 1938 to CJ and Henrietta Walker. He was the oldest of four siblings. He graduated from Cathedral High School. Jim is survived by his wife, Barbara Preissel of New Britain, CT, whom he married in 1999, twenty seven years after he met her in 1971, his three children and one grandson.

He was an enlisted aviation petty officer, attended NAPS and The United States Naval Academy (USNA) before going into the Naval Air Preparatory School (NAVCAD) program. Jim spent twenty two years in the Navy as a Naval Aviator. He graduated the NAVCAD program and received his wings in 1961. He is a decorated Vietnam Veteran where he was a Seawolf-gunship pilot

(HAL3 Det 3) and received the Navy Cross. He also received two Purple Hearts, the Distinguished Flying Cross, thirty two Air Medals, Navy Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal-Cuban Conflict, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal-four Campaign Stars, two Silver Stars and many more commendations. His medals will be on display at the National Navy Seal Museum and Memorial in Fort Pierce, FL.

He graduated Christ for the Nations Bible School where he became a Chaplain in the Florida prison system.

Jim and Barbara moved to Branson West in 2007 from California where every day he felt like he had already gone to heaven. He was a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America 913 (VVA 913) in Branson, MO.

Although he is a decorated Naval Officer he is best remembered for his love of God and country, a husband, a father, a grandfather, his sense of humor and a friend to many.

He will be buried at Barrancas National Cemetery, Naval Air Station, and Pensacola, FL.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Missions at Ozark Mountain Assembly of God, 55 Trail Ridge Rd., Kimberling City, MO 65686.

We welcome members to forward obituaries to the VHPA. Send them to Gary Roush (groush@earthlink.net). If you wish, providing the link to the listing is acceptable. We print the obituary, with photo, of dues current members. We provide a condensed notice for non-members. The number of entries will continue to grow for obvious reasons. With that in mind, space limitations require us to edit the size of many submissions.

Ed.

Records of the recent deaths of the following seven potential members of the VHPA were gleaned from internet searches within these last two months. All information that the VHPA has for these men may be found at VHPA.org or by calling 1-800-505-VHPA. If any of our members have more information please report it to: HQ@VHPA.org or call 1-800-505-VHPA (8472).

Cavarzan, Dario USA, Flight Class 68-503, 68-3
died on February 24, 2015 (no other data)

Frye, Rodney Carl USA, Flight Class 68-35/ 68-19
died on February 8, 2015 (no other data)

Jagers, Joseph Newton USA (MG Ret.),
RVN 68 AHC, 197, AHC, 334 AHC died on January 16, 2015.
He served in Vietnam with the 68, 197, and 334 AHC's.

Kotler, John D. USA, Flight Class 65-8W
died on February 10, 2015 (no other data)

Knowles Thomas H. USMC
died on February 19, 2015 (no other data)

Moore, Bobby C. USA, died February 12, 2015 (no other data)

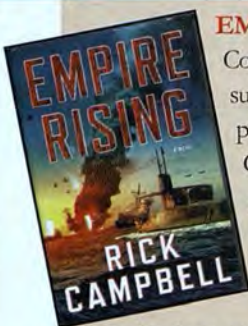
Parnell, James Ivan, USA Flight Class 63-1W, RVN 65-66 B/1/9 1
CAV died on February 28, 2015.
He served in Vietnam in 65-66 with B/1/9 CAV

Williams, Daniel Roger, USA Flight Class 67-24 RVN Helicopter
Pilot died on October 19, 2014 (no other data)

White James T. USA (CW4 Ret.) Flight Class 67-13
died March 26, 2015.
He served in Vietnam in 68-69 with 17 AVN and 214 CAB

Waggener, Richard G., USA Flight Class 69-27
died March 27, 2015.
He served in Vietnam in 70-71 with 128 AHC.

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



EMPIRE RISING by Rick Campbell, a retired Navy Commander and veteran of 25 years of service in nuclear submarines and author of *The Trident Deception*, has published a second gripping novel of naval warfare. China is facing diminishing oil supplies, threatening its prosperity and national stability. When peaceful negotiations fail, the Chinese Politburo decides to use military force to remedy the situation.

With a buildup of secret missiles, cyber warfare technology and new submarines, the Chinese believe they will have the upper hand against the US Pacific Fleet. Their goal is to dominate all

of Asia including Taiwan and Japan. The situation appears grim for the US forces that are deployed, but there are other assets – human assets involved and capable of getting to the core of the problem.

Campbell has significantly upped the ante on the intensity of the action in this book. He does an excellent job of character development of both the good guys and the bad guys. An index is provided, in case you make a wrong turn along the way. This engaging novel is a real page turner, with very little “down time.”

The Empire Rising by Rick Campbell (432 pages, hardcover \$19.70, Kindle \$12.99) by Rick Campbell, ISBN 978-1250040466 at bookstores everywhere or you can order the eBook from numerous on-line stores.



THE ADVENTURES OF A HELICOPTER PILOT is the memoir of VHPA Member Bill Collier's 13-month tour of service with HMM-161 and HMM-363, call sign Barrel House, in Vietnam flying H-34s in 66-67. After 18 months of flight training in the Navy's MARCAD program, Collier traveled to Da Nang on Northwest Orient Airlines and requested HMM-161 after noticing one of his buddies was on the S-3 status board.

Collier soon found himself in the cockpit of an H-34 based out of Phu Bai flying missions north to Dong Ha in support of Marines along the DMZ, including outposts such as The Rockpile, north of Route 9, and inserting Marine Recon units often followed by extraction under fire. He also flew a lot of medevacs. During his first 8 weeks in country Collier witnessed an H-34 go down in flames and came close to the same fate. Surviving his tour did not seem likely.

There were serious R & R breaks however, such as when his unit sailed

aboard the USS Iwo Jima to Okinawa via Taiwan and on to the Philippines. Before returning to Vietnamese waters, he was assigned as a FAC accompanying a Marine unit ashore onto a beach head. As Collier notes it wasn't a situation conducive to longevity but being there for the Marines on the ground was all that mattered.

Collier has done a great job with this book. His narrative descriptions of flying H-34s into seemingly impossible situations along the DMZ and his time on the ground with the Marine “grunts” are intense and well written with an unexpected sense of humor at times – it is a truly engaging reading experience.

In 1969 Collier left the Marine Corp to join Air America flying H-34s and Hueys for 30 months in Laos. Collier says that will be the subject of another book.

The Adventures of a Helicopter Pilot: Flying the H-34 Helicopter in Vietnam for the United States Marine Corp, (234 pages, paperback \$17.72, Kindle \$9.99) by Bill Collier, ISBN 978-1500936136 is available by order from your local bookstore, Amazon, or other book providers.



GUNSHIP PILOT is a memoir of VHPA Member Robert F. Hartley's two tours of service with C/2/20 ARA in 68-69 and 5 AVN DET in 71-72 and C/16 CAV in 72. Hartley was disillusioned with college and needed to take a semester off to make money leaving him at the mercy of his draft board. A pamphlet at the recruiter's office read “High School to Flight School,” and he was on his way. He graduated from flight school with class 67-23. He received his Cobra transition, in flight school, from an instructor who had only 12 hours in the aircraft! It was an exciting flight - his instructor's parting words were “Don't worry, we'll figure this out.”

They were taking “incoming” when he arrived on the ramp at Bien Hoa AFB. After the usual in-processing hassles and a couple of C-130 rides he joined his unit at Camp Evans. He was soon flying the dangerous skies of the A Shau Valley in a UH-1B gunship for C/2/20 ARA and catching hot brass down his collar. On his first combat mission, after seeing a Chinook go down in flames, he asked himself “How the Hell did I get here?”

In due course Hartley began ferrying Cobras from Vung Tau as C/2/20 began replacing its UH-1Bs. There were lots of kinks to work out on the Cobras weapons systems. The new Cobras were used in a

multitude of missions, including some into Laos in support of CCN. In October the unit, along with the rest of the 1st Cav, headed south to their new home at Quan Loi in III Corps.

Between tours Hartley was assigned to “Cobra Hall” at Hunter Army Airfield where he was released from active duty. He sought a civilian flying job without success. A call to the WO Branch resulted in a recall to active duty with an IP ticket and a trip back to Vietnam – initially to Camp Eagle with 4/77 ARA, 101st ABN where he became an SIP. At the time, the AO was very quiet and as the 101st stood down, he was reassigned to Vung Tau with the 5th Avn Det as a country wide Cobra SIP. When that unit stood down he moved on to C/16th CAV at Can Tho. Things weren't so quiet there.

Gunship Pilot is a very detailed intimate narrative of the introduction and combat testing of the Cobra and its weapons system as it came into its own in Vietnam told with an ample serving of humor. Everyone should read this book.

Gunship Pilot: An Attack Helicopter Warrior Remembers Vietnam (364 pages, hardcover \$32.57, paperback \$27.65, Kindle \$3.99) by Robert F. Hartley, ISBN 978-1489703934 is available by order from your local bookstore, Amazon, or other book providers.

Volume three in the series **WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE** by retired CW5 Michael Lazares is now available. This volume includes the stories and experiences of over 50 pilots, crew chiefs, and gunners who served in Vietnam. I particularly enjoyed the story by John Fox entitled "Catholic Chaplain." New to the series are stories from family members who waited at home and worried about their loved ones. They lived each day dreading news of the loss of their sons, husbands, and fathers in Vietnam.

Lazares, who served with C/2/20 ARA and E/82 ARTY in 67-68 and 196 ASHC in 69-70 has done an excellent job bringing together these stories in this year of the 50th remembrance of the Vietnam War. It is likely these stories might never have come to print, if it were not for such talented and



dedicated members as Lazares and others. I am hoping for a 4th volume.

Lazares is also the author of Goodbye, My Darling; Hello, Vietnam and Tacoma Blue.

Lazares comments: Of the 2,709,918 Americans who served in Vietnam, Less than 850,000 are estimated to be alive today. If true, 390 V.N. vets die each day. How does it feel to be among the last 1/3rd of all the U.S. Vets who served in Vietnam? I have been encouraged to do a Vol 4 and stories are coming in. Please consider adding one or two from your service to America. Remember that all profits go to veterans charities such as the VHPA Scholarship Fund and Fisher House. Contact me at mdlazares@comcast.net

We Gotta Get Out of this Place, Volume 3 (284 pages, paperback \$13.43, Kindle \$3.99) by Michael D. Lazares, ISBN 978-1502304391 is available from the author at www.mdlazaresauthor.com, or other book suppliers. All proceeds from this book go to veterans charities.

WHEN LEMMINGS FLY by VHPA member Tom Smith, who served with the 1st CAV in Vietnam in 69-70, is a post-Vietnam memoir of his time flying helicopters in Alaska. It is a story of flying, friendships, relationships, commitment, and self-discovery in "The Last Frontier." Smith found an employer based in Fairbanks looking for the skills of former Vietnam helicopter pilots. The company was small, more like a group of friends with an important shared goal of getting the job done safely.

The flying was challenging and the work ran the gamut from hauling miners around to fighting forest fires. There was unpredictable weather, long distances between fuel stops, rugged terrain, and mountain passes littered with the debris of wrecked aircraft – a warning of the risks and the costs of bad decisions. But Smith also came to know the beauty of Alaska and the people who lived out in the small bush communities. Dropping off a letter at the nearest post office or



sliding loading a baby grand piano to a remote cabin was not too much to ask. Where else but Alaska could you fly one day and float a wild river the next morning?

Smith's very personal narrative of his experiences flying in Alaska, along with a dry sense of humor, makes this book an excellent reading experience. Other Vietnam helicopter pilots who also found their way to Alaska to fly after Vietnam will recognize many of the "characters" and appreciate many of the situations Smith found himself in. Smith is also the author of Facing PTSD: A Combat Veteran Learns to Live with the Disorder and Easy Target: The Long, Strange Trip of a Scout Pilot in Vietnam.

When Lemmings Fly: Helicopters in the Wilds of Alaska (268 pages, paperback \$11.83, Kindle \$9) by Tom Smith, ISBN 978-0615835228 is available by order from your local bookstore, Amazon Bookstore, or other book providers.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

A reunion of all Veterans who served with the 121st Assault Helicopter Co., 93rd 121st, (renowned Soc Trang Tigers and Vikings), 80th attached and supporting units will be held in **Nashville, Tennessee on June 4 - 7, 2015**. 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. 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 @ email: [REDACTED]

The 134th Assault Helicopter Company will be holding its first west coast Reunion on **June 24-28, 2015 in Boise, Idaho**. Full details at: www.134thahcid.weebly.com. POC for the event is: Kirk Muth at [REDACTED] or Dick Sheehan at [REDACTED]. Special offer for first time reunion attendees!

Company "C" of the 158th Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, callsign- "Phoenix" and the 273rd TC Detachment will be holding a reunion on **August 7-9, 2015 in Omaha, Nebraska**. All former unit members and friends are invited to this event. Full details are available at www.phoenix158.org. POC is Pat McKeany [REDACTED]

Black Aviator Oral History Project

There seems to be a growing interest in preserving Black Aviation History, especially during the Vietnam Era. Plans are being made to capture some of this history during the 2015 VHPA Reunion in Washington, D.C.

All black aviators that served in Vietnam are very strongly encouraged to attend and participate in this major historical event. It is anticipated that at least one film crew will be present, and there may be some journalists and

photographers present also. For additional information, please contact [REDACTED]. Feel free to call me with any questions you have: [REDACTED]

This Mini-Reunion is tentatively set for Thursday, August 27, 2015, 9 am - 5pm. More details will follow.

I hope you will attend AND will pass on this information to any African American Vietnam aviator you know.

57th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) 12th Biennial Reunion, **Possum Kingdom Lake, Texas ~ August 28-30, 2015**. Full details at: www.57thahc.com, POC is Jim McKenzie, [REDACTED]

D Troop, 1/1 Cav will be holding their tri-annual Reunion on **September 25-27, 2015 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**. POC for the gathering is either Gary Smith ([REDACTED]), Chuck Abbott ([REDACTED]) or Don Wargi ([REDACTED]). Complete details to follow.

187th AHC Annual Reunion on **November 7-12 2015 at The Island House Hotel in Orange Beach, AL**. Full details are available on our web site 187thAHC.net. The POC is Ray Root [REDACTED]

The 92nd AHC will be gathering for its eighth, every odd year, reunion this **September 10-13 in Bloomington, Minnesota at the Stallion and Sidekick 'corral'**. Our base of operations will be the Minneapolis International Crown Plaza Hotel and Suites at Three Appletree Square. Past 92nd AHC reunions have been great; attracting eighty to one-hundred attendees. This one will be no exception. Dave and Patty Skoog can send you the information for: reunion and hotel registration, as well the planned activities. Their contact information is Dave and Patty Skoog at [REDACTED] or call Dave at [REDACTED]

Want to see your Reunion listed here? *Send details to: Aviator@VHPA.org*

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 32 new Members to the VHPA!
All have joined our Association during the period from February 16 - March 16, 2015

Askren James D. 'Jim' **
Atlanta Georgia
Army
65-8W
155 AHC in 65-66

Baldwin Harry F.
Dothan Alabama
Army
56-7
176 AHC in 67-68; 14TH AVN

Boulos Joseph F. **
Falmouth Maine
Marine Corps

Brooks Ronald A 'Ron'
Greenville South Carolina
Army
58
162 AHC in 71-72

Buzzelli Orey R.
Palatine Illinois
Army
67-14
A/4 AVN 4 INF in 67-68; 4 AVN 4
INF in 68-68

Campbell Charles J 'Charlie'
Liverpool Pennsylvania
Army
1ST RR CO AVN in 71-71

Campbell William R.
Fairfax Virginia
Marine Corps
HMM-161 in 65-66; VMO-2 in 66

Carlson Charles RI 'Chuck'
Minneapolis Minnesota
Army
66-19
121 AHC in 67-68

Crider Jessie A **
Herrin Illinois
Army
70-12
MACV FLT DET in 66-67; IIFV
ARTY in 70-71

Cyr Arthur Robert 'Bob'
Belton Texas
Army
60-9FW
176 AHC in 67-68;
180 ASHC in 70-71

Dean John W. **
Hillsboro Virginia
Army
67-9
173 AHC in 67; 17 AHC in 67-68

Dean William V.
Caldwell Idaho
Army
70-1 69-49
HHT 3/17 CAV in 70-71

Dugger Jay L. **
Tacoma Washington
Army
55-F
39th Signal Bn in 62-63;
73 AVN in 64-65;
1 CAV DIV in 67-68

Eaves Paul H. **
Clarksville Tennessee
Army
69-4 69-2
B/4/77 ARA in 1969

Farmer Harold D 'Danny' **
Drumright Oklahoma
Army

Ford Eddie L **
Grand Prairie Texas
Army

Francis James M. 'Jim'
Saint Charles Illinois
Army
68-515 68-27
128 AHC in 68-69

Gerstenberger Herbert C. 'Capt G' **
East China Michigan
Air Force
38 ARRS in 70-71

Greenquist James C 'Jim' **
Alexandria Virginia
Army
52 AVN BN in 65;
14th AVN BN in 65

Hightower John H. **
Bristow Virginia
Air Force
56 ARRS 3 ARRS in 71-72

Irby Dewitt T "T" **
Hattiesburg Mississippi
Army
64-7 65-1
1 AVN BDE in 66; 125 ATC in 66-
67; B/15 TC 1 CAV in 70-71

Kamhoot Norman B. **
Albuquerque New Mexico
Air Force
DET 5/38 ARRS in 65-66; 40 ARRS
in 73-74

Knause Charles A **
Auburn Alabama
Army
65-9W
243 ASHC in 67-68; 196 ASHC
in 67-68; 180 ASHC in 70-71

Machin Wilson F 'Will'
Manassas Virginia
Army
67-7
173 AHC in 67-68; 1 CAV DIV in 71-72

Price Forrest R. 'Frosty' **
Woodbridge Virginia
Army
72-11 71-12
129 AHC in 72-73

Puglisi Ralph
Weatherby Lake Missouri
Army
69-29 69-27
195 AHC in 70-71

Purnell Barry K. **
West Hartford Connecticut
Army
69-8
121 AHC in 69-70

Sifuentes Raul A.
Dumfries Virginia
Marine Corps
HMM-163 in 66-67; HMM-164 in 71-
72; HMM-463 in 72-73

Suldo Michael Richard
Lafayette Louisiana
Navy
HA(L)-3 in 69-70

Thompson Owen R. 'Dick' **
Gordonsville Virginia
Army
63-9 FW 69-7QC
156 AVN in 67; 14 TC BN in 69; 79
TC CO in 69-70; 34 GS GRP in 70

Turnage John O. 'Jack' **
Augusta Georgia
Army
73 AVN in 64-65; 23 ART GRP in
68-69

Waller Hugh W. **
Seaside Park New Jersey
Army
68-24 68-42
158 AVN 101 ABN in 69-70

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THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

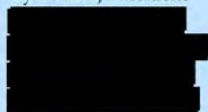
*"...for heroism or extraordinary achievement while
participating in an aerial flight."*

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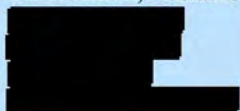
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Lynn Kile, President



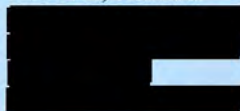
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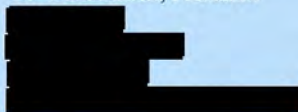
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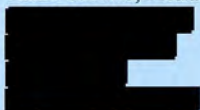
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Adam Steczko, President



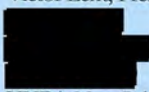
GEORGIA CHAPTER

President: Bob Lanzotti



LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER

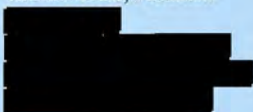
Victor Lent, President



VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

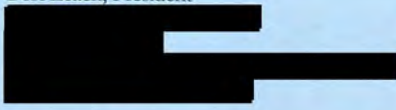
MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Richard Deer, President



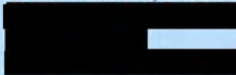
UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

Bert Leach, President



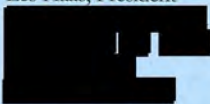
MONTANA CHAPTER

Todd Brandoff, President



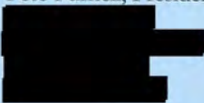
NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Les Haas, President



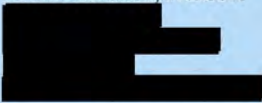
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

Pete Purnell, President



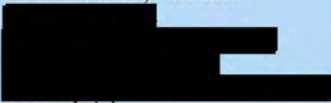
NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Brock Nicholson, President



OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

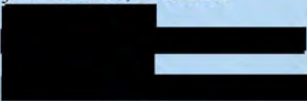
Bob Hamilton, President



www.ohrivlz.org

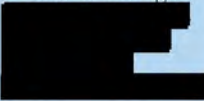
OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

John Gaines, President



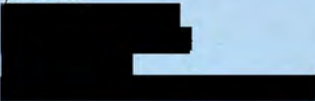
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

President: Don Agren



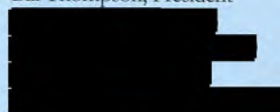
SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER

Jim Miles



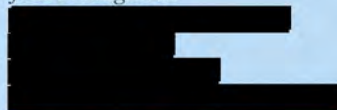
SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

Bill Thompson, President



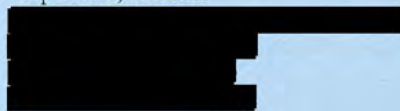
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

John P. Hargleroad



THE ALAMO CHAPTER

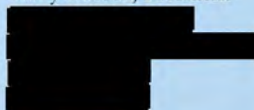
Chip Brown, President



SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

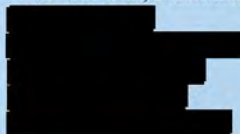
(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter

Larry Russell, President



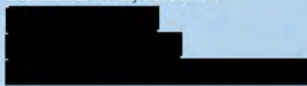
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Sven Akesson, President



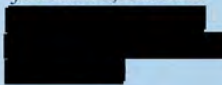
VHPA OF FLORIDA

Frank Hoover, President



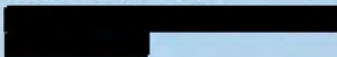
WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

J.C. Combs, President



HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional

Ken DeHoff - POC



Notice to all Members of the VHPA

For a limited time, liaison between the National HQ of the VHPA and the Independent Chapters has reverted to John Sorensen of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at 417-759-7487 or via E-Mail at: jsorensen7106@gmail.com. Feel free to contact John concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

The June chapter meeting will be held at National Vietnam Museum site, just outside of Mineral Wells, on Saturday, June 6th, 2015. This is in conjunction with the annual Wall update at the site. Festivities are scheduled to begin at 10:00 hours. The chapter meeting will be held immediately after the ceremony's completion. Lunch will be available at \$20 per person. You are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, and the adult beverage(s) of your choice. Non-alcoholic beverage will be available at the lunch meal. For more detailed information on the Museum's activity, please visit their web site at <http://www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org/news.htm>

The September chapter meeting will be held at Logan's Road House restaurant, on Saturday, Sept 12th, 2015. Please note that this is the second Saturday of the month. This change is precipitated by the Labor Day weekend occurring on the first weekend. The address is 948 N.E. Loop 820. The EC will meet at 11:30, followed by the general membership meeting beginning at 12:00. Flat rate for the meal is \$20/ person. Elections for chapter officers will be held during this meeting.

Come early and enjoy the company of your friends. As usual, all are welcomed to attend.

By Adam Steckzo

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

The Helicopter War Museum

On March 19, 2015 members: John Hargleroad, Michael Silva, Phil Lanphier, Terry Sullivan, George Mayl, Rick Beaver, Bill Bates, Walt Wise, Terry Olson, Doug Neil, his daughter and Bill Robie, along with many other Vietnam Veterans attended the "Salute to Veterans" held at the History Colorado Center in downtown Denver. The event was emceed by Ryan Haarer, KUSA 9 News and KOA Morning Show anchor Steffan Tubs was there to assist. The one and only USO Show Troupe also performed. Local news organizations attended as Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper honored our Veterans. Guest speaker Col. (Ret.) Jim Nicholson, former Secretary of the Veterans' Administration and a decorated Vietnam Veteran, addressed nearly five-hundred attendees. The event was hosted by the History Colorado Museum. It included a presentation of Certificates of Vietnam Service by the Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR). The National Order of the Daughters of the American Revolution are conducting a Nationwide Search for all Vietnam Veterans and presenting them with Certificates of their Service. Other Chapters of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association should contact their local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for more information.

Our March meeting was held at the Longmont American Legion in conjunction with the Longmont Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH).

Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

Other events planned are: the May 4th-Honor Flight reception for returning WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Pur-

ple Heart recipient Veterans from ceremonies held in Washington D.C., then on June 11 to 14 14 our Vietnam Helicopter War Museum will be set up in conjunction with the Traveling Wall and Salute to Veterans at Ft. Carson, CO, and on 4 July, we will be joining the City of Golden Colorado for a Celebration of the Fourth of July sponsored by the Golden Lions Club. We will be joining chapter members Bill McPherson and Ken Overturf, who will be displaying their Mike model Huey gunship, at some of these events. We have a full year planned ahead and we are excited!

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Saturday, at 10:00 at American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have a holiday get together in December. The museum committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays.

We continue to look for artifacts for the museum. Among the items which we would like to acquire is a chicken plate with the cloth holder that our visitors can try on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President John Hargleroad or Dale House, Museum Curator, with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com.

By Dale House

WASHINGTON STATE

Spring is almost here and old pilots are coming out of winter hibernation. We all met for the first time this year at Famous Dave's barbecue in Tacoma WA. We had a great turnout, good food, and great fellowship. We have a lot of upcoming events this next year that we are looking forward to attending. This is where we can find new members, by distributing information about our chapter and its activities.

In February of this year we sent some members to the Olympic Flight museum to talk about the 'Huey's' role in Vietnam. Our boys had a great time. We are trying to get the new bird to Spokane WA., during the summer, to show it off, as well as trying to bolster the membership on the east side.

Our next meeting will be at the airshow in Olympia. We will dedicate the revamped helicopter to the 114 AHC. We are hoping that previous members of this unit can attend. The date for this will be 27 June 2015. Please check our website for any changes. But... we have not forgotten the big show, the reunion in Washington D.C. on 28 August. Many great activities are planned. We still are in the planning stages for the Veterans Day parade in November.

The Washington State Chapter is an active veterans group and we invite all Vietnam era helicopter pilots to join us and re-connect with those that you served with so many years ago. Lastly: our thanks to the many members who put in the hours to make our state chapter a success!

By Bill Lyons

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER

Glacier Girl Viewing
The Alamo Chapter's most recent activity was conducted at the hangar housing a private collection owned by Rodney Lewis. One of the highlights was the restored P38, Glacier Girl. Their submission for this issue is the story of that aircraft and the project to restore it. Ed.

In 1942, a formation of various fighter and bomber aircraft was flying to England to join the Allied efforts in World War II. Weather forced them to crash-land on a Greenland glacier. All the crewmen survived and were rescued after walking to safety. Recovery of aircraft was attempted by American forces, but was unsuccessful. Over the years, snowfall eventually buried all the aircraft under 268 feet of glacial ice, where they stayed until 1992.

Twelve different expeditions attempted to recover some of the classic ships. All twelve recovery efforts failed, but the planes were located under the ice in 1983. The thirteenth recovery try by different resourceful men was successful. One P-38 fighter, the least damaged of the ill-fated flight, was brought to the surface in pieces in 1992. The recovery work required fourteen weeks of living on the ice and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. When she suffered her forced landing in 1942, the P-38 Glacier Girl was sixty-two days old and



One of the 900 B25's sent to Russia



The Glacier Girl



A beautifully restored Cobra

had flown seventy-four hours.

Mr. Robert L. Cardin was the project manager for the recovery of Glacier Girl. A shaft was made using steam, and then the steam and water pumps created a room around the aircraft, 268 feet down. The ship had to be dismantled in pieces small enough to be brought to the surface through the four-foot shaft. After her recovery, Mr. Cardin took on another difficult task: reassembly and restoration of the P-38 to flying condition. He was appointed the project manager of that second job, which took ten years, but likewise ended in success.

In 2002, Glacier Girl flew again, and she has flown approximately five-hundred hours since. She is completely authentic in every detail. Cardin's team took meticulous care to use original parts where they could, to obtain needed authentic parts from veterans and other sources world-wide when they could, and to manufacture exactly duplicated parts from scratch, when necessary. She retains about 80% of her original parts, including all working machine guns and cannon, which is pretty amazing after 50 years encased in ice. (Only seven other P-38s are known to be flying today, and none have their guns.)

Today, Glacier Girl is owned by Mr. Rodney Lewis as part of his extensive warbird collection (Lewis Air Legends). Mr. Cardin works for him as his Director of Flight Operations. Some of Mr. Lewis's aircraft, including Glacier Girl, reside in San Antonio. Our Alamo Chapter President Dave Whitney requested a private showing for Chapter members and guests. Mr. Lewis graciously agreed, and on 15 January about twenty of us were able to see, touch, and marvel at Glacier Girl. Bob Cardin described his two historic projects, answered questions, and led us through the extensive Lewis collection of classic old aircraft in hangars. Besides the P-38, we were able to view the B-25, P-51 Mustang, P-40, AH-1G Cobra, Navy Bearcat, and Tigercat aircraft, and many others. All are in flying condition and are flown.

The Alamo Chapter thanks Mr. Lewis and Mr. Cardin for their generosity, courtesy, and patience in allowing us to admire these historic old aircraft. Our thanks are offered to both of them for helping to preserve the history of our great country and military forces. They are patriots we admire. And thanks to our good president, Dave Whitney, for arranging this.

By Chuck Qualline



ALASKA CHAPTER

The Alaska Chapter had its December gathering at the Mountain View VFW. We had a great dinner of steaks and other surprises. Our membership is now up to forty-three. The word is getting out, and the power of word of mouth is finding more and more of our guys!

The early talk was about the upcoming National Reunion in DC, since many are interested in attending. The Reno reunion also came up, but most are not crazy about the July time frame, preferring late August. Anyway, many who have yet to attend are ready to accept a run at a Reunion, as those of us who have already

been keep chatting about the wonderful times we've had and all the old buddies we got to see after so many years.

The highlight of our "Evening to Remember" was the presentation of quilts by the Quilts of Valor Foundation of Alaska. Linda Kau, the Director for the State, presented 20 quilts to the members present and it was all captured by one of our local TV channels. It had been kept a secret, and everyone was truly surprised and appreciative. The Quilts of Valor women do extraordinary work and their time and effort to recognize Veterans is very special. Linda opened with a short story of how her brother-in-law was saved in Vietnam by a helicopter pilot, giving special meaning to the presentation.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

We also had the honor of recognizing John Ulsher, winner of the Alaska State 28 gauge skeet shooting (once a cobra pilot and can still shoot) championship and Garland Dobson for being inducted into the Alaska Air Carriers Aviation Hall of Fame.

We had six new members, but as usual with our chapter many others were out of state snow birding. I can't figure out why, with the soft temperatures and excellent weather here, anyone would want to go to the frozen south! They were missed, and we hope they are enjoying their journey. There are many other upcoming events where we can all get together. Talk of events for the summer heated up with the Memorial Day gathering, fishing trips, National Reunion, helicopter hovering contest, and other ideas to include Hawaii as topics! We have also been considering inviting chapters to Alaska on a small scale, since a National reunion here looks like a long shot for now. We will keep everyone posted on how this idea evolves.

I also have to say that we recently found the VHPA face book page



Back row L to R Gene Ori, Ron Fleuschhacker, Jim Harvey, Terry Vraniak, Thomas Blake, Phil Watson, Roy Daw, Lynn Kile, Red Kinney
Front row L to R Joe Riley, Garland Dobson, John Brown, William Merkley, John Ulsher, Ron Priebe, Vic Micol, JD Baxter

thank everyone for their posts. It's a great page, thanks for leading the way. It has motivated us to launch our own page as we've grown to forty three members!

It is exciting that new members keep joining us and participating in our events. We are thankful for all who call the Alaska Chapter of VHPA their home Chapter and really appreciate our out of state members who flew in this great state after their tours. To all we send a special blessing and look forward to a full year of activities.

*Lynn Kile
Nomad 23*

President, Alaska Chapter

CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

The chapter began the year with our annual Holiday party on 24 January at our President's (Ken Fritz) house. The twenty-seven members and spouses enjoyed a warm and dry day.

Our Huey was displayed for the first time this year on 16 February at the 13th Annual "American Heritage Day" at Mt. Vernon Cemetery in Fair Oaks, CA. Al Doucette, Mike Whitten, Jim Stein, Greg Hutson, Ken Lake, and Curt Knapp showed off our helicopter to "Ole Abe" and many others in attendance.

We completed many small improvement projects (including adding the wiper blades) at our first 'Huey Work day' of the year on 21 March. Our thanks go to Dave Anderson, Tom Inks, Mike O'Connell, Curt Knapp, Frank Kulhavy, and Jim Stein for helping out. Our big plan is to replace the B-Model rotor system with a C- Model rotor system sometime this year.

There are, however, many other smaller things to accomplish before that happens!

We plan another work day in April, before we display the Huey again at the American Legion's post in Rio Linda, CA. We have many events planned in May. Please check out our website for more information and plan to join us at future events. www.vhpaccn.org.

*By Dave Anderson,
VHPACCN webmaster*



Holiday Party at Ken Fritz's house



'Abe Lincoln' posing in front of our UH-1C



How many Old Helicopter Pilot's does it take to change a wiper blade?

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter conducted its bi-monthly breakfast meeting at the Rib Ranch in Marietta, GA on 21 March 2015. Our guest speaker was BG (Ret.) Joseph Stringham who currently serves as the Chair of the Ranger Foundation. During his thirty-two years of active duty, BG Stringham commanded three Infantry battalions, including the 1st Ranger Battalion. The gem of his career was commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment. He is credited with forty-two months of close combat. As a Green Beret, BG Stringham organized, trained, and led in combat the first MIKE Force unit in Vietnam. The Mike Force became legendary in Vietnam and was featured in the John Wayne movie, "The Green Beret." His presentation included his own experiences during three tours in Vietnam, his role as senior military attaché at the US Embassies in Brazil and Mexico, as well as his participation in DOD activities for counter-narcotic interdiction in these regions. He also addressed some of the contemporary challenges facing today's US Army. BG Stringham has been inducted into both the Ranger and Special Forces Hall of Fame.

The Newman High School Social Studies and History Department at Newman, GA, offers within its curricula an advanced elective on the Vietnam War. The course has become nationally known and is very popular among NHS students. On 10 March 2015, NHS honored veterans of the Vietnam War during a daylong ceremony with daytime exhibits and an evening reception featuring keynote speaker, Col. Paul Longgear. He serves as a Green Beret, won the Silver Star, and is one of the founders of the Georgia Military



Newman HS Students view the Cobra
Photo by Celia Shortt, courtesy of The Newman Times-Herald

tary Hall of Fame. On 16 March 2015, the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation flew a Huey and a Cobra to NHS and landed on the stadium football field during school hours. The pilots and several members of the GA Chapter VHPA were present throughout the school day to interface with about three-hundred students to field general questions regarding the Huey and Cobra to include how they were employed during the Vietnam War. The GA VHPA will continue to support NHS with speakers throughout the school year.

On the morning of 30 March 2015, the Governor of Georgia, the Honorable Nathan

Deal, will host a ceremony at the State Capitol to honor and recognize veterans of the Vietnam War. The ceremony will include customary honors to our nation, military/patriotic songs, and keynote remarks by Governor Deal and Army LTG (Ret.) Claude M. Kicklighter, Director of DOD Office of Commemorations. Georgia is currently preparing Certificates of Honor (signed by the Governor and the Georgia Department of Veterans Service Commissioner) to be ceremonially presented to every Vietnam War veteran residing in Georgia (currently 234,000). Bob Lanzotti, GA-Chapter VHPA president, will attend that ceremony.

Our next meeting will be on 23 May 23 at our home base, the Rib Ranch, 2063 Canton Road, Marietta, GA. Our May meeting speaker will be Mr. Joe Kirby, the editor of the Marietta Daily Journal. Joe will relate to our members his experience of annually escorting local groups to the D-Day beaches and Caen War Memorial at Normandy, France.

For those former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots in the Atlanta area who are interested in joining our Chapter, please view our website at www.ga-vhpa.org for schedule of future meeting dates or contact me at [REDACTED]

Bob Lanzotti, President



NORTH ALABAMA

The North Alabama Chapter VHPA (NAVHPA) has spent a long, cold, wet winter (brrrr) preparing Buc-3 our display quality UH-1C for the spring and summer season. We are happy to have more requests that we can possibly fulfill to bring Buc-3 and our member docents to school, veterans and patriotic events.

Here is our near-term schedule:

- 21-22 March – Veterans Gun Show, BJCC Birmingham - Display (20 Mar move aircraft)
- 29-31 March – AAAA, Nashville
- 4 April – Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Display, HSV Veteran's Park
- 14 April – Scottsboro High School Display

- Week of 27 April - Owens Crossroads Elementary Display
- 25 May – Memorial Wreath Laying at Maple Hill
- 25 May – Madison Veterans Park Display
- 30 May - Madison County Exec Apt Open House
- 26-27 June – McMinnville, TN Display

As you can see in the schedule above, the NAVHPA is venturing farther afield with Buc-3. Birmingham, AL; Nashville and McMinnville, TN are more than 100 miles from our base at the Huntsville Executive Airport. It takes the efforts of at least 5 members driving three vehicles to safely convoy Buc-3. Then 10-15 members must act as docents and lecturers for the aircraft and displays of memorabilia. Our more than 60 active members are the reason that this schedule is possible.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

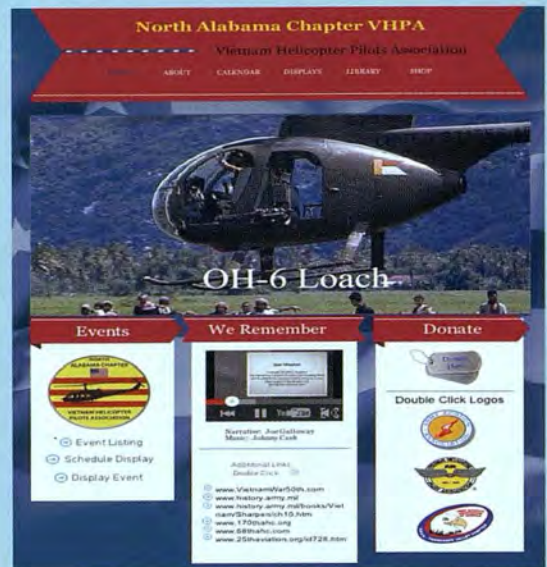
Another activity during the winter has been totally revamping our website. Thanks to the efforts of NAVHPA member Joe Stevens and our sponsor, Kairos Network, for a wonderful NAVHPA presence on the web.

The NAVHPA site is open to the public at <http://www.navhpa.org>. It contains our chapter's history, some information about our chapter officers, an updated calendar, some of our public documents and a whole lot of great pictures on Vietnam helicopters in action.

We want to publically recognize our President, Les Haas, for his leadership; Marshall Eubanks for organizing all the activities and displays and Bernie Parr for honchoing the restoration and maintenance of Buc-3.

If you live within 100 miles of Huntsville, you are eligible to join the NAVHPA. We need you. You can contact us at navhpa@gmail.com or write us at Box [REDACTED]. Please join us.

By Ralph Weber



NAVHPA Homepage

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Each month on the first Saturday, the names of the 44 North Carolina POW/MIA lost from Vietnam are "called" from the Capital Square in Raleigh, NC. Each February the NCVHPA has the honor of "calling" the missing. Most were related to aviation. Six are from Army Helicopter units. You may have known some: CWO Jimmy Lee Watson 1/9 Cav "Headhunters", Lucamo NC; WO1 Dennis William Omelia, 61st AHC "Lucky Stars" Smithville, NC; Sp4 Larry Kane Morrow, H Troop (Air) 17th Cav "Black Dragon" Lowell, NC; Sp4 Larry Carl Jamerson, 17th AHC "Lancers" Rosman, NC; SSG Robert Lee Curlee, Jr. 118 AHC "Thunderchickens" Monroe NC; and, WO1 Frederick Lewis Cristman, 48th AHC "Bluestars", whose name is read by past NCVHPA President, Brock Nicholson each year. Brock was "Bluestar 26" in Vietnam.

The NCVHPA's annual meeting is called to order after our annual "calling" of the POW/MIA names. Newly elected for 2015, were Larry Pigg, President, and Edmund Hughes, Vice President. Carl Seager remains as Treasure and Bob Inglis remains Secretary. Both are irreplaceable to NCVHPA.

Events in which we plan to participate in 2015:

- February 27 – March 1: Two birds (UH-1M, UH-1H) Baseball, Kinston, NC.
- March 27 – 28: UH-1H Etchings in Stone.org, Raleigh, NC.
- May 5 – 13: Four helicopters, Moving Vietnam Wall, Conyers, GA.
- May 13 – 17: Two helicopters (OH-58, UH1-C), Myrtle Beach, SC.
- May 16 – 17: Two helicopters (UH-1M, UH-1H), Seymour Johnson AFB.
- May 21 – 29: Six helicopters, one jeep, Myrtle Beach, SC.
- August 24 – 30: Two helicopters, VHPA Reunion, Washington, DC.
- September 9 – 1: Four helicopters, Moving Vietnam Wall.



The Chapter assembles for the "calling of the Missing" ceremony

Ashville, NC.

- November 11: UH-1H, Veterans Day, Ft. Rucker, AL.

There will be additional events. Stop by and we will put you to work.

A special event occurred during that gathering. Quilts of Valor were awarded to eighteen members. They were, Jerry Seago, Carl Seager, Edmund Hughes, Bob Inglis, J.D. Lawson, Vic Rose, Bill Doran, Lawrence Lainer, James Baker, Joe Armstrong, Sam McLamb, Dave Samuels, Allan Hoffman, Steve Eyman, Phil Keith, Sid Chambers, and Larry Pigg. Past President, Brock Nicholson had been previously awarded a QOV and only one is awarded to each serviceman. More emotion was displayed there than since Vietnam.

Catherine Roberts founded Quilts of Valor Foundation in November 2003. It was after 9/11 that things changed radically for her. She retired and in late 2003, started QOV as a result of her older son, Nat's, upcoming deployment to Iraq as a gunner for his Humvee. She had this vision of a post-deployed warrior struggling with his war demons at two in the morning. She saw him sitting on the side of his bed wrapped in a quilt. That quilt not only comforted but warded off his war demons. The mission was simple: To cover all those wounded warriors with both physical and psychologically

wounds with a Quilt of Valor. The focus was first on warriors from Iraq/Afghanistan rather than other wars/conflicts. This whole process started with one QOV going to Walter Reed. Since that first quilt, they have awarded more than 30,000 QOVs and are still counting. . . . Quilts of Valor = Comfort for those who served.

Mary Ellen Melchiorre, of Fuquary-Varina, NC lovingly brought in the Quilts for the recipients. There is no limit of praise for both her, and her efforts.

By B. Seago and L. Pigg



Mary Ellen Melchiorre distributes quilts to the members cited in the report



OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Our Chapter met at the County Grill in Yorktown on February 7. Approximately fifty members, spouses and guests enjoyed a great meal and much camaraderie, followed by a tour of the Transportation Museum at Ft. Eustis.

On May 2, we will meet at 10:30 at the Marine Corps Museum at Quantico. Lunch and a brief business meeting will be followed by a guided tour of the museum.

Regular meetings are held at the Legend Brewing Company in Richmond at 13:00 on the first Saturday of each month. An excep-

tion to this schedule will be April's meeting, which will be held on April 11.

Activities currently being addressed by the Chapter are establishment of a scholarship and participation in a program to provide home maintenance assistance to the families of deployed service members.

On 12 March, three of our members supported President, Bob Hesselbein, in his presentation to the Arlington National Cemetery Committee for our Monument. He returns for another presentation to Max Cleland's ANC Advisory Committee on 26 March.

By Hugh Adams: Secretary



7 Feb Meeting at the Ft Eustis Transportation Museum. L to right Don Agren, Bill Ryan, Jim Squires, Ken Paulson



Leading Ladies
L to r Patti Squyres, Janet Gay, Angie Agren.



Dining at our 7 Feb. meeting at the County Grill Yorktown, VA



SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

Several members of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA joined hundreds of other veterans and guests for the formal dedication of the Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the campus of the College of the Ozarks. The ceremony took place on April 22nd, in Point Lookout, Missouri. The college had been designated by the Missouri legislature and governor as the official site for the memorial, largely because of the honor and respect it holds for all veterans.

The second quarterly meeting of 2015 will be on June 13th at Arris Bistro, in Jefferson City, Missouri, and will begin at 11:00AM. A presentation will be made on the Lakota helicopter, the UH-72, and following our luncheon meeting, members and guests will have an opportunity to travel the short distance to the Missouri Air National

Guard hangar to view the helicopter "up close and personal". We extend special thanks to chapter member Ed Smith for his efforts in arranging this opportunity for us.

Our third quarterly meeting will be in Columbia, at a place, date, and time to be determined. Why even mention it then? It is important because we will be electing a new Vice President and Secretary. If you have interest in serving your chapter in either capacity, contact me or a Chapter Council member for more information.

The chapter continues to grow and our members continue to serve our communities and honor our fellow veterans. Keep us informed of such opportunities in your area so they can be posted in the calendar link on our website, vhpasmo.org.

Make your plans to be with us in Jeff City!

By Bill Thompson, President

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Our SoCal Chapter had our annual St Patty's meeting and BBQ at Wings and Rotors Museum. Over forty of our members, family and kids attended. One of our members, August Swanson brought his nonprofit charity Serve-One with several volunteers and cooked us an awesome Corned Beef and Cabbage meal. Serve-one has served thousands of meals to veterans and homeless this year alone. They were grateful to be included with us. We thank them so much for feeding us and supporting our veterans.

On 14 April, Ron Warner VP, and I are invited to the Fisher House SoCal Board of Directors Meeting at the Long Beach VA. We will at that time give them a check for \$2300 from our fundraiser. This will be matched by Fisher House National. This matched total of \$4600 will help build a twenty-one unit living facility on the Long Beach VA property. Family members



The Chapter poses in front of a USMC H-34

will be able to stay for free while visiting injured and sick veterans at the VA Hospital. Ground breaking is scheduled this coming July. It is a great Honor for our Chapter to be part of this Fisher House.

By Sven Akesson



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GOT YOU COVERED ...Sort Of

The Players:

WO1 Edward "Ned" Schantz, CW2 Bruce James, SP5 Jim Alden-difer, and an unremembered crew member with a first name of Victor. There was possibly a fifth crewmember involved that is completely unremembered after forty-two plus years. A FAC known only as Seahorse (possibly Seahorse 11) was also involved at the time of this incident.

The Background:

Until very shortly before the incident, everyone mentioned above (except Seahorse) were members of C/227 (Ghostriders) Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Division, based out of Phuoc Vinh in III Corps. Ned and Bruce had a total of twenty months in-country; both were highly experienced Aircraft Commanders with a couple of thousand combat hours between them. Jim had nine months experience in-country as a top-notch crew chief. It is believed that Victor (gunner) also had considerable in-country experience. The Ghostriders were a pure lift company; i.e., twenty UH-1H "slicks" with no gun platoon. Each of the two ten-ship slick platoons, however, had a bird configured with a minigun and searchlight on the left side and a fifty 'cal on the right side. These two aircraft were normally dedicated to Nighthawk missions and seldom, if ever, flew normal missions. The Ghostriders flew traditional slick missions. The mix of (C&C, Log, Combat Assault, passenger ferry, etc.) was conducted in many areas of III Corps such as: An Loc, Lai Khe, Quan Loi, and Tay Ninh. In addition several crews wound up flying many of their Infantry support missions in the area around Song Be and north up to Bu Gia Map. This included the many associated fire bases around the areas north, west, and east of Song Be up to the Cambodian border. The Ghostriders played a major part in the Cambodian Incursion (1 May 70 – 30 Jun 70). By coincidence, or planned happenstance, two or three crews often supported 1/8 Infantry Battalion (then commanded by LTC Jack Galvin; A/1/8 commanded by CPT Brian Utermahlen). These crews grew very close to the "Jumping Mustangs" (1/8 Cav), and even participated in an informal exchange program. When not in the field, if possible, Brian would take a few days to fly right-seat with the Ghostriders. In exchange, one of those Ghostriders, would spend a week in the field, humping the bush with an Infantry Company (he shall remain unnamed, as this act clearly demonstrated his lower-than-average IQ).

The 1st Cav was an airmobile Division with considerable combat assault experience (particularly after Cambodia). They were very effective inserting troops into LZ's. When inserting into a new or known hot LZ, the slicks always had gun cover, normally provided by AH-1G Cobra gunships armed with 2.75" FFAR, Flechettes (Nails), 40mm cannon (Chunker), nose or pod mounted minigun, or sometimes 20mm cannon (Vulcan). Other times, gun cover might have been provided by a FAC, either OV-10 (usually call sign Rash), or an O-2. Regardless, when the slicks heard they were covered, they truly were...and by expert pilots. The Ghostrider pilots had only to look left or right-rear to see the covering guns. The guns were often out front, in clear sight, when prepping a hot LZ. It was very effective and reassuring support on those occasions for the slicks, having only a pair of M-60s for defense.

In early 1971, the 1st Cav began standing down and rotating back to CONUS. Some organic units inactivated, some went home, and others remained in-country, were re-designated, moving elsewhere in RVN. The Ghostriders were re-designated 60th AHC and moved to Ninh Hoa, near the coast in II Corps, north of Nha Trang and south of Tuy Hoa. They replaced the 48th AHC (Bluestars), who fared very badly,

when sent north in support of Lam Son 719. The mission in Ninh Hoa was to support the Korean "White Horse" Division. The 60th arrived at Ninh Hoa in mid to late March 1971, and naturally was completely unfamiliar with the AO.

The Incident:

Prior to recounting this saga, the author should point out that he is very clear on some portions and hazy, or even totally clueless, on other aspects...he will depend on the other two crewmembers to edit, add, or delete as appropriate. On 31 Mar 71, Ned and Bruce were either in or near the new Ops building; possibly getting some rays. A call came over Guard from Seahorse, asking for any armed aircraft in the vicinity of Ninh Hoa to come up on a certain frequency. Having two Nighthawk aircraft, we responded. Seahorse, a FAC reported a friendly convoy under attack in a mountain pass nearby (Duc Me, as it later turned out). He added they had cleared the area, abandoning the vehicles. Weapons were left and the main vehicle (there may or may not have been others) was a five-thousand gallon tanker with enemy crawling all over it. The convoy friendlies were either ARVN or US, but not Korean. We described our Nighthawk birds, and Seahorse said: "Perfect, come on." He probably had to give us directions to the site, due to our newness in the AO. Upon arrival in the area, Seahorse instructed us to destroy the tanker and get as many of the enemy as we could. We probably made a high recon, and Seahorse reported us in sight (we were single-ship). Since we had the .50 with Armor Piercing Incendiary (API) on the right side, we decided to make a low pass to the left of the tanker, firing mini on the left and .50 on the right, and so informed Seahorse, who rogered and said: "I've got you covered going in." Upon initiating this pass, we could see many of the enemy who suddenly decided we were unwelcomed intruders to this invitation-only event, and decided to shoot back...a lot. We opened fire; the mini fired one round and jammed, and the .50 fired one round and jammed. Calling Seahorse, we made a hard 180 so he would know to stay clear and exited the area. We were able to clear both weapons and test fire pretty quickly. We notified Seahorse that we were back in hot. He responded: "Roger got you covered." This trip went better – got a number of bad guys and the tanker made one hell of an explosion when the .50 API lit it up. We made some more passes; each time covered by Seahorse and return fire seemed to lessen considerably. At some point, the gunner reported that he had been hit in the leg and got pretty excited, so we began to clear the site. Ned and Bruce asked each other: "Did you see Seahorse?" Both responded with a negative. As we were headed back to Cam Ranh hospital, we called Seahorse, asking, "What are you and where are you?" The reply was: "I'm a Birdog at 5000 feet, been there the whole time." We turned and looked at each other, shook our heads, and queried: "What weapons are you carrying?" Back came the rather sheepish reply: "Well, I was out of rockets when I called for help, but had you covered with my M-16."

Postscript: We never were able to hunt that sucker down and castrate him, but recent web research indicates that Seahorse was the Army 183d Reconnaissance Airplane Company, flying O-1's in the area. Their unit historian (copied on this) is attempting to research the incident. Our gunner took a clean through-and-through flesh wound and returned to the unit in a short time. There is a good possibility that he shot himself in all the excitement and chaos after running out of .50 ammo and engaged with his M-16.

By Bruce James VHPAM15579



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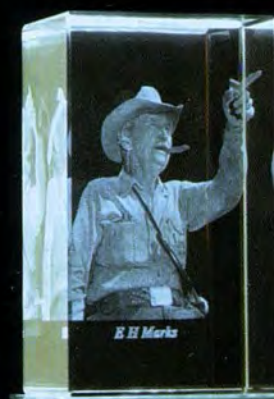
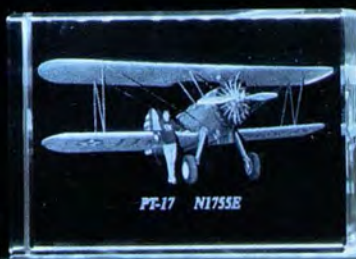
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