



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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# From the President of the VHPA

~ JOHN SHAFER ~



Camp Holloway, early 1971

Sitting here (1/14/17) trying to write the President's column for The VHPA Aviator that will be in the March/April issue. What to write about? The VHPA has its reunion in Indianapolis this year, we have a really good chance the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act will be passed in the 115th Congress, we are still upgrading the software systems at HQ, the Endowment Fund at the Vietnam Center and Archives at Texas Tech University, and the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War.

Reunion in Indianapolis, look on the VHPA website for all the details, really many things to do and see, sign up before events are sold out. Hope to see you there.

Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act, Bob Hesselbein is still spearheading this effort for the VHPA. Thanks to Bob and all the volunteers who helped with the bills in the 114th Congress, the bill in the House passed and the Senate bill was blocked from a vote in the last few days of the 114th Congress session. Bob has already been busy working on the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act with the new Congress. Representative Amodei will be sponsoring the bill in the House again and Senator Dan Sullivan in the Senate. So, we need the VHPA memberships' help again with calls to the Representa-

tives and Senators to have them co-sponsor the new bills.

The upgrading of the software systems at HQ has been moving forward on schedule, thanks to Art Price, Sherry Rogers, the rest of the HQ staff, Mike Law, Gary Roush, and Greg Pattillo.

The Endowment Fund at Texas Tech University continues to grow, donations so far \$8,500, thank you to those who donated to help maintain the legacy of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots. The VHPA is trying to fund the endowment with \$250,000. Your tax-deductible donation can be made to the VHPA by mailing a check or using a credit card, please call HQ at 800-55-8472.

The Governor of the State of Hawaii welcomes the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration in the 50th State May 22 - 29, 2017 in Honolulu. A week of joining together to Welcome Home veterans, families and supporters is planned in Hawaii, with activities that include governor's Reception, parade through Waikiki, concert at the Band Shell, movie on the beach, unit reunions, tour of US Army Museums and of Pearl Harbor Historic Sites, Bob Hope/ USO style dinner and show at Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor, memorial services at National Cemetery in the Pacific and much more.

Register at <http://www.vietnam50years.org/register-1>

John Shafer

Scalphunter 18, B Troop 7th/17th Air Cav

## FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

If you plan to attend R2017, please go on line and get registered! There are several capacity-controlled events already sold out or nearing sold out. We hope to see you in Indy!

The 1994-2016 Calendar CD is available for the cost of \$8. If you would like to purchase one, call HQ to place your order. Don't forget to order your 2017 directories that will be mailed out in October.

REMEMBER - You can now pay your dues and pre-order your CD or Paper Directory on line thru the On Line Directory at <https://directory.vhpa.org/>!

If you move, PLEASE 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. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under "Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you

can make updates directly to your information. You can also call HQ with an update to your contact information! If we do not have your correct address on file, you will not receive your Aviator!

If you know of anyone who served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam who is 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 newsletter 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 we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

Sherry Rodgers

VHPA Office Manager



Future Reunion Site  
**2019 VHPA REUNION**  
 ~ KANSAS CITY ~



After initially receiving proposals from 11 hotels in six cities, Mike Law, Don LeMaster, and I (the 2019 Site Search Committee appointed by VHPA President John Shafer) visited the two finalists and have successfully concluded contract negotiations with The Kansas City Marriott Downtown for the 36th VHPA Annual Reunion, which will take place the end of May, 2019 (final dates still to be determined). Kansas City is a vibrant and historically rich city that you will enjoy immensely (even if you only hear their famous jazz, or sample their tasty BBQ). You will be very pleased to know that for three full years out, we have locked in an excellent room rate (\$119), banquet cost (\$70), and parking fee (\$10), as well as some very good terms and conditions. There will be more to come regarding events, tours, local attractions, and entertainment in future Aviator editions.

By Art Jacobs, VHPA Member-at-Large



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# The Dog That Flew With Silver Spurs

The Red Horse Inn was an oasis for the combat-weary troopers of the 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry in Vietnam. A simple structure of plywood, it had a large screened patio with a tin roof that rattled noisily when it rained. Above the entrance was a large sign painted with a bright red Pegasus. The men of the squadron built it in their spare time with scrounged material; it was their special place for relaxation, for refreshment, and, occasionally, for revelry. It was once the scene of a ludicrous controversy created by intense emotions among the squadron pilots concerning an intrepid canine named Wopa.

The story began in January 1969 at the Di An Base Camp, located in the brush country about ten miles northwest of Saigon. This was the home for Troop A of the squadron, more widely known and acclaimed by their radio call sign, "Silver Spurs."

I was a Lieutenant just recently graduated from the U.S. Army Helicopter Training Program. After arriving in Vietnam, I was subsequently assigned to A Troop for my tour of combat duty. I came to Di An in the early afternoon of January 19, and was given the customary orientations at the squadron and troop headquarters. Afterward, I was filled with imaginative anticipation of the forthcoming combat with the "Silver Spurs." The troop area was nearly vacant this time of the day due to mission requirements. I went to my assigned hooch; while unpacking my gear, I suddenly noticed a skinny, mongrel dog sharing the quarters. He had been sleeping beneath the small frame bed and raised his head to stare at me as I invaded his privacy. Closer scrutiny revealed symptoms of malnutrition and acute companionship-anemia. So, following the evening meal, I brought him some table scraps from the mess hall. That first expression of kindness quickly paved the way to a steadfast friendship.

I believe every animal, like humans, possesses a unique personality and temperament. It has been said the most common emotional ailment permeating all of dogdom is the delusion they are four-legged people! Wopa was no exception.

His name, Wopa, was synonymous with the acronym for an unofficial U.S. Army organization known as the Warrant Officers Protective Association. It has an unwritten constitution and consists of a strongly knit group of Warrant Officers dedicated to their profession. Wopa's name was a tribute to the multitude of valiant War-



rant Officer pilots who comprised the backbone of the U.S. Army Aviation efforts in Southeast Asia.

Besides this canine's unique name, there were several physical ingredients of character manifesting themselves as our friendship ripened. He was medium-sized in build, with hair shaded like bleached straw. His appearance was enhanced by a wrinkled forehead, which gave him a most profound countenance and peculiar stare. His tail arched up and back over his body somewhat like a horse-shoe, usually resting in a half-cocked position to one side. He sometimes ambled along using only three legs as his hind legs were plagued by arthritis result-

ing from an accident at Long Binh, where he was struck by a jeep. Besides his physical traits, Wopa possessed a nebulous charisma in his personality, attested to by his intrinsic talents for adventure and challenge.

In Vietnam, "man's best friend" was accepted as an extension of the soldier's natural senses with extensive programs devised to educate the sentry, scout, tracker and even tunnel and booby-trap detecting dogs. Many accounts relate the invaluable services provided by these trained canines. In fact, the U.S. Army was experimenting with a new super-breed of dogs for future combat requirements. Wopa did not fit any of these categories; instead, he will be remembered in the annals of dogdom for his exploits and achievements as a Flying Mascot.

Prior to my arrival in the troop, Wopa had belonged to a Warrant Officer in the lift section of the aero-rifle platoon. After a few days' acquaintance, our mutual adoption cemented our relationship and Wopa began accompanying me everywhere in the troop area. Day by day, we progressively developed into inseparable companions. On a typical day, Wopa would rise at dawn and accompany me to breakfast and then to the Flight Operations Room. There, he would watch as I departed for my helicopter at Sabre Heliport. Wopa patiently waited in the shade of a bunker and would greet me with his special display of affection when I returned from the day's mission.

Sometimes, following the evening meal, the platoon would play a wild game of Jungle Volleyball and Wopa would watch intently from the sidelines. After the game, he would nonchalantly follow the players as they adjourned to relax in the squadron officers'



club, the Red Horse Inn. Considering himself "one of the boys," Wopa enjoyed the fraternizing and the tidbits he might wheedle from the men. At taps, he would escort me safely back to our hooch; and during the night, I slept contentedly with Wopa beneath my bunk as guardian. Often, he would make his presence known by nudging my hand reassuringly when returning from any night prowling!

During late March, a significant event transpired causing our relationship to ripen even further. Living in such close proximity, it was quite natural that several of the other men also developed an attachment for Wopa. Two of them were my constant companions, Lieutenant Mike Reardon, a Vermont Yankee, and Lieutenant Dick "Mac" McCulloch, an Alabama farm boy. They both encouraged Wopa to follow the pilots' truck to Sabre Heliport one morning. The distance was more than a country mile, but Wopa managed to keep the truck in sight all the way and was apparently thrilled with his new discovery. Henceforth, he came to Sabre daily, waited until mission departure time, then returned to the Flight Operations room for his usual daily vigil.

Inevitably, Wopa was destined for adventure in a realm remote from his wildest imaginations. About a week after Wopa's first visit to Sabre, my crew chief, PFC Mike Scott, suggested we take Wopa on a mission. Scotty was the most daring crew chief in the troop, and the keeper of Hawk, Wopa's father. Against my arguments, Scotty persisted that Wopa did not appear to fear hovering aircraft like other mascots and would not interfere with the mission's performance. Scotty stressed this would be "status" for the aero-rifle platoon.

I was skeptical. The idea of a pet flying in the aircraft had not been a previous practice by Troop A; and besides, Wopa might become frightened and fall from the aircraft.

Mike, Mac and I discussed the proposal that evening. Carefully weighing the factors, we made our surreptitious decision. At the moment, it seemed rather quixotic. Wopa experienced his first sensation of flight during a routine combat support mission from Di An to Lai Khe. He adapted to the new environment with ease. Although his mannerisms expressed great anxiety during the take-offs, once airborne, he was calm and seemed to sense his new accomplishment. Relishing the flow of cool air through the open doors, he strutted from side to side of the cargo compartment gazing at the new view of his old world, then he curled up next to the transmission fire wall and slept!

My fears were gone. Considering the apparent initial success, I decided Wopa should participate in an actual combat assault mission, just as the aero-rifle platoon had frequently used their tracker dog on combat assaults. However, I was uncertain of Wopa's reaction to other troops being on board, not to mention the sights and sounds of exploding rockets and crackling mini-gun bursts that would be used in the devastating suppressive fire during the assault. After all, a tracker dog was well disciplined for this duty, while Wopa was still a combat virgin. As might be expected from a dog of such character, he reacted like a seasoned veteran!

While enroute to the landing zone, Wopa circulated among the cavalymen in the helicopter as if he were wishing them all "good luck!" He seemed to sense the tenseness and excitement of the moment. During the actual assault, the crisp staccato of the M-60 machine guns firing intensified his exhilaration. Wopa moved forward to the cockpit pedestal between the pilot and copilot seats which afforded him a better view of the action. Upon landing, the troops dispersed from the helicopter to perform their mission.

When the troops were ready for pick up, Wopa served as their welcoming host while they clambered aboard. His services were rather limited, but I did see some wide smiles from weary faces thanking Wopa for his welcome!

Since Wopa's inaugural combat assault mission had been a success, the platoon decided to continue this canine aerial experiment. Wopa gradually became the object of a growing community of admirers. Although his aerial

actions were clandestine, they nevertheless became well known throughout the platoon. Actually, Wopa began to anticipate flying daily missions with me. His anticipation became so intense that on numerous occasions, if I failed to place him aboard before hovering for take-off, he would race ahead of the helicopter, jumping up and down pleading to be taken aboard!

Our joint aerial endeavor continued smoothly for almost two months. Then, one evening in late May, as the platoon returned from its mission and began disembarking from the truck, I was approached by my section leader, Captain James Le Due. He had not flown with us that day; and as the truck neared Flight Operations, I noticed him standing there with Warrant Officer Shakallis, our Instructor Pilot. Both were scowling very hard. The Captain approached me slowly, placed his arm around my shoulder and said rather ominously, "The Old Man has learned about Wopa being in your aircraft and wants to see you first thing in the morning." His tone was not pleasant.





As he walked away, a myriad of thoughts flashed across my mind, conjuring up all sorts of punishments for my actions. Who had revealed our secret? Only the platoon knew about Wopa. Immediately, a cloud of gloom hovered above me, and I avoided everyone for the rest of the day. I even abstained from the club that night, and the usual din and chatter drifting into my hooch from the fellows at the Red Horse Inn accentuated my melancholy outlook. Even Wopa lay silent beneath my bunk.

Early the next morning, I reported to the Orderly Room, where I sat for thirty minutes silently contemplating my mock execution. Our Commanding Officer was Major Burnett Sanders, an accomplished combat veteran, one of the innovators of the air cavalry concept, and a disciplinary martinet. The idea of confronting him at that early hour was certainly not appetizing!

Just then, the office door opened and the First Sergeant motioned for me to enter. I felt queasy.

Major Sanders returned my salute, then asked: "Are you aware of your rights under Article 31 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice?" I was stunned. Informing me that he was cognizant of my airborne actions with Wopa, he then asked if I could justify those actions. I began to flounder for words, then stammered out two rather facetious reasons.

An eternity elapsed, filled only by morbid silence. I was definitely up the proverbial creek!

The silence terminated with the opening of the rear office door. In walked Captain Bell, the troop Executive Officer, grinning like an ear of corn, and leading Wopa with a rope leash! Behind Captain Bell came the Adjutant; and by then, I could discern a group of the platoon members waiting just outside the open door. Major Sanders muffled a laugh. I realized immediately that my punishment was really a hoax; and to my surprise, Wopa was about to be rewarded for his services rather than being chastised!

I was tingling with excitement as Major Sanders pinned an Air Medal to Wopa's collar and officially declared him Troop Mascot! The Adjutant read the citation, which ended with: "For meritorious service and achievement while serving in the capacity of official A Troop Mascot."

Flushed with elation, I led Wopa from the room. Outside, the men of the platoon greeted us with a happy mixture of grinning, laughing and congratulations! The platoon had really fooled me. To this day, I have no idea who divulged the secret of Wopa to Major Sanders or who planned the award ceremony. The honor and distinction of being awarded the Air Medal was the highlight of our aerial experiment.

But these honors were short-lived. Despite his place of honor within Troop A, Wopa was not popular with everyone within the entire squadron. It was just three months after this day of distinction, that Wopa became the object of a heated campaign to remove his club privileges in the Red Horse Inn.

The commander of C Troop was a rotund, short Oklahoman whose own mascot was not permitted to enter the club. Since I am a lanky Texan, there was a natural geographic rivalry that existed

between us during our association. Each of the troops in the squadron had mascots; however, Wopa was the only mascot enjoying "club privileges." During mid-August, this troop commander began making an issue of Wopa being allowed in the club. At first, this seemed to be a jocular opinion, but it soon progressed to a point where adamant feelings developed for and against Wopa. Coalitions between the troops were formed, with most of A Troop backing Wopa's admittance to the club and most of C Troop being against his admittance. Relations eventually became so hostile, that Troop C boycotted the club and the Squadron Commander was forced to call a general meeting of the membership to settle this now serious issue. Animosity filled the air during the meeting. After hearing the opinions and plaudits of both sides, the Squadron Commander asked that a vote be taken, and the tally revealed Wopa could no longer enter the club! The conflict was settled, but Wopa's wounded pride was slow to heal.

During the remainder of the year, Wopa continued his flying exploits; and at night, he faithfully waited outside the club entrance for my reappearance.

It is difficult to measure a dog's loyalty; but once while I went away to Soc Trang on a special mission, Wopa awaited my return for three days in my revetment at Sabre heliport until he was finally coaxed to return to the troop area by the troop maintenance officer.

Obviously, the termination of our companionship at the end of my tour was an unpleasant task. The morning I departed Di An, Wopa followed, as usual, right up to the helicopter. I gave him a final hug and leaped aboard without him. A sad glint was reflected in his eyes as he stared at the departing helicopter. I knew he did not understand.

Wopa's flying career was terminated when I left Di An, but letters from some of the remaining troopers reported he was still active as their mascot and was cared for by the troop maintenance officer. During that year with me, Wopa logged almost two hundred hours of mascot flight time! He participated on numerous missions, exhibiting the daring and courage of the men with whom he flew. Although he was not a trained canine specialist, to the men of the "Silver Spurs" he was a loyal trooper who had justly "earned his spurs."

I suspect he continued to be an institution in the troop until it returned to the United States. To be forced to surrender his attachment to the air cavalymen of A Troop must not have been easy. In fact, a return to his normal life was likely impossible. In this sense, Wopa symbolized the Vietnamese people. In my mind's eye, I can visualize a dramatic scene at the sprawling Bien Hoa Air Base, wherein as the final soldier began to board the last "Freedom Bird," Wopa was impeding his progress by desperately clinging to his pant leg!

**William "Bill" McCalister  
Silver Spur 24 (1969)**



# Dawdling Dromedary

*by Tom Phillips*

The fascinating 1946 "Truculent Turtle" a big patrol plane non-stop distance record-setting flight in the March/April Aviator, prompted me to sketch out the story of the "Dawdling Dromedary," a Navy SH-3A, which set a non-stop, unrefueled, distance record for HELICOPTERS in 1965.

On September 27, 1964, an Army UH-1D Huey flew from Edwards AFB to Rogers, AZ, a distance of 1,171 nm, barely eclipsing a 1952 distance record (1,057 nm, Fort Worth to Niagara Falls, NY), set in a Bell H-13. Yes, an H-13!

That must have gotten the Navy's juices flowing because the Dawdling Dromedary went out and broke that record just five months later, March 6, 1965. Launching from USS Hornet (CVS-8) off San Diego, to USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA-42) moored pier-side at Naval Station Mayport, FL (near Jacksonville), she covered a distance of 1,829 nm. The Navy tried for the distance record three years earlier and failed, which may have gotten the Army's juices flowing for their 1964 record - who knows.

The aircraft commander for this second Navy attempt was especially qualified. Commander James R. Williford, was head of the Rotary Wing Branch, Flight Test Division, at the Naval Test Center, Patuxent River, MD. His copilot was Lieutenant David A. Biel, and their lone crewman was ADJ1 (jet engine mechanic) Paul J. Bert. A second crewman, normal for the SH-3A, was not included to save weight.

The Navy Sea King's normal fuel capacity was just over 5,700 usable pounds; modified with a blivet in the cabin it carried almost double that at 11,500 pounds. The attempt was hallmarked by careful planning, and good luck, as is always the case with any aviation event involving pushing or stretching an envelope. Everything nonessential which could lighten the bird was removed, including the heater. At takeoff, the helo weighed in at 23,000 pounds, the NATOPS maximum gross weight was 19,100. On landing, there were 60 pounds of fuel remaining.

They stacked the deck as much as possible by optimizing date and launch point: conducted the flight in the cool month of March rather than power-draining summer heat - historically, the highest westerly winds



Sikorski SH-3A: the Dawdling Dromedary

are in March - an even bigger factor than the OAT; launched from USS Hornet which was (I am assuming - NOT stated in the records, but why else launch from a ship instead of a runway), steaming into the wind to generate plenty of wind on the nose for takeoff - at least 30 knots.

Williford and Biel used every aerodynamic calculation and judgment derivable from performance pages found in the back of the NATOPS, augmented by test center calculations for needed values beyond standard NATOPS. They stayed low initially to avoid excessive fuel expenditure during the climb. This had an extra benefit as winds aloft early in the attempt were from the East. They were clearly to be avoided as the Dawdling Dromedary had to average at least a ten-knot tailwind for the attempt to succeed. They pressed on, finally burning enough fuel to climb and pick up a critical tail wind, then flying as fast as weight would allow short of retreating blade stall. Retreating blade stall speed is a function of weight and density altitude, lower with higher weight, higher with lower altitude. The flight records are no longer around, but at 23,000 pounds, low altitude on a cool day in March, the blade stall speed for an SH-3 would have been about 85 knots. The flight threaded a path of lower ground elevation through the mountains of the west. Unfortunately, the highest land elevations were when the Dawdling Dromedary was heaviest. Once beyond the last of the western high ground at Guadalupe Pass, TX and over the plains, Dawdling Dromedary flew a great circle route.





Crew of the Dawdling Dromedary: ADJ1 Paul J. Bert, Commander James R. Williford, Lieutenant David A. Biel. Note the art under the copilot's window

When weight allowed and ground elevation fell away, the crew shut down one engine as greater distance could be achieved while single engine (albeit at a slower speed) at higher altitudes. They flew single engine for nine and a half hours, then starting the second engine descending into the Jacksonville area for the landing aboard FDR. At best range altitude, single engine, the airspeed envelope would have been about a minimum of 50 knots indicated airspeed (power limited) to maximum of 70 knots indicated (retreating blade stall limit) to maintain level flight with the torque available.

They were able to find 35-knots of tail wind at 15,000 feet for much of the last portion. During that portion, they paid the price for no heater, the OAT at altitude was -11°F and their rubber boots, long Johns, and jackets were not enough to keep the crew from becoming thoroughly chilled. At altitude, the crew used portable oxygen bottles. The tail wind gave them a chance and mitigated their greatest worry, a night autorotation with empty fuel tanks to join the snakes and alligators in the spread across the flight path and unavoidable vast Okefenokee Swamp.

Departing at 04:18 PST, The Dawdling Dromedary finally settled to the deck of USS Franklin D. Roosevelt fifteen hours and 52 minutes later at 11:10 PM EST. It was a distance record, not a speed record. They didn't call their dromedary Dawdling for nothing.

The completion of the first coast-to-coast non-stop

flight of a helicopter brought accolades for the crew from Chief of Naval Operations on down, with Williford concluding "the flight was executed almost exactly as planned; a combination of aerological, airframe, engine, engineering and aeronautical talents."

The unrefueled, non-stop record of the Dawdling Dromedary stood for only a little over a year, being snared by a Hughes Corporation YOH-6 flown by legendary Allison civilian test pilot Jack Schweibold, who flew from Culver City, CA. to Ormond, FL. - 1922 nm. Nobody who knows much about the Howard Hughes of the mid-century should be surprised by that.

In 1967, the USAF set a non-stop distance record crossing the Atlantic in an HH-3E, but they did that with nine in-flight re-fuelings from an HC-130P, a capability then recently installed into the HH-3E and the HC-130P for use by the Air Force combat SAR forces in Vietnam.

Finally: In an interview with a reporter from the local Jacksonville fish wrap, someone representing the Navy was quoted as saying they made the distance record attempt just because the Army had it.

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# The Final Mission by Darryl James

## Americal Div Arty Air Operations 1900 Hrs. 2 Sep 69

The Operations radio chattered away. Everyone was either on the ground or on the way home.

It's been a good day, thought Captain James. No screw-ups. Sergeant Jenkins had all the battalions' Hook and Slick support running smoothly. Not a whine or complaint. Sighing with pleasure, he thought, just 6 days and a wake-up, then home!

James looked up as Jenkins walked in. The OPS NCO said, "No mail today, Sir."

"OK," Well maybe tomorrow, replied the disappointed Captain, I'm overdue for a letter; that's for damn sure.

Buck Sergeant Jenkins ran the day-to-day activities in Operations. The sharp, young college graduate made the job easy for James. All the Ops Officer had to do was schedule the pilots' missions and sign his name here and there. Jenkins loved to fly and had some boot-leg chopper time. Most crew-chiefs, however, preferred to ride in back as gunner with an M-60. Door gunners were used on convoy cover and scouting missions, as well as covert insertions and pickups for LRRPS.

The door opened and CW2 Tim Booth, the last Loach pilot in, entered sweaty and dirty. "Booth, you stink." The weary pilot gave a dirty look at the Ops Officer in clean fatigues and let out a string of expletives. The 19-year old could cuss like a seasoned sailor.

James sat heavily on the uncomfortable folding chair and began his paperwork. It was becoming dark. He was hurrying to catch up with the gaggle of Loach drivers gathering at the Officers Club. Finishing up, he and Jenkins were about to leave. As Jenkins flipped off the lights a door flew open, and their boss rushed in. The Major shouted, "JAMES! I just got the word; the 73rd needs a FADAC computer out to LZ Stinson, like right now."

The Major was Div Arty Air's new section leader. He was a bit of a mystery. Although he had been their boss for a month, he had not flown any combat missions and kept himself aloof.

"Major, it's nearly dark," replied the Captain. We don't fly night tactical missions unless a formal "TAC-E" is declared. Sir, we can take out the computer first thing in the morning. This happens all the time. They usually wait."

James thought to himself, in an emergency they can use those little circle slide rules to shoot those 105-howitzer's. They'll wait!

James had only 44 night-flying hours in Vietnam. Generally, most night missions were admin flights such as taking some Colonel home after dark. Night flying in Vietnam was inherently dangerous. The mountainous terrain and the dark waters of the South China did not provide a visible horizon for the nighttime pilot causing many to be disoriented and sometimes crash. Because of this danger, Div Arty Air always used two pilots at night. Two sets of eyes were safer.

James thought back to a dark, cloudy night when CPT Dotson and CPT Fuller, their most experienced pilots, were caught in the nighttime clouds over the Chu Lai airfield. They were taking a Lieutenant Colonel home to Duc Pho and planning to fly VFR on top of the cloud cover. When they climbed in the dark clouds, they got vertigo, lost control and nearly crashed into the sea. Each had a grip on the controls when they recovered from a death spiral. Seeing the welcome lights of the airfield, they decided to abort and return to Ky Hai Heliport. Neither could remember who made that decision, or who landed. They staggered in visibly shaken, and their passenger had a distinct green complexion to match his brown pants. The Colonel was more than happy to spend another night in Chu Lai.

The Captain's thoughts were interrupted as the Major barked, "Then I'll declare a TAC-E."

"You can't do that. Sir, only the Colonel or the XO can do that."

The Major snarled and grabbed the phone, and the Captain began to worry. James turned toward Jenkins and said, "Sarge, send a runner up the hill and see if you can find someone who's, ah, not drink- ah, I mean available."

"Yes, Sir."

Ten minutes later, James learned all the Loach drivers were at the Club playing liar's dice to see who would buy the next round of drinks.

The phone rang. The Major snatched it and said, "Yes, Sir." He looked at the Captain with a half-smile and said, "You got your TAC E, James. Division is sending over a FADAC. NOW GET SOMEONE TO TAKE IT OUT TO LZ STINSON!"

"Yes, Sir, but it looks like you and I will have to fly this mission. Everyone is at the Club."

"WHAT!" he shouted. "Why isn't someone available? Shouldn't we have someone on standby? Surely this isn't how you run things around here, Captain James."



Darryl James and Loach (named Whale).



"Sir, this TAC E is unusual. Sir, this is only the fifth or sixth TAC E since I've been here. It's rare for us to fly anything other than a scheduled admin mission at night."

"Well," replied the Major, sitting down and composing himself, "Get someone else to fly with you. I'll need to stay here and man the radios."

This is getting worse by the minute, thought James.

The door opened and an out of breath Spec 4 said, "I have a FADAC for a Major."

"O.K." said Sergeant Jenkins, "Ah, I, I guess you better send it down to the flight line."

The Captain turned back toward the Major and said, "Sir, Sergeant Jenkins can work the radios. Two pilots are needed for safety at night. It's our SOP. In addition, under our policy, with only a week to go, I'm considered "too short" to fly a combat mission. During your last week, a short-timer is restricted to fly only admin, avoiding combat missions. Since no one is available, I'll have to go. I'll do the flying, but I need you to sit in the left seat. Two set of eyes."

"No," interrupted the Major, "I need to stay here to manage things." He looked up and said sharply, "Captain, if all your buddies are ah, inebriated, then do it yourself. It's your deal, get it done."

That was uncalled for thought the Captain. They're not drunk, just having drinks before dinner. Maybe this newbie can't fly well. Maybe he is scared. Either way I don't think I want him flying with me tonight. James looked at Jenkins who stared without expression at the wall. "Would you like to go, Sergeant?"

Jenkins looked back at the Captain and smiled, "Sir, I would love to."

They grabbed their chicken-plates, M-16s, side arms, survival gear and walked down to the flight line leaving the Major to operate the radios. At the flight line, Wally, one of the crew chiefs, motioned for them to take his Loach. As usual, he wanted to go along.

"Sir," said Wally, "I can mount that M-60 in the back in two-minutes flat."

"Not this time, Whale. Sorry...we won't need it."

"Sir, you never know what you will run into."

"Sorry, Whale."

Wally's Loach, ship 425, had a bright blue whale painted on the transmission cowling. Wally's nickname was "Whale" and he decided to brand his aircraft with his handle. Wally was on the chubby side and not particularly fond of his nickname, but knew there was nothing he could do about it. The nickname stuck. He had become Div Arty Air's Whale. If he complained; the guys would call him that to tease him. By not complaining, everyone thought he liked it. He'd be Whale in either case. It's just one of many examples of Catch 22, Div Arty Air style.

Wally helped Sergeant Jenkins and Captain James preflight. This was his baby. He was proud of her and waited to see that everything would check out perfectly. It did. After pre-fighting, the three watched the Division technicians strap down a large alu-

minum suitcase (the FADAC computer) in back. They treated it as if it was a case of precious gems.

As Wally helped the Captain strap into the right seat, the "short-timer" thought, Don't sweat it, Amigo. Jenkins can fly this Loach a bit, at least straight and level. He can help watch the instruments, and work the radios. Everything's cool.

James hit the starter button and waited for the compressor gauge to stabilize at 15%. Then he slowly cracked the throttle spraying jet fuel into the engine. The Loach engine temperature had a tendency to spike during rapid starts causing potential damage. Starting slowly mitigated the spiking tendency. James set the radios, called Ky Hai tower, received permission to taxi, and depart. The Loach climbed to the east over the foamy surf of South China Sea and immediately turned left toward Chu Lai Bay. He leveled off at 200-feet as required to stay below the fast movers' airspace. James was surprised when Ky Hai immediately gave clearance to turn south and continue climbing. No jets tonight?

It was a clear, beautiful night. Americal Division was spread out before them like a sprawling, sparkling city. The huge Chu Lai Airbase off their left side was lit up like a JFK Airport in New York City.

The two heard no radio traffic. They seemed uncomfortably alone as they climbed south along Highway One. They leveled off at 3,000-feet continuing south as the darkness closed around them. Twenty minutes later, they came to a position where they had to turn inland away from sanctuary of Highway One.

As they turned west, James thought he could hear his butt cheeks pucker as he stared into the horizon-less pitch-black masking the mountains he knew were ahead. The Captain dimmed the instrument panel lights in a feeble attempt to see the horizon. The foreboding darkness in front seemed like a black hole ready to devour them. The pilot turned off the running lights to hide in the darkness. As he did this he hit the intercom switch on the cyclic and said, "They have us on radar with flight following, Sarge. I'm more worried about Charlie seeing us than running into another airplane."

"Right, Sir," replied Jenkins. "It sure is dark ahead."

"You got that right."

Every now and then, they saw small, dull specks of light and the faint glow of campfires. Their eyes picked up lines of pink tracer flashes. Friendlies, they hoped. They saw none of the green tracer flashes from the ammunition the VC preferred. Each in their minds could visualize lines of green tracers reaching up to devour them. Things seemed quiet below them. Suddenly, the darkness ahead was broken by a series of bright white flashes from the 105-howitzer battery on Stinson. The sight was spectacular.

"Now how can they do that without their little ol' FADAC?" The pilot chuckled sardonically to himself (Must be using those cute little circular slide rules).

"Looks like a firework show at Disneyland, Sir," Jenkins said over the intercom.



"Big fireworks," the Captain replied. "Well we certainly can't miss the hill, now...Right?"

"Yes, Sir. I hope they stop shooting when we get there."

"They will."

As they got closer, James forced himself to keep his eyes inside the cockpit. Staring at the artillery flashes would ruin his night vision and he would need sharp eyes to land on the dark hill.

The radio crackled, "Phoenix One-Three, this is Salvation, over."

"Salvation, One-Three."

"One-Three, you will have a check fire to land at Stinson in zero five, they recommend you approach directly from the east."

"Wilco, Salvation, Phoenix One-Three, out."

James slowed to 60 knots and began descending over the hill in a left, corkscrew pattern. Jenkins chatted on the FM with battery operations and confirmed their check fire. James closed his eyes to retain his night vision and flashed the landing lights twice to allow the Battery to see their Loach descending without running lights. The pilot could now make out the gun emplacements and hootches below. Everything appeared quiet. A 1/4-ton truck's headlights blinked and then stayed on, lighting up a sandbag-landing pad. The Loach descended toward the pad, turning tightly to stay over the relative safety of the hill.

This is turning out to be a piece of cake, thought the pilot.

They landed to a hover on the pad and settled softly in. James kept the Loach light on the skids, ready to depart as soon as the FADAC was offloaded. Soldiers grabbed the metal suitcase and threw on an identical case. A SP4 came up to the pilot's open door and shouted, "SIR, CAN I GET A RIDE BACK TO CHU LAI? I AM ABOUT TO DEROS."

"SURE," James yelled over the rotor noise, "JUMP IN; I AM GOING HOME SOON, TOO." The soldier climbed in back. James pulled pitch. The Loach leaped into the air, turned left and climbed in a tight spiral over the hill.

At about 200-feet, they were baptized in intense, white light as all six 105-howitzers fired directly below them. The bright flash blinded the Loach's occupants. A deafening boom immediately followed, penetrating the soundproof helmets worn by James and Jenkins. The passenger's unprotected ears were less fortunate. He covered them and screamed.

The pilot yelled in the intercom, "HOLY SHIT, I CAN'T SEE."

The aircraft bucked in the air. James instinctively jerked up on the collective causing the Loach to climb, dangerously straight up. The aircraft hovered high over the hill then began drifting in dangerous, low speed flight.

Time seemed to stand still. The pilot prayed, God please let me see and keep this thing flying. It seemed like an eternity, but in reality, the pilot began to regain his vision in twenty or thirty seconds. James scanned the instruments with burning eyes and saw they were at 700-feet, 35-knots airspeed and climbing with the

power in the red zone. He nudged the nose over slightly, lowered the collective into the green range and stabilized the aircraft in a normal 60-knot climb. The pilot took a deep breath and thought to himself, "Everything's OK. I can see. We are still in one piece and flying. We are OK unless our own guys shoot us out of the air."

Sergeant Jenkins found himself panting. He clicked the button on his cyclic and gasped for breath. "Ah, ah," he stuttered then screamed into the FM radio, "CEASE FIRE, CEASE FIRE."

"Ah, Roger, One-Three. Ah, standby one," came back the emotionless reply.

The battery's operations people knew Jenkins. They called him daily for Hook and Slick support. Jenkins willed himself to relax as he thought, those bastards will find themselves dealing with one really pissed off Ops NCO tomorrow. They will be hard pressed getting any extra perks from us for a while.

Just then, green tracers cut through the night and past the pilot's right shoulder. James turned sharply left away from the tracers and climbed hard. His eye caught the transmission torque meter that showed he was again pulling too much torque. James eased the collective down to bring the needle back into normal operating range and willed his scout helicopter to disappear into the night. I should have brought Whale along with his M-60. Wally will not be happy. His Loach will have its transmission inspected by maintenance for pulling too much torque.

The Loach headed away from the hill swallowed by the darkness. The SP4 in back, traumatized by the light and noise, sat in a stupor holding his ringing ears. Up front, James barked at Salvation Control on the UHF radio and then switched frequencies to complain to Div Arty Air OPS. The Major said he would call Battery OPS on LZ Stinson and personally chew them out. You do that thought the shaken aviator.

All the way home, folks on the radios said something like, "Oops, sorry, you were definitely under a check fire." "That was a screw up, a big Charlie Foxtrot. Sorry about that." "Anything we can do? Are you OK?"

James and Jenkins ignored the attempts at contrition as they flew home to Ky Hai. They landed and hovered into a revetment. The passenger and the defective FADAC were met on the line by a 1/4-ton truck. The passenger looked back at the pilot as he got into the jeep and said shakily, "Thanks for the ride, Sir." The Captain noticed he didn't kiss the ground.

James and Jenkins found a group of Loach drivers and crew chiefs waiting for them in the Operations Hootch. They wanted to hear all the details. The Major was noticeably absent.

I did not know it at the time, but that "hairy" night mission was my last time to fly in Vietnam. The following day, with one week remaining in my tour, I received the proverbial Dear John letter. The Dear John got me home in less than 48 hours to a world of hurt. And that bit of trauma is another story. I have since been blessed with a wonderful wife of 37 years, an awesome family and a successful career as a geologist in the oil industry. It has been a great life. God has been in control.



# VHPA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

NOW is the time for your descendants to start getting their VHPA Scholarship applications ready for the 2017 awards in JULY. All applications must be submitted to AAAA NLT Midnight April 30, 2017. Go to the AAAA website at... <http://www.quada.org/index.php/scholarships/application-procedure> and follow (see AAAA article in this issue) the instructions. If you have any questions, please contact us at 214-802-4244 (cell) or [msheuerman@tx.rr.com](mailto:msheuerman@tx.rr.com) or Tom Payne at 918-813-5132(cell) or [ka5hzd@att.net](mailto:ka5hzd@att.net) and we will try to help.

Remember, you, as the SPONSOR, must be dues current with VHPA and you, as the SPONSOR, or the APPLICANT must be dues current with AAAA at the time of submission. The APPLICANT can be a STUDENT Member.

Based on the total VHPA funds now being managed by the AAAA Scholarship Foundation at a 3.5% return our scholarships will, hopefully, be fully funded by the time of the awards in 2020. Currently, the Scholarship Committee plans to recommend to the Executive Council that VHPA add two more scholarships in 2019 and three more in 2020, bringing our total to ten (10) \$3000 awards each year. In addition, since our scholarships are some of the largest awards made, our applicants are considered first. Many not receiving a VHPA scholarship, receive AAAA scholarships, awards and grants. Last year, over \$86,500 was awarded to VHPA applicants.

## OBITUARIES

A good day is to read the obituaries in the local paper and not find my name. We are now at the age where we are beginning to realize we are not immortal as we learn of our friends' deaths. So as you scan the obituary page in your local newspaper, please let us know if you spot a fellow helicopter pilot so we can pass along that information to their friends. Obituaries are becoming a key part of our legacy so we need the information for our archives that will eventually go to the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech. The ideal way to report an obituary is to provide us with the link to that obituary on a web site. And of course regular mail works too. Several people have provided us with their biographies which is actually a much better way to preserve your legacy than an obituary written by someone who may not know or understand your military service. A couple of guys have sent us their self-written obituaries with the death date blank. That works too.

View this as an opportunity to tell your story. Write your story for your grand kids and send us a copy or get one of your grand kids to interview you for an English project at school and send us a copy of that...whatever works. We need your story to fill in your piece of our legacy. Please send them to [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) or to me, [Gary Roush webmaster@vhpa.org](mailto:Gary Roush webmaster@vhpa.org)

We are all getting older and are aware that the future needs to be considered, perhaps, as far as our personal legacy is concerned. Over the last few weeks, VHPA HQ has been contacted by several members wishing to donate money to the VHPA Scholarship fund and / or include the VHPA Scholarship fund in their wills and bequests. This is greatly appreciated. However, please consider obtaining legal advice when doing such bequests. Remember, the VHPA Scholarship fund is a major part of our lasting legacies.

During the last Reunion in Reno, Don Agren and his wife, Angelia, approached me with an interesting question. Angelia was the sister of a Vietnam helicopter pilot who flew two tours of service in-country. He returned to the States, continued to serve as an Aviator in the Army and was killed in a Mohawk accident in the late seventies before VHPA was formed. By our current listed qualifications for the VHPA Scholarship his descendants are not eligible. She felt this was wrong. Her deceased brother had served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, died after tour and before VHPA was formed. Tom Payne, Scholarship Chairman, and I discussed this and contacted Gary Roush, Database Chairman, to see how many aviators this addition would add eligible for scholarships. The answer...57 aviators! The obvious conclusion was this could and would need to be changed. The change was proposed to the Executive Council and it passed unanimously. Now, all descendants of pilots who flew helicopters in Vietnam and died prior to the VHPA being formed in 1984, are eligible to apply for VHPA Scholarships.

Again, if you have any Scholarship questions, feel free to contact us,

*By Tom Payne and Mike Sheuerman: Scholarship Committee*



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**The Cub Inn**



# HI SON, YOUR MOM AND I ARE IN SAIGON. HOW DO WE GET TO DONG BA THIN?

My father's voice was not what I was expecting to hear that evening in October 1969 when the company CQ interrupted our nightly Liars Dice game at the Cockpit Club to tell me I had a phone call. I assumed it was another call from Buck Miller, a life-long friend who was serving up-county in the Americal Division. I admit my first thought upon hearing Dad's voice was not: what are my folks doing in Vietnam? It was: how in the hell did my dad get on to a MILITARY phone system and FIND MY UNIT?

After the first shock, I realized I was NOT surprised my Dad was in-country; he was an international salesman of plywood manufacturing equipment and was likely to be in a different country every week. No, I was just a teensy-weensy bit surprised he brought Mom into a war zone. On second thought, I shouldn't have been; my folks liked to travel together and, as a former Army and emergency room nurse, my mother had certainly seen the elephant.

So, how do I answer his question? My unit, the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company, was located just inland from Cam Ranh Bay. At the time, we were short on Aircraft Commanders and I was in the middle of what would be an uninterrupted string of 43 days of flying and I couldn't go get them even if I'd wrangled permission. I stammered that out and told him the truth: I hadn't a clue how to get them from Saigon to Cam Ranh but, if they could somehow get there, I would arrange for the Duty Sergeant to pick them up in a jeep and bring them over to Dong Ba Thin (DBT). I had to fly so I couldn't even stay in the unit for the day.

After hanging up and returning to the club, I told everyone about the call and many simply didn't believe me. Dad had told me they had diverted from a business trip into Phnom Penh, hoping to visit Angkor Wat, but the Khmer Rouge had just overrun it. They were at the hotel discussing various options with the concierge when he suggested Vietnam. It seems any American who didn't have entry stamps for China, North Korea, or Cuba in their passports, got an automatic visa into Vietnam. After just a bit of initial trepidation, the whole idea of getting to visit me in a war zone appealed to them both.

It turns out my Dad's trick with the phone system wasn't the big one; the next day he somehow managed to get himself and Mom on an Air America Queen Air that spent most of the day picking up and dropping off

military brass all over the county before finally landing in Cam Ranh. The plane was so full, dad flew all day in the co-pilot's seat. Mother reported meeting a lot of nice Generals. The 1st Sergeant made good on his promise to me, picked them up, and brought them over the bridge to DBT.

I have a very clear memory of that afternoon: short final into Flander's Field about 4:30 on a sunny day, looking left to see my folks waving as I landed: my Father in a business suit and tie, Mom in a black cocktail dress. Talk about a strange sensation!

My roommate, Jim Bankston (whose name later appeared on the world's first order for Warrant Officer 5!) and I gave our hooch to the folks and moved in elsewhere. Straight to the Club for dinner and a party. My whole unit had a ball: they also developed a protocol to clear out and guard the only restroom, as necessary, for my Mom's use. At that time, having a women's bathroom available in a combat zone was not an Army priority.

The party resumed the next night with two additions: our monthly show, a Korean band with sexy girls mauling the pronunciation of Mustang Sally (who cares if they can sing?) and the also monthly mortar attack at about 1:00 am. Most of the unit had been overserved and I was no exception. Someone shook me awake, yelled "mortars", and ran back out the door. I went back to sleep/coma/la-la land. Jim Bankston, actually sober, ran to our hooch and got my folks into the bunker right outside our door. As they later reported; it was very dark and they were the only people inside. All the pilots were on TOP of the bunker yelling "hit 363, I don't want to fly tomorrow", taking pictures, and generally continuing to party. As I believe I mentioned, some drink had been taken.

As usual, the excitement quickly died out and people staggered back to bed. Also, as usual, the bad guys had mostly blown holes in the swamp to the south of us, although they did get a bit of shrapnel into several aircraft on that side of the field. I awoke in dark silence, remembered we were under attack, AND MY PARENTS WERE HERE! I jumped out of the bunk, ran across the compound yelling "mother!", and REWOKE my folks; they were less than thrilled to see me. Someone else must have been awake besides me because my 2:00 am romp was reported in detail to the entire Company. At least, when I called for my mother in a combat zone, she was actually there!



Some notes: All the members of my Company had a great time with my parents and did everything they could to make them comfortable, the brass from the 17th Aviation Group, who shared our officer's club, stayed away and didn't even stop by to see who the blond was. Later, someone told me the senior officers thought my folks were spooks (CIA) and no career is enhanced by contact with spooks. Also, at all subsequent reunions (and there have been several) I am invariably introduced to significant others as "the guy whose parents came to Dong Ba Thin."

On the third day, Tom Dykes and I flew Mom & Dad from our base to Nha Trang, low level (three feet), up Highway One and doing pedal turns to clear the trees. I still have this incredible vision of my father in his suit & tie, mom in a black cocktail dress, two suitcases centered in the Huey, and flanked by our crewchief & door gunner with their weapons trained out. As far as I know, I am the only man who served in Vietnam and had his civilian folks visit his base. If anyone else had a similar experience, I'd love to hear about it.

Lee Chambers  
Albany, Oregon

92nd Assault Helicopter Company, Feb 69 - Feb 70  
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# An Update on the 34th 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 34th Annual Reunion in Indianapolis from Saturday, July 1st through Thursday, July 6th 2017 at the JW Marriott hotel. We have a wonderful Reunion planned for you, your family, and your friends! The Jan/Feb issue of *The Aviator* devoted 15 pages to the Reunion. The Reunion has six in this issue – by design. The leadership team determined years ago there is little value in reprinting the same information in issues after “the big one” in Jan/Feb. Therefore, the Reunion information in this issue is more along the lines of a sitrep with an updated event schedule and registration form. So, here are SIX points for your consideration.

## First, THANK YOU! – Please don't procrastinate!

As you can see in the Morning Report on [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org), the Reunion registrations are coming in at a brisk pace since the Online Reunion Registration Application (ORRA) opened to the public in mid-December. As of 1 Feb, the Indianapolis Reunion Registrations are running with the Washington, DC Reunion. Our hotel reservations are as expected when compared to our last few Reunions. So, THANK YOU for all who registered early as we begged you to do.

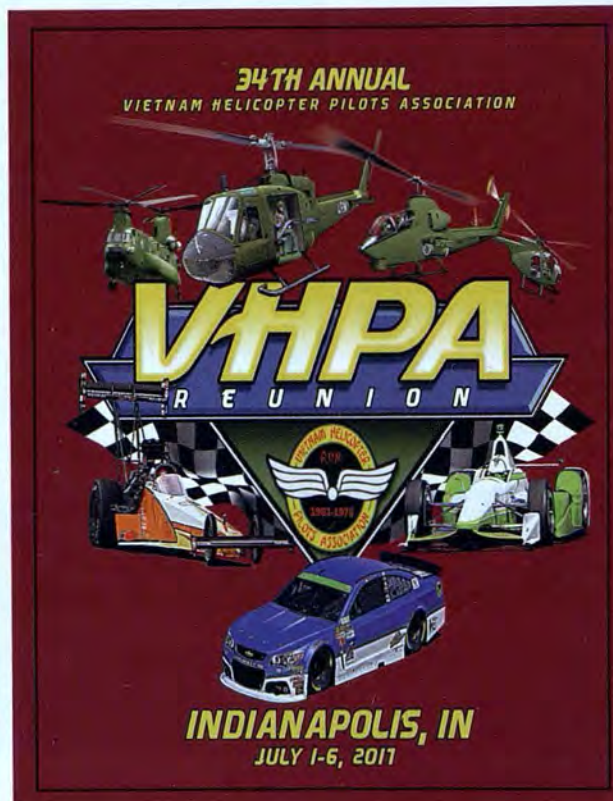
## Second, TAKE ADVANTAGE of some KOOL things the Vendors offer! For example:

■ **Joe Kline Aviation Art** – Yes, he advertises in most every *Aviator*. Yes, he has a good website [www.joeklineart.com](http://www.joeklineart.com). At the Reunion, however, you can **actually talk** to Joe about your ideas for that special picture for your wall at home. The one that really sums up your feelings about a certain mission, flying a certain type of aircraft, getting a

specific piece of nose art on the helicopter, etc. The good news about an artist – he can make it happen!!!

■ **Same idea for Brian and Marilyn Paine with 3 D Custom Crystals** ~ see the ad on the back page of most every recent *Aviator*. You can **actually talk** to them about your ideas.

■ **Witness To War** – At zero cost to you, save 90 minutes of your time ~ your oral and visual history will have been recorded for your family and for the Library of Congress and to be included in the VHPA's Legacy at The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech. Image your ten-year old grandchild attending your funeral and saying to his parents (one of which is your own child!), “I never knew that about Grandpa! What did he do in Vietnam?” Gentlemen **FIX THAT AT THIS REUNION!** Sign up for your interview **NOW** by calling Mike Law 830-730-0950 or Martin Madert 770-628-0024. We have 48 interview slots = 8 per day from Sunday the 2nd through Friday the 7th.



## Third, Status of the Reunion Events

As we've done in past years, we have several “small event” tours - meaning they are capacity controlled for one or two buses. By the time you read this both of our **Dallara Indy Car Factory** tours will be sold out. Our initial block of **baseball** tickets for the 4th of July sold out, so we got some more in “the shaded area.” While we should be able to get additional tickets after this second block, these may not be in the shaded area so sign up now. The demand for the **Aviation Trail** (Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum and Wright Brothers sites) has been high enough for us switch to Plan B – double the number of buses allocated for those tours. Finally, concerning the **Indianapolis City Shuttles** ~ WOW! Most everyone wants a ticket! THANK YOU again for all who registered early as we begged you to do! It really helps with the planning – thank you!!



## Fourth, the VHPA Reunion Committee wants you to VOLUNTEER – please.

I've repeatedly sung the praises of the Virginia Old Dominion, Ohio River LZ, and California Chapter North (CCN) chapters for their help with the last three Reunions. This year Dan Gulley and Pete Norman from the Ohio River LZ will be working with the locals. Additionally, Phil Marshall and Chuck Canfield will help with the American Huey 369 suite of volunteers. Jim and Patti Squyers will staff the all-important Welcome Desk. Gary Jones will coordinate the volunteers especially in the Pre-registration packet distribution areas. HOWEVER, even they will need "reinforcements" for sure. Please go to [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) and see the Volunteer Schedule AKA "Duty Roster" – dates, tasks, number of people needed, etc. This has worked very well for the last few years. Surprise, surprise – the list of volunteer opportunities is LONG! Big party – big list - go figure!! Please call HQ if you have questions or don't want to use the website to volunteer. THANKS!!

## Fifth, book your Mini-Reunion NOW!

VHPA Reunions are all about renewing old and making new friends based on our common bonds forged when we were soldiers once and young. The Morning Report helps you see who is currently coming. 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 HQ if you want a Mini-Reunion room. Get the form and procedure, see 'To schedule a mini-reunion, please use this **form**' on the Reunion Information page a few lines below the Reunion Logo. Please, please invite your friends and plan on having a good time.

## Sixth, please look to [www.vhpa.org](http://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](http://www.vhpa.org), then the Reunion Information page. For example, just below the Reunion logo, see the 'Everything you need to know about the 2017 Indianapolis reunion.' line. The underlined and bolded "Everything you need to know" 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 HQ@vhpa.org or Mike Law at 830-730-0950 or reunion@vhpa.org.

## GUNS UP



Full color. 22" x 28" , limited edition print of Huey gunships. Standard version as shown, \$80.00 ea. **Customized** version with markings of your choice, optional armament and B or C Model \$125.00 including postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

See my other available prints, and watch for new ones, at [www.joeklineart.com](http://www.joeklineart.com).



### Joe Kline Aviation Art

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

[www.dfcsociety.org](http://www.dfcsociety.org)



**OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**Updated 31 JAN 2017**

**Due to publication lead times, the status of tour availability may have changed in the interim  
Please consult our website at: [www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org) for the latest details and to register for the reunion.**

Time	Event
<b>Friday, June 30</b>	
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	O'Club Open
<b>Saturday, July 1</b>	
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
9:00 am - 12:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
12:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
1:30 pm - 5:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
7:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Early Bird Gathering
8:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Early Bird Entertainment - "The Chilly Winds"
<b>Sunday, July 2</b>	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
7:30 am - 9:00 am	"How the VHPA Works" Breakfast
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Aviation Trail #1
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Historic Dayton Tour #1
8:00 am - 11:00 am	HQ Registration Desk
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
10:00 am - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Lucas Oil Stadium Tour
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
5:45 pm - 9:00 pm	Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #1
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	1st Time Attendee Reception
7:30 pm - 11:00 pm	Welcome Reception
8:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Entertainment - "Wayne Young & The New Legends"
<b>Monday, July 3</b>	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	"Helicopter Medal of Honor Tribute" Breakfast
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Aviation Trail #2
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Historic Dayton Tour #2
8:00 am - 11:00 am	HQ Registration Desk
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up



# VHPA 2017 Reunion ~ Indianapolis, Indiana ~ July 1st - July 6th

Time	Event
8:30 am - 12:30 pm	Dallara Indy Car Factory #1
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
9:30 am - 5:00 pm	Golf Outing - Brickyard Golf Course
10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Writers Workshop
10:00 am - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Dallara Indy Car Factory #2
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Quilters Show & Tell
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Mind Tripping #1
5:45 pm - 9:00 pm	Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #2
6:45 pm - 10:00 pm	Ballgame #1

## Tuesday, July 4

7:30 am - 9:00 am	"Your Personal Legacy" Breakfast
7:30 am - 5:30 pm	American Huey Museum
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
10:00 am - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Banquet Seating
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Mind Tripping #2
5:45 pm - 10:00 pm	Ballgame #2 w/Fireworks

## Wednesday, July 5

7:30 am - 8:45 am	Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker Dave Hansen
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Memorial Service
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting
10:30 am - 12:30 pm	Spouse/Guest Event - "The Dinner Detectives"
12:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
12:30 pm - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Mini-Reunions / TOCs
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:00 pm - 5:45 pm	Studio Photos
5:45 pm - 10:30 pm	Closing Banquet w/Entertainment - "Butch Kaufman's Uptown Band"

## REUNION CONTINUING EVENTS

Unit Mini-Reunions and Unit TOC's are scheduled daily at various times - See posted schedule.

Indy City Shuttle - See posted schedule for scheduled stop times.





VHPA's  
suggested  
airport shuttle



The GO Green Shuttle to  
Downtown Indianapolis  
departs from the  
Indianapolis Airport on the  
hour and half hour from

**ZONE 7.**

Major CC and cash  
accepted at the  
airport. Major CC  
accepted online and  
on shuttle. **Shuttle  
buses DO NOT  
accept cash.**

Service Hours:  
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Seven Days a Week

First bus arrives at the  
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Last bus departs the  
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**BOOK ONLINE!**

Visit [www.GoExpressTravel.com](http://www.GoExpressTravel.com) to book your one-way or  
round trip shuttle in advance, guarantee a seat, print your receipt,  
and save time! **JW Marriott is the last stop #9!**

**VHPA 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REUNION DISCOUNTED PARKING RATES**



**DISCOUNTED RATES**

Car/Truck/SUV

**\$15 DAILY RATE**

2 DAY \$26

3 DAY \$40

4 DAY \$52

5 DAY \$65

6 DAY \$78

7 DAY \$91

RV Parking

**\$40 DAILY RATE**

Our location is: 343 West McCarty St Indianapolis, IN 46225

**GATE TEN is 100 feet south of Lucas Oil Stadium**

- We have space for over 700 vehicles
- Offer a **FLATE RATE** daily parking fee
- Parking lot is open 24 hours/7 days a week
- Entry & exit privileges
- Overnight parking is included in daily rate

**A FREE Shuttle is included to take you to and from the  
Gate 10 parking lot and the JW Marriott's front entrance.  
Just give us a call when you need a ride back to your car  
and we will come pick you up!**

**Shuttle Hours: 6 AM to 12 Midnight**

**VIST THE LINK TO RESERVE YOUR DISCOUNTED SPOT!**

<https://squareup.com/store/GateTen>

**CALL @ 855-2GO-PARK OR (317) 737-2036**



# VHPA 2017 Reunion ~ Indianapolis, Indiana ~ July 1st - July 6th

## VHPA'S 34th Annual Reunion Registration Form ~ Indianapolis, IN ~ July 1-6, 2017

For information and to register online: [www.vhpa.org](http://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](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) Fax: (817) 200-7309

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

EVENT	DATE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
Registration through 4/30/2017 *			\$30 EA	
Registration for under age 21			\$15 EA	
Registration 5/1/2017 and after *			\$40 EA	
Indy City Shuttle	July 1-5		\$20 EA	
Early Bird Gathering	July 1		NC EA	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast	July 2		\$15 EA	
"How the VHPA Works" Breakfast	July 2		\$15 EA	
Aviation Trail #1	July 2		\$46 EA	
Historic Dayton Tour #1	July 2		\$56 EA	
Lucas Oil Stadium Tour	July 2		\$8 EA	
Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #1	July 2		\$43 EA	
1st Time Attendee Reception	July 2		NC EA	
Welcome Reception	July 2		NC EA	
"Helicopter Medal of Honor Tribute" Breakfast	July 3		\$15 EA	
Aviation Trail #2	July 3		\$46 EA	
Historic Dayton Tour #2	July 3		\$56 EA	
Dallara Indy Car Factory #1	July 3	SOLD OUT	\$45 EA	SOLD OUT
Golf Outing - Brickyard Golf Course	July 3		\$150 EA	
Writers Workshop	July 3		NC EA	
Dallara Indy Car Factory #2	July 3	SOLD OUT	\$45 EA	SOLD OUT
Quilters Show & Tell	July 3		NC EA	
Mind Tripping #1	July 3		\$10 EA	
Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #2	July 3		\$43 EA	
Ballgame #1	July 3		\$25 EA	
"Your Personal Legacy" Breakfast	July 4		\$15 EA	
American Huey Museum w/transportation	July 4		\$118 EA	
American Huey Museum w/o transportation	July 4		\$84 EA	
Mind Tripping #2	July 4		\$10 EA	
Ballgame #2 w/Fireworks	July 4		\$30 EA	
Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker Dave Hansen	July 5		\$15 EA	
Memorial Service	July 5		NC EA	
Spouse/Guest Event - "The Dinner Detectives"	July 5		\$57 EA	
Closing Banquet - Adult	July 5		\$70 EA	
Closing Banquet - Child	July 5		\$16 EA	
Non-Registered Adult Guest at Banquet	July 5		\$80 EA	

Pre-Ordered T-Shirts				
Small			\$18 EA	
Medium			\$18 EA	
Large			\$18 EA	
X-Large			\$18 EA	
XX-Large			\$19 EA	
XXX-Large			\$20 EA	

Voluntary Contributions				
Gold Star Sponsorship **			\$15 EA	
Membership Fund **			\$10 EA	
Reunion Sponsorship **			\$10 EA	
Scholarship Fund **			\$10 EA	
National American Huey Museum **			\$10 EA	
Army Aviation Heritage Foundation **			\$10 EA	
Vietnam Archives **			\$10 EA	

Refund Guarantee Total	(From Side Bar)	\$	
VHPA Dues (if not dues current) ** 1 year @ \$36 or 3 years @ \$99		\$36/\$99	
Life Membership (Call HQ for exact amount) **			
2017 CD Directory Fee **		\$10 EA	
2017 Paper Directory Fee **		\$15 EA	
GRAND TOTAL			

Registration Form Revised 31 JAN 2017

**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](http://www.vhpa.org)

REFUND GUARANTEE FEE

10% of Total Events \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CANCELLATION DATE TO RECEIVE A REFUND WITHOUT HAVING PURCHASED THE REFUND GUARANTEE IS**

**CLOSE OF BUSINESS, CST  
FRIDAY, 16 JUNE 2017**

### Banquet Meal

\_\_\_\_\_ Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken  
\_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Special \*  
\* If Special meal is selected, please call HQ to provide special dietary info  
Banquet Seating Preference \_\_\_\_\_

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC/Visa # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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

### Notes:

\*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.

The policy has changed - you can no longer pre-order up to 5 years of directories. We are now only taking pre-orders for 2017 directories.



# UPCOMING REUNIONS

## Annual Reunion D Troop, 1/10th CAV (1966-1971) "The Shamrocks"

**Dates: April 4th (Tues.) - 6th (Thurs.)**

Location: Harrah's North Kansas City, Kansas City, MO.

Who: All members of D Troop are invited to attend to include pilots, crew members, headquarters personnel and ARP's.

Contact: Ron Adams, email [REDACTED] for reunion information and hotel reservation details. Most importantly; if you've never been to a SHAMROCK reunion you owe it to yourself to attend. Trust me when I say you won't regret it. And that's a truism from Old Deadeye.

## 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion Reunion

**When: April 25 - 29, 2017**

Where: Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee Who: All members, guests and friends of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion are invited to attend.

Details of the reunion and hotel information is available on our reunion website at: <http://reunion.227ahb.org/>

Submitted by Howard Burbank [REDACTED]

## The 50th Anniversary Reunion of W.O.C. Flight Classes 66-23/67-1

"Class Blast 2017" A really big deal...be there!

**When: April 27th - April 30th** (out on the 1st of May) 2017

Location: Embassy Suites Hotel, Kansas City, MO

Contact: Tom Percy,

Email @ [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]

## A/2/17 Reunion

Unit: A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry,  
101st Airborne Division Alumni Association

**Date: May 3-6, 2017**

Location: Crowne Plaza (Airport), 4831 Tanger Outlet Blvd,  
N., Charleston, SC 29418 - \$129/night

Contact Military Reunion Planners account manager Leanne Casey at 817 251 3551 (casey@MilitaryReunionPlanners.com) or Alpha Troop Alumni Chairman Doug Doerr at [REDACTED] for details and reservations. Or call the Crowne Plaza desk and mention the reunion for the appropriate discount (843 744 4422). More details on [www.AlphaTroopAlumni.com](http://www.AlphaTroopAlumni.com)

## The 24th Annual Reunion of the 174 Assault Helicopter Company Association

**When: May 5-7 (most arrive on the 3rd)**

Who: All assigned to the 174 AHC in Vietnam

Where: Best Western Beachfront, 380 Santa Rosa Blvd / Okaloosa Island, Ft Walton Beach, Florida 32548 PH 850-243-9444 FAX 850-243-5445 Email contact: [lcollins@bestwesternfwb.com](mailto:lcollins@bestwesternfwb.com) (specify 174th rates) Submitted by Ralph Elliott (Butch), Witchdoctor 05 elliotttriii@msn.com

## 205th Geronimo's Reunion 2017

**Dates: August 9th to August 13 - 2017**

Location: Marine Memorial Club, San Francisco, CA

Who: All members and family from Ft. Sill, to Vietnam, to Ft. Benning, and Germany Contact: Gary Alexander [REDACTED]

## 20th Aerial Artillery Association Reunion

**Dates: September 13th to September 17th, 2017**

Location: Williamsburg, VA at the Embassy Suites

Details: visit [araassociation.com](http://araassociation.com)

From: Dave Borgeson, President, ARA Association



# HEAVY HAULERS REUNION

Laughlin 2017...All Marines Heavy Haulers Reunion 2017 Laughlin, Nevada - October 24, 25 & 26, 2017 Hello All! We have a contract! This is Mike Amtower; I'm heading up the planning and co-ordination of this year's Gathering. We are setting up the 6th biennial Heavy Haulers Gathering in Laughlin, NV at the Colorado Belle on October 24, 25 & 26, 2017. Let's make this one the biggest and best Gathering we have had to date. It has been nearly 50 years now, (my how time flies!) since the original 463 folks first left SE Asia. This would involve ALL Heavy Hauler folks from both HMH-462 & HMH-463. Actually, it involves ANY and ALL folks that have ever driven or laid hands on a CH-53 from all eras and any other squadron, Including HMH-362, The Ugly Angels. We will make every attempt to arrange for another Color Guard from Miramar for this event. We've lost Hoot who was always instrumental in getting the Color Guard. We would like to exceed the success we have had in the past. We suggest that everyone consider bringing a guest that might not have attended in the past. All Marines and friends of Marines are welcome, also family members of Marines. Consider contacting your local Marine Corps League and American Legion organizations. Laughlin in late October has marvelous weather. We donated over \$3800 to the Semper Fi Fund & the Army Burn Center in San Antonio after the 2017 Gathering.

The two dinners on Wed (10/25) and Thur (10/26) will be held at \$40 per person each night. We are also requesting a \$15 surcharge to help fund the hospitality suite. This charge is only per each squadron attendee, not their guest. I have reserved a block of 50 rooms at the Colorado Belle at \$25/night and a block of 10 rooms at the Edgewater at \$27/ night. The link to the Colorado Belle/Edgewater is: Colorado Belle/ Edgewater (800) 677-4837 When talking to them specify the Heavy Hauler name as a code phrase to get the above room rates. We hope to see a bunch of you there! S/F! Mike Amtower.

My address is: Mike Amtower [REDACTED] Corinth, TX 76210-1907 Please make your checks out to me for the dinners and the hospitality suite. Or, for anyone that absolutely cannot attend and would like to send a donation for the Color Guard costs or to the Semper Fi Fund.

Want to see your Reunion listed here? *Send details to: [Aviator@VHPA.org](mailto:Aviator@VHPA.org)*



# 2017 INAUGURATION PARADE NCVHPA WIVES' EDITION

There were 16 of us who had bleacher tickets gathered outside the Comfort Inn to catch the bus to the metro around 8:30 am. Someone suggested we form a circle, hold hands, and say a prayer. We had heard there would be protesters downtown that could become violent; so it was agreed to say a short prayer. Strangers behind us were grateful too and said so.



dential parade. Yet, still tens of thousands could not get to their seats because many roads were blocked due to rioters. We then had several hours to chat with others in the bleachers. A group of 20+ parents of an elite high school marching band from Indiana said they all had ridden the bus for 19 hours and had planned to do some sightseeing on Saturday. Unfortunately, they never got the chance

We all got seats on the metro for the 20 min ride to the 14th St. stop just a few short blocks from the gate to our bleacher seats.

We came up out of the metro and asked directions to our gate at 15th street and were told to go left for some reason, instead of right, and ended up at 13th street. We veered off along New York Ave. and walked right past a group of people standing outside



NCVHPA Banner picture.

Andrew Chambers, and Nicholas J Seago

a doorway along the narrow sidewalk. They welcomed us and invited us in to have coffee, cookies and Danish, and asking us if we wanted to use their restroom. It was the New York Ave. Presbyterian Church where Abe Lincoln worshiped. They took us behind a closed door into their board room to show us the original draft of the "Emancipation Proclamation" hand written by Lincoln; as well as some furniture he used, and other photos. Then they took us to the sanctuary and explained some of the history. We sat in Lincoln's personal pew. We would not have had this experience had we turned right instead of left. And the bathroom was warm and clean.

Unbeknownst to us, by this time people started to gather a block away to smash Starbucks windows and destroy other properties. So we were hustled through the gate and into our designated viewing area. We had no idea beforehand how special these seats were. We were later moved right up next to Trump's viewing booth because some government officials decided to protest and not show up. Some needed to get ready for an inaugural ball and didn't have time to sit through a presi-

to see even the Smithsonian because of more feminists protesting and trashing of downtown. These kids had saved money fundraising for a year, and many had never been to DC before. They didn't know at the time who would be the President; but were proud to represent their state.

After the parade we knew the street to our metro stop was blocked and we would have to find our way to another stop. Our friends from Indi-

ana suggested we follow their leader as he was taking them to an alternate stop also. They were headed to the same destination as we anyway, and the route they took was direct.

Did I say how close we were to the President? His whole family got out of their limos and walked the rest of the block past us. Later VP Pence and his family did the same. The trucks full of media, cameras, and journalists stopped right in front of us ahead of the President and waited for him to exit his limo for the final walk. A hush of anticipation fell over the crowd, and one of the ladies was tempted to shout out "Make the media great again". Should have done it as there would have been no way they would not have heard.

I was given a bottle of water by a couple beside us. Food trucks were close by our viewing stands. And a Washington DC souvenir shop was right on our corner where for \$3.95 I bought a Hershey Bar in a special wrap that said "WE SHALL OVERCOMB."

*By Barbie Armstrong*



# NCVHPA at the INAUGURAL PARADE

Thirty of the NCVHPA's 130 members, from four different states but all with ties to North Carolina traveled to D.C. to participate in the parade. Towing six trailer-mounted Vietnam-era helicopters from North Carolina we came. These pilots have over 20,000 combat hours. The trip was out of pocket. There's never been any federal or state money involved in what we do. We are self-supporting - we don't have to answer to someone else. To be chosen, organizations had to submit an application requesting to be selected for the inauguration parade. A committee then reviewed the applications and picked the groups that would be in the parade.

Six choppers were hauled up Interstate 95 to be part of the parade. All are on permanent loan from the ARMY, three UH-1s, an OH-58, an OH-6, and an AH-1G Cobra. They all saw action in the skies over Vietnam. All converged on I-95 Exit 104, IFR rules; then to Springfield VA they went.

Twenty years ago January 20, 1997, the North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association participated in its first Inaugural Parade for former President, Bill Clinton, bringing honor and recognition to all Vietnam Veterans. Twenty-eight participated then. It looked like mixed flight school classes. Eight years later, the NCVHPA marched Pennsylvania Avenue for George W. Bush.

On January 20, 2017, they were again front and center in the 58th Presidential Inaugural Parade for, President Elect, Donald Trump. Members from the 1997 Picture who were in the 2017 parade are, Jerry Seago, Terry Lanier, Dave Samuels, Phil Keith, John Leandro, Joe Armstrong, and Brock Nicholson.

These great members were again bringing honor and recognition to the men who fought the war more than 50 years ago. We could not carry a banner for the Helicopter Crewmen Memorial, but NCVHPA's presence in our helicopters gave reference. We appeared in the fifth division, eighth position. We were one of more than 40 groups that participated in the celebrating and honoring the swearing in of the 45th president of the United States, with the peaceful transfer of power.

At 03:00 the helicopters at the Pentagon parking lot, for a Secret Service security check of all the aircraft - third change in plans. We had expected to park them there for the night. We arrived on time only to be told we were 3 hours early (shades of Catch-22)! We sat there for hours and were then escorted across the 14 Street bridge. We were escorted all around the secure area of the Capitol. Up and down, back and forth. Then we were led the wrong way to the wrong location. All six helicopters then backed-up an 1/8 mile to our stage point. Seven hours until the parade starts. "Hurry up and wait."

We were in the last group, Group 5, just in front of tractors, due to the size and number of helicopters. The parade was smooth for us, until someone left the Huey to go to a porta-potty, to find the bird had moved on. We were great. It is well recorded by all kinds of

Media. The people in the stands loved us. A lesson learned is one cannot stand on an ammo bay door of a Cobra, hold on with your right hand and salute at the same time. One can wave and get a wave back from the President.

Right after the parade we broke down the birds on 21st Street without a problem, and as a flight of six departed. A hundred yards down Pennsylvania Ave we split up at a traffic circle. A little old woman stopped in a traffic circle! Three birds went on. The other birds split up. All were redirected to different roads. The last three again get together, only to find they must back-up again. All are redirected down Rock Creek Parkway! The parkway has a bridge with an 11 foot clearance. We need twelve! All three stop traffic. Two different police are tracked down to clear traffic so each helicopter can back-up again, at night. One must back two hundred yards, with a left turn up a side street. Then go back the way we came.

All three birds then go different directions! One stops on Virginia Ave. asking M.P.s in two Humvees to help clear the way out of D.C. Their reply is they cannot move! They are the Pennsylvania Guard and are for crowd control and do not know where they are. One bird gets to Constitution Ave for a shot back over the 14th Street bridge. Finding the route blocked by 24 tractor trailer flat-bed trucks lined up to pick up the parade barriers, it is redirected again to VA.

Two birds found their way over to Theodore Roosevelt Island, then to Rosslyn VA. One bird was forced on I-66. One did a U-turn heading back to I-95. Four U-turns later one of the separated birds reports in to debrief, and for beer and pizza, a little after 10pm. The last bird shows up a little after 11:00pm. Overheard in the debriefing many times was: "THERE I WAS". All participants and birds made it home. We wish you were with us.

**Larry Pigg NCVHPA President**



Jerry Seago with Widowmaker. Jerry Seago, NCVHPA Event Coordinator. Jerry was the force behind getting a slot in the parade and getting everyone together to go.





Roy Ivett, Jerry Seago, Robert Purdue. First time since Nam when all were together with the 189 AHC.



Sid Hughes



Security check



Greeting the crowd



Beginning of Parade



Joe Armstrong, and Michael Milulan plus unnamed wounded warriors who marched in the parade



Members of the 3rd INF taking pictures



Jesse Dize, Bob Inglis, Ben Gay, Brock Nicholson. All of the 48 AHC, with the 48th Slick.



Huey passes the reviewing stand



1997 Parade Group Picture





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## VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

2100 N. Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050

(800) 505-VHPA (8472)(voice) • (817) 200-7309(fax) • HQ@vhpa.org (e-mail) • www.vhpa.org (website)

### Membership application/change of address

☐ New application

☐ Address change

☐ Directory correction

NAME

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

HOME PHONE: ( )

WORK PHONE: ( )

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

Membership Dues: ☐ Annual \$36 ☐ Three year \$99 ☐ Lifetime (based on applicants' age\*) Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*age 59 and below (\$450), 60-64 (\$350), 65-69 (\$250), 70-74 (\$150), 75-79 (\$100) 80 and above (\$75)

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☐ Add \_\_\_\_\_ for Membership Fund Contribution ☐ Add \_\_\_\_\_ for Scholarship Fund Contribution

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Information about each Vietnam unit:

Dates in units		Unit	Location	Call sign
From:	To:			
1st				
2nd				
3rd				
4th				

Information about you: Helicopters flown, medals/awards, talents, hobbies, and anything else:

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association? Referred by? Was membership a gift? From whom?

\*NOTE: Lifetime Membership and/or Subscriber Dues are based on the applicants' age - please provide your date of birth.

\*\* NOTE: Membership Directories are not available to only Aviator subscribers.



# 2017: The year to complete the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument

In early 2014, a military historian noted the significant number of helicopter casualties buried within Arlington National Cemetery (ANC): the many individual graves, the Medal of Honor recipients, and the recovered MIA crews comingled within a single plot. He also noted their sacrifice and their magnificent combat role in the aircraft they operated, the iconic symbol of the "Helicopter War." He said a monument within ANC would recognize and explain their shared sacrifice to visitors in a manner no headstone could possibly communicate. He was right, and the VHPA acted upon the idea.

Prepared by Legacy Committee Chairman Bob Hesselbein, the VHPA Monument Proposal was received by Secretary of the Army (September 3, 2014), moved through formal communications and hearings by the ANC Advisory Committee on March 28, 2015, and culminated in an official denial notification by the Secretary of the Army (September 2015). In lieu of the proposed monument, the SECARMY gave approval to place a small tree marker (1.5 square feet) by a living tree donated and dedicated within ANC by the VHPA (August 28, 2015). Tree markers, however, provide information about the tree donation, but little else. It is an inappropriate tribute to the almost 5,000 American dead.

## THE LEGISLATIVE PATH 2015-2016

The VHPA turned to Congress and the House mission began when Representative Mark Amodei introduced HR 4298 on December 18, 2015. The effort culminated with 92 House cosponsors and the bill's unanimous passage on December 7, 2016.

The Senate effort began when Senator Dan Sullivan introduced companion bill S. 3447 along with cosponsoring by Democratic Senator Baldwin on September 28, 2016, resulted in 11 cosponsors. Unfortunately, the bill simply ran out of time when it came to the Senate, and the bill died in December at the end of the 114th Congress.

It was the combined efforts of many that produced 2016's positive outcomes. The active support of veterans, Gold Star Families, and supporting organizations such as the Vietnam Veterans of America, Order of Daedalians, Quad-A, the NAUS and others, played a key part. Social media, email blasts and letters to representatives and senators also generated a receptive atmosphere for supporters who met to "walk the halls" of Congress after Thanksgiving.

## 2017 LEGISLATION

The mission continues in the 115th Congress. The simultaneous introduction in companion bills S. 315 and H.R. 877, both titled The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act, on February 6, 2017 received a warm welcome on the Hill. Many previous cosponsors immediately added their support to the leg-

islation (38 immediate cosponsors of H.R. 877). Hearings in both the Senate and House will be scheduled in the coming months.

## CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

Now is time to contact your legislators and voice your continued support with (in priority) emails, telephone calls and letters. Telephone calls asking to speak with a staff member about the legislation work best. If you are sent to voicemail, leave a contact number; call back if they do not call you within 24 hours. Working separately and together, the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument will become reality in 2017.

By Bob Hesselbein

*Why was the title changed to The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act? Congress wants the national military cemeteries to use standardized terms. Our proposed stone giving tribute to the fallen will be defined as a monument, not a memorial. Thus, the change.*

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### Ned Crimmin

TSgt, USAF, Ret

USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74

USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83

Tours of Duty:

1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

**1.509.523.4213**

email:

**KHABT114@FRONTIER.COM**

### VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION SATISFIED CLIENTS

- |                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| - Dan Fox      | - Bruce Brattain    |
| - John Shafer  | - James Tinney      |
| - John Penny   | - Bill Medsker      |
| - Lenny Julian | - Pete Rzeminski    |
| - Terry Opdahl | - James Oden        |
|                | - William C. Brooks |

### KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

- Kenny Hames Photos of War Tour
- 1952-53 Heartbreak Ridge & Sugarloaf



115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

## H. R. 315

To direct the Secretary of the Army to place in Arlington National Cemetery a monument honoring the helicopter pilots and crewmembers who were killed while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes.

---

### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AMODEI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

---

#### A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Army to place in Arlington National Cemetery a monument honoring the helicopter pilots and crewmembers who were killed while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-  
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,  
3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.  
4 This Act may be cited as the "Vietnam Helicopter  
5 Crew Monument Act".

1 SEC. 2. PLACEMENT OF MONUMENT HONORING HELI-  
2 COPTER PILOTS AND CREWMEMBERS WHO  
3 WERE KILLED WHILE SERVING ON ACTIVE  
4 DUTY IN THE ARMED FORCES DURING THE  
5 VIETNAM ERA.

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements of  
7 subsection (c), the Secretary of the Army shall place in  
8 Arlington National Cemetery a monument honoring heli-  
9 copter pilots and crewmembers who were killed while serv-  
10 ing on active duty in the Armed Forces during the Viet-  
11 nam era.

12 (b) DESIGN.—The monument placed under sub-  
13 section (a) shall measure 4 feet in height, 5 feet in width,  
14 and 1 foot in depth, and shall be based on a design ap-  
15 proved by the Secretary of the Army and the Vietnam Hel-  
16 icopter Pilots Association.

17 (c) AGREEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE.—The Secretary of the Army may only place a  
18 monument under subsection (a) if the Secretary enters  
19 into an agreement with the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots As-  
20 sociation under which the Association agrees to pay all  
21 costs necessary for preparation of the site for the monu-  
22 ment (including the activities authorized under subsection

23 (d)(2)) and to construct, install, and maintain the monu-  
24 ment, and to such other provisions as the Secretary may  
25 require.  
26



- 1 (d) SITE AND REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING MEMO-  
2 RIAL.—  
3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The monument described in  
4 subsection (a) shall be placed where the Vietnam  
5 Helicopter Pilots Association Memorial Tree stood  
6 on the day before the date of the enactment of this  
7 Act.  
8 (2) REMOVAL OF EXISTING MEMORIAL.—In  
9 placing the monument described in subsection (a) in  
10 the place specified in paragraph (1) of this sub-  
11 section, the Secretary of the Army may remove the  
12 Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Memorial  
13 Tree that was in such location on the day before the  
14 date of the enactment of this Act.

## Selections from Past Newsletters

*This issue's column is from June 1993*

### VC Soldier Does as He Was Trained

It was December 1971 and the Outlaws of the 175th Assault Helicopter Company at Vinh Long were flying five-ship combat assaults in UH-1Hs carrying South Vietnamese soldiers. We were flying our fourth sortie of the day in an area of operations around Sa Dec, West of Vinh Long. We had taken only sporadic small-arms fire throughout the day, so it was going rather routinely.

Being a new platoon leader, I was flying flight lead on this mission. We landed close to a tree line in the LZ, perhaps a little too close. As the troops got out, I was watching the tree line, and went wide-eyed when a Viet Cong jumped out and aimed his rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launcher at us. We were less than 100 yards from him; I knew he couldn't miss. Even though death was certain, I reached for my Browning 9mm pistol, which many pilots carried rather than the standard-issue .38-caliber revolver.

As I yelled on the intercom and started to aim my pistol out the window, the gunner also saw the VC and, with hope and a prayer, swung his M-60 machine gun toward the enemy soldier, knowing the futility of this action. The VC fired his 82mm RPG and we knew we were about to make our final flight.

What happened then couldn't help but make us laugh and cry simultaneously: The VC led the helicopter, as he was trained to do, and the rocket flew past the nose of our stationary helicopter! While wondering how many times his instructors told him to lead a helicopter with his RPG, my gunner and I fired probably 100 rounds at him - I emptied my pistol as our copilot took off.

We flew two more sorties that day, and knew nothing else would happen. Over a beer or two at the club that night, we laughed about our close call and how fortunate we were our VC would make his instructor proud.

Thomas G. Eastman  
"Outlaw 16"



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## ALAMO CHAPTER

James Boykin, President

[REDACTED]

## ALASKA CHAPTER

Lynn Kile, President

[REDACTED]

## ARIZONA CHAPTER

Bill Sorenson, President

[REDACTED]

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH

Ken Fritz

[REDACTED]

## CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER

Tom Mc Millen, President  
17 Broad St.

[REDACTED]

## FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Donald Ancelin

[REDACTED]

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

Bob Lanzotti, President

[REDACTED]

## LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER

Victor Lent, President

[REDACTED]

Email: VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Richard Deer, President

[REDACTED]

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

Don Abrams, President

[REDACTED]

## MONTANA CHAPTER

Todd Brandoff, President

[REDACTED]

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Marshall Eubanks, President

[REDACTED]

## NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

(currently inactive, seeking members)

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Larry Pigg, President

[REDACTED]

## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

Pete Norman

[REDACTED]

## OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

Tom Payne, President

[REDACTED]

## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Don Agren, President

[REDACTED]

www.vhpavirginia.org

## SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER

Jim Miles, President

[REDACTED]

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

John Wilkinson

[REDACTED]

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

Dale E House, President

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## SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter

Larry Russell, President

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## VHPA OF FLORIDA

Dr. Joe Ponds, President

[REDACTED]

## WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

Dave Saunders

[REDACTED]

## HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional

Ken DeHoff - POC

[REDACTED]

## 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

## ALAMO CHAPTER

The Chapter ladies started the New Year with lunch at The Quarry Hofbrau on January 13; chapter members met for lunch at Applebee's on Loop 1604W on January 10.

Our directors met at the Barn Door on February 22nd to plan the New Year's activities, immediately followed by a dinner with all our members. Planned activities for 2017 were outlined by new President Jim Boykin.

Members should watch for e-mails and check our Chapter website [www.vhpa-alamo.org](http://www.vhpa-alamo.org) for scheduled events and details.

By Chuck Oualline

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

On 21 January 2017 the Georgia VHPA Chapter conducted its first bi-monthly breakfast meeting of the year at our home base, the Marietta Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo).

Our speaker for this meeting was Laura Bartholomew Armstrong, daughter of LTC Roger Bartholomew (Black Bart) who was killed during his second tour when his gunship was shot down north of Da Nang in November of 1968. Laura is a journalist and a staunch and outspoken advocate for veterans and military families with radio appearances, articles published on the web, local papers (Atlanta Journal Constitution and Marietta Daily Journal), and the Wall Street Journal. She plans to launch her own blog sometime during 2017. Laura is widowed by one Marine and married to another who retired after 30 years of active duty. Laura is known amongst our GA VHPA chapter members as the 'Great Santini' of military dependents, and she might very well be a splendid candidate to deliver a presentation during the 2018 VHPA reunion in Atlanta.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2017. Our guest speaker for this meeting will be Bob Babcock who served in Vietnam as a 4th Infantry Division rifle platoon leader during 1966-1967. From 1968-2002 Bob spent a 34 year career as a Sales and Marketing Executive for IBM. He has been a founding official partner of the Veterans History Project, part of the Library of Congress. He served ten years as president of the 22nd Infantry Division Association as well as the 4th Infantry Division Historian. He was commissioned by two 4th Infantry Division Commanding Generals to write chronologies of their year-long deployments to Iraq. Bob was presented the Order of St. Maurice by the National Infantry Association in 2013. He has personally authored six published books and is the founder/CEO of Deeds Publishing LLC that has published over 175 books for established and aspiring authors.

Former Vietnam helicopter pilots interested in joining our Chapter, please view our website at [www.ga.vhpa.org](http://www.ga.vhpa.org) for a schedule of future meeting dates. For questions regarding our organization and/or directions to our meeting location, please contact me at [REDACTED]

By Bob Lanzotti, President



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The spring meeting will be a luncheon gathering. A guest speaker is expected again this time. This is an excellent time to meet with old friends and share war stories. Extra time will be scheduled to allow for more enhanced war stories. Everyone is invited to bring memorabilia related to their tours in RVN and anything similar. You are also encouraged to bring spouses, family members, former crew members and anyone interested in our role in the Vietnam War.

There will be a short business meeting. The agenda will include a discussion of upcoming events and soliciting member participation. Chapter member Glen Venio has suggested members create "Brag Boards" which will be on the agenda as well. Another attempt will be made to recruit/draft more chapter officers as we are still lacking a secretary and treasurer. The floor will be open for any topics from those present.

For any VHPA members in or near Michigan that would like to be added to our email list for updates on our activities, contact me at [REDACTED]. You do not have to join the Michigan chapter to be listed as an interested party if you prefer.

Submitted by, Rich Deer, President



## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

The Thirtieth Reunion of the Ohio River Chapter is getting close and plans for the event have been finalized. The reunion will take place in Indianapolis, IN on April 7th and 8th with a departing breakfast on the 9th. The main dinner will be held at the Indiana War Memorial in the Grand Lobby and the menu will be Filet Mignon with Seared Sea Scallops or Southern Braised Beef Short Ribs. We will be staying at the Hilton Garden Inn just three blocks from the Memorial.

There are plenty of activities to enjoy during the reunion which include Dallara Indycar Factory tour and museum; this will include garage tour, racing simulator, and photos on Friday the seventh. For an additional cost you can drive a street legal two seat Indy Car. In the evening there will dinner and movie with pizza and a movie about Vietnam Vets.

On Saturday morning there will be a tour of the Indy 500 Museum. In the afternoon we will go to the IMAX theater for a movie "Extreme Weather 3D". Our business meeting will be held at the Hotel Hospitality Room at 15:00.

The evening banquet will be held at the Indiana War Memorial with the Cocktail Hour from 18:00 – 18:55; Dinner at 19:00. Do not forget your Champagne Glasses for the Missing Man Toast.

We depart for home after a Sunday Breakfast.

I look forward to seeing everyone for another reunion.

By Robert Blair





# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The holidays are over, winter (for some of us) has truly arrived, as have the bills for the great holiday season that we have all had. Once we have those bills paid, we can really look forward to 2017. And we can look forward with real anticipation. There will be a lot happening this year.

The chapter website has been undergoing a rewrite to update the software used in the site construction. That has almost been completed and should be up and running and updated in the next week. A lot of work has gone in the rebuild, and we appreciate the assistance given by the web host technical support. The website is [www.vhpasmo.org](http://www.vhpasmo.org).

The first quarter meeting of the South Missouri Chapter will be on the first day of the second quarter. It will be held on Saturday, April 1, 2017, at the Blue Springs Hy-Vee located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 40 and Missouri Highway 7. The street address is 625 W US Highway 40, Blue Springs, Missouri. The speaker will be Joel Trautmann, who was a platoon leader in 3/187 Infantry at the Battle of Hamburger Hill. He will be speaking of his experiences during the battle and after.

Dick Elgin, VHPASMO vice-president has called my attention to



an activity later in the year. The Military Vehicle Preservation Association has several activities during the year throughout the country. This year they are presenting the MVPA Route 66 2017 Convoy, which will follow the old Route 66 from Chicago, IL, to Santa Monica, CA. This will run through the state of Missouri from St. Louis to the Oklahoma state line near Joplin. It will be in Branson, MO, for two days. For anyone interested, more information can be found at <http://www.mvpa.org/home/mvpa-convoys/convoy-news/>.

Also of note regarding Dick, in October of 2016 he was honored by the Missouri Society of Professional Surveyors, receiving the 2016 Surveyor of the Year Award at the Annual Conference for his contributions to the profession of surveying.

Of note to those of us who are aviators, Dick has also written a book about his time in the military. It is entitled *Shoulda Played the Flute*. In it, he looks at his time at Ft. Polk during basic training, his special offer, his time in flight training, and his experiences flying in Vietnam. It has received several very good reviews and is available on Amazon.

So, once again, have a great new year, and we can all look forward to meeting in Indianapolis.

By John Wilkinson, President 2015-

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH

DEC 2016-JAN 2017 Chapter Report

In 2016, VHPA-CCN displayed our Huey at 11 public events for a total of 22 days including the annual VHPA reunion in Reno. We also met for four work days and one party for a total of 27 days together. Thanks to all of our members who made this possible. Also, welcome to our 22 new members who signed up this year.



To celebrate our achievements for the year, we had one last great gathering at Ken and Marcia Fritz's home on December 3 to end the year for CCN. Ken had been searching for his favorite crew chief (Larry Dedaux) since 1971. Ken last saw him when he left Vietnam in 1969. He finally found him this year, living in Northern California and invited him to the party, their first post-Vietnam reunion. As Ken started to introduce him to Dave and Kathy Anderson, Dave cut Ken off with, "Hey Larry! How are you?" Dave and his wife Kathy and Larry were all in High School together and hadn't seen each other since a High School reunion 15 years ago. A double barreled first reunion - amazing! Small world, isn't it?

We had first time New Guy CCN attendees, too: Michael Campbell drove down the mountain from Tahoe-Donner, Jeff Coupe and his wife, and another couple whose name escapes me at the moment. Total attendance was 28. The weather was fine for strolling outside to see the city lights and listen to the migrating geese overhead. Uncharacteristically, Curt Knapp, one of our most active members, wasn't here. He was in Georgia helping prepare an AAHF helicopter for transport to AZ. As our Secretary-Treasurer,



Assembled party guests

photographer, and all-round good guy with a perpetual smile, Curt was sorely missed.

Special Forces CSGM (ret.) Jamie Allen (an Army Reserve colleague of Ken's) called us to attention and led us in the Pledge

to the flag out front. Then Ken Fritz welcomed everyone with a short talk, including: a moment of silence in memory of those lost and those who survived Pearl Harbor in tribute to them on this 75th anniversary of that horrible attack. A round of applause and a good laugh was had for Al Doucette's birthday making him older than Pearl Harbor (76). Ken announced that our finances are all in great shape with no obligations, that we were awarded 1st Prize Overall at the Nicolaus Labor Day parade, and announced two events for 2017 that will earn a \$500 donation from Mt Vernon Memorial Park in Citrus Heights (President's Day and Memorial Day with the Huey). We took some photos of all of us out front in the sunshine with a nice green field of winter wheat sprouting up under clear skies before diving into the food and beverages.



Xmas Cookies



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The house was festive with a Christmas tree, outdoor lights and interior decorations for the holidays. Of course, Marcia did her usual outstanding job as hostess. Greg Hutson provided the ice early enough to get all the beverages chilled, and Bel-Air deli trays were scarfed up enthusiastically. Many brought some nice wines and Marilyn Doucette brought homemade cookies in the shape of helicopters.

Al Fink "souvenired" Ken Fritz with an OH-58 rotor mast for his memorabilia collection and we all toured Ken's "barn" that has become a hangout for CCN members to swap stories and fables

about helicopters, cars, motorcycles and other legendary memories, some of which shall not be printed here. In the spirit of the holidays, Ken Fritz and Mike Whitten handed out VHPA window decals and VHPA-CCN lapel pins.

We are looking forward to a busy 2017, with 3 events already booked, starting on Presidents Day in February.

For more pictures and information, please check our website: [www.vhpaccn.org](http://www.vhpaccn.org).

By Dave Anderson, VHPA-CCN webmaster

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Over the winter the North Alabama chapter has devoted itself to celebrating the holidays and helping our community.

We held our annual elections at the December 14th Christmas meeting. The new NAVHPA officers for 2017-2018 are:

President - Marshall Eubanks

Secretary - Sam Maki

Treasurer - Sandy Weand

Events Director - Bob Monette

Publicity Director - Ralph Weber



The NAVHPA Christmas party was well attended, over 60 members, spouses and guests were there to celebrate the season. Our guest speaker was Colonel (Ret) John Reitzell. Col Reitzell is a noted former Special Operator who is cited in several of W.E.B. Griffin's military novels. He spoke about the events leading up to, during and after the hijacking of the Cruise Ship Achille Lauro in the 1980s. It was entertaining and enlightening.

In December and January, members of the Chapter assisted with the Wreaths for Veterans Program. This program placed more than 3000 wreaths on

veteran's graves in two local cemeteries. This involves taking the wreaths from storage, fluffing them to restore the shape, replacing bows and ribbons, transporting them to the cemeteries, placing them on the graves before Christmas. Then collecting them, boxing them up and returning them to storage after the holidays. This process requires many, many hours of volunteer labor to do it right. NAVHPA members, spouses and guests contributed hundreds of hours to this worthy cause. Our Chapter yellow shirts were much in evidence and much appreciated.

The NAVHPA Chapter has taken on a new responsibility of committing to serving the folks who are a little less fortunate. Once a month our members will be serving lunch or dinner at the Huntsville Downtown Rescue Mission. For those of us who have done it, it is a rewarding and humbling experience. All of us have a very blessed life compared to some of the less fortunate that have to seek shelter at the Rescue Mission. The Mission is based on Christian Faith of helping the people that need not only physical but Spiritual needs. The mission gets much of the food we serve from local groceries and food distribution centers. Food is also sent out to the satellite centers in some local towns. The Rescue Mission offer free clothing and programs that get the folks out of any



Ladies of the NAVHPA - who make all our activities possible.



Remembering Christmases past, NAVHPA member Rob Glasier, 1969.



While the food at Below the Radar was great, we were overflowing the room in January.



NAVHPA members and spouses serving lunch to the less fortunate.



Unpacking the wreaths to be placed on veteran's graves.



Each veteran, from any war since the revolution, gets a wreath.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

addiction problems and hopefully back into society.

During the time that our favorite dinner venue, The Schnitzel Ranch, is moving to a new, better location; we are meeting at other local restaurants. This poses a problem because we routinely have about 50 members and spouses at the meeting. Finding some place that can handle the numbers and is quiet enough to hold a meeting is no mean feat. The NAVHPA January meeting was held on the 11th at a local brew pub called "Below the Radar". The

food (and beer, of course) was very good. But we about maxed out the venue. We will meet at another place in February. Hopefully "the Ranch" will be reopened by our March meeting.

If you live in the North Alabama and Middle Tennessee areas, we want you to join our chapter. You can find out more about us at <http://www.navhpa.org>. You can contact us at [navhpa@gmail.com](mailto:navhpa@gmail.com). Come on out!! We'll give you a chance to get all those good old war stories out of your system.

## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER UP COMING EVENTS

Website: [VHPAVirginia.org](http://VHPAVirginia.org)



Virginia Snow

**4 MARCH 2017 SATURDAY 13:00** Normal Meeting Legends Brewing

## 8 APRIL 2017 SATURDAY MEETING AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS QUANTICO

0900 Arrive Museum (Museum Opens)

0930 Chapter Meeting in Devil Dog Diner (30 min prior to official opening)

1030 Meet with Docents, Art Bohn Ret MSG USMC, Door Gunner on CH-47s in RVN; Larry Britton Ret COL

USMC Helicopter Pilot with Purple Foxes, RVN

1030-1230 Tour Museum

1300 Gather at Globe and Laurel for Lunch

1300-1500 Lunch

## 28 MAY 2017 SUNDAY

DINNER Gathering somewhere in Northern VA 6:00 PM  
Frosty Price has 9 rooms reserved at Crown Plaza Hotel  
Crystal City, VA

## 29 MAY 2017 MONDAY Memorial Day

Attending Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/News/Post/3682/>

**JUNE-JULY-AUGUST** = Summer Vacations & No Meetings Scheduled

## 1-5 JULY 2017

VHPA National Reunion, JW Marriott, Indianapolis, Indiana <https://reunion.vhpa.org/>



Walking the Hill



## SEPTEMBER 2017

Day trip Cruise to Tangier Island, date to be determined later  
<https://tangiercruise.com/>

NAS Oceana Air Show 16 & 17 September, Blue Angels performing Virginia Beach

## OCTOBER 2017

Train Ride, Autumn Rambler, Old Dominion Chapter  
National Railway Historical Society, Buckingham Branch  
Railroad, Dillwyn, VA date and time to be determined later.  
<https://odcnrhs.ticketleap.com/>

## NOVEMBER 2017

Normal Meeting Saturday 13:00 hours 4 November, Legend  
Brewery, Richmond, VA

## DECEMBER 2017

Christmas Gala with Richmond Chapter MOAA.

[www.racmoaa.org](http://www.racmoaa.org)

Volunteering to lay wreaths on graves at Arlington National Cemetery

<https://wreaths.fastport.com/donateLocation.html?page=14720>



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER AND THE HELICOPTER WAR MUSEUM (HWM)

Our second to last event for 2016 was our annual Christmas party held at Greg Mann's house on December 3, 2016. There were more attendees than ever before, too many to name here. The next evening on December 4, 2016, several members of our Chapter were guests of the VFW Post 1, Founders Day Banquet, Honoring the Veterans of Vietnam, held at the renowned Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. Special guest that evening was Ann Margret and her husband Roger Smith. Some of you may have seen her while "in-country". Two of our members reunited with her that evening who had the pleasure of either flying her or meeting her at one of her performances at one of the many USO shows that toured Vietnam during those years. Among them were Stanley Cass and Terry Olson. I thanked Ann Margret for the many years of support of our Veterans and she said, "Why of course; you're all my boys". The banquet key note speaker was Secretary Jim Nicholson, the 5th Secretary of Veterans Affairs and a Vietnam Veteran.

On December 23, 2016, Soldiers Angels, a veteran support organization, was to distribute over 700 bags of food to deserving Veterans and Veterans families. The food was supplied by the Denver Mobile Food Pantry and was to be distributed by volunteers; however, due to a number of circumstances beyond the control of the organizers, it appeared this would not happen. Chapter member Rick Beaver, a Director of People House Inc., organized chapter members, Mike Silva, Al Harinck, George & Judi Mayl, Don and Donna Rice, Mike Shea, Phil Lanphier, and Greg Mann, to support the Soldiers Angels project by providing crowd and traffic control along with members of the Denver Police Department as well as sorting the food into bags and distributing the bags at the Del Norte Veteran Housing Building, in Denver. This was a very worthwhile event that would not have happened without Rick Beaver's interdiction and the support of our chapter.

### Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

We once again have a full year ahead with Helicopter War Museum events planned for Memorial Day weekend in conjunction with the Traveling Wall at Ft. Collins, CO; The Greely Stampede; Bandimere Speed Way and City of Golden for July 4th celebrations among them.

VHPA Life Time member Mike Silva has acquired an H-Model Huey, 66-16493. He is in the process of restoring the helicopter with the hope of completion this April or May of 2017. Best historical records show 66-16493 assigned to the 281st AHC (Intruders) out of Nha Trang, Vietnam 1968;69;70. Once 493 is certificated, his intent is to partner up with our Rocky



UH1-H 66-16493



Dale House, Cynthia House, Susan Olson, Terry Olson, Cecily Cass, and Stan Cass



Dale House, Ann Margret, Terry Olson, and Stan Cass



Soldiers Angels Food Distribution



Vietnam Veterans with Ann Margret and Secretary Jim Nicholson

Mountain Chapter VHPA and our Helicopter War Museum for fly-in displays. One potential project will be to work with the Denver, Colorado Veterans Hospital for counseling of Vietnam Vets with PTSD. If there are any 281st pilots or crew out there with additional personal knowledge regarding 493 please contact Mike via our website: [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com).

### Meeting Schedule and other Information:

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Saturday of the month, at 10:00 hours at the 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. Visit our new Web site [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com)

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum; among these items is a chicken plate with the cloth holder our visitors can put on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: [RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com](mailto:RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com)

By Dale House, President



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

SoCal Chapter had a great time at Flo's Airport Cafe and visited the Planes of Fame Air Museum at Chino Airport.

Fisher House SoCal has had glowing reviews since it opened its doors in October to military veterans families visiting their loved ones at the Long Beach VA. It's been running at 3/4+ occupancy and already saved families thousands of dollars by staying at a five star like hotel for free. This 6 million dollar 16 unit beautifully furnished facility is number 71 of the Fisher Houses with more being built.

Congratulations to Chapter member Jim Davidson who recently received The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award which recognizes pilots who have demonstrated professionalism, skill and aviation expertise by maintaining safe operations for 50 or more years. Jim is currently a pilot for the Orange County Fire Authority.

Our annual St Paddy's Day meeting and BBQ will be on Sat Mar



Members: L/R - Jim Grimm, Brian Novak, David Fey, Phil Siracusa, Sven Akesson, Andy Hoder, Bill Leonard, Malcomb Campbell and Jim Davidson next to OV-1 Mohawk at Planes of Fame Museum

18, 11am. This will be at Wings and Rotors Museum at French Valley Airport in Murrieta. Last year we had about 50 attend which included family and friends.

By Sven Akesson, President

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# The 2017 Scholarship Program is Underway

## Deadline: MAY 1



### It's that time of year again!

- One of the greatest benefits of being an AAAA member is that you and your family members are eligible to apply for a Scholarship!
- Scholarship applications must be submitted by May 1, 2017.
- Before you can apply you must submit the Pre-Qualifying Form (see below for a link to the form).
- You can apply for a scholarship every year that you are attending college as long as you are not already receiving an AAAA Scholarship.

### Who can apply?

- You must be a current member of the Army Aviation Association of America, or
- the spouse of a current AAAA member or deceased member, or
- the son or daughter of a current member or deceased member, or
- the grandchild of a current member or deceased member, or
- the unmarried sibling of a current member or deceased member.

In all the above instances, the member's effective date must be on or before May 1 of the previous year in which the applicant is seeking aid, unless the member is deceased. This requirement is waived for uniformed members of the Active Army, ARNG and USAR. The applicant must be attending an accredited college or university or selected for fall entry as an undergraduate or graduate. No recipient can hold concurrent AAAA Scholarships.

### Where do I go to qualify?

Go to the Application Procedure page of our website to access the Pre-Qualifying Form. If eligible, you will receive a follow-up email within a week with a link to the application.

If you have any questions, please contact [scholarship@quad-a.org](mailto:scholarship@quad-a.org) or 203-268-2450.

The AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc., a non-profit 501 C3 charity was established to render financial assistance for the college-level education of members of the Army Aviation Association of America, Inc. and their families. Since its inception in 1963 the Foundation has provided over \$6 Million to more than 3,000 applicants!



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203-268-2450  
[aaaa@quad-a.org](mailto:aaaa@quad-a.org) | [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org)  
Supporting the U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family



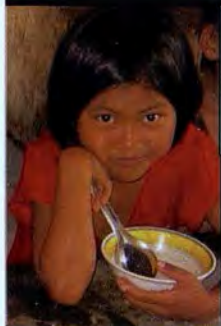
# Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO), Vietnam

FVSO helps support 850 Montagnard children living at 7 orphanage sites in the Kontum and Pleiku area. Founded in 2005 by servicemen who served in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, we are a small organization and are proud that 100% of your donations go to the children and their caregivers.

FVSO Board members pay for all of the administrative expenses and any on-site visits. Our mission is to provide for basic needs (food, medicine, clothing and shelter) & education.



It takes \$12 per month to provide adequate nutrition for one child and \$80 per year to send a child to school (covering primary & secondary). Operated by the Catholic Sisters of the Miraculous Medal.



FVSO is a non-profit and all donations are tax deductible  
For more information or to make a contribution, please see our contact info below. **THANK-YOU** for helping!

FVSO P.O. Box 9322-C, Auburn, Ca 95604-9322

Web: [www.FriendsofVSO.org](http://www.FriendsofVSO.org)  
Email: [info@FriendsofVSO.org](mailto:info@FriendsofVSO.org)



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### Dear Editor

A Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command team is going to look for the remains of Jerry Auxier in February 2017.

The incident occurred July 29, 1968 at BT167078, and is believed to have involved a helicopter from the 176th AHC. A 500lb bomb went off as a resupply helicopter flew into the location. Crater was 15 meters in diameter and ten feet deep. Chopper blew up in the air. Two KIA, One MIA, and eight wounded in action that required evacuation.

The helicopter was believed to have been a 176th AHC helicopter, and, according to accounts, was likely destroyed. If this is true, it might be there was a detailed report on the incident because of the loss of the helicopter. The helicopter might have been UH-1D 65-10052 based on the information on helicopters found in the VHPA web-site.

Auxier and the two KIA were from C 1/46th of the 198th LIB.

Any help on this would be appreciated. Thanks.

Contact Leslie Hines at [REDACTED]

### Looking for a Photo

I graduated with class 65-11 at Fort Wolters & Ft Rucker and was looking around for class photos.

I saw a nice one from Wolters for a class two months behind mine but nothing for 65-11.

I went through basic training with Mike Wells of Mineral Wells TX and we were both in 65-11, I think he had a class album but have not talked with him in years. Mike flew H23s for an oil company his entire career.

Gary Redden

info@DestinDirect.com

### Searching for my birth father... maybe you can help!

I was born in April of 1968 in Texas, and placed for adoption as an infant. I am searching for my birth father, who was a warrant officer and helicopter pilot at Fort Wolters in the summer of 1967. I am hoping the information below may lead to a connection.

I have some limited information from the adoption agency. They indicate that my birth mother and birth father met in the summer of 1967 when she was home from college for the summer. They attended church and other social events in her home town of Mineral Wells, TX. She was 20 years old at the time. The information about my birth father was very limited. He was described as 22 years old, 5'9" tall with brown eyes and brown hair. He appears to have been stationed at Fort Wolters, and was described as a "warrant officer and helicopter pilot", with the understanding he would most likely be sent to Vietnam. The information also indicates my birth father knew about the pregnancy, that marriage was discussed, and they mutually decided on adoption.

This is all I know about him... not enough to determine a name.

There was enough information available in the records from the agency to work with other public records and determine my birth mother's name. However, I have not been able to establish contact with her. Consequently, I have not been able to learn my birth father's name from her.

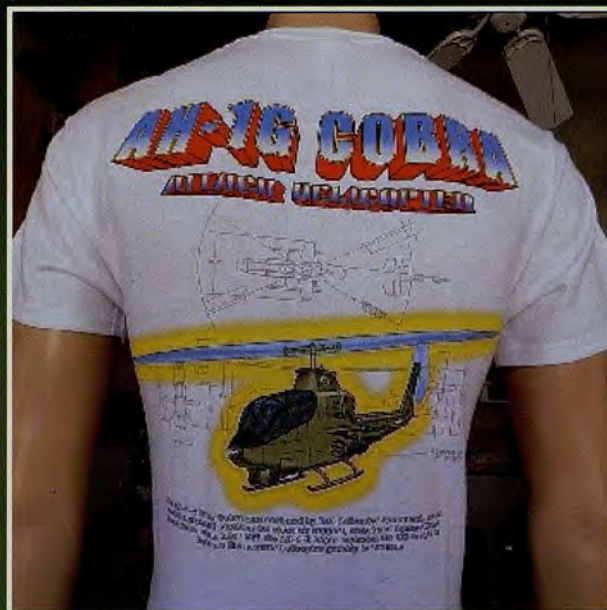
This is a contact I have been interested in making for most of my life. I have been actively searching for members of my birth family for over 25 years. Hopefully we could exchange family medical information for me and my children. My daughter, age 11, has a chronic hereditary health condition that has required frequent hospital stays. Beyond the medical information, no pressure or expectations, although I am interested in finding out information about my birth father and his family, history, interests, and perhaps meets him if he is willing. For example, I am curious if he is still involved with aviation, as I am a hot air balloon pilot.

Please let me know if you think you can help.

Thanks for your assistance,  
Darrin Harrison

*From the Editor:* The UH-1 mentioned in the January/February issue's Looking For column has been sold.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



VHPA Life Member Marc Liebman, who served in Vietnam with HC-2 and HC-7 has written **Forgotten**, a gripping novel with the return of main protagonist Josh Haman in a cameo role among a new cadre of characters including a badass female coldblooded assassin. The story line features some captured American soldiers listed as MIA and not returned or listed among the POWs released by the North Vietnamese at the end of the war. Unknown to the higher command of the NVA, their captors forced them to labor in a secret heroin operation, expecting to ransom them later.

At one point, they are reported dead, then it becomes evident they are very much alive and are rescued. However, some government players have denied any and all evidence

any Americans were left in Vietnam. These people now know they will lose their jobs and are at risk for prison. Both sides of the issue take out contracts on one another's lives. Unknown to anyone, one of the assassins is the wife of one of the rescued Americans.

The book is a page turner full of intrigue, taking the reader inside a dark world of protesters, sex, weapons violence, big money, drugs, shady characters, covert operations and cover-ups. While Liebman ties up some loose ends from his earlier novels, he leaves an opening for more Josh Haman adventures.

Liebman has also authored Big Mother 40, Cherubs 2, and Render Harmless, all previously reviewed in the Aviator.

**Forgotten** (586 pages, \$18.95 paperback) by Marc Liebman ISBN13: 978-1944193713 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.



VHPA Life Member, Allen Cates has written **Full Circle**, his second book but first novel. Cates, served with HMM-365 in 1964 and Air America from 1967 to 1974. Full Circle is fashioned around the main character, Brian Vincent, who much like the author, heralds from a southern Louisiana bayou.

Vincent enlists for Naval Aviation training and was soon flying an H-34 for the Marines. Growing tired of the regimentation, he accepts a position with Air America and begins a far different flying experience. The reader follows Vincent into the heart of what came to be known

as the "secret war" in Laos and Cambodia. Ultimately, Vincent witnesses more "collateral" damage than he could bear and makes a full circle back to his bayou roots in Louisiana.

Cates' time flying for the Marine Corps and Air America is reflected in this fictional work, which reads like a memoir. His character development is great and the reader is taken deeply into the story and will experience difficulty putting down. I recommend this book.

Cates is also author of Honor Denied, the story of his time with Air America.

**Full Circle** (248 pages, \$12.95 paperback, \$5.99 Kindle) by Allen Cates, ISBN13: 978-0692729731 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.



Ed Denny, who served with the 116th AHC in 70-71, has written **Hornet 33: Memoir of a Combat Helicopter Pilot in Vietnam**. The book began out of frustration borne of his attempting to craft letters to the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is not clear if he ever sent the letters.

Arriving in-country Long Binh and sent on to Cu Chi, Denny got his first dose of in-coming and some derision from his fellows about his lack of haste in getting into the bunker. The harsh realities of war were quickly learned. Friendships were made and lost and people you talked to in the morning were on the casualty list in the afternoon. One day, he even found his own name on the casu-

alty board by mistake.

Hornet 33 is a personal, raw, and honest narrative of his tour in support of the 25th Infantry Division missions in Cambodia and the Hornet's reinforcement roles as members of the 101st Airmobile Division in Operation Lam Son 719. Denny holds nothing back. Various sections are difficult to read but even more difficult to put down. I highly recommend this book - A great reading experience.

In addition, Denny chronicles the many losses in the 116th including a memorial to the men of the 116th who died in Vietnam both during and after his tour.

**Hornet 33** (296 pages with photos and maps, \$12.95 paperback, \$9.99 Kindle) by Ed Denny, ISBN: 978-1476666099 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.



# 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, current city and state. Line 3, branch of service. Lines 4 to 6, flight class and Vietnam units and served with, if that info is available.

16 members who have joined in the period of  
November 9th to January 30th, 2017.

Bocek Victor A. 'Vic' \*\*  
Lindenhurst Illinois  
Army  
71-11  
71 AHC in 71; C/101 AVN 101  
ABN in 71-72

Braaten Thomas A. \*\*  
Trent Woods North Carolina  
Marine Corps  
6-68  
HMM-263 in 69-70

Bustamante Jesus V 'Busta'  
Laredo Texas  
Army  
69-2  
2/20 ARA 1 CAV in 69

Capozzoli Earnest A \*\*  
Troy Alabama  
Army  
D/2/1 CAV in 68-70

Cook Stephen K 'Cooker' \*\*  
Burke Virginia  
Army  
62 AVN in 72-73

Dawson Burle M.  
Ozark Alabama  
Army  
70-19  
5 SFG in 64-65; 62 AHC in 70-71

Dover Melton A 'Mike' \*\*  
Dickson Tennessee  
Army  
69-24  
D/101 AWC 101 ABN in 69-70

Greener William M 'Bill'  
Lakewood Colorado  
Air Force  
54-1  
211 SQDN VNAF in 63

Hutchins Fate J. 'Dadjim'  
Anderson South Carolina  
Army  
71-23 71-19  
F/4 CAV in 72-73

Johnson William J. 'Jack'  
Lake Jackson Texas  
Army  
67-4  
229 AHB 1 CAV in 67-68

Lawson Cliff T  
Parker Colorado  
Army  
67-4  
3/17 CAV in 67-68

Reid Irvin C \*\*  
Plattsburgh New York  
Army  
68-5 68-1  
326 MED 101 ABN in 68-69

Thomas Kent R  
Anchorage Alaska  
Army  
70-19 70-21  
1 CAV DIV in 70-72

Wigen Robert G. 'Bob'  
Anchorage Alaska  
Army  
68-501 67-25  
128 AHC in 68-69

Woods Kenneth R.  
Vine Grove Kentucky  
Army  
68-513 68-23  
189 AHC in 68-69

Woolman William W 'Rocky' \*\*  
Antlers Oklahoma  
Army  
70-22  
163 GS 101 ABN in 70-71

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# TAPS

**Acheson, Gilbert W. USA Flight Class: 67-11, RVN: 67-68 D/1/10 CAV 4 INF died January 18, 2017.**

Note: No obituary was found; the death notice was supplied by a colleague.

**Blanchard, Harvey F. USA Flight Classes: 70-1/69-49, RVN: 70-71 C/3/17 CAV, D/3/5 CAV 9 INF.**



Fred Blanchard, 68, of rural McCune, KS, died Thursday, December 8, 2016 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident near McCune.

He was born June 19, 1948 in Denver, CO to Harvey Fredrick and Christine Marie (Manners) Blanchard. He grew up in Denver where he graduated from Lincoln High School in 1966.

While serving in the United States Army during the Vietnam War, he was an Air Cav Warrant Officer flying Huey Helicopters. He later served in the Wyoming National Guard as a pilot and medic.

For several years, Fred worked for the City of Aurora, CO as a fireman and paramedic. He also worked as a brick layer with his father. Fred's No.1 priority was caring for his family. He enjoyed traveling, helping others, working and creating with his hands, and sharing his sense of humor with others.

He and Patricia L. Johnson were married August 23, 1990 in Boulder, CO. She survives of the home. In addition to his wife, survivors include; four daughters, five grandchildren and two sisters. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Memorials are suggested to Schools to End Poverty (S.T.E.P., Inc.) or Disabled American Veterans ( DAV ). These may be left at or mailed to Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home, P.O. Box 374, Parsons, KS 67357.

**Clark, Larry M. Sr. USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Classes: 70-50/70-48, RVN: 70-71 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN, 72 7/17 CAV, Callsign: CON-DOR21.**



L. Michael Clark Sr. passed away Sunday, January 8, 2017. He was born May 1, 1944. Major Clark served numerous tours in Vietnam, serving his country as a Cobra pilot. After his military service, he continued his passion for flying by working for oil and gas companies, and volunteering to fly fire rescue mis-

sions combating wildfires. He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Rhoda Clark; his three sons and daughters-in-law, six grandchildren, his brother and youngest sister. He is preceded in death by his mother, Irene Clark, and two sisters, Rebecca Wilson and Anna Catherine Campbell.

**Crozier, Ted A. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Classes: 60-10Q/59-1FW, RVN: 68-69 HHC/101 AVN 101 ABN, 69 HHC/101 CAG 101 ABN.**



Ted Archer Crozier, Sr., age 91 of Clarksville, passed away Monday, January 9, 2017 at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital. He was born October 27, 1925 in Meriden, CT to the late Wesley Thomas and Flora Crozier.

Ted devoted 32 faithful years of service in the U.S. Army. He served as the first Aviator Chief of Staff 101st Airborne Division. In 1978, Crozier was elected and served two terms as Mayor of Clarksville.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 36 years. Survivors include his wife, Betty Newhouse Crozier; two sons, one daughter, and two daughters and a son by marriage, as well as ten grandchildren.

Suggested donations: The Ted and Mary Tom Crozier Scholarship Endowment c/o APSU P.O. Box 4177, Clarksville, TN 37044, Wings of Liberty Museum P.O. Box 2133, Ft. Campbell, KY 42223, or SAFE (Soldiers and Families Embraced) 812 Haynes Street, Clarksville, TN 37043.

Burial: With full Military Honors at Greenwood Cemetery.

**Daniels, Gilbert W. USA Class: 67-16, RVN: 68-69 D/2/1 CAV, Callsign: Blackhawk 20.**

CPT Gilbert Wayne Daniels passed away December 11, 2016, in Guatemala City, Guatemala, surrounded by his family. He was an avid and accomplished pilot throughout his lifetime, and held fixed wing multiengine, commercial, and instrument ratings.

Members of the Guatemalan Aero Club performed a flyover in his honor during the burial.

Submission courtesy of Gary W. Smith M10970

**Davis, John K. USA CPT (Ret.) Flight Class: 66-21, RVN: 67 D/229 AVN 1 CAV, 69-70 B/25 AVN 25 INF.**

John Kirwin Davis age 71, of Ft. Myers, FL and formerly of Johnsbury, passed away on Veteran's Day, Friday, November 11, 2016 at his home. He was born March 3, 1945 in Evanston IL to John and Lucille (Kirwin) Davis. John resided in Chicago until he was ten, when his family relocated to the Sunnyside Estates subdivision of Johnsbury. He was a graduate of McHenry High School, District 156.

After high school, John joined the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He entered the Army's helicopter training program, which he absolutely loved. He became a pilot on a helicopter gunship and attained the rank of Captain. In 1970 during a tour of duty in Vietnam, John was in charge of a squadron of helicopters which took a direct hit from enemy fire. He landed the helicopter safely, saving the entire crew, but John was permanently disabled from injuries he sustained. He lived in Johnsbury until 1996, then he and his mother moved to Florida to be closer to family. John's dedicated mother, Lucille, cared for him for a few decades, and when she passed on, his sister and her family made sure John had all the comforts he needed. People will remember him as a friendly and outgoing veteran who served his country well. John is survived by his sister. He was preceded in death by his father, John, and his mother, Lucille, on January 27.

For those wishing to send an expression of sympathy, his family suggests memorials to Paralyzed Veterans of America at [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org).

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery.

**Fragola Al USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 67-15, RVN: 68-69 213 ASHC, Callsign: Black Cat 1.**



Albert T. Fragola passed away December 30, 2016. He was living in Paros, Greece. He was born December 31, 1942 in Pelham, NY to Albert & Dora Fragola.

He attended Rutgers the NJ State University, Manhattan College, NY, Hunter College, NY, Texas Christian University, and Cambridge University, UK-with a degree in Orthodox Christian History.

Al was an avid Aviator who loved flying. He served 34 years in the Armed Forces: Six years in the Marine Corp, three years active and three years of reserve service, and 28 years in the Army. He was a recipient of The Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze



# TAPS

Star, Service, and Air Medal among other awards. Al attended Command and General Staff College, 1983, graduating with honors and the US Naval War College in 1995. He retired August 31, 1995 from the 124th Arcom, Ft. Lawton, WA.

Al was also an avid boater, cruising the waters of the Great Lakes and the Pacific Northwest. Al was very active in the Eastern Orthodox Church. He loved God, his family and living in the Greek Islands.

He is survived by his beloved wife Ardy; two daughters, a step son, a sister, four grandchildren and one great grandson. Al is buried on his beloved Greek Island of Paros.

If desired, donations/contributions in Al's honor may be made to:

The Aplastic Anemia MDS International Foundation. Contributions will be designated to support essential MDS research. Your gift may be made securely online, [www.aamds.org/donatenow](http://www.aamds.org/donatenow). Or by mail to: AAMDSIF  
4330 East West Highway, Suite 230  
Bethesda, MD 20814

**Grubbs, Paul L. III USA**  
**Flight Classes: 70-5/70-7,**  
**RVN: 70-71 71 AHC,**  
**Callsign: Rattler 22.**



Paul "Pete" Leonald Grubbs III, 67, of Eustis passed away December 22, 2016 in Orlando. He was born September 29, 1949 in Honolulu, HI, the son of Paul L. Grubbs Jr. and Virginia Grubbs. Pete served our country in the US Army during Vietnam as a helicopter pilot with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company, earning the Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Valorous Unit Award, and Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation under the call-sign "Rattler 22."

He worked for 35+ years in law enforcement, first as an officer with Winter Park Police Dept. and then for almost 30 years as an Orange County Deputy Sheriff. He married the love of his life E. Michele (Rizzo) Grubbs in 1970, and they enjoyed 46 years of marriage until his passing. He was a motorcycle and aviation enthusiast.

Pete leaves behind to cherish his memory, his wife Michele; a son, two daughters, seven grandchildren, a great grandchild and two sisters. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Donations: The Alzheimer's Association or the Army Aviation Museum at Fort

Rucker, AL.

Burial: Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL with military honors.

**Harris, Frederick W. USA**  
**Flight Class: 67-13, RVN: 67-**  
**68 128 AHC, 71 120 AHC,**  
**Callsigns: Tomahawk**  
**10/Razorback 32.**



Frederick Woodrow Harris of Auburn, WA, passed away at Saint Francis Hospital in Federal Way Sunday, January 1st at the age of 74 due to medical complications. Fred Harris is survived by his wife Carola Harris; three daughters, one son and seven grandchildren. A second son predeceased Frederick.

Fred was born in Greenville, ME on May 23, 1942; he was the son of the late Woodrow Wilson Harris and Alice Theresa Harris. He went to school and graduated in Hoopa, CA. Fred started his military career in 1960 in the Air Force where he was stationed in England. In 1962, he met his wife Carola; they married in August 1963 and were married for 53 years.

In 1964, Fred continued his military service in the Army where he proudly served his country until 1981. During his military career, Fred was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Air Medal, and was a Vietnam War Veteran. Following his career in the military, Fred worked for Korean Airlines until he took a job for Alaska Airlines in 1982. During that time he also worked as a helicopter mechanic instructor at the University of Alaska. In 1984, he moved with his family to Washington State where he worked for Alaska Airlines until his retirement. After retiring, Fred loved and enjoyed playing golf with his friends, fishing, and traveling. Fred Harris was a loving husband, wonderful father, grandfather, and great friend to all who knew him.

**Hendrex, David L. USA Flight Classes: 66-**  
**5W/66-5, RVN: 65-66 336 AHC, 68-69**  
**213 ASHC, Callsigns: Warrior/Black Cat.**

Note: No obituary was found; the death notice was supplied by a colleague.

**Jewell, John USA Flight Class: 67-9, RVN:**  
**67-68 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, Callsign: Apache**  
**19, died November 8, 2016.**

No obituary was found; the death notice was supplied by a colleague.

**McPherson, David R.**  
**Flight Class: 69-19, Call-**  
**sign: Warlord 24.**



David Robert McPherson, 67, passed away on October 18, 2016, at St. Luke's Hospital in Boise, ID, after a six-year battle with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Dementia. He had been residing in Mountain Home, ID for the last four years.

David was born in Great Falls, MT, July 11, 1949. He graduated from Palouse High School 1967 and attended WSU. He served in the United States Army in Vietnam, flying many special missions for the Navy Seals and Special Forces. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Air Medal, plus others.

During his life, he worked at R.A. Hanson and F.E.L. companies of Spokane, WA until retiring because of illness.

David loved the outdoors. David was preceded in death by his father, Robert Bruce McPherson; mother, Anna Elizabeth Peterson McPherson; and son, Scott Darrel McPherson.

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Betty Marlene McPherson; one daughter, one son, one brother, and numerous grandchildren.

He will be remembered as a soft-spoken man who always had the answers. His most famous saying: "You are grounded indefinitely."

Burial: Washington State Veterans Cemetery.

**Oppedahl, Roger L. USA Flight Classes:**  
**68-503/68-1, RVN: 68-69 498 MED**  
**CO, Callsign: DUSTOFF 19.**

Roger L. Oppedahl, 74, of Goldfield, IA, passed away Saturday, October 29, 2016, at the Paula J. Baber Hospice Home in Fort Dodge after a long battle with cancer. Roger was born November 15, 1941, the only child of Sherrill and Marie Oppedahl. Roger attended grade school in Renwick and graduated from Renwick High School in 1959. He attended and graduated from Waldorf Junior College. Roger enjoyed being a farmer just like his father and grandfather, but he always wanted to be a pilot. Aviation was in his blood. His father, numerous uncles and cousins all became pilots. Roger soloed July 4, 1964, at the airport in Eagle Grove, Iowa. Roger went on to earn his flight instructor pilot's license and flew for Thunderbird Aviation and North Central Airlines, both out of Minneapolis, MN.

In 1967, Roger volunteered for service in Vietnam. He graduated May 7, 1968, as an



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an Army medevac helicopter pilot. Warrant Officer Oppedahl was assigned to the 498th Medical Air Ambulance Company (Dustoff) at Lane Field from 1968-69. Roger flew more than 600 combat missions, evacuating hundreds of injured soldiers under enemy fire back to field hospitals. For his efforts, he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal and the Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters. After Vietnam, he was transferred to Fort Wainwright.

Roger left the military in 1971 and began flying for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management in Fairbanks. Roger performed many aviation roles but specialized in the aerial firefighting of forest fires as a lead pilot, directing air tankers where to drop their retardant. Roger retired in 1997 with 25 years of service and moved back to the family farm in Goldfield. It was not unusual to see Roger flying one of his aerobatic airplanes out of the Eagle Grove Airport to go perform aerobatic maneuvers or just enjoy the beautiful weather. Roger held multiple flight ratings and had accumulated more than 20,000 flight hours in both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, all accident free. In May 2015, Roger was awarded the prestigious Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award from the Federal Aviation Administration. It recognizes pilots with more than 50 years of safe flying experience who have made significant contributions to aviation.

Earlier this year, Roger took his last flight in another small airplane at the very same airport where he began his love affair with flying, some 52 years earlier.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Sherrill and Marie Oppedahl. He was loved and will be sorely missed.

Suggested donations: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or the American Cancer Society. Burial: with military honors took place at Lake Lutheran Cemetery in Goldfield, IA.

**Owings, William M. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 59-5, RVN: 67-68 20 TC CO/520 TC BN, Callsign: Red Hat.**



William M. Owings, of Lake Wales, FL passed away Monday, January, 9, 2017 at his residence, Spring Lake Farm. He was born November 17, 1932 in Columbus, GA to the late William Owings and

Thelma A (Carter) Owings. Always a Floridian, he graduated High School in Tampa, and then the University of Florida in 1954.

Colonel Owings has been a resident of Lake Wales since 1974. After retiring from a long active career, consisting of multiple duty stations around the world, such as tours as a helicopter pilot in Korea, Viet Nam and Germany (as NATO ADVISOR).

Feet first in Florida, he continued his service, with his second career for 28 years in the Florida Department of Transportation.

He was preceded in death by his son Michael Gardner and daughter Mary Dawn Owings. He is survived by his wife of 64 years Niven Gardner Owings; two sons, two daughters, one brother, 12 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

**Parr, Bernard A. USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Classes: 66-23/67-1, RVN: 67-68 162th AHC; 407 TC Det 70-71 C/1/9 Cav; 1st CAV; 151 TC Det, Callsign: Cavalier.**



Bernard A. Parr, 70, passed away on his own terms January 26, 2017 in Huntsville, AL, after several years of defying the prognosis for his end-stage heart disease and emphysema. He was born August 28, 1946 in Catonsville, MD to Dr. William Parr and Mildred Pohlhaus.

Bernard, or Bernie as he was affectionately called by friends and family, is survived by Clair, his loving wife of 50 years; three children, four grandchildren, four siblings, and countless nieces and nephews.

Bernie grew up in Catonsville, MD, attended St. Marks Parochial School, Calvert Hall College High School and then graduated from Catonsville High School in 1964. He was a Certified VW Mechanic. He started dating his soon-to-be-wife Clair before enlisting in the Army in 1966.

Upon graduating from flight school, Bernie attended Aviation Maintenance Officer's Course at Fort Eustis, VA, followed by his first tour of duty in Vietnam, 1967-1968, as a Warrant Officer assigned to the 162nd Assault Helicopter Company. He was next stationed at Hunter Army Airfield in GA before returning to Vietnam for his second tour, 1970 - 1971, with Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile) as the maintenance officer. He was then assigned to Fort Eustis for the

Transportation Officer Advanced Course, then the Readiness Group at Fort Lewis, WA. Bernie graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1975 from Saint Martin's College in Olympia, WA. He then transferred to Fort Wainwright, AK. After four years fishing and canoeing the Alaskan wilderness, Bernie was transferred to Redstone Arsenal, AL, where he worked R&D on the MLRS system before taking command of Special Troops Battalion. His final assignment was with the Ballistic Missile Defense Systems Command before retiring from the Army in 1986. Bernie's many awards include three Bronze Stars and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Bernie shared his love of the outdoors with everyone he could, sponsoring events for the National Wild Turkey Foundation and getting heavily involved in Scouting. He introduced many to canoeing, fishing, archery, black powder, and a healthy respect for cast iron cooking and a morning cup of fresh brewed coffee. His knowledge of wood-working may have influenced the outcome of more than a few pine wood derbies.

In 2006, he joined Yulista Aviation, Inc. where he later became the Director of Aviation Quality Management, a position he maintained until the end. In 2009, Bernie found a way to express his love for his military brothers by becoming a founding member of Save Our Flying Heritage and helping found the North Alabama Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Bernie was diagnosed with emphysema in 2006, and later with congestive heart failure in 2009. This did not stop him. In complete defiance of every diagnosis, Bernie continued to push through life with dedication, tenacity, and passion until reaching a goal he was determined to make. On December 26th, 2016, Bernie and Clair celebrated their 50th anniversary. One month later, to the day, Bernie decided it was time to go Home. He enjoyed one final bowl of his favorite ice cream and then passed peacefully in the loving arms of his family.

**Pullen, Dennis L. USA CW3 (Ret.) Flight Class: 57-9, RVN: 62-63 81 TC CO, 66-67 178 ASHC, Callsign: Boxcar 14.**

Dennis Lee Pullen, 87, of Hot Springs, died Friday, July 29, 2016. He was born July 12, 1929, in Oregon, MO, to the late Frank Hurley Pullen and Martha Iola (Chance) Harvey.

Dennis was a 20-year veteran of the U.S.



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Army, where he served as a Senior Aviator. He did two tours in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Bronze Stars and the Army Air Medal. After retirement, Dennis started a successful business in the construction industry. He was a Jack of all Trades and Master of Many Others. Dennis was a master modeler of remote controlled airplanes. He was also a master gardener and loved to hunt, fish, read and learn.

Survivors include: his wife of 66 years, Dorothy Pullen (Randall); two sons, two sisters, a brother, ten grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

**Small, James A. USA CW3 (Ret.) Flight Class: 65-15W, RVN: 66-67 ACT/11 ACR, Callsign: Thunder Horse 13.**



James A. Small of Navarre, FL died December 2nd. Jim was born August 6, 1936 in Miami, FL. He entered the Army in 1953 and served 12 years in Infantry and Airborne units. He was a Korea and Vietnam veteran. He met and married his wife, Lola, while stationed at Ft. Riley, KS. They spent 4 years at Ft. Richardson, AK where 2 of their 4 children were born. Jim attended US, Army Helicopter Flight School and became a pilot in November 1965.

Following his Vietnam tour, he transferred to the Quartermaster corps in January 1970 and served as an Air Drop and parachute repair technician until January 1971. During his second tour in Vietnam (not included in data base Ed.) he spent five weeks in the jungle in Cambodia as OIC of Recovery Detail attached to infantry units from the 1st Infantry Div and the 1st CAV div. He was then assigned to Ft. Bragg, NC where he served until his retirement in August 1973.

He then moved back to Miami, FL where he worked for GE as an appliance and air-conditioning technician for eight years. In 1981, he and his wife moved to Navarre, FL, working at Hurlburt Bowling Center as the maintenance supervisor in Civil Service until retiring in January 1999. His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star w/ 2 OLC, Meritorious Service Medal, and the Air Medal w/ 11 OLC. He was also awarded Outstanding Civilian Career Service Award at retirement from Civil Service. He was predeceased by his youngest daughter, Vicky, in 1976 and 2

infant grandsons. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Lola, of Navarre; two daughters, a son, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Per his wishes, there will be no services.

**Smith, James C. USA MGN (Ret.) Flight Class: 46, RVN: 65-66 DISCOM 1 CAV, 66 HHT/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 66-67 1 BDE 1 CAV, 68-69 HHC/1 AVN BDE, 69-70 HHC/101 AVN 101 ABN, Callsigns: Saber 6/Hawkeye.**



James "Jim" Smith, a highly-decorated veteran of three wars and father of seven, died December 14 at his Lawrenceville residence. He was 93.

He had a chestful of medals from his combat duty in three wars. But in a 39-year military career, he was most proud of what he did to improve the safety of the troops: making training in instrument-flying standard for military pilots, advocating for night-vision goggles for fliers, and helping to develop the modern-day drone, a family member said. "He was very pragmatic," said R.J. Parsons, Smith's nephew by marriage. "He could see the advantage of these types of things and what it meant to the airmen."

The path of Smith's life was set in childhood. As a young boy, he would go with his father, a sergeant major in the acclaimed 6th Cavalry at Fort Oglethorpe in northwest Georgia, to visit and camp with the horse soldiers. "It was said he essentially joined the Army when he was six," daughter Heidi Smith said.

With his parents' permission, Smith enlisted in the Army as a private at the tail end of World War II. He was 17. A review board exempted him from basic training, deciding he already knew everything being taught to new soldiers, and he was immediately assigned to a platoon in Riley, KS.

He was shot several times by a sniper in Germany and nearly killed, his daughter said. His weight dropped to about 80 pounds, and he was told he wouldn't see active duty again. "He requested to create his own rehab program," Heidi said. "He was allowed to eat whatever he wanted from the mess hall and do whatever he needed to get fit again." A review board soon deemed him "good to go."

In nearly 40 years in the Army, Smith saw combat duty in World War II, the Korean

Conflict and the Vietnam War, earning medals of valor including the Distinguished Service Medal and multiple Flying Crosses, Silver Stars and Purple Hearts.

When the Army took to the air, he was among the first young soldiers trained to fly. The late Eugene Patterson, who went on to become an award-winning and nationally known journalist, was with him at flight school training and remained a lifelong friend, his daughter said.

Gen. Smith is credited with major contributions in Vietnam and in later years to the Army's advances in air mobility with helicopters. In the early 1960s, he was part of a task force of the U.S. Strike Command charged with analyzing the air mobility of the Air Force and Army. As a field test officer specializing in tactical air reconnaissance, Smith was largely responsible for many of the organizational and training standards in aviation the Army and Air Force still employ.

The Army Aviation Association of America recognized Smith's contributions, naming him to the Army Aviation Hall of Fame in 1976 for his efforts in the 1960s. Army Maj. Gen. Carl H. McNair Jr. (Ret.), said Smith always "gave the Army, his troops and his mission 200 percent, night and day. I often wondered when he slept."

As deputy commanding general of the 1st Aviation Brigade, Gen. Smith's call sign was "Hawk 5" and his nickname was "Hawk Eye." "He had an eye on everything as a commander must do in a combat theater and in the garrison preparing for combat," said Gen. McNair, who was 10 years Smith's junior and his friend for 50 years. "Thus, the nickname 'Hawk Eye' was very fitting, and we all learned from him."

Smith showed his dedication and fortitude by going from one tough command to an even tougher one in Vietnam, remaining there as long as any commander, with the possible exceptions of Gen. William Westmoreland and Gen. Creighton Abrams, McNair said.

After retirement, Smith consulted with the Institute for Defense Analyses and assisted in the early development of unmanned aerial vehicles commonly known as drones, for battlefield reconnaissance and observation. He saw the drone as a potentially life-saving alternative to sending troops into danger zones, Parsons said.



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Smith referred to Doris, his wife of 66 years, as the "gold standard" of military wives. When he was stationed in Germany during the 1960s, as the wall was being built between East and West Berlin, Doris traveled by troop transport plane to be with him. She stepped off the plane seven months pregnant with daughter Heidi and with five children 10 years old and younger at her side. "That's an Army wife," Smith would say.

Heidi Smith said her dad was a "soldier's soldier no matter what his rank." One of his traditions was to make Christmas Eve visits to the guard posts on base. He would bring a tape recorder, play Christmas music for the men on duty and talk to them about the families they had back home. He cared deeply about the well-being of his troops. Having grown up among soldiers, he could still relate to them. That was at the core of his leadership style."

Gen. Smith is survived by his wife, Doris; seven children, 12 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Since his death, tributes have flowed in from soldiers who served under his command. A memorial service for MGN Smith was held December 17 in Snellville.

**Stoddard, Harry C. USA/USN LCDR (Ret.) Flight Classes: 68-12/68-18, RVN: 68-69 187 AHC, Callsign: Crusader Rabbit 16.**

Harry Charles, of Richmond, VA, died January 12, 2017. Born in 1946 in Seattle, WA, Harry joined the U.S. Army at 18 to serve in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He went on to attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, completing a degree in Aviation Management, before joining the U.S. Navy. Here he completed his 22 years of service with posts from Monterey to the Pentagon, eventually retiring as a Lieutenant Commander. Harry remains known for his kind demeanor, dedication to his wife and daughter and affinity for Hawaiian shirts. He is survived by his wife, Jo Ann Stoddard; and a daughter.

Suggested memorials are: The Disabled American Veterans, DAV.org or the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, donate.lls.org.

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery.

**Tanner, Harold J. USA CPT (Ret.) Flight Classes: 66-9W/66-9, RVN: 66-67 187 AHC, 67-68 118 AHC, 70-71 7/1 CAV, Callsign: Whirlybird.**



Harold Jean Tanner, 77, of Van, TX, passed away March 20, 2016, in Grand Saline, TX. He was born in Odem, TX, January 13, 1939, to Adam Fontenet and Rosalie Self. He is preceded in death by his parents and adopted parents, Leonard and Mildred Tanner of Dawson, TX.

Harold graduated from Dawson High School and was drafted for military service on February 19, 1958. He entered the U.S. Army and attended basic training at Fort Carson, CO. After basic training, Harold reported to Fort Gordon, GA, for Military Police advanced individual (AIT). Following Military Police AIT, Harold was stationed at Fontenet Ordnance Depot, Fontenet, France, assigned to the 500th Military Police Detachment. During this tour of duty, while at Saint Jean D'Angely, France, Harold met his future wife, the former Mady Erb, and they married August 22, 1959.

Harold reenlisted in the Army to attend Army Helicopter Maintenance School at Fort Eustis, VA. During his time at Frankfurt, he also applied for Helicopter Pilots School. Before completing helicopter maintenance school, he was accepted into helicopter pilot school. Harold entered Primary Helicopter Training at Fort Wolters, TX.

Eventually, Ray traveled to Vung Tau, where they reassembled aircraft and flew them off the carrier deck. The helicopters were armed with rockets and other weapons. After they were test fired, they were flown on to Tay Ninh where the unit was based. Harold left Vung Tau in March 1967 and had a one-year tour flying helicopters on combat missions and performing maintenance test flights. In July 1968, Harold and family were sent overseas to Gablingen Airfield, Augsburg, Germany, USAREUR Aviation Safety and Standardization Detachment. At Augsburg, Harold transitioned to the CH-34 Helicopter. In 1970, Harold returned to Vietnam for a second tour. In December 1972, Harold was selected to be released from active duty in the U.S. Army because of the reduction in forces (RIF). He was released from active duty on December 7, 1972, and finished his career in the USAR.

Harold's military decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, The Army Commendation Medal, Civil Action Medal First Class, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm Medal, Viet Nam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, Viet Nam Campaign Medal with two Overseas Bars, the Army Air

Medal with twenty-three Oak Leaf Clusters. Harold was a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Disabled American Veterans. He also was a member of the American Legion and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Harold is survived by his wife, Mady; a son, daughter, four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and a brother.

Burial, With Military Honors: DFW VA National Cemetery, Dallas, TX.

**West, Grover C. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Classes: 68-8/68-10, RVN: 68-69 B/227 AHB 1 CAV, Callsign: Potato Masher 1.**



Grover Cleveland West, III died Sunday after a courageous battle with cancer. Colonel West was born to Grover and Dorcas West in Rockwood, TN. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army where he later earned a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and a Commission from the Officers' Candidate School. He met and married Peggy Millender while stationed at Ft. Hood, TX. While in uniform, he served combat tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and again as an engineer during the Gulf War. He retired from active duty in 1996.

Among his many awards are the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service and Kuwait Liberation medals. He was also qualified as a parachutist.

Following his retirement from the Army, he served as a Brigade, Division and Corps level command and staff evaluator for several military/civilian training contractors.

Grover was preceded in death by his parents, Grover and Dorcas West and sister, Nancy Mier. He is survived by his wife, Peggy West; one daughter, a son, four grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

Memorials can be made to Win Rockefeller Cancer Center, or the American Cancer Society.

Burial: DeKalb Cemetery in Smithville, TN.

**Wilks, Clarence D. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 56-14, RVN: 67-68 128 AHC, 68-69 11 ACR.**



Clarence Donald "Don" Wilks born August 7, 1931, was welcomed into the arms of Jesus Sunday, December 4,



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2016 at 6:25 am. Don was born and raised in Portland, OR to parents Clarence and Katie Wilks. Don was a man of utmost integrity, ever an "officer and a gentleman". He attended college at Oregon State University where he joined the ROTC program. The initial commitment grew into a 30-year career in the U.S. Army, with challenges such as a three-year exchange duty with the U.S. Navy where he became jet qualified, commanding a helicopter battalion in Viet Nam, earning his MBA at George Washington

University, serving with NATO and then as the military liaison to the civilian government in Frankfurt, Germany, as well as being a Staff Officer to the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon.

After an impressive career, earning medals including the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross, Don retired in Florida with his wife, Winnie, where he continued to leverage his leadership skills as treasurer of his homeowner's association, serving on the board of directors for Cypress Pointe Resort in Orlan-

do, and as an Elder and Clerk of Session with the First Presbyterian Church of Brandon and the Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center. Don leaves behind his devoted wife Winnie; three daughters, one son, 10 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and a brother. His brother Walt preceded Don in death.

Suggested memorials: Alzheimer Foundation or Lifepath Hospice of FL.

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery in the Spring of 2017.

Records of the recent deaths of the following potential members of the VHPA were gleaned from internet searches within the last two months. All the information VHPA has for these pilots may be found at VHPA.org or by calling 1-800-505-VHPA. If you knew any of the pilots listed, please help VHPA by sending any information you know about the person to HQ@VHPA.org or call 1-800-505-VHPA (8472) so it can be added to our database.

**Ahneman, Phillip J.** USA Flight Class: 68-6 RVN: 68-69 189 AHC died on January 20.

**Allen, John M.** USA Flight Class: 70-1 died on October 10, 2016 (no other data).

**Anderson, Roland B.** USA Flight Class 67-21, RVN: 68-69 114 AHC, Callsign: Red Knight died on October 29, 2016.

**Archer, C. A.** USA died on November 26, 2016 (no other data).

**Arenz, James E.** USA Flight Classes: 67-17, 67-15, RVN: 67-68 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF 70-71 HHC/13 CAB, Callsign: Outcast 8 died on July 6, 2016.

**Baye, Firmin** USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class 56-10, died on July 6, 2016 (no other data).

**Blackburn, Walter D.** USA Flight Classes: 68-524/68-44, died on November 1, 2016 (no other data).

**Bourne, Richard W.** MAJ (Ret.) USAF died on October 6, 2016 (no other data).

**Burnett, Sanders R.** USA COL (Ret.) died on December 9, 2016 (no other data).

**Campbell, Gerald E.** USN LCDR (Ret.) died on January 8, 2016 (no other data).

**Coleman, Michael D.** USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-8, died on December 10, 2016 (no other data).

**Croton, Richard A.** USA Flight Class: 70-27, died on December 28th, 2016 (no other data).

**Ekholm, Wallace H.** USMC LTC (Ret.) died on November 16, 2016 (no other data).

**Fisher, Harold D.** USA LTC (Ret.) RVN: 67 D/3/4 CAV, 70-71 B/227 AVN BN/1 CAV died on October 30, 2016.

**Forsyth, Robert W.** USMC died on December 31, 2016. (No other data).

**Gilman, Tommy L.** USA Flight Class: 70-41, died on November 20, 2016 (no other data).

**Golinski, Joseph F.** USA Flight Class: 69-47, died on January 18, 2017 (no other data).

**Klear, John M.** USA Flight Class: 68-4, RVN: 68-69 A/229 AVN 1 CAV died December 30, 2016.

**Lary James E.** USMC LTC (Ret.) RVN: 63-64 HMM-362 died on December 28, 2016.

**Mackey, William** USN CPT (Ret.) died on November 17, 2016 (no other data).

**Malvin, Handy L.** COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 67-5QC, RVN: 67-68 C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 71-72 128 AHC died on January 11, 2017.

**Martin, Douglas J.** USA Flight Class: 68-22, died October 17, 2016 (no other data).

**Mayo, Clive** RAN LCDR (Ret.) Flight Class: 67FTS, RVN: 69-70 HFV3/135AHC (Experimental Military Unit), Callsign: EMU 24 died on December 31, 2016.

**McCaskill, Charles, E. Jr.** USN (Ret.) RVN: 68-69 HA(L)-3 DET 2 died on August 20, 2016.

**McDermott, Francis** USA COL (Ret.) died on November 30, 2016 (no other data).

**McMurray, Thomas** USA LTC (Ret.) died on December 10, 2016 (no other data).

**Mire, Evrice** USA Flight Classes: 70-5/70-3, died on October 23, 2016 (no other data).

**Moore, Bobby L.** USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 60-10Q, died on December 30, 2016 (no other data).

**Morrison, Douglas B.** USMC Flight Class 63-7T, RVN: 68-69 HMM-262, Callsign: Chatterbox died on October 29, 2016.

**Rice, Lawrence C.** USAF MAJ (Ret.) died on December 7, 2016 (no other data).

**Rodenberg, James C.** USAF LTC (Ret.) made his final flight on January 18, 2017. Jim was a HH-43 pilot stationed at NKP, Thailand as a Capt. in early 1965, with Det. (Provisional) 2, Pacific Air Rescue Center.

**Rogers, Harold J.** USA Flight Class: 68-36, died on May 27, 2016 (no other data).

**Rusk, Frank R.** USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 65-1W, RVN: 65-66, 68 AHC 66 118 AHC died on August 20, 2016.

**Schroeder, Gerald M.** USN UNK (Ret.) died on December 17, 2016 (no other data).

**Snow, Quentin E.** USA (Ret.-rank unk.) died on November 15, 2016 (no other data).

**Spinks, Larry S.** USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Class: 71-4 died on December 5, 2016 (no other data).

**Viles, Frederick R.** USA Flight Classes: 66-23/66-21, died on April 21, 2016 (no other data).

**Weitz, Charles A.** RVN: 63-74 Air America died on October 22, 2016 (no other data).

**Whisnant, Stewart** USA died on December 28, 2016 (no other data).

**Wolfe, William C.** USMC COL (Ret.) died on August 20, 2016 (no other data).



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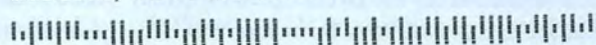
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