



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION
"WE FLEW ABOVE THE FINEST"



JULY 5-10, 2016

**Peppermill Resort
Reno, Nevada**

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VHPA Aviator Newsletter:
Aviator@VHPA.org

VHPA WebSite:
VHPA.org

VHPA Headquarters
and Headquarter Staff
contact Information

Phone:
1-800-505-VHPA (8472)

E-Mail:
HQ@VHPA.org

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

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From the President
of the VHPA

CLYDE ROMERO



I hope all of our members had a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Another year is in front of us; the Executive Council and Headquarters staffs are busy working on the 2018 reunion location. While I am on that subject, have you signed up and reserved your rooms for the 2016 reunion in Reno? As they say, operators are standing by.

This last Veterans Day was the 50 year observance at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. John Powell our Secretary/ Treasurer and I were in attendance. The VHPA also laid a wreath along with other Vietnam Veterans organizations. The

keynote speaker was one our own members, Bruce Crandall, a Medal of Honor recipient.

This January it will be 44 years since we kicked off operation Lam Son 719 into Laos where we as helicopter pilots endured incomparably higher losses in the most heavily defended airspace than any other period of the Vietnam War.

We are still seeking volunteers for numerous duties to keep this outstanding organization running smoothly. Contact the VHPA Staff for a list of positions that require volunteers.

Clyde Romero

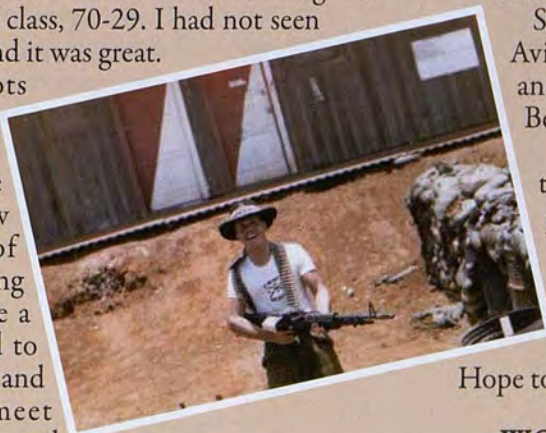
WONIC

My first reunion was 2006 in Washington DC. At the reunion there were two members from my unit, B Troop 7/17th Air Cav, that I flew with in Vietnam, along with a member from my flight class, 70-29. I had not seen these guys since 1971 and it was great.

I met a lot of pilots from other units and some from my unit that were there before me and after me. I knew I wanted to be part of this organization as long as I could and became a life member. I planned to attend future reunions and that allowed me to meet more members, contact, and

see more pilots that I flew with so many years ago. It has also provided many opportunities to reunite with members from my unit including; observers, crew chiefs, blues, maintenance, and HQ personnel.

I volunteered to be a member of the Executive Council



(EC); I wanted to help keep this organization moving forward and continue to be of benefit for the members. *The last time I had volunteered for anything was October 1971, when I volunteered to fly Scouts.* For me being a member of the EC has enhanced my desire to help this organization continue into the future.

Send in stories and pictures of your tour(s) to The Aviator. I have contributed stories to *The Aviator*, and I know there are many more stories out there. Be part of putting your history in *The Aviator*.

Think about getting involved, be a volunteer at the reunions or get involved with the election process to become a member of the EC.

Join your local chapter or help start a chapter. At the 2015 reunion in Washington DC I continued to meet more and more members as well as class members. It just keeps getting better.

Hope to see and meet more members in Reno in 2016.

WONIC? Warrant Officer Next In Charge.

*By John Shafer
Vice President VHPA
Treasurer Washington State Chapter VHPA*

Looking For Vietnam Veteran Helicopter Pilots of all Branches



Restored UH-1 on display at the NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The New Jersey Chapter of the VHPA was not established in an earlier attempt to gain members and create a charter.

Carl Burns, Class 65-18, has generously volunteered to oversee a new effort. He and I are obtaining contact information to canvass potential members in NJ, eastern PA, southern NY (and NY City – Long Island Staten Island) and northern DE. Carl is the author of a recent Aviator article, "Hangar Crew" which described the restoration project for the Huey shown in the picture above.

If you are in one of those regions, please contact Carl if you are interested. Membership in the national VHPA is not a requirement for joining.

Carl has secured space at the NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1 Memorial Lane, Holmdel NJ 07733 for a meeting on March 12th at 10:00. Whether or not you respond to this notice or a separate contact, you are welcome to attend.

We know there are many candidates in the tri-state area available to establish a well-populated chapter.

Carl's contact information:

Email [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

By Tom Kirk

FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

Happy New Year from all of us!

We have a few 2016 Calendars available at HQ. Give us a call if you would like to purchase one.

Be sure to register for R2016 in Reno! There are tours that have limited capacity so you want to register early. We hope to see you there!

Don't Forget...if you move, be sure to call HQ with an update to your contact information! This assures that you do not miss any issues of your newsletter.

You can also do so on line by navigating 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.

Call HQ to pre-order the 2016 CD Directory for \$10 and the 2016 Paper Directory for \$15 or you can still purchase the 2015 CD directory for \$20 and the 2015 Paper directory for \$25. We have limited quantities of the 2015 directories so call now if you would like one.

If you know of anyone who served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and they are not a member of VHPA, give us a call and we will check to see if they are in our database. We would love to send them membership information and a copy of the 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 that we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

*Sherry Rodgers
VHPA Office Manager*

Big 50th for the Golden Hawks!



The 1st Aviation Brigade Fort Rucker Alabama, wishes to announce its 50 plus years of service and excellence Anniversary celebration.

This is one of those once-in-a-lifetime events: The Golden Anniversary of the largest and most lethal Army Aviation unit, the 1st Aviation Brigade. A May 2016 celebration & reunion at Fort Rucker is planned for the legendary unit's members from Vietnam through today (military and civilian, men and women).

The cost is minimal. \$55 per person includes all the activities. We do a picnic in the Hangar right behind the Army Aviation Museum and a formal dinner in the Landing Club on the night of May 14. The celebration includes: post tours, a great look at the training facilities, briefings on current Army aviation equipment, training displays, a little simulator time on the new stuff, static aircraft displays, and a memorial service on the morning of the 15th. We will line up sometime for a round of golf, and still in negotiation is the best part of all: Huey rides at no, or a nominal cost.

Mark the dates May 12-15 on your calendar; make plans to take time off. Join your comrades, wingmen and drinking buddies as we celebrate our accomplishments, our shared danger, the life-changing experiences we all went through. Call the guys you keep in touch with, repost this on your Facebook page or your unit reunion page, or even your VFW or American Legion pages. Hit the print button and put it up on the bulletin board. We want everyone to get together for this event.

No one deserves this more than you. No one can appreciate or enjoy it as much as you. So please, if you're going to make one reunion, make it this one. We will see you in May!

Please see the 1st Aviation Brigade reunion entry of this issue of Aviator for contact information.

Larry Castagneto - Event coordinator

You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Good Impression

When the subject, "My most embarrassing experience" is raised, I generally recall three doozies. One of the three was a bizarre accident involving my helicopter and myself in Korea during the spring of 1963. The accident involved no damage to the helicopter, but did severely wound my self-esteem and pride. And while I can now laugh about it, I can assure you, it was not a laughing matter when it happened.

I was a first lieutenant, flying for the first time as a co-pilot with a more senior officer assigned as the Eighth Army Commanding General's helicopter pilot. Our mission was to fly the general to a flag ship among several U.S. Navy ships anchored off the southern coast of South Korea, pick up the admiral of the fleet, and then fly our high ranking passengers to the beach where they would observe a joint amphibious exercise involving both U.S. and ROK forces. That part of the mission went smoothly. My assigned job on the beach was to stay with the Huey. I was instructed to watch the bleacher area and get the rotors turning when I saw the general and admiral returning to our helicopter.

As the exercise was about to conclude, I observed a CH-37 Sikorsky helicopter making its final approach to the helipad. The CH-37, then the largest helicopter in the Army inventory, could generate hurricane force winds below its main rotor blades as it neared the ground. Our Huey would not obstruct the CH-37 landing, but its proximity to where the CH-37 would land gave me concern about possible damage to our main rotor blades. So, I clambered up the side of the Huey's fuselage to pull the main rotor down so I could grab it with both hands over my head and hold it down near the tail rotor assembly.

As the big copter descended to the helipad, I prepared myself for the rotor wash by pulling my fatigue cap down as far as it would go without covering my eyes and I hid behind the tail boom of the Huey. The CH-37 quickly dropped off its passengers and ascended. As the rotor wash dissipated, I glanced toward the bleachers and to my surprise the general's ground transportation was heading my way.

I released the main rotor and bounded toward the cockpit, determined to have the rotors turning before the general's arrival. But my hat, still low on my head, blocked the view of the fixed stabilizers protruding horizontally on both sides of the aft fuselage. I hit the left stabilizer at eye level and the force of the collision actually bowled me backwards in what I was told looked like a back flip. I wasn't unconscious when the general arrived over my crumpled body, but I was certainly dazed, yet lucid enough to hear the general ask, "Are you okay son?" I don't remember if I responded. To this day, I don't know what the right response would be. I mean, here at the general's feet was his pilot who had just run into his own aircraft! It was hardly a first good impression.

Bob Lanzotti LTC (Ret.)
RLTW



VHPA'S 33rd ANNUAL REUNION

REUNION ARRIVAL AND OTHER DETAILS

Last updated 03 December 2015

Reunion hotel:

Peppermill Resort, 2707 S. Virginia St, Reno, NV 89502

Reunion hotel reservations: There are at least three ways to make you hotel reservations while insuring that you receive the VHPA Group Rate of \$89 (Peppermill North & West Wings – Non-Smoking), \$99 (Peppermill Tower – Smoking & Non-Smoking), or \$129 suite (Tuscany Tower – Smoking & Non-Smoking) + tax over these dates 1 – 12 July 2016. We recommend that you consult the VHPA website for more details on **sleeping rooms at:** <http://www.vhpa.org/R2016RoomDetails.pdf>

Please consider the following:

■ Via the Reunion's personalized website, go to:

resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ci_new&eventID=14050872

■ Via www.vhpa.org, then Reunion Information and use the reserve your hotel room link.

■ By calling the hotel's reservation line at **800-282-2444** or **775-826-2121**. *You need to mention AVHP716 or "VHPA 33rd Annual Reunion 2016".*

Transportation from the Airport: The hotel offers a complimentary shuttle to/from the airport. The Peppermill shuttle vans are chocolate brown. At the airport, you must go past the baggage claim to the hotel shuttle area. The hotel shuttle departs from the airport every half hour from 4:15am – 11:45pm.

Parking: Hotel parking is complimentary.

Internet Access: The VHPA has negotiated free internet for attendees in their sleeping rooms. The hotel will provide a special code to access the internet when you check in.

WHO CAN ATTEND THIS REUNION?

As a general rule anyone who is dues current in the VHPA can register, order tickets, etc. simply by paying the Reunion registration fee. All who served in the Vietnam War as helicopter pilots must not only be a member of the VHPA but also be current with respect to their annual membership dues as of the first day of the Reunion to register. Anyone who was not a pilot is also welcome to attend as long as they are a dues current subscriber to the VHPA Aviator magazine. Exceptions are vendors, specifically invited performers/speakers, Gold Star Family guests and Non-Registered Banquet Guests; these people do not have to be a subscriber to attend. Anyone wishing to purchase a ticket for any of our events must pay the Reunion Registration Fee.

Since VHPA Membership and Subscriber dues expire on the last day of the month, someone who is dues current when they register, could be non-dues current on the 1st day of the Reunion

(July 5th, 2016). Because of this, the VHPA Reunion Registration software is "forward looking" with respect to the dues status.

Please understand all Reunion attendees (anyone who pays the Registration Fee) are treated as equals. A VHPA Life Member, a former enlisted man, the widow of a deceased Vietnam Vet, a good friend – are treated equally once they pay. The one exception is that only VHPA members can attend the Annual Business Meeting.

Who Can Attend This VHPA Reunion? Answer – anyone who pays the Registration Fee and is dues current as outlined above. So, please consider inviting anyone and everyone to attend with you!

REUNION REFUNDS AND CANCELLATION FEES

The Executive Council establishes the official cancellation date (OCD) for the each reunion. The OCD for R2016 is Friday, June 17, 2016. Only cancellations received by HQ by close of business Central Daylight Time (normally 3pm) on the OCD (including those via US Mail) are considered for refunds, unless covered by Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) described below. For reunion registration cancellations under consideration for a refund, there is a \$15 cancellation fee for each PR and each registered guest. It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are non-refundable even with purchase of GRI: dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions plus any event designated as non-refundable. Additionally if the PR enrolled in the GRI program cancels the entire registration prior to the OCD, then the GRI fee is refundable. For cancellations after the OCD, the GRI fee is non-refundable. HQ only processes refunds after the reunion ends, usually within two weeks. For PRs receiving a refund, there is a two-step process. First, the PR receives a letter and/or a statement from HQ outlining the details of the refund including the amount. Normally this correspondence is sent from HQ by US mail but it can be via email. Second, the PR receives a check via US mail from the VHPA's bank. The goal is to complete the entire refund process not later than one calendar month after the reunion ends. Any clerical errors in the details of the refund should be brought to the attention of HQ.

CANCELLING A REUNION REGISTRATION

The VHPA Member or Subscriber who made the Reunion Registration is known as the Primary Registrant (PR). A PR may cancel all or portions of his or her registration any time prior to the reunion by contacting HQ via US Mail at 2100 North Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050, by email at HQ@vhpa.org, by Phone at 800-505-8472 or Fax at 817-200-7309. It is important to note that reunion registration and hotel reservation cancellations are completely separate business processes.



~ RENO, NEVADA JULY 5-10, 2016

The PR is responsible for both processes. PRs cannot assume that when they cancel their hotel reservation that the hotel will notify HQ to cancel the reunion registration or vice versa.

GUARANTEE OF REFUND INSURANCE PLAN

As part of their initial registration transaction a PR may enroll in the Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) program by paying a fee calculated at 10% of their total registration fees and event ticket purchases. As mentioned above, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions are not included in this calculation. The GRI program allows the PR to receive a refund for him/her and/or their guests that have to cancel or have their reunion travel plans interrupted for any of the following reasons:

1. Sickness or injury of PR, a traveling companion or members of immediate families, which is diagnosed and treated by a physician or requires hospitalization during the time of the reunion.
2. Death of PR or immediate family member.
3. PR's involvement in a traffic accident, en route to the reunion that causes you to miss the reunion or a particular event.
4. PR's home is made uninhabitable by a natural disaster such as fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, or volcano prior to or during the time of the reunion.
5. PR is recalled into active duty by the military that causes you to be unavailable to attend the reunion.
6. PR is served a subpoena or called to serve for jury duty during dates of the reunion.
7. PR is quarantined during dates of the reunion.

The GRI program covers only specific VHPA events and fees, and does not cover cancellation costs that might be associated with hotel rooms, airfares, rental cars, and other non-VHPA generated expenses. PR's enrolled in the GRI program and needing to take advantage of the program's features are encouraged to contact VHPA HQ either by email or at the HQ desk at the host reunion hotel as soon as possible in the event of cancellation.

REUNION T-SHIRTS

Honor & Pride is this Reunion's "Official Reunion T-shirt" contractor as he has been for over a decade. This year's Reunion T-shirt will be a silver color with VHPA logo on left front and a large version of the Reunion Logo on the back. This year's prices are the same you have enjoyed for the last eight Reunions. You are welcome to order as many as you wish with a Reunion registration until June 13th 2016. All orders after June 13th 2016 are subject to inventory on hand at the end of the Reunion. If we have a supply of the shirts you requested, we will mail them to you; if not we will refund your T-shirt money. All cancellations made prior to June 13th 2016 come with the option to have the T-shirt mailed to you after the Reunion or having the amount paid for the T-shirt refunded. There is a \$5 shipping & handling

fee per shirt when HQ mails the T-shirts. Please notice that the cutoff date for ordering the T-shirt is different from the official cancellation date (OCD) described above.

You are welcome to order Reunion T-shirts even if you do not plan to attend the Reunion. Simply contact VHPA HQ and tell them you only want a "Reunion T-shirt order". The shirts will be mailed to you after the Reunion.

VENDOR AREA

The Vendor Area for R2015 was a huge success! If you are interested in becoming a Vendor for R2016 please go to www.vhpa.org and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules & Regulations. Complete the forms and mail, fax or email to VHPA HQ. If you know of anyone that you think would be an asset to the Reunion Vendor Area be sure to let them know or contact VHPA HQ to give us the info and we will be happy to give them a call.

VOLUNTEERS

The VHPA needs your help! The California Chapter North VHPA-CCN is this reunion's Host Chapter and as such will organize the volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are organized around stations and then shifts with the number of volunteers needed for that shift. Sounds like a Duty Roster! We've found that 3-hour shifts will not take up much of your time or make you too tired. Additionally we can guarantee everyone is trained on their duties. Obviously, we greatly appreciate volunteers. Not only do we avoid the cost of hiring local convention bureau temps but we get a chance to interact with each other while performing the tasks exactly as VHPA members would have it done! Until about early February, the only way you can volunteer is to work with Ken Fritz, President of the California Chapter North at 916-989-4112 or kenhfritz@sbcglobal.net. As is our tradition, the Host Chapter gets "first shot" at the Duty Roster. Once they have made their selections, the Duty Roster is loaded onto the Reunion Information page at VHPA.ORG. The remaining tasks are then available for anyone else (including husband and wife teams). Instructions for how to volunteer at that point will be posted on the website. Last year the Old Dominion Chapter set the bar high in terms of the number of tasks, and volunteers. They did an outstanding job!

DRESS CODE

The dress code is casual for this Reunion, with the following reminders and suggestions:

- It is a good idea to wear your Reunion lanyard so other attendees can recognize that you are with VHPA.
- At the Closing Banquet, many men wear a suit and tie with the ladies wearing a nice dress. You will even see Dress Blues.

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

Last updated 3 December 2015

Primary Attendee (Member or Subscriber) Registration - The registration fee for the member is \$20 through 4/30/2016 and \$25 thereafter.

Adult Guest Registration - The registration fee for the member is \$20 through 4/30/2016 and \$25 thereafter.

Under 21 Guest Registration - The registration fee for someone under the age of 21 years is \$15.

Please remember that each person 21 years and older who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.

Mini-Reunions:

5 July through 9 July - One of the primary reasons for the Reunion is to reconnect with past compatriots from your RVN unit and flight school. The best way to meet up with unit members is to schedule your own Mini-Reunion. If your unit does not have a Mini-Reunion, why not take the initiative to start one up, or you could combine with other sister units with which you are familiar. In addition to specific units and flight classes, we've had Mini-Reunions for such subjects as tandem rotor, Dust-off, Operation Lam Son 719, anyone who was stationed at Soc Trang, VHPA chapters, anyone interested in radio controlled aircraft models. Really there are no rules! Mini-Reunions are typically scheduled in four-hour blocks and are available for booking on most days during the Reunion. You can also request a second four-hour block. However, this second block will be granted on a space available basis with priority for the particular space given to units requesting only one block. Due to decreased usage and increased expenses, the Reunion no longer provides AV equipment for Mini-Reunions. Once your Mini-Reunion is scheduled the details will appear on the webpage. You still should make an effort to get the word out to your buds. Use your directory to contact members (encourage them to re-up with the VHPA if they are not dues current), write a short article for the VHPA Aviator, and schedule early so we can list your unit in articles such as this.

Unit TOC (Tactical Operation Center): If you have a big group that you know is coming (say approximately 20 registrants), then we invite you to schedule a TOC. A TOC is a specific Mini-Reunion room given to your group for all day or for several days. This is like a super Mini-Reunion. Since the group is going to "hang out" in the same room for several days, they can bring almost anything into the room (AV stuff, displays, etc.).

It is easy to schedule a Mini-Reunion or TOC. Complete the Mini-Reunion Request form available at VHPA.ORG and email it to Melissa Allen at melissa@vhpa.org or call 800-505-8472 or mail the completed form to HQ in Grand Prairie, TX.

KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast Sponsorship - \$16

Use this item to make a contribution to the Gold Star Family Breakfast organized by Julie Kink. Effectively you are paying the

price of the meal for a Gold Star Family member. This item was added to the VHPA Reunion Registration form at the request of VHPA Members attending the Annual Business Meeting during the 2010 Reunion in San Diego. *Thank you for your generosity.*

O'Club:

4 July - 4:00pm-8:00pm

5 July - 8 July - 11:00am - 11:00pm

9 July - 12:30pm - 11:00pm

It is only fitting that the "official opening" of the Reunion happens at the O' Club at 11am on Tuesday, July 5th! In the tradition of a Vietnam unit's Officer's Club you can get a beer and shoot the breeze with your buddies. The O' Club will again be part of 'ground zero' - meaning the Vendor Area, Ballrooms, Registration and Pre-registration, and the O' Club are all within hand grenade range. The O' Club prices are generally \$0.50 to \$1.00 below the Hotel Bar prices. *For the record, the O' Club inclusive prices are: Domestic Beer \$4.75, Imported Beer \$5.50, House Wine \$6.50, Cocktails \$6.50, and Soft Drinks/Bottled Water - \$3.25.*

Take Me Out to the Ballgame: - \$29

4 July - 6:00pm - 10:00pm



What could be more appropriate on the 4th of July than an old fashioned baseball game? The Reno Aces (farm team for the Arizona Diamond Backs) will be playing the Sacramento River Cats (farm team for the San Francisco Giants). Your ticket for this event will include a reserved infield seat for the game plus a voucher good for a hotdog, drink, and chips. After the game stay in your seat for a perfect view of the Reno July 4th fireworks. The only thing missing to make this a perfect celebration of the United States' birthday is a piece of apple pie.

Note: Transportation is not included. You are on your own for transportation to/from the ballpark which is located about 10 minutes from the hotel. The cost for a cab is about \$20 each way.

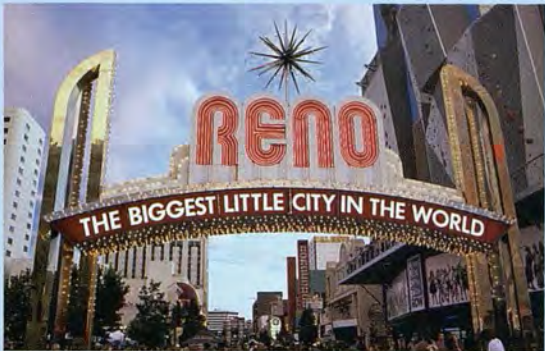
Capacity: This event is limited to 30 participants



Reno City Shuttle: - \$25

5 July thru 8 July – 10:00am – 4:00pm

9 July - 12:00pm – 4:00pm



The heart of the “Biggest Little City in the World” is located just about 10 minutes from the Peppermill Resort. The downtown area offers many attractions, casinos and unique restaurants, all within 6 city blocks. Daily shuttle service will be provided from the Peppermill to downtown Reno with scheduled stops at the Nevada Art Museum, the Auto Museum, the National Bowling Stadium, downtown Casino’s and the Wilbur May Museum. This ticket does not include any attractions or admissions, it is for the shuttle only and can be used as many times as you would like during the reunion. A detailed shuttle schedule and maps will be available on-site at the reunion. There will be a guide on each shuttle bus to answer question and provide recommendations.

Reno City Shuttle w/Museum Pass: - \$47

5 July thru 8 July – 10:00am – 4:00pm

9 - July 12:00pm – 4:00pm

The heart of the “Biggest Little City in the World” is located just about 10 minutes from the Peppermill Resort. The downtown area offers many attractions, casinos and unique restaurants, all within 6 city blocks. Daily shuttle service will be provided from the Peppermill to downtown Reno. Your museum package includes admission to the following five museums: **National Auto Museum** which is one of America’s five greatest automobile museums. The museum’s outstanding collection explores decades of intriguing automobiles. Stroll down period style street scenes, and stand inches from cars once owned by the rich and famous. The **Nevada Museum of Art** has a permanent collection of modern and contemporary works by artists including Roy Lichtenstein, Georgia O’Keeffe and William Wegman. The museum also hosts many traveling exhibitions. The exhibition taking place during the reunion was not known at time of publication. **The Wilbur May Center** includes a museum, arboretum, and botanical gardens. Discover great and exotic artifacts from around the world, beautiful gardens, secluded groves and much more. **The Fleischmann Planetarium and Science Center (FPSC)**, the planetarium’s uniquely shaped building, officially termed a “hyperbolic paraboloid”, is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. It was constructed around large panels of an early large-scale solar energy system designed by Reno architect Ray Hellman. The FPSC is Northern Nevada’s only venue specializing in space, astronomy and related fields. **The Nevada Historical Society** is home to the state’s oldest museum. It was founded in 1904 with the purpose of collecting, preserving, and interpreting Nevada’s heritage. The extensive collection

includes items covering the history of Reno from past to present. A detailed shuttle schedule and maps will be available on-site at the reunion.

Naval Air Station Fallon #1: - \$33

5 July – 7:45am – 3:00pm

This is a private, escorted tour of the U.S. Navy’s premier air-to-air (TOPGUN), air-to-ground (bombing and gunnery), carrier airborne protection (TOPDOME), and helicopter weapons training facility. The tour includes: elevator to the Observation Deck in the control tower, access to the Fleet Training (subject to actual training needs) and the Top Gun Buildings (subject to actual training needs), a group picture in front of the F18, a visit to the helicopter maintenance facilities, lunch at the “All Hands Dining Facility”, and a walk in the historic aircraft display park area. Since this is an active military base, we must submit a roster with name, date of birth, and last 4 of the SSN or passport numbers for all attendees. We will use a “next up - stand-by” list to guarantee the bus is full prior to leaving the hotel. You must ride the VHPA bus ~ no POVs. *The travel time is about 75 minutes one-way.*

Visit the website at:

www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrsw/installations/nas_fallon.html

Capacity – Each tour is limited to 50 participants

Virginia City Tour #1: - \$69

5 July – 9:00am – 4:00pm



Board your coach for a windy ride through beautiful mountains with many hairpin turns and gorgeous views. Spend the day exploring Virginia City at your own pace. Every inch of this picturesque, Victorian-era town, celebrates their colorful history. Stroll the authentic board sidewalks to Old West saloons, shops, museums, and restaurants or visit historic churches, 19th century homes, public buildings, quaint cemeteries or take the historic steam train ride (train fee is not included in the tour price). Take a step back in time in Virginia City! Your tour includes 3 museums of your choice, a \$15 food voucher to be used at one of the many unique restaurants, as well as a coupon for an ice cream cone or a piece of homemade fudge. Virginia City is 6,000 feet above sea level, be sure to drink plenty of liquids before and during the tour. Visit the website at: www.visitvirginiacitynv.com

Note: A VHPA shuttle map with stops plus a list of restaurants and museums will be provided on site.

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 350 participants

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #1: - NC

5 July – 10:00am – 11:00am

These are private tours for Reunion attendees of the Peppermill's facilities that use geothermal energy to heat the outdoor swimming pools and spas plus all the domestic water needed by the Resort. The \$9.7 million gamble began in 2007: Drill a well tapping in to the geothermal aquifer, betting on finding water at the correct temperature that could be captured and converted to energy through a closed loop system then returned to the earth via a reinjection well, which would heat the entire Resort's water and mechanical heat via geothermal energy. With no guarantees and just a steadfast commitment, the Peppermill successfully hit proverbial pay dirt at over 4,400 feet deep, becoming geothermal energy innovators and making local history with a well of this magnitude. "No one else has a geothermal well of this depth in the city of Reno" said Dean Parker, Executive Facilities Director at the Peppermill. "In order for a well to produce the level of geothermal energy that could accomplish what we set out to do, we had to find water at 170 degrees that can pump 1,200 gallons per minute at 150 psi. With this well, we found that and more." Take the tour and see some serious "big boy toys" with an impressive ROI (Return On Investment) versus a natural gas burning facility! Each tour is capped at 20 for group control in confined spaces and so everyone can hear the guide.

www.peppermillreno.com/about-us/going-green/geothermal-heating

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 20 participants

Early Bird Gathering with Entertainment - NC

5 July – 7:00pm – 11:00pm

This social gathering continues the long standing tradition of having an appointed place and time for everyone who comes "early" to the Reunion to meet and greet others. Since the room is configured with lots of tables and chairs, you can sit, stand, and walk around as you see fit. The O'Club, the CCN-VHPA Huey, and the Early Bird Gathering are all in the Tuscany Ballroom. We'll position other cash bars to make certain no one has to stand in a long line.

About one hour after the Early Bird Gathering kicks off, Hank Cramer will entertain us as he has many military reunions and special events. A retired Army veteran, Hank is a military balladeer that mixes in some Vietnam War era "pop songs" for a nice concert. **Visit Hank's website at www.hankcramer.com**

Note: No food is provided at this gathering

Golf Outing @ Lakeridge Golf

Course: - \$125

6 July – 6:45am – 3:00pm

This year we will play the Lakeridge Golf Course. Buses depart the hotel at 6:45am. Golfers should be back at the hotel by 3 pm. Your golf ticket includes bus transportation, green fees, carts, score cards, status board scores, coffee & pastries prior to tee off, complimentary range balls and a BBQ lunch. Rental



golf sets of Callaway irons, with metal woods and putter are available for \$30/round. Please see www.lakeridgegolf.com for details about the course.

The Power Pack rules are carried forward from previous VHPA events. One (1) Power Pack is included with your golf registration. A Power Pack ticket costs \$20 and can be purchased at the HQ Registration Desk in the hotel with cash or credit card. Cash is required to purchase an individual team member Power Pack at the golf course. Included in the Power Pack Bonuses are the following: Two each Mulligans off the tee only for each 9 hole side (total of 4 per team member). Mulligans are for each player and cannot be used by another team member. One each "Get-Out of Hazard Free" per 9 hole side (total of 2) per 18 holes – Place ball where last traveled before entering the hazard or OB, no penalty. Used for sand traps, water, and Out of Bounds with no penalty. Use of the most forward tee, one (1) per side (total of 2) per 18 holes-Not available on Par 3s.

Capacity: 144 participants

Breakfast with Speaker #1: - \$16

6 July - 7:30am – 9:00am – "Vietnam Now"

This is the first of four breakfasts with speakers offered at this Reunion. Four VHPAers will make 12-minute presentations about their recent trips back to Vietnam. If you've been thinking about going back or interested in what others recently experienced there; this is your event! Enjoy the Peppermill's "The Breakfast Gathering" fare including juices, assorted yogurt, seasonal berries, danish, muffins, croissants, country fresh scrambled eggs, cherry smoked bacon & buttermilk biscuits with house-made country gravy with your family and friends. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.

Heavenly Day in Tahoe w/Sightseeing Cruise #1: - \$82

6 July – 8:30am – 5:30pm

South Lake Tahoe is home to the Heavenly Ski Resort; Lake Tahoe's premier winter playground. Straddling the border of California and Nevada, no other mountain compares



to the inspiring scenic beauty and exhilarating experience of Heavenly. Begin your day in Heavenly Village strolling along the quaint cobblestone sidewalks enjoying the traditional Tahoe ambiance. This unique community has many shops, eateries, and entertainment. You will have time to take the gondola ride to the top of the mountain, where the views are spectacular (cost of Gondola Ride is not included in the price of the tour). Then take a short ride to Zephyr Cove to board your Emerald Bay Sightseeing Cruise on board the Tahoe Queen. This two and a half hour narrated cruise offers non-stop photo opportunities that will surely delight everyone. As you cruise to, through and back from Emerald Bay, you'll learn how the bay was formed and its fascinating history. Hear tales about Fenette Island (nicknamed "little rock island") within the bay, as well as the Viking-sholm Castle, the stone mansion on its shores. With plenty of

room to spread out and get comfortable, you'll quickly settle in and find the best place on-deck to snap magazine-worthy photos. Light refreshments are available for purchase on board. **Visit the website at: www.zephyrcove.com/tahoequeen.aspx**
Capacity: Each day is limited to 200 participants

Virginia City Tour #2: - \$69

6 July – 9:00am – 4:00pm

See Description on July 5

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 350 participants

Frey Distillery & Winery Tour #1: - \$51

6 July – 9:30am – 3:30pm



Board your coach for the drive through the desert to the historic and unique Frey Ranch. In addition to planting, growing and harvesting a variety of crops for the distillery, including corn, alfalfa, wheat and barley; Frey Ranch is also home to Churchill Vineyards, Nevada's only estate winery. Nearly one year after releasing Nevada's first legally distilled spirit, Frey Ranch released the state's first commercial estate distillery. Frey Ranch Estate Distillery grows grains for, distilling, malting and bottling, gin, vodka and bourbon. Your tour of the estate includes the distillery and winery with the opportunity to taste the spirits and wines at the conclusion of the tour. Enjoy the beautiful estate as you dine on a wonderful picnic lunch (included in the tour price). Frey's wine and spirits, which are only sold in the state of Nevada, may be purchased before boarding the bus for your return to the hotel. **Visit the website at: www.freyranch.com**

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 100 participants

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #2: - NC

6 July – 10:00am – 11:00am

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #3: - NC

6 July – 2:00pm – 3:00pm

See Description on July 5

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 20 participants

Writer's Workshop: - NC

6 July – 10:00am – 12:00pm

The Writer's Workshop is organized by John Penny, the VHPA book reviewer. Meet three VHPAers who have managed to wind their way from idea to manuscript to published work. Russell Jones – the author of the memoir *Honorable Intentions*; Tom Philips – co author of *Leave No Man Behind, The History of Combat SAR*; and Marc Liebman – author of *Big Mother 40*,

Render Harmless, and *Cherubs 2*. All have taken different routes getting their books published. Russell went the self-publishing route for his memoir. Tom went through an agent to get his book on the history of combat SAR published and Marc is working with a publisher to get his novels to market. In the workshop, you will have the opportunity to ask them questions about:

- How to get started outlining a book.
- Writing a book proposal and query letter.
- Benefits, costs and pitfalls of self-publishing.
- Working with editors, proofreaders and publishers.
- Key terms you need to include in a contract.
- Marketing the finished work.

First Time Attendee Reception: - NC

6 July – 7:00pm – 8:00pm

This is a special reception for those attending a VHPA reunion for the first time. Besides meeting other first time attendees you will visit with members of the VHPA Executive Council and various VHPA committee chairmen in an informal setting. After a brief presentation about the history of the VHPA and the way the VHPA operates there is time for Q&A and one to one conversations. For example - maybe you want to meet and speak with the VHPA President or the Editor of *The Aviator*? Maybe you have a question about how the annual financial audit is conducted. Maybe you have a photo that you'd like to see published in the VHPA Calendar? Now is a good time to have these conversations! While the primary audience is VHPA members, their guests and friends are also welcome. A cash bar is available in this reception.

Note: At the conclusion of this reception, you are welcome to join the Welcome Reception already in progress.

Welcome Reception with Entertainment: - NC

6 July – 7:30pm – 11:00pm

This reception was traditionally the first official event for everyone to get together FOR SURE at a Reunion. Now it is just a "get together" at an appointed place and time for everyone who attends the Reunion. Please don't be concerned about the word "reception" ~ **there will not be a receiving line, nor formalities.** The room will be configured with plenty of tables and chairs, allowing everyone to sit and talk. We'll position multiple cash bars to make certain no one has to stand in a long line. You are welcome to bring a unit sign or guidon so people will know where "your table" is located; we **cannot**, however hang unit banners over the tables.

About one hour after the Welcome Reception kicks off, **The Robin Street band** will take the stage near the dance floor at the far end of the Tuscany Ballroom. This is a classic rock and roll band armed with a current copy of the Official VHPA Song List. For those who don't wish to have the music interrupt their visiting, there are additional tables and chairs available in the O' Club at the other end of the Ballroom. As part of our contract signing bonus, the Peppermill is graciously providing **complimentary snacks, beer, wine and soda for one-hour** starting about the same time the Band begins playing. A cash bar will also be available for cocktails at the same time and thereafter.

KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast: - \$16

7 July - 7:30am – 9:00am

The Gold Star Family Breakfast is a traditional VHPA reunion event organized by Julie Kink, providing an opportunity to recognize our Gold Star families. All are welcome to attend. These families are extremely appreciative of the fact that their loved ones did not die alone and that we care about them and remember them as a brother.

If you would like to sponsor guests for the breakfast use the Event Sponsorship section under Voluntary Contributions in **Step 2** of the online registration.

If you would like to invite KIA/MIA Gold Star family members who will not be registering for the Reunion, please call VHPA HQ to provide their names and contact information so we can have Name Badges prepared for them.

Julie Kink often writes something like the following as a separate article in *The Aviator*: "As aviators who have seen combat, most of you remember someone from that long-ago time who didn't make it back from Vietnam. A few of you have connected with the families of your fallen buddies, either through the Family Contacts Committee or by other means, to share with them a memory or two, perhaps a photo, most of all, the knowledge that their loved one was never forgotten. Have you thought of inviting them to attend the VHPA reunion, and particularly, the Gold Star Family Breakfast, with you? As a sister of a fallen Vietnam helicopter pilot, I remember the first time I sat down with veterans who served with my brother, who was killed while flying C 1/9 Cav scouts at age 19. The experience of being with men who could tell me more about his life and his service was powerful. I learned that not only are we families of the fallen welcome at veterans' reunions, we are welcomed warmly by those who knew our loved ones and shared their last days." You might have wondered previously: "Should I invite John's family to a reunion? What in the world would they do there, among 600+ of us rowdy pilots? Would they feel out of place?" For the past few years, there's been an event designed especially to bring Gold Star Families (families of the deceased) together with pilots in remembrance and celebration of the lives we lost- the Gold Star Family Breakfast. We are still working out the details but we know this year, as in the past, the breakfast will be a fitting time for you to share great stories about the lives of the guys we lost, with their families, and the rest of us. For family members, reunions provide a great opportunity to experience, firsthand, the camaraderie that our loved ones shared with veterans who have never forgotten them. Have you been sending Christmas cards to John's family all these years? Been calling Harry's mom on the phone at Mother's Day just to brighten her day? Have you been emailing back and forth with Bob's brother for years, but just never got a chance to shake his hand? This is the opportunity to do that. Invite them to attend the reunion and bring them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast. I'm happy to answer questions about the breakfast, as details get confirmed, or about how to connect with a buddy's family. Julie Kink is the sister of WO David Kink. David was KIA while serving with C Troop 1/9 CAV in 1969. She is also a member of the VHFCN Family Contracts Committee.

Visit www.VirtualWall.org/contacts or email me at

Breakfast with Speaker #2: - \$16

7 July - 7:30am – 9:00am – William "Bill" Albracht

This is the second of four breakfasts with speakers offered at this Reunion. In October 1969, Bill Albracht, the youngest Special Forces captain in Vietnam, took command of a remote hilltop outpost near Bu Prang in southwest II Corps called Firebase Kate. He is the author of *Abandoned in Hell: The Fight for Vietnam's Firebase Kate*. If you served in the 48th, 155th, or 189th AHCs or 243rd ASHC or B/7/17th Cav in late October or early November 1969; this is your event! Enjoy the Peppermill's "The Breakfast Gathering" fare including juices, assorted yogurt, seasonal berries, danish, muffins, croissants, country fresh scrambled eggs, cherry smoked bacon & buttermilk biscuits with house-made country gravy with your family and friends. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.

Note: Breakfast #2 and this year's KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast are scheduled at exactly the same times; so you must choose which one to attend.

Nevada Army National Guard Aviation Tour: - NC

7 July – Time TBD

This is a private VHPA tour of the Nevada Army National Guard components based at the former Stead Air Force Base, now the Reno Stead Airport. Specifically we will tour the Army Aviation Support Facility and the 189th General Support Aviation Battalion, equipped with modern CH-47s. Current instructions require the VHPA to provide a list of attendees and for each attendee to provide some form of ID. To avoid a huge last minute administrative nightmare and to be on the "safe side," the VHPA is collecting date of birth and full name for all attendees as we have done for previous reunions.

Note: All participants wishing to visit Stead must purchase a Reno shuttle ticket.

Capacity: 100 participants

Heavenly Day in Tahoe w/Sightseeing Cruise #2: - \$82

7 July – 8:30am – 5:30pm

See Description on July 6

Capacity: Each day is limited to 200 participants

Virginia City Tour #3: - \$69

7 July – 9:00am – 4:00pm

See Description on July 5

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 350 participants

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #4: - NC

7 July – 10:00am – 11:00am

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #5: - NC

7 July – 2:00pm – 3:00pm

See Description on July 5

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 20 participants

Quilter's Show & Tell - NC

7 July – 2:00pm – 4:00pm

This special meeting will continue the tradition started in Louisville of presenting quilts to both VHPA members and local area veterans. The 2016 Reunion will have a little twist for the

quilters. On Thursday July 7 at 2:00 p.m. the quilts will be presented to the selected veterans in the Roma 1 Room (2nd floor of the Peppermill Tower). As of late 2015 they have five quilts to present. Following this presentation, each quilter will have the opportunity for a show and tell of their quilt blocks, either completed or in progress, until 4:00pm.

Please contact Kathleen Sherfey [REDACTED] or Roslyn Atwood [REDACTED] for more details.

Movie Night #1: - NC

7 July – 3:00pm – 4:30pm

“Cathy at War” – This is a documentary film featuring the words and pictures of Catherine Leroy, the greatest female photographer of the Vietnam War. Maybe you knew her? Under five-feet tall and 90 pounds, Leroy set the record for operations undertaken with the US Marines, was the first woman to parachute into combat, was seriously wounded in action, captured by the North Vietnamese, and for three years (1966-68) made some of the most iconic images of the war. Cathy was exceptionally close to the soldiers in the field and the air, and in the end, her work and this film, too, are more about them than her.

Tahoe Dinner Cruise #1:- \$103

7 July – 4:30pm – 10:30pm Board the award-winning M.S. Dixie II, one of the largest cruising vessels in South Lake Tahoe. M.S. Dixie II is built in the traditional Southern style of the steamboats that once cruised on the Mississippi River. Built upriver on the Mississippi and transported in sections to Zephyr Cove, she made her first launch on Lake Tahoe in 1994. This grand replica paddle wheeler is 151' long and 33' wide, and has three climate controlled decks. Your 3 hour cruise offers non-stop photo opportunities that will surely delight everyone. The evening begins with a champagne toast as you set sail on Emerald Bay. Then sit down to enjoy a delicious dinner, with your choice of beef, chicken, or salmon. After dinner relax and enjoy the spectacular views, or kick up your heels on the dance floor as the band plays some of your favorite songs. This is sure to be a wonderful evening out; don't miss it! **Visit their website at: www.zephyrcove.com/msdixie.aspx**

Capacity: Each cruise is limited to 200 participants

Dinner at the National Auto Museum #1: - \$61

7 July – 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Gather with your friends and family for a private dinner at the National Auto Museum. The museum will be open for the VHPA only during this event. One of



America's Five Greatest Automobile Museums ... the National Automobile Museum has a “Wow!” factor you don't often find in a museum. After you enjoy a delicious all-you-can-eat buffet, stroll through the museum exhibits and more than 200 eye-

popping cars with authentic street scenes and sounds. The facades bring displays to life ... a hardware store here, a movie theatre there which accompany artifacts from each era. Follow the historical timelines as you visit vehicles from the 1890s, through the 1930s and beyond. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity and a great night out. **Visit the website at: www.automuseum.org**

Capacity: Each day is limited to 250 participants

State of VHPA Breakfast: - \$16

8 July – 7:30am – 9:00am – Speaker TBA

This is the third of four breakfasts with speakers offered at this Reunion. Current plans have a senior member of the VHPA Executive Council giving a detailed presentation on the dozen plus subjects that are the core of the VHPA's activities. These subjects may only receive a minute or two during the Annual Business Meeting, but at this breakfast you receive the “rest of the story” and have the opportunity to ask questions. Enjoy the Peppermill's “The Breakfast Gathering” fare including juices, assorted yogurt, seasonal berries, danish, muffins, croissants, country fresh scrambled eggs, cherry smoked bacon & butter-milk biscuits with house-made country gravy with your family and friends.

Naval Air Station Fallon #2: - \$33

8 July – 7:45am – 3:00pm

See Description on 5 July

Capacity – Each tour is limited to 50 participants

Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City #1: - \$24

8 July – 9:00am – 12:00pm

Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City #2: - \$24

8 July – 1:00pm – 4:00pm



The Nevada State Railroad Museum preserves the railroad heritage of Nevada. There are two big stories - the building of the first transcontinental railroad between 1863 and 1869, and the Virginia and Truckee Railroad (V & T), born during the Comstock era to haul ore and supplies for the mines in Virginia City. There are 65 locomotives and cars in the museum collection. Over half of them were built before 1900. Much of the museum equipment was obtained from Hollywood studios, where they were often featured in movies and television. There will be a guided tour of the museum, including their restoration program. Museum activities consist of operation of historic standard gauge and narrow gauge railroad equipment, including train rides and handcar rides. A ride on one of the historic steam trains will be included as part of your tour. **Visit the website at: www.museums.nevadaculture.org/NSRMCC**

Note: No food is provided on this tour

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 50 participants

Quilter's Shop Hop: -NC

8 July – 9:30am – 11:30am

The quilters will go on an excursion to visit the local quilt shop, Windy Moon Quilt Shop. There will be a demonstration for the quilters and plenty of shopping. Transportation will be provided by shuttle, which will depart from the hotel at 9:30 a.m. and arrive at the quilt shop a short time later. You will board the shuttle back to the hotel at 11:00 a.m. **Visit their website at: www.windymoonquilts.com**

Note: Quilters wishing to visit Windy Moon Quilt Shop must purchase a Reno shuttle ticket.

Frey Distillery & Winery Tour #2:

8 July – 9:30am – 3:30pm - \$51

See Description on 6 July

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 100 participants

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #6: -NC

8 July – 10:00am – 11:00am

Peppermill Geothermal Tour #7: -NC

8 July – 2:00pm – 3:00pm

See Description on July 5

Capacity: Each tour is limited to 20 participants

Movie Night #2: -NC

8 July – 3:00pm – 4:30pm

See Description on 7 July

Tahoe Dinner Cruise #2: - \$103

8 July – 4:30pm – 10:30pm

See Description on 7 July

Capacity: Each cruise is limited to 200 participants

Dinner at the National Auto Museum #2: - \$61

8 July – 6:00pm – 9:00pm

See Description on 7 July

Capacity: Each day is limited to 250 participants

Pre-Memorial Service Breakfast: - \$16

9 July – 7:30am – 8:45am – Speaker TBA

This is the fourth and last breakfast with speaker offered at this Reunion. We plan to continue the well received themes of patriotism and camaraderie that is the “bond of brotherhood” for so many VHPAers. Enjoy the Peppermill’s “The Breakfast Gathering” fare including juices, assorted yogurt, seasonal berries, danish, muffins, croissants, country fresh scrambled eggs, cherry smoked bacon & buttermilk biscuits with house-made country gravy with your family and friends.

Memorial Service: -NC

9 July – 9:00am – 9:30am

The Memorial Service has been part of the “Reunion’s Fabric” for at least ten years. It has evolved into the perfect setting / opportunity to reflect and remember our fallen brothers and friends. Since the KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast is dedicated to our KIA/MIA brothers, this Memorial Service is dedicated to *those who passed away after*

their service in Southeast Asia with SPECIAL EMPHASIS on those who have passed SINCE THE LAST VHPA REUNION. The VHPA often uses the term DAT (Died After Tour) to refer to those who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era, survived the War, and then passed away.

A roster of all DATs (known to the VHPA) since the last Reunion is displayed for all to see as they enter the room. In Louisville there were 284 names on the roster! In Washington there were 327 names on the roster!

While the Memorial Service is brief, it is patterned after a traditional grave-side service many of us experience at a National Cemetery. The local VHPA Chapter(s) have direct involvement in the Memorial Service. The OIC or WOIC (Warrant Officer In Charge) begins the Service with the Posting of the Colors and we all repeat the Pledge of Allegiance. There is an opening prayer and we all sing the Star Spangled Banner.

Traditionally a local pastor or a VHPA member delivers a short message. Following their remarks, the names of all those submitted for especial remembrance are read.

Taps is played. We all sing God Bless America as a closing hymn. A Closing Prayer is offered.

It is important to note that no financial donations or contributions are requested or accepted during the Memorial Service.

Questions concerning this event should be directed to VHPA Executive Council Member John Shafer or by contacting VHPA HQ.

Spouse/Guest Event: - \$53

9 July – 9:30am – 12:30pm

Picasso & Wine - The Newest & Trendiest Entertainment to hit Reno!!! Unleash your inner Picasso! It's not an art class...It's a Painting Party!!! Grab your friends, enjoy a beverage of your choice from the bar and let the talented instructors guide you step by step through an original painting while listening to some funky tunes! No Experience Required....Really! By the end of this event you will have had a fabulous time and be able to take home a work of art painted by you! Visit their website at: www.picasso-wine.com

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants

Annual Business Meeting: -NC

9 July – 10:00am – 12:30pm

The Annual Business Meeting (ABM) is when we conduct the official business of the association. On Saturday morning you will hear committee chairmen give reports on their activities over the past year and you will have the opportunity to vote on administrative issues plus elect our next two Executive Council members. This is a good time to learn about the workings of the VHPA behind the scenes and to influence the future direction of our association.

Only VHPA Members in good standing (meaning the former pilot is dues current and HQ has a valid mailing address for him in the database) may attend. You must present your ticket at the door. VHPA Members in good standing who are not attending the Reunion can also attend the ABM but must obtain a ticket from the Registration Desk.

Closing Banquet: Registered Adults - \$50

9 July – 5:45pm – 10:30pm

This ticket is for an adult banquet meal (beef, chicken or vegetarian) plus the dance band for someone who has also paid the adult reunion registration fee.

The highlight for most reunion attendees is our closing banquet on Saturday night. This is the only “dress up” occasion of the reunion. It is a celebration of our time together opening with a tribute to our missing men and closing with the change of command from our current president, Clyde Romero to the new one, John Schafer after the meal.

For those who just want to visit after the closing remarks, please know you can stay at your table until 11 pm. Cash bars remain open until they are no longer needed.

For those who want to dance or listen to music, *Johnny Z and the Camaros* will play tunes from our youth in the Ballroom. Back because they were so well received in 2013 at our San Francisco Reunion, this 5-piece cabaret dance band has a current copy of the Official VHPA Song List. A smaller ensemble from the band, probably a trio, will perform during cocktails, 5:15-5:45 pm. As per the finer Reunion traditions, following the VHPA President's closing remarks the full band will play a 90-minute set, take a 15-20-minute break, and conclude with a 45-minute set. Those who want to visit with their friends without having to talk over the music and dancing are welcome to use the tables and chairs in the O'Club at the other end of the Ballroom.

This year the VHPA needs to “vacate” the Ballroom as soon as possible after 11 pm. This means removing our banners, flags, and memorabilia plus allowing the hotel staff to “strike” the stage as

quickly as possible to “make a path” so the CCN-VHPA truck can enter the Ballroom to retrieve their Huey. Luckily, the Tuscan Lounge is located just outside the Ballroom and remains open until at least 2 am; so all who wish to keep visiting can relocate there.

For anyone that is interested, time will be allotted for photo opportunities with the Missing Man Table and the large American flag. Please sign up at the Welcome Desk prior to 4:00pm on Saturday, 9 July.

Closing Banquet: Registered Child - \$16

9 – 10 July – 5:45pm – 10:30pm

This ticket is for a “kid's meal” for the closing banquet. A word of warning is appropriate here. This meal is designed for children under the age of 10 years old. Trust us when we say that this meal will NOT MAKE a teenager happy at all!

A few years ago the only meal option available was an adult meal for children. Rather expensive indeed. While this price is still rather high for a “kid's meal” it is much more attractive than paying for an adult meal for a 10-year old!

Closing Banquet: Non-Registered Guest - \$60

9 July – 5:45pm – 10:30pm

This ticket is for an adult banquet meal (beef, chicken, or vegetarian) plus the dance band for someone who has **NOT PAID** the adult reunion registration fee. Please review the Non-Registered Banquet Guest (NRBG) details in the Reunion Information at www.vhpa.org.

A non-registered guest enjoys all the features/details described in the registered adult narrative above.

A Reunion Request

The annual reunion offers many activities, tour locations, and above all the meeting of friends and colleagues. One thread that runs through all of these is the recollection of events from Vietnam. They may be mundane, humorous or dramatic, yet they collectively represent a unique experience for thousands of helicopter pilots.

One significant goal of the VHPA is to preserve and disseminate those histories for the following generations. Many of those who lived it, have shared their memories in numerous books and articles for benefit of current and future readers.

The Aviator has published and continues to

publish these accounts every other month. It is arguably the most interesting content for most subscribers.

While at the reunion, please speak with one of our editors about telling your story. If you hear an interesting story, encourage the speaker to share it with the membership through the newsletter. They will appreciate it, and we will be able to continue offering a variety of content for the reader.

Thanks,

Tom Hirschler, Tom Kirk: Editors,
VHPA Aviator

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday – July 4

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
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Take Me Out To The Ballgame

Tuesday – July 5

7:00 am - 12:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
7:45 am - 3:00 pm	Naval Air Station Fallon Tour #1
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Virginia City Tour #1
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #1
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno City Shuttle
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno Shuttle with Museum Pass
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
6:30 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 - "Hank Cramer"

Wednesday – July 6

6:45 am - 3:00 pm	Golf Outing - Lakeridge Golf Course
7:15 am - 12:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast with Speaker #1 ~ Vietnam Now
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
8:30 am - 5:30 pm	Heavenly Day in Tahoe w/Sightseeing Cruise #1
9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Virginia City Tour #2
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
9:30 am - 3:30 pm	Frey Distillery & Winery Tour #1
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #2
10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Writers Workshop
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno City Shuttle
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno Shuttle with Museum Pass
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #3
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
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 - "Robin Street Band"

Thursday – July 7

7:15 am - 12:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
7:30 am - 9:00 am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast with Speaker #2 ~ Bill Albracht - FSB Kate
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
TBD	Nevada Army National Guard Aviation Tour
8:30 am - 5:30 pm	Heavenly Day in Tahoe w/Sightseeing Cruise #2
9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Virginia City Tour #3
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #4
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno City Shuttle
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno Shuttle with Museum Pass
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #5
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Quilters Show & Tell
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Movie Night #1 - "Cathy at War"
4:30 pm - 10:30 pm	Tahoe Dinner Cruise #1
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Dinner at the National Auto Museum #1

Friday – July 8

7:15 am - 12:30 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
7:30 am - 9:00 am	State of VHPA Breakfast
7:45 am - 3:00 pm	Naval Air Station Fallon Tour #2
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City #1
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
9:30 am - 11:30 am	Quilters Shop Hop
9:30 am - 3:30 pm	Frey Distillery & Winery Tour #2
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #6
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno City Shuttle
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Reno Shuttle with Museum Pass
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Banquet Seating
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City #2
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Peppermill Geothermal Plant Tour #7
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Movie Night #2 - "Cathy at War"
4:30 pm - 10:30 pm	Tahoe Dinner Cruise #2
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Dinner at the National Auto Museum #2

Saturday – July 9

7:15 am - 12:00 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
7:30 am - 8:45 am	Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker TBA
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
9:30 am - 12:30 pm	Spouse/Guest Event (Picasso & Wine)
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Reno City Shuttle
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Reno Shuttle with Museum Pass
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
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:00 pm - 5:45 pm	Studio Photos
5:45 pm - 10:30 pm	Closing Banquet w/Entertainment - "Johnny Z and the Camaros"

REUNION CONTINUING EVENTS

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

THE VENDOR ROOM

Open 1:00pm -5:00pm July 5, Open 9:00am-5:00pm July 6 through July 8 and Open 9:00am-10:00pm July 9

THE O'CLUB

Open from 4:00pm-8:00pm on July 4, 11:00am-11:00pm on July 5 through July 8, open 12:30pm-11:00pm on July 9

Visit ...

www.vhpa.org

for current Reunion details

Click on Reunion Information

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

Page 17 The VHPA Aviator

The Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker – Our Legacy

By COL (Ret) Rich Johnson - Robin Hood 26/3 RVN 70-71 VHPA L05535



Most of us who flew helicopters in Vietnam share a common experience - time spent at the Fort affectionately known as Mother Rucker. Whether for a few weeks or months, Fort Rucker was our home, and it is now home to the Army Aviation Museum, "our museum".

I call it our museum because, arguably, the most active period in Army Aviation was the Vietnam War. Our work and our successes changed the way the world viewed helicopters and Army Aviation; we hope to continue to showcase this legacy through the Army Aviation Museum.

I currently serve on the Executive Board of the Army Aviation Museum Foundation, Inc., a 501(3)c nonprofit corporation. The Foundation's mission is to ensure the legacy memorialized in the Army Aviation Museum can be viewed and appreciated by generations to come. Currently, our challenge to achieve this mission is space and funding - out of our 160 aircraft, fewer than 50 can be displayed to the public. There simply isn't the space in our current facility. Funding to restore many of the aircraft in our inventory to exhibit-worthy status has been limited. I am asking for your help to raise our museum to the caliber it deserves.

The Army Aviation Museum was initially funded and constructed by the U.S. government in 1989, and it is a great testament to our service to the Nation. Since that time, however, the process to construct and expand military museums has changed and largely falls on the shoulders of museum foundations. Accordingly, we have embarked on a vigorous fund raising campaign. Our fund raising team is preparing grant and donation packages for assistance by major corporations. This will take us far, but to fully realize our goal of exposing our more than 250,000 annual visitors to the significance of Army Aviation, we need your help.

Please consider planned-giving to the Army Aviation Museum Foundation as a way to ensure our legacy lives on. Through planned-giving we can ensure future Army Aviators know their history and see the responsibilities that now fall on their shoulders. Any and all gifts are welcome. Those who contribute will be recognized prominently and permanently in the new facility to

ensure their contributions of both service and support lives on.

What is planned-giving? Planned-giving is a term that refers to several specific gift types that can be accomplished with cash, stocks, property, life insurance, or a retirement account, providing tax benefits to the giver and his/her estate. Additionally, it can be as simple as a bequest in a will and can be accomplished in a number of different ways: it can be a designated amount of money, a percentage of your estate, some other asset, real estate or a trust. Life insurance is also a vehicle many use to support the museum. For example, you could purchase a new policy and make the Museum the beneficiary of the policy. In this case, your monthly life insurance premium is tax deductible. Planned-giving simply means you decide where your final resources go in support of causes you believe in.

Real estate or securities can also be the source of your gift to the Museum. We have vehicles available that allow you to deed your real estate to the Museum and retain the right to live on the property and/or receive income from the property for as long as you live. You receive an income tax deduction when the property is deeded to the Museum and normally avoid any capital gains taxes when making the transfer. Your inheritance and estate taxes may be reduced at the time of your death. Gifts of appreciated real estate or securities allow you to avoid capital gains taxes. It is important to transfer the stock or real estate to the Museum before you sell it.

Before you make any financial decision that impacts you, your estate, and your family please talk to your financial advisor (and your spouse if not the same person).

With a gift of any size, you will be directly supporting the Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker and preserving our legacy for many generations to come. For more information on our ongoing efforts please check us out on social media at: <https://www.facebook.com/AAMFrestoration>, or you can call or email our fundraiser at the email and phone number below and we'll get you on our newsletter mailing list.

For more information on planned-giving to the Army Aviation Museum, contact Ken Holder at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]



TALES OF NHA BE

I chuckled when I read the article about Stan Cherrie's flight from Nha Be in the July/August 2015 issue. Every pilot who landed or departed from there embraced the challenge: approach over the Saigon River to a tiny PSP helipad. This meant rotor wash from another helicopter or a gust of wind could cause you to slide if you were still light on the skids. An enticement to do so was the Navy's Filipino cook's legendary food.

I'd like to share two Nha Be incidents which occurred in 1969 when I served with A Troop, 3/17th Air Cavalry "Silver Spurs" based in Di An in III Corps. I was a UH-1H Aircraft Commander in both incidents.

The first incident occurred during an afternoon mission. We had completed our primary mission involving our Aero-Rifle Platoon when our TOC radioed to proceed to the Rung Sat, a large swamp area east of Nha Be to extract a Navy SEAL Team. We flew to the location and the extraction went smoothly despite having to hover beneath the Nipa Palm and lift the men out one at a time using ropes, as they were mired in the muck up to their chests. Their Team Leader was ecstatic once on board and tried to give me a hug.

We were becoming low on fuel, so I flew out of the Rung Sat toward some rice paddies in case we needed to land. We cleared the Rung Sat; however, we then encountered a severe rain shower. The rain was so heavy I could not see through the plexiglas and attempted to fly with my head out the door.

With my vision impaired by the rain, I called the tower at Nha Be and asked for "long counts" which enabled us to follow the FM signal. It worked!

Fortunately, the rain abated when we reached the Saigon River and had a clear visual of Nha Be. We landed on the helipad, set the skids, and the engine died. We had just enough fuel to complete the mission!

The second incident occurred during a night "Firefly Mission". Completing our initial mission without incident, our team landed at Nha Be for refueling. In addition to the port facility, there was a large oil storage tank farm and a large artillery battery located there. My helicopter, christened by my Crew Chief as the "Foxy Lady", had been used during the daylight mission as a "smoke-ship" for an infantry operation. This entailed the addition of a small oil tank in the cargo compartment. The oil from this tank was sprayed out at the turbine exhaust producing a billowy smokescreen which was used sometimes to obscure the enemy's surveillance of the insertion of our Aero-Rifle Platoon into an LZ.

After refueling, the control tower advised me the artillery battery was firing in all directions. Thus, to clear the sector safely after take-off, it would be necessary to fly low-level up the river for some distance. My Crew Chief suggested this would be an opportune time to burn off some of the oil in the tank as the extra weight hindered the helicopter's performance when hovering or flying slower than 40 knots during the Firefly operation. Accordingly, as we flew up

the river, he discharged the oil. Coincidentally, the artillery battery fired a salvo simultaneously with the oil burn-off.

By accident, the oil spray ignited causing the tail section to catch fire. Naturally, the artillery battery thought they had hit the helicopter! The Door Gunner, who was a slow-speaking lad from Tennessee, drawled over the intercom, "Sir, we're on fire."

My Co-Pilot and I momentarily stared anxiously at each other. I turned on the landing light and we frantically searched the area for an emergency landing site. Back at Di An, our TOC monitored the conversation and began a "scramble" with one of the men running near the hootches yelling "24 is on fire and going down." Needless to say, the adrenaline was flowing and the Pucker Factor high. However, in what seemed an eternity, as we were beginning to descend, the Door Gunner calmly grabbed the small hand fire extinguisher in the cockpit and stepped precariously out onto the skid. In this delicately balanced position, he began spraying the flaming tail section until it was extinguished! Somewhat relieved, we then continued to Di An, changed helicopters, and continued our scheduled mission.

Indeed, for a brief moment, the "Foxy Lady" had truly become a firefly.

by William L. McCalister

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THE FOUR LIEUTENANTS

VHPA reunions are wonderful for connecting with old friends. Where else can you go to be among those who have shared similar life changing experiences? Friends for life were made in Vietnam. I and three special friends have been trying to re-unite for about 20 years. This year it finally happened in Washington, DC! They are Mike Ryan, Sean Walsh and Tom Davis. Fortunately, Tom took a picture of the four of us in Vietnam and I have had that picture on my "honor wall" for years where I can look at it daily. Now I have a 2015 version to add. Tom also has attempted to get us together by sending us the picture as a reminder of our friendship and by having special shirts made for us to wear when we finally meet.

So how was it that we became friends? In 1968 the Vietnam War was building to its peak and the Army was producing helicopter pilots at a furious rate. Chinook transition was normally used as a sweetener to soften the blow of a second tour so Chinook companies were normally staffed by second tour veterans. Because of the rapid buildup some first tour officers and warrant officers were selected for the transition to fill vacancies. Tom and Sean became Lieutenants through OCS and Mike and I through ROTC and we were only a couple of classes each apart in flight school. Each of us was offered Chinooks at the end of flight school and of course incurred an additional year of service for making that choice.

The four of us 1st Lieutenants arrived in Vietnam in 1968 within a few weeks of each other. We were assigned to a Chinook Company, the 242nd ASHC Muleskinners at Cu Chi. The Muleskinners were mostly second tour warrant officers - CW2 and higher. We LTs were the bottom of the barrel despite our rank! A typical retort was "Hey Lieutenant, come here!" for some more embarrassment and belittling by the experienced warrants. We quickly learned that rank only had what meaning you earned and all four of us set about doing just that. Being commissioned officers in a company of mostly warrant officers meant we were assigned most of the extra duties.

Even with all of extra duties we flew as much if not more than the warrants and quickly earned their respect as well as the respect of the guys in the back. All four of us averaged over 100 hours of flight time per month for the period we were on the flight line. The guys in the back would frequently reserve a table near the stage in their club for us Lieutenants to enjoy their shows. Not many pilots were honored that way.

In case you do not know, warrant officers are passive-aggressive. They can control the situation without outwardly challenging it. As an example, there was one senior warrant the other warrants did not want to fly with so they manipulated the flight so that one of us Lieutenants would get him as a co-pilot - very clever those guys.

We Lieutenants were all competitive and challenged each other to become the best pilots. This was especially true between Mike and me as we were hootch mates as well as flying together frequently. I don't know about the other three, but I practiced nearly every day so with this competitive spirit and continuous challenge to be the best, all four of us got really good at our jobs. We all gained the respect of the warrants and were eventually inducted into the unofficial WOPA (Warrant Officer Protection Association). This respect included working with each other on a first name basis throughout our tours. We LTs together thrived in this challenging environment and the stress of getting shot at frequently! As a result we developed a life time bond.

Fast forward 47 years to Washington, DC and our mini-reunion. Sean arrived from Northern Virginia with boxes of pictures and memorabilia from his three back-to-back tours with the Muleskinners. He stayed in the Army and retired to a civilian Army job and is still working. Despite his 20 plus years of military experience he still relishes that first year in Cu Chi saying that Mike and I were his mentors and taught him how to fly in Vietnam. Tom arrived from Oregon with wife Jo, Muleskinners shirts for us to wear, super 8 movies and pictures. Tom and Jo got married six days after Tom got home from Vietnam

in 1969. Tom spent additional years in the Army but not enough to retire and has retired after a successful career in electronics and raising a big family. Mike and original wife Toby arrived from Massachusetts. Mike worked for Polaroid as a chemical engineer for several years, then helped to spin off a specialty chemical company and now enjoys retirement racing his sail boat. My original wife Susan and I arrived from upstate New York with Mike's slides and pictures from Vietnam that he had loaned me over 20 years ago along with my slides and super 8 movies.

Then the war stories started. Mike, Tom and Sean all had water buffalo stories - hilarious and very unusual. Imagine having a water buffalo get loose in the back of a Chinook in flight as happened to Mike. The flight engineer says, "Sir he is going to tear out the hydraulics what you want me to do?" Mike says "Lower the ramp." and out the big guy goes - Oooops! a dropped load. Sean tells the story of him and me landing at the wrong base camp one night after a 13 hour day. Of course, he said, it was my fault as I was the aircraft commander. Hey it was dark out there and I was tired. All four of us had Nui Ba Den (Black Virgin Mountain) stories as the Muleskinners were their primary means of support with nearly daily sorties to the top of the 3,000 foot mountain from Tay Ninh. It involved things like hovering while indicating 50 knots, placing equipment in tight places and medevacing wounded and dead...and there were many more.

WOW! What a great time. We all agreed to meet in Reno next year for a repeat mini-reunion and to take our families so they can meet the guys we have told them about over the years. With a little luck this will become an annual tradition. What an honor to know these three guys and have them together after 47 years!

*By Life Member Gary Roush,
VHPA Webmaster*



L-R Mike Ryan, Sean Walsh, Thomas Davis, Gary Roush



L-R Mike Ryan, Sean Walsh, Thomas Davis, Gary Roush



L-R Mike Ryan, Sean Walsh, Thomas Davis, Gary Roush

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.

We welcome these 20 new Members to the VHPA!

All have joined our Association during the period from September 12-November 25, 2015

Eslick Michael A.
Morris Oklahoma
Army
70-45
B/158 AHB 101 ABN in 71

Gray Ronald E **
Palm Bay Florida
Army
63-7
128 AHC in 65-66; AH-1G NETT in
67-68; 334 AHC in 67-68

Jansen Leonard H 'Lonnie'
Mason Illinois
Army
72-6
611 TC CO in 72-73

Johnson Kenneth D
Saint Augustine Florida
Army
68-13 68-19
C/3/17 CAV in 68-69; HQ 12 CAG in
69-70

Kaiser Daniel H.
Columbus Indiana
Army
67-17
A/123 AVN 23 INF in 67-68

Macdougall Parker D. 'Don'
Williamsburg Virginia
Army
67-14
7 SPECIAL FORCES in 64; 5 SPE-
CIAL FORCES in 65-66; 3 BDE 101
ABN in 67-68

Nauer Christopher J. 'Chris' **
Mason Ohio
Army
71-47 71-33
57 MED DET in 72-73

Sullivan John F. 'John' **
Southlake Texas
Air Force
20 SOS 14 ACW in 70-71

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Since 1989

Selections from Past Newsletters

From time-to-time, this new column will be included in the Aviator to honor our VHPA Newsletter predecessors and contributors. This issue's column is from the spring of 1984.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Are you funded? No funding is being provided at this time. My employer, Sperry has furnished postage and stationary to help me get this organization going, but is in no way an official sponsor.

What are the dues? At this time we ask for no money. At the first reunion the elected officers will determine how much, if any, the dues will be for membership.

Will other crew members (Door Gunner and Crew Chief) be eligible for membership? At this time the VHPA is for pilots only. At the first reunion the elected officers may desire to put this question to the membership for a vote.

What is the purpose of the VHPA? My original plan was to assemble a directory of all of the pilots. In talking with many of you, we all had a desire to find out what became of our friends. As the information began to flood our mailbox it became clear that you wanted to have a reunion and perhaps an ongoing organization.

Will there be a directory of members? All members who have sent in the information sheet will be included in the directory which will be issued at the reunion. If you cannot attend the reunion then the directory and a T shirt will be mailed to you for a fee of \$10.00. These will be sent out just after the reunion. If you must find a buddy before then, sent a SASE to the VHPA with your request and we will check our list and forward the information if we have it on file.

AAAA/VHPA SCHOLARSHIP

By Mike Scheuerman

The deadline for applying for a VHPA Scholarship is right around the corner. You can request Scholarship packets from AAAA after January 1, 2016. Applications are due NLT May 1, 2016.

Last year, over forty people applied for our scholarships. Five received our scholarships and another twenty received AAAA awards totaling over \$35,500. In addition, another ten people whose parents or a grandparent we consider eligible to be members of VHPA, were awarded a further \$26,000 in scholarships. This included the recipient of a \$12,000 - four year award.

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

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

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

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

GOOD LUCK!

From the Editor:

In the recent November/December VHPA Aviator there was an article about member Michael Lazares: "Payback Time: Veteran gives back to military through books." This article reprinted from an Arizona newspaper tells of Michael's giving the profits from his books to vets, typically through organizations such as the Wounded Warriors Project.

Along with the editors/staff at VHPA, Michael is involved in a new project designed to generate on-going funds for the VHPA

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To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

On page 25 of the *Aviator* 34-06 (November/December 2015) a photo caption contains the phrase: "Roy Sudeck was killed during the Vietnam war." In fact, CW4 Roy Sudeck (VHPA member, Flight Class 68-516/68-28 RVN: B/7/1 CAV in 69, D/3/5 CAV in 69-70, C/7/17 CAV in 71-72, H/10 CAV in 72, 1 TOW DET in 72 Call signs: CRUSADER 36, YELLOW SCARF, HAWK'S CLAW) died after his tour in Vietnam on Nov. 16, 2012 at the age of 65, from cancer. I thought you might want to post a correction in the next issue. Thanks for continuing the high quality of The Aviator! Each issue is greatly appreciated.

~ Al Roettger

Thanks Al on both counts. When we use a photo from a source outside our organization, we are bound to print the caption as provided. *Ed*

Scholarship fund. We intend to produce at least one or two soft cover books which will contain selected stories from VHPA members.

When published, the book will be available for purchase from the VHPA HQ, through the VHPA magazine and, of course, at our annual convention. In addition, the book will be produced at Createspace.com in soft cover format. It will also be available at Amazon.com in an E-book format.

To submit articles for inclusion in the War Stories book(s) or the Aviator, please send to Aviator@VHPA.org

Tom Hirschler

DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY (DPAA) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

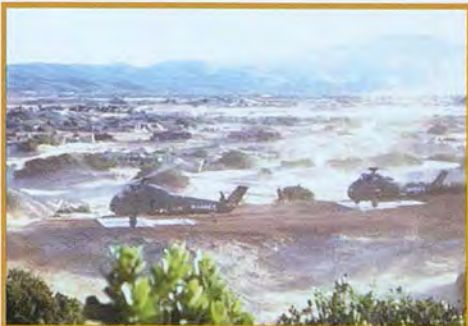
SOG/SOF Related Cases Needing Assistance*

Listed below are Missing in Action cases and some basic information. The DPAA can use any information you may have concerning any of these events. In addition, they would like to speak with any Army Security Agency (ASA) personnel. The POC is Matt Kristoff (DPAA) at matthew.kristoff2.civ@mail.mil / (703) 699-1240.

**Extract from the full report. For more information contact Matt Kristoff as shown above.*

**Red denotes new cases since the 2014 Special Operations Association Reunion (SOAR).*

Case#	Date of occurrence	Country	A/C Unit, Individual	Name(s)
0109	13-Jul-65	South Vietnam	Det B-52/Delta, 5th SFG(A)	(Gallant, Taylor)
0353	2-Jun-66	South Vietnam	F-4C, USAF	(Rosato)
0476	28-Sep-66	South Vietnam	SOG, RT Montana	(Taylor)
0513	4-Nov-66	South Vietnam	Det A-302, 5th SFG(A)	(Hunt)
0598	21-Feb-67	Laos	SOG	(Borja)
0608	6-Mar-67	Laos	SOG/B-50/Omega	(Carpenter)
0630	24-Mar-67	South Vietnam	ODA-302, Mike Force	(Hallberg, Stewart)
0902	9-Nov-67	Laos	SOG, RT Massachusetts	(Kusick, Baxter)
0902	10-Nov-67	Laos	37th ARRS, USAF	(Maysey, Brower, Clay)
0930	29-Nov-67	South Vietnam	Det A-341, 5th SFG(A)	(Millner)
*944	21-Dec-67	Laos	SOG, RT File	(Scurlock)
1106	27-Mar-68	South Vietnam	SOG, RT ?, CCN	(Calhoun)
1154	2-May-68	South Vietnam	Det A-109, 5th SFG(A)	(Englander)
1164	8-May-68	South Vietnam	281st AHC (supporting Proj Delta)	(Condrey, Dayton, Jurecko, Jenne)
1191	23-May-68	Laos	SOG, RT Idaho, CCN	(Lane, Owen)
1321	13-Nov-68	South Vietnam	Geotronics Co.	(Erskine)
1322	15-Nov-68	South Vietnam	SOG, RT New Hampshire	(Birchim)
1325	13-Nov-68	Laos	SOG, RT Vermont	(Copley)
1340	13-Dec-68	Laos	C123K, USAF (Albright, Fanning, Clarke, Dailey, Donahue, Walker)	
1351	29-Dec-68	Cambodia	SOG, RT Vermont	(Scherdin)
1380	11-Feb-69	Cambodia	SOG, RT Hammer	(Kroske)
1411	20-Mar-69	Laos	SOG, RT Copperhead	(Davis)
1493	27-Sep-69	Laos	57th AHC	(Huntley)
1521	12-Nov-69	Laos	A1H, 602nd SOS, USAF	(Helmich)
1681	4-Dec-70	Laos	SOG, RT Washington	(Green)
1641	29-Jun-70	Laos	A7A, CVW 19	(Aldern)
1647	4-Jul-70	Laos	SOG, RT Colorado	(Bookout)
1692	15-Jan-71	South Vietnam	Co A, Det B-43, 5th SFG(A)	(Harwood, Kinsman)
1696	29-Jan-71	Laos	SOG, RT Colorado	(Mixer)
1744	27-Apr-71	South Vietnam	UH-1H/SOG, HF, CCC	(Krupa)
1747	17-May-71	South Vietnam	UH-1H, C Co, 158th Avn Bn	(Pearce, Soyland)



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THE VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOT AND CREWMEMBER MEMORIAL PROPOSAL

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association is leading the effort to place a memorial within Arlington National Cemetery honoring the service and sacrifice of almost 5,000 helicopter pilots and crewmembers from all military branches who lost their lives in the Vietnam War.

(Q) What is the justification for seeking a memorial within Arlington National Cemetery to honor helicopter pilots and crewmembers killed in the Vietnam War?

(A) No memorial exists that recognizes the common valor of the helicopter pilots and crewmembers of all military branches who gave the last full measure of devotion to their nation in the Vietnam War. No national monument specifically honors the pilots and crewmembers that died in rotary-wing aircraft, despite their significant contribution to what is commonly described as "The Helicopter War."

(Q) Why does the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, supported by many other veteran organizations, seek the monument's placement within Arlington National Cemetery?

(A) Arlington National Cemetery is where the nation goes to honor those lost in war. Almost 5,000 pilots and crewmembers died during the long span of Vietnam combat (1963-1975), and Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) holds approximately 457 pilots and crewmembers from all service branches, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard, who perished in the conflict. In addition, recovered Missing in Action (MIA) crews lie buried together within the cemetery along with many combat helicopter pilots who earned the Medal of Honor and other distinguished awards. It is the heart of the United States Armed Forces, and remains the most fitting location for this honor to their joint service and sacrifice.

(Q) The Secretary of the Army declined the proposed memorial, but approved the placement of a small tree marker instead. Why is this unsatisfactory?

(A) Existing small tree markers generally honor the specific service of individual military units from a specific branch of the military such as a U.S. Army regiment or U.S. Navy ship, while others honor those who fought in specific battles. Small tree markers have never been used to honor the common sacrifice of thousands of servicemen, from different military branches serving jointly, who gave their lives across the span of 13 years of combat; honoring this extraordinary sacrifice with a small tree marker would diminish the magnitude of their sacrifice and valor.



Proposed Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Memorial

(Q) Some feel the limited burial plots remaining within ANC justify restricting additional memorials that take away space for graves. Is this a good reason for declining the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial?

(A) No. Arlington National Cemetery possesses areas that are unsuitable for the placement of graves due to soil conditions, tree roots and underground utilities. The proposed Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial will require only five square feet of ground, and could easily be placed on a spot within the cemetery unsuitable for burial.

(Q) Will taxpayer dollars be used to create and install the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery?

(A) No. The design, production and installation will be fully paid for with private funds from the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

(Q) Why do this now, some 40 years after the Vietnam War ended?

(A) Most United States military memorials are established between 20 and 50 years after the end of fighting. Surviving Vietnam Veterans are reaching the end of their natural lives and want to ensure those deserving of tribute are recognized before their generation disappears into history. At this time, during the 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War, establishing the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial within Arlington National Cemetery is the right thing to do at the right time in history.

For further information regarding the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial, contact VHPA Past President Bob Hesselbein, Monument Committee Chairman.

bobhesselbein@vhpa.org



Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

2100 N. Highway 360, Suite 907 • Grand Prairie, TX 75050-1030 • 800.505.8472 • hp@vhpa.org

November 30, 2015

Representative Mark E. Amodei
222 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2802

Subject: Support of the proposed Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act

Dear Representative Amodei:

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA), a fraternal, non-profit veteran's organization dedicated to enhance and accredit the cohesiveness, esprit de corps, and traditions of the valor of rotary-wing pilots who flew helicopters in the Vietnam War, is pleased to support the proposed Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act. We thank you and your hard-working staff for taking the lead on this important bill.

The VHPA has set aside funds for the creation and installation of the proposed monument. Our organization is also prepared to establish a trust fund for any future expenses involved in the routine maintenance of this simple monument stone.

Placing a lasting memorial within Arlington National Cemetery to honor the many thousands of helicopter pilots and crewmembers who gave the full measure of devotion to their nation in the Vietnam War is more than appropriate, it is long overdue. We applaud your effort.

On behalf of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, I thank you for your support, leadership, and sponsorship of the proposed Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act.

Respectfully,

Clarence L. Romero, Jr., President
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

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IT COULD ONLY HA

Those of us who served in Vietnam will remember an old saying "It could only happen in Vietnam." That either meant something good or it could mean something went terribly wrong. Let me tell you a recent It Could Only Happen in Vietnam story and you can draw your own conclusions about the outcome.

Forty six years ago, or 1968-69, I commanded a Dust Off medevac unit at Cu Chi supporting the 25th Infantry Division. We were extremely busy that year, evacuating far too many critically wounded and dead American soldiers and lots of Vietnamese, both soldiers and civilians.

In early January 1969, a friend commanding a sister unit at Soc Trang called. We had been in the same unit during our first tour in Vietnam, so when he said he needed a favor, I replied "For you, anything."

He went on to tell me there were two Army Special Services women at Soc Trang who ran their Recreation Center. There was no special housing built for women, so his unit created space in their pilots' hootch to accommodate them. He said they had been adopted like sisters, but can you imagine two women living with a bunch of pilots?

Ed told me one of them was being transferred to my location at Cu Chi, some 130 miles to the North. He had intended to fly her there himself, but a large operation kicked off in the Delta, so he asked whether I could pick her up. I told him I was checking out a newly arrived pilot and would swing by and get her. When I got to Soc Trang, I found a beautiful, young woman named Debby Alexander from California waiting.

On the way back to Cu Chi, I tried to explain the differences between Soc Trang, where there were two women and 400 Americans on a tiny airfield, and the 25th Infantry Division which was located on three enormous base camps with nearly 25,000 Americans. I told her there were two brigades at Cu Chi where my unit was located; there was a brigade at Dau Tieng, some 30 miles to the northeast; and another at Tay Ninh, about 40 miles to the northwest.

I told her members of the Division Staff, Special Services women, and Red Cross Donut Dollies needed to go to the outlying brigades on a regular basis, and I tried to help by giving them rides. I kept an aircraft on 24 hour standby at all three locations rotating Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh crews on alternate days. Nearly every morning, we'd find people at our helipad trying to hitch a ride; Debby took advantage of that opportunity many times.

As I got to know her better, I found she had an amazing ability to interact with young soldiers. When she talked with someone, it was almost as if they were the only person in the world and the soldiers adored her. I also learned she loved the people of Vietnam and was constantly going "outside the wire" with the civic action teams that provided medical and dental care in the villages and orphanages. My



Debby outside the wire in a village conducting a MEDCAP

Visiti

pilots and I warned her that was dangerous and she could get herself killed, but she never paid any attention to us.

Debby's six months at Cu Chi passed quickly, and she left in July 1969. What I didn't know until many years later was she had a two-year commitment to Army Special Services and was supposed to go to Korea to complete that obligation, but while home in California, she volunteered to return for a second year in Vietnam.

When she got back, she found her Army Special Services leaders aware of some of the crazy things she had been doing: flying all over the place in helicopters, going out with pathfinders to witness an ARVN combat assault, and visiting the local villages and orphanages. Her supervisor said "I'm not going to be responsible for you getting hurt or killed, so I'm sending you someplace where there are no helicopters and I want you to stay out of the villages." Debby was then assigned to a ground transportation brigade near Quin Nhon, but several months later managed to get reassigned back to the delta at Dong Tam where she was back with her beloved helicopters.

I thought about Debby across the years as you do about people you care about, like the pilots and crewmen I flew with. It was easy keeping up with the guys because we tended to keep in touch. I knew one of our pilots went to medical school, another flew for a major airline, and another became an assistant police chief in Seattle. The enlisted men did equally as well, but none of us knew what happened to Debby.

Now, fast forward 15 years. I was running a large conference in Denver and had the Army Chief of Staff and several other senior officers as speakers, so I was jumping to keep things on track. During a particularly hectic time, a major walked up to me and said, "Sir, Debby Alexander wanted me to say hello." I stopped and he continued, "She wanted you to know she's married, has two children, and lives in California, but fondly remembers the fun times she had fly-

APPEN IN VIETNAM



ing the troops in a maintenance shop



Returning from R&R and trying to hitch a ride at Hotel 3 helipad

ing with you and your guys and remembers you as being her biggest hero."

At that point, one of my staff interrupted because of a problem involving one of our speakers, so I stepped away to handle that situation and when I returned to talk with the major, he was gone. I was disappointed because I wanted to get Debby's telephone number or address, but couldn't find him anywhere.

Now, fast forward another 30 years or 45 years since we last saw Debby. On Veterans Day 2013, I was asked to speak at the Vietnam Women's Memorial where I had an opportunity to pay tribute to the hardworking and courageous military nurses I saw during two tours in Vietnam and during the two years I spent in Japan between those combat tours.

I had just finished speaking and was standing off to the side talking with Diane Carlson-Evans, founder of the Vietnam Women's Memorial, when someone tapped me on the shoulder and said "Hi Major Moore, I'm Debby Alexander, do you remember me?" I turned and found the same beautiful person I had known forty-five years earlier.

I asked what she was doing in DC and learned she had come from her home in Bend, Oregon to attend a ceremony honoring one of the legends in Army Special Services who had died at the age of 96. At a luncheon the previous day, Debby saw a list of speakers for the Veterans Day activities and noticed one was retired Colonel Doug Moore, so she began wondering whether it was me. Although she was planning to leave town that afternoon, she changed her schedule arriving at the Vietnam Women's Memorial just before I spoke. She said she looked through the crowd, but couldn't find me and assumed it must be someone else with the same name. When I was introduced and walked up to the podium, she said I appeared to be a lot taller than she remembered, but as I have reminded her since then, I was sitting

in a helicopter most of the time when she saw me. When I began speaking, Debby told a friend accompanying her, "That's Major Moore, so I've got to say hello to him." Unfortunately, I was already late for another event, so I apologized for having to leave quickly, but we exchanged email addresses with the promise we would catch each other up on the 45 years since we had last seen each other.

The following week, I sent a note telling her where all I had been since 1969, and she responded a few days later. In her note, she said she didn't recall being introduced to my wife at the ceremony and asked whether she was there. I told her my wife had died a couple of years earlier after a long illness and then Debby told me she had been single for several years, so we continued emailing, but strictly as friends.

In early 2014, I was planning a trip to Vietnam with Colonel Don Price, USMC Ret, author of a book entitled "The First Marine Captured in Vietnam." I was particularly interested in going with him to Binh Gia where one of the first major battles in Vietnam began in late December of 1964 and where three Americans: Marine Corps Captain Donald Cook, Army Staff Sergeant Harold Bennett, and Army PFC Charles Crafts were captured. Old timers from the 120th, 118th, A/501st, UTT, and the 57th Dust Off will remember those horrible few days when a number of helicopters were shot down and several pilots and crewmen were killed or wounded.

In one of my earlier emails, I asked Debby whether she had been back to Vietnam. She responded by saying she had not gone and would not go unless she was with someone who understood what she had experienced there. She said the last thing she wanted to do was to try to explain to a group of non-veterans, especially other women, why a young college graduate decided to go to a combat zone. She also felt some might question her motivation for going in the first place when all she wanted to do was serve her country and honor her father who had flown B-29s over Japan during WWII.

She also said she didn't want to explain what it was like to be rocketed, mortared, and shot at like the men. Those of you who were at Soc Trang or Cu Chi during that time will remember the bad guys used us for target practice rather frequently. Some of you will remember February 1969, when a large enemy force penetrated our basecamp at Cu Chi, killed eleven Americans, and destroyed or damaged most all of the CH-47 helicopters belonging to the 242nd Mule-skinners. Later, it was confirmed some of the enemy had been on the roof of Debby's Recreation Center prior to and during the attack.

I asked Debby if she wanted to go on that particular trip with me, but she couldn't because of recent surgery. I told her I would go and then fill her in on how the country had changed when I returned. Perhaps she could find someone to go with her later on.

Was it chance or destiny? A short time later, my April trip was cancelled. The tour company began planning another trip in late August and promised they would make special accommodation if I would go by taking me to Binh Gia and to a jungle clearing on the Cambodian Border where I picked up three American Prisoners of War on New Year's Day of 1969 in a highly classified and sensitive mission.

I called Debby and she agreed to go if the tour company could find her a female companion to share a room. Fortunately, they found the wife of a retired colonel in North Carolina.

Our tour group met initially in Los Angeles and the tour director asked us to his hotel room that evening for a Show and Tell to share information about ourselves and to explain why we wanted to go to Vietnam. He asked me to lead off, so I explained a little about my military background and men-

tioned that Debby and I had served together in Vietnam 45 years earlier and hadn't seen each other since then.

While talking, I was looking at Debby who was sitting across the coffee table from me and something magical happened. I quickly cautioned myself I was too old to become interested in another woman, but when Debby talked, she seemed to be focused on me. As we rose to leave the meeting, I put my arm around her shoulder to guide her through the door and we became inseparable for the next two weeks.

Fortunately, our tour group consisted of some of the nicest people I have ever met who seemed intrigued with Debby and me. They kept asking questions about how we had met and seemed so happy and supportive. In fact, I believe they encouraged us.

It all culminated several days later when we went to the jungle clearing where I picked up three American POWs being released by the North Vietnamese on New Year's Day 1969. The tour company allegedly had approval from Hanoi to go inside the restricted zone along the Cambodian border where drug smuggling and human trafficking are huge problems, but apparently no one told the local Vietnamese Border Police.

After traveling along the border on a dirt road for several miles, we stopped at the place where I had landed 45 years earlier and the tour director asked me to describe what happened that day. I told the group about departing from Tay Ninh and flying towards the Cambodian Border for several miles over a jungle area that we knew back then as the "Saw Tooth Woods." Finally, we spotted a North Vietnamese flag flying in a small clearing. We landed by the flag and, several minutes later, eight heavily-armed North Vietnamese soldiers marched out of the jungle with their AK-47s at port arms and surrounded our aircraft. We sat there for several more minutes before the POWs were finally brought out.

As I was finishing my explanation of that day's events to our tour group, a border police vehicle roared up and ordered our bus driver to follow them to a miserably

hot and filthy police station about five miles away. After reaching there, we were ordered to empty our pockets and purses; then the authorities began interrogating the bus driver, the Vietnamese interpreter, the US tour director, and, finally, me. After finishing with me, I was escorted to a tiny, foul-smelling room where the remainder of our group was waiting and sat down alongside Debby.

Then something totally unexpected happened! One of the members of our tour group was a retired school teacher from Salina, Kansas who had become our group philosopher. No sooner than I sat down alongside Debby, Leah spoke up and said rather loudly to the group, "Doug, I've been thinking about you and Debby ever since we first met in Los Angeles. Yours is a wonderful story and it's obvious that you care a great deal for each other."

She paused for a second as I began wondering where she was headed with her commentary. She then continued, "I don't think all of these things that have happened to both of you across the years were by accident or chance. In fact, I think the stars have lined up properly and that you and Debby were destined for each other all along. Doug, in my opinion and, perhaps it's my opinion only, but I think you ought to ask Debby to marry you!"

At first, I was speechless, but finally managed to respond by saying, "Leah, that sounds like a great idea to me!" I then turned and said "Debby, would you marry a worn-out, old helicopter pilot like me?" She looked shocked and then said "Huh? Yes!"

Debby and I continued our fairy tale by getting married in April 2015, some 46 years after meeting in Vietnam. We then purchased a home in Haymarket, Virginia and it was our great luck to have the recent VHPA Reunion in nearby DC. It was a wonderful affair and we got to see some old friends and met dozens of others with whom we shared common hardships and fun times in Vietnam. It was a great start for our still young marriage and we want to thank all of you who listened to our story and made us feel so good at the reunion.

And as we used to say many years ago, "It could only happen in Vietnam!"

By Douglas Moore



Debby and I at China Beach in Danang, July 2014

Cobra Dedication

*Courtesy of Brad Hanson
KWVL News 1A, Dubuque Newsroom*

A hotel ballroom is transformed Tuesday night. There's no wedding celebration or board meetings.

Rather, stories are being shared. Stories from wars fought in decades past. And tonight is especially noteworthy, because, for the first time in 44 years, the two men who flew the Cobra attack helicopter that overlooks Dubuque's Veteran's Memorial Plaza, are back with their chopper. Lt. Ken DeHoff and Chief Warrant Officer Wayne Burk are in Dubuque to speak at the annual Veteran's Day ceremony.

To say their story is incredible might be one of the biggest understatement you could make. "We were hit by three 51 caliber machine gun positions, and essentially shot out of the air, and crashed and burned. And then Wayne and I had the opportunity to get out of that helicopter and get on with life," DeHoff said.

The man who helped fly them to safety after they were shot down, also in attendance tonight: Chief Warrant Officer Kent Crisler. "This would make a heck of a movie," Crisler said.

But instead of a movie theater, they're holding court in that hotel ballroom, confronting the ghosts of their past. "44 years after I saw it the last time, and now I'm seeing it again. Maybe I'm hoping that this is a closure, but I don't know," Burk said.

All three men are in Dubuque for the first time in their lives. But that doesn't mean they haven't stayed in touch. "It's almost like a support system, to be able to talk, because there were just so few people in the world that were there and part of that, that you can actually talk about problems," Crisler said. And today, they're together again, seeing the aircraft they haven't seen for more than four decades.

"It's an experience that, I mean, if I saw this in a movie, this never would happen. Who would believe it would happen," Burk said. DeHoff

added, "It brought tears to my eyes. It's truly an honor, thank you so much."

The three men slated to talk at Dubuque's Veteran's Day ceremony, which is slated for 10:30 a.m. Wednesday morning inside the Mystique Community Ice Center.



L-R Pilots Wayne Burk (AH-1), Ken DeHoff (AH-1). Kent Crisler (UH-1)



Tri-State Veteran's laid a stone in the Memorial Park in memory of the March 21, 1971 battle

Air Compassion for Veterans Provides Bridge of Access for Wounded Warriors

By Suzanne Rhodes

They come home from war with missing limbs and tortured minds. The wounds they bear are deeper than most of us could ever comprehend. They sacrificed willingly, and for the great cause of freedom. Believing we should be there for them, Air Compassion for Veterans (ACV) was founded in 2006 to provide free long-distance transportation to make sure no one in need is left without access to PTSD/TBI treatment, medical care, service dog acquisition, counseling, rehabilitation, adaptive sports events, and all other therapies and programs that will help to heal and restore these wounded warriors.

Based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, ACV serves as a bridge by providing charitable travel through a variety of means, including flights on commercial airlines, general aviation (volunteer pilots), and ground transportation—gas cards and bus and train tickets. Since being incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, ACV has served nearly 49,000 clients. The group partners with American Airlines, whose fuel conservation program (Fuel Smart) has saved hundreds of millions of gallons of fuel. Those thousands of dollars in savings are donated to Air Compassion for Veterans.

Another important partner is the Independence Fund Hyperbaric and Wellness Center. With headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina, the center treats veterans suffering from PTSD, TBI, and other injuries, using hyperbaric oxygen therapy and other medical modalities. ACV provides the veterans with travel. There is no cost to the veteran for any of these services.

ACV is administered by Mercy Medical Angels, a Charity Navigator 4-Star charity. Mercy Medical has always assisted members of the military with necessary medical transportation. If you add up the public benefit since 1997, when the organization began providing flights for veterans and active

duty, the figure comes to over \$24 million. The charity is supported by corporations, individuals, grants and other contributions where more than 95.3 percent of every dollar directly funds the program.

While statistics convey important information, it's the faces behind the facts that best showcase ACV's vital role in the healing of our nation's heroes.

Consider the story of Sgt. First Class Brock, a medically-retired soldier living with his wife and five children in Chesapeake, Virginia. Brock was on a mission in Iraq to destroy an Al-Qaeda stronghold of unoccupied houses rigged with explosives. "We identified our targets and placed ourselves and vehicles between the buildings and the people," he said. "We started dropping the houses using 500 pound JDAMS (bombs)."

The soldiers had been assured their position was far enough away from the explosions to prevent them from harm. Brock stood in the hatch of the truck while the other members of his group remained inside. He immediately realized, "we were too close. The explosions coming through shook me up a little too much. It rocked my world."

Afterward, he began experiencing extreme and excruciating migraines. He also had sleep disturbances related to "things I saw" in the war, such as a suicide bomber. "By the grace of God, the car bomb missed us by seconds. No one was injured." His symptoms continued and worsened after deployment, so much so that he started isolating himself. "I locked myself in my closet. I stayed there and in my bathroom day and night."

Brock underwent extensive treatment for PTSD and married Stormi, his caretaker and the love of his life. But despite medication and cognitive therapy, nothing helped. "My wife and family were searching and searching for some relief and help. It was tearing my family apart," he said.



Then, while traveling on a commercial flight, he met a pilot who told him about Air Compassion for Veterans. When Brock contacted the organization, he was referred to a service dog facility called paws4vets, a program of paws4people in Wilmington, North Carolina. He applied and was accepted into the program where he began the process of dog selection (dog selects vet and not the other way around! The process is called "the bump"), followed by extensive training. A young golden retriever named Tannen chose Brock, and Air Compassion for Veterans has provided Brock with several free trips.

The first was to Lakin Correctional Center in West Columbia, West Virginia, where qualified inmates handle and train canines as part of a sister program called paws4prisons. That's where Brock got "bumped" by TanTannen. The next step was a series of trips to paws4vets headquarters in Wilmington, North Carolina for rigorous training at select intervals. After successfully passing a variety of skill requirements, Tannen was able to go to his new home for good. Brock says she has changed his life.

"Now I can go to restaurants and the mall. My schedule has become normal and I'm sleeping through the night." He explained that Tannen senses when he's under stress and will nudge him with her nose to help him re-focus. She also intervenes when Brock is having a nightmare. At 18 months, this amazing animal knows and obeys approximately 100 commands.

Brock's story is repeated in countless ways, but ACV's help is not limited to veterans of OIF/OEF. World War II reunion flights provided by ACV to Pearl Harbor and Iwo Jima made history in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars have received life-saving medical treatment, with ACV providing access.

Unlike the cumbersome federal bureaucracy, the charity's process of serving clients is streamlined



and flexible, made available through a phone call or website request for assistance. (See the end of this article for more information.)

A retired soldier sums up the role ACV played in his restoration: "Thank you all. Because of you I was able to get treatment at the Pathway Home (for PTSD). You saved my life."

www.AirCompassionforVeterans.org

www.MercyMedical.org

<http://bit.ly/1iREx9A> (American Airlines' Fuel Smart)

<http://independencehyperbarics.info/>
www.paws4people.org

Suzanne Rhodes is the director of public affairs for Mercy Medical Angels and Air Compassion for Veterans. She edited and produced the book Sacred Glances, featuring stories and photographs of World War II and Korean War veterans living in the Tidewater area of Virginia. She's also the author of Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic, a pictorial history of the aviation charity (Arcadia Publishing).

INTERESTING LINKS ON THE WEB

RARE WWI AVIATION PHOTOS

[HTTP://WWW.THEATLANTIC.COM/STATIC/INFOCUS/WWI/WWIAIR/](http://WWW.THEATLANTIC.COM/STATIC/INFOCUS/WWI/WWIAIR/)

CANADIAN SOLDIERS DISMANTLE AND REBUILD A JEEP IN UNDER FIVE MINUTES

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/EMBED/LGWF8MDQWLW](https://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/EMBED/LGWF8MDQWLW)

NOVEMBER ISSUE OF THE CHPA MAGAZINE THE SWASHPLATE

[HTTPS://CHPA.MEMBERCLICKS.NET/ASSETS/DOCUMENTS/SWASH%20PLATE%201511.PDF](https://CHPA.MEMBERCLICKS.NET/ASSETS/DOCUMENTS/SWASH%20PLATE%201511.PDF)

Information Regarding recovered MIA remains of SFC Billy David Hill

006 SFC Billy David Hill

008 WO1 Gerald Leroy McKinsey, Jr.

005 SSG Jerry W. Elliott

G 282 AHC UH-1D 66-01027

P 282 AHC UH-1D 66-01027

G 282 AHC UH-1D

**History of the 282nd ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY, 212th COMBAT SUPPORT AVIATION BATTALION
Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam APO SF 96337, 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 1968**

Prepared by First Lieutenant Thomas Prince

Approved by Valentino Panzitta, Major, IN Commanding

The second full year of operation for the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company saw many challenges for the men and machines of the company. Given the mission of supporting I Corps Headquarters, the I Corps Advisory effort and operations of the 1st and 2nd ARVN Divisions, the 282nd must be able to respond to the variations requested of it. Within the capabilities of the "Blackcats", supported by the armed "Alleycats", are combat assaults, medical evacuations, resupply, visual reconnaissance, command and control, fire-fly, armed escort, suppressive fire, close support or any other mission requested of them.

The Hue Section began 21 January with a resupply and medevac request from the Regional Headquarters at Houng Hoa which had sustained a ground attack the night before. A single ship was dispatched and picked up supplies and observer at La Vang airfield near Quang Tri enroute. On short final into the single-ship pad outside the Houng Hoa compound, the Crewchief, Maurice Seghetti, was hit by ground fire from the LZ while CWO Tom Pullen and WO Richard Gilmore took evasive action. The Senior Advisor for Quang Tri Province then administered first aid to Seghetti. While Pullen was enroute to the aid station at Quang Tri, Lt Bob Ford attempted to get the medevacs out of Houng Hoa but was also repulsed by heavy ground fire. Col Seymoe called for more ships from Da Nang, and a combat assault was quickly arranged from volunteers.

WO1 McKinsey (Mac to his friends) had returned to Da Nang to DEROS. In aircraft #036, he flew Joe Sumner the crewchief, to Houng Hoa and then to Dong Ha for assistance from the Marine helicopter unit. For some reason, possibly other commitments, they were unable to do so. WO McKinsey waited there for the rest of the company to join them. After dropping off Seghetti and borrowing a young Marine to serve as door gunner CWO Pullen joined them.

Mr. McKinsey was familiar with the area so he changed seats with Maj. Rex, putting Cpt. Tom Stiner and Mr. McKinsey flying the lead ship in a flight of seven. Five ships carried Ruff-Puffs and two carried ammo and other supplies. Alleycats flew gun support. Intense ground fire around Houng Hoa forced them to divert south to an old French fort on a mountain top near Khe Sanh. As the flight landed, NVA regulars emerged from their hiding places and began firing at point blank range. The lead ship was hit on the right side, burst into flames (even the rotor blades were burning) and rolled over the embankment, landing on its side. Two ships landed and

crewmembers tried to help the crew of Chalk One. Danny Williams exited his ship and went to help rescue Col. Seymoe from the burning ship. Ground fire hit the butt of crewchief Heidi Atanian's M-16 rifle and shot the microphone off his helmet so he got back in the aircraft. Gunner Jerry Elliott never returned to the ship. David Howington, crewchief of aircraft #027 which had crashed managed to get aboard before they took off due to intense enemy ground fire which hit one of the pilots. After receiving many hits the rescue ships were forced to leave the area. Severely damaged ships escaped the LZ and made emergency landings at Khe Sanh, Quang Tri and medevac'd the wounded to Dong Ha.

WO McKinsey survived the crash but was killed on the ground while providing covering fire for the rescue attempt. Col. Seymoe was killed in the crash. Sgt. Billy D Hill, gunner of #027 and PFC Jerry W Elliot, gunner are listed MIA. Cpt. Tom Stiner and Sgt. Danny Williams escaped from the area, evaded the NVA ground forces and walked to Khe Sanh where they were picked up the next day by a Hue Detachment ship.

*Sergeant First Class Billy D. Hill,
missing from the Vietnam War,
has now been accounted for.*

On January 21st, 1968, Staff Sergeant Billy David Hill was assigned as door gunner on a UH-1D helicopter with five other occupants when it was struck by enemy fire and crashed. Two crewmembers survived the crash, one of whom witnessed Staff Sgt. Hill killed by enemy fire prior to the impact. The remains of two other crewmembers killed in the incident were recovered soon after, while Staff Sgt. Hill and one other crewmember remained unrecovered.

While in MIA status, Staff Sgt. Hill was promoted to Sergeant First Class. The remains were unilaterally turned over by government officials from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam who had reportedly confiscated them from Vietnamese citizens who had found the remains in the vicinity of Khe Sahn. The DPAA Lab identified the remains on Staff Sgt. Hill on September 4th, 2015.

Staff Sergeant Hill will be interred on his birthday, December 17th, in Killeen Texas.

Welcome home and rest in peace Sergeant First Class Hill.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER
Dave Whitney, President

ALASKA CHAPTER
Lynn Kile, President

ARIZONA CHAPTER
Bill Sorenson, President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH
Ken Fritz, President

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER
Tom Mc Millen, President

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER
Adam Steczko, President

GEORGIA CHAPTER
Bob Lanzotti, President

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER
Victor Lent, President

Email: VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

MICHIGAN CHAPTER
Richard Deer, President

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER
Bert Leach, President

MONTANA CHAPTER
Todd Brandoff, President

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER
Les Haas, President

Email: NAVHPA@gmail.com
www.navhpa.org

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER
(currently inactive, seeking members)

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER
Larry Pigg, President

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER
Bob Hamilton, President

www.ohrivlz.org

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER
Tom Payne, President

www.okvhpa.org

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
Don Agren, President

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER
Jim Miles, President

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER
John Wilkinson

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER
John P. Hargleroad, President

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
Sven Akesson, President

VHPA OF FLORIDA
Frank Hoover, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER
J.C. Combs, President

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional
Ken DeHoff - POC

Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER

On Veterans Day, many of our members attended a press conference called by Senator John Cornyn of Texas. This was held outdoors at the Medical Museum located at Ft. Sam Houston in the shadow of several former medevac helicopters, including a beautifully restored UH-19. The purpose of the press conference was to announce Senator Cornyn's introduction of a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to all medevac crewmembers of the Vietnam War. This is the highest honor which can be bestowed upon a group by Congress, and requires passage of a bill into law. MG (Retired) Patrick Brady, one of our Alamo Chapter members and MOH recipient, has worked closely with Senator Cornyn to bring this honor to crewmembers respected by all of us. Senator Cornyn and MG Brady both addressed the crowd of active duty soldiers, veterans, and families of all. Our Chapter thanks both of them for making possible this honor.

Alamo Chapter President, Dave Whitney, arranged another private tour on November 17th of the extensive warbird collection of Mr. Rodney Lewis (Lewis Air Legends) for those members who missed the first tour back in January. Glacier Girl, a P-38 which was deep under a glacier in Iceland for 50 years, and which now flies, is part of this collection in San Antonio. The Alamo Chapter again thanks Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Robert Cardin, who conducted the tour, for their generosity and courtesy in allowing us to admire these historic old aircraft.

Our ladies have really outdone us in the meetings department. Back on June 5th, they met for a luncheon, just for the girls. They enjoyed it so much that they have continued their luncheons every month since, except for December. They choose a different restaurant each time, and San Antonio has lots of variety. They plan to continue these very popular gatherings.

Apparently taking note of the ladies' success and fun, and maybe feeling some shame, the men have likewise begun meeting for lunch. The first was held on November 5th at a Twin Peaks Restaurant in San Antonio. Fortunately, we did not see, receive, or participate in any gunfire. Our pilots will have met again for lunch on December 3rd at Julian's Pizza by the time this is published. This will likely be a monthly occurrence. As always, members should watch for e-mails and check our Chapter website www.vhpa-alamo.org for details of these and other scheduled events.

Our next evening meeting at the Barn Door Restaurant will be sometime in March.

Our Christmas party took place on the evening of December 18th in the Army Residence Community Sky Lounge in San Antonio. As always, it was well attended, and we all enjoyed an evening of dining and dancing. Thank you, Secretary Al Flory, for arranging this popular party each year.

By Chuck Oualline

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Our chapter has been holding lively meetings quarterly for a good many years and has accomplished the mission of the VHPA very nicely. We have completed a few projects such as the placement of a monument at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery and painting a Huey on static display at the Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base to match its original colors while operating in Vietnam. We also were the principal founding organization of the National Vietnam War Museum located just outside the Fort Wolters gate and continue to support its ongoing construction and operation.

The next regular chapter meeting will be held at noon, Saturday March 5 at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst, TX.

By Ed Faught, President



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter has finished an active 2015 year with participation in Veteran's events in Benton Harbor and Oscoda and good representation at the National VHPA Reunion in Washington, DC.

2016 promises to bring more activity with our participation in the Operation LZ Michigan Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans that will take place again in Oscoda, MI on July 8, 9, 10, 2016. The American Huey 369 and Bob Hope USO Show by Lynn Roberts will be there as well. Other events will be discussed at our spring meeting - date and location to be announced via email to the membership.

The spring meeting will also include election of chapter officers. We are looking to fill the president, vice president, secretary and treasurers positions.

For any VHPA members living in Michigan (or nearby) who are not currently on our email list, please feel free to email me at [REDACTED] to be added. You do not have to be a chapter member to be listed as an "interested party." Who knows, you might just want to join us at a function or two. Spouses, non-aviator crewmembers, and any interested parties are welcome.

By Rich Deer, President

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

The time is getting close for the annual reunion in Tennessee. If you have not signed up to go the reunion go to the website WWW.OHRIVLZ.ORG and download the registration form and get signed up. You can also find all the information on the hotel and the activities planned. There are some important cut off dates, the hotel reservations are March 19, 2016 and the Banquet Reservations no later than Midnight March 27, 2016.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The weekend begins with a morning bus ride to Nashville for a "Behind the Scenes" tour of the Grand Old Opry". After the tour we will go to a restaurant for dinner; then back to the Grand Old Opry for the evening show. It will be a full day of fun and entertainment.

If you know any fellow Vietnam Helicopter Pilots who are not members please make an effort to have them come and become members of our chapter.

I look forward to seeing everyone in April and wish you all a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

By Robert Blair

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

On November 6th Don Abrams, Jim Bankston, and Jim Ottman participated in a Veterans' Day observation at the New Richmond Middle School in Wisconsin. Don Abrams made a number of classroom presentations, while Jim Bankston and Jim Ottman staffed the static display of a UH-1H helicopter for each class. The helicopter belongs to the St. Croix Valley Chapter of the VVA. We have been able to partner with them several other times with positive results.

One of our members, Jim Cringler, who lives in Winona, MN, is very active in speaking at schools and on national holidays. He has a cockpit recording made during an air assault in Vietnam. The situation turned critical and the resulting chatter is interesting.

Member Dave Schmidt is a USMC helicopter pilot who was stationed at Marble Mountain Air Field. He has partnered with a friend and acquired a flyable UH-1H helicopter. We hope to have him fly into some of our events in the future.

Jud Hilton, another member of our group, continues to work with the Veterans' Court to assist less fortunate veterans. He has given us enthusiastic reports of the ongoing programs.

On November 20th we held a dinner party at O'Gara's Restaurant in St. Paul MN for members and significant others. A pleasurable evening of food and fellowship was enjoyed.

Our next business meeting will be in January 2016. The date and time are to be determined and notification will be e-mailed. The main purpose of this meeting will be to elect officers for the next two year period.

Although we are a small chapter, we are very active. Our meetings are held January, March, May, and September with social meetings in July and November. If you flew helicopters in Vietnam and live in Minnesota or western Wisconsin we urge you to join us for great fellowship and camaraderie. Please contact Dick Anderson at [REDACTED]

By Bert Leach, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

The Washington State Chapter has had a busy time since our last report. In September, we met at the Timbercreek Grill, in Spokane WA, for our meeting. It is always great to meet our brothers on the east side. We enjoyed a fine meal and even better meeting and conversations.

During our weekly trip to the Museum, in October, we installed an MP3 player and speakers in the engine area of our 'Huey'. Every popular Vietnam era song available was loaded on the player. Among the more memorable were; "The Flight of the Valkyries" and "We Gotta Get Out of This Place". We recalled good times with that music in the background.

On the seventh of November, our busiest month, we participated in the Auburn WA Veterans Day Parade. This is the largest parade of its type west of the Mississippi. We were placed 80th of the 155 entries. While watching the lead elements pass, we had the opportunity to thank other veterans, exhibiting pride and service to their country. It was a truly rewarding day for all.

That activity was closely followed by the Elma Washington parade. Although, a small event, we were much appreciated, to include a terrific meal. Thank you ELMA!

By Bill Lyons

ALASKA CHAPTER

The Alaska Chapter decided to hold our Fall Steak Dinner a month early this year in hopes of maximum participation before the snowbirds left the state for warmer weather! We got together just after Veterans Day at the Eagle River VFW. It didn't make a difference as December or November yielded about 45 folks. On to the event...

Besides having a wonderful time, we have been doing a mini- Quilts of Valor donation drive this summer and presented our \$616 dollar collection to our State's Quilts of Valor Chair, Linda Kau. This organization has done super things throughout the state for Veterans and is much appreciated. They presented four more Quilts to our membership, Scott Coonce, Robert Clark, Gary Quales, and Gary Boyd. One special presentation went to our VHPA quilt recipient, Francis Boisseau. He was actually awarded his Quilt at the Washington DC Reunion but was unable to attend. So, the VHPA-Quilt was brought back to him here in Alaska and presented at our Dinner. He was also elected as our new Fairbanks Board Member, thanks for volunteering Francis!

We are also excited to have picked up three new members at our dinner, bringing membership in our Alaska Chapter to 64 members! Never thought a year ago we would grow so fast! The comradery and fun we have getting together is getting out. It is very nice to have such a great group of guys with this common bond, eager to spend time together.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALASKA CONT'D

Our Chapter is 90% VHPA members and we are currently pushing all remaining eligible members to join VHPA. We have a plan to be 100%.

We are adding two events to our normal four event schedule for next year; one is a maximum push to attend the Reno Reunion, so far progress is good. Not sure VHPA is ready for a bunch of Alaska Vets descending on the Reunion, but here we come!

It's snowing today, so I need to go sweep the wings.

*There is Pride in
knowing WE FLEW!*

Lynn Kile
www.VHPA-Alaska.org
Nomad 23



Scott Coonce receiving his quilt.



Robert Clark receiving his quilt.



Gary Quales receiving his quilt.



Gary Boyd receiving his quilt.

FLORIDA CHAPTER

The snow birds are flocking back to Florida and we are getting back into high gear after a lazy summer. November is always a busy time but we do slow down for Christmas and

New Year's Eve. Our members who attended the VHPA reunion all reported that they had a great time. Although we lost several members this year, who will be deeply missed, we added new members.

We now stand at 463 members by my last count and they are an active and very welcome addition.

We completed the move of our organization from the Hillsborough Veterans Park, Tampa to the Florida Air Museum at Sun-N-Fun in Lakeland Florida. Until we obtain a new address, contact us through our web site: vhpa.org. Our thanks go out to Howard Smith who coordinated the move and re-configured the displays in the museum.

We took the OH-6 Little Bird to Sea Park Elementary school on Friday, November 6th for "Bring a Vet to



Shown are three of the display cases we have put into the Florida Air Museum. There are more display cases and displays nearby.



L-R Stan McGlamery, Vice President Elect and Frank Hoover, President during set up at the Villages.

school day". There were lots of veterans attending, because the school is near Patrick Air Force Base and military dependent kids make up a large segment of the student body. We

attended this event last year and it was so much fun we made sure we would be invited back this year. Each class room came out to look at the OH-6 and listen to narration on the specifications, capabilities and uses, followed by a question and answer period. The children are always excited to see the helicopter and learn about it. The school provided breakfast and lunch for the veterans and the outdoor event was followed by a really nice program from the kids inside.

We departed the school late in the day and went directly to Oviedo Florida to prepare for the next day's support for "The American Heroes Air Show" on November 7th. This air show was set up at the Oviedo Mall and a dozen or so military and public safety helicopters landed in a large field next to the mall. The

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

parking lot next to the field was used for our helicopter, as well as a collection of vehicles from the military, police, fire department, home land security, ambulance units, forestry service firefighting plow and other vehicles. Vendors were set up on the side selling food and drinks. There were also many military support organizations present. During the ceremonies, a large group of people were sworn in as American citizens.



Oviedo event

We had Saturday off and then proceeded to Lady Lake at the Villages on Sunday, November 9th where we supported the Moving Wall for the next four days. We had the sales tent, OH-6, and the little mall ride helicopter. The Villages is a community of 56,268 households made up of residents aged 55 and over. The complex spans three counties, three zip codes and over 20,000 acres. The entire community is connected by over 100 miles of golf cart legal streets and trails.

up with displays and vehicles. Many helicopters are flown in for the event. Around 3,000 high school JROTC students from all over the county are bused to the event. The kids come at about 15 minute intervals. They first attend a briefing in the school and then come out to the display area in the parking lot. It is a very positive event and one in which we participate in every year.

By Frank Hoover, President

GEORGIA CHAPTER

Our last bi-monthly breakfast meeting in 2015 was conducted at the Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo) in Marietta, Georgia, on November 21, 2015. During the business portion of our meeting we addressed Chapter officer positions for 2016. President Bob Lanzotti, Vice President Dick Butler, and Secretary/Treasurer Gary Earls agreed to extend their tours of duty through 2016.



Chapter members gather at a breakfast meeting

Our speaker for this meeting was one of our very own, Colonel Carl (Skip) Bell. Skip completed two tours in Vietnam, the first on the ground as a grunt and the second in the air supporting grunts. During his first tour he served as a cavalry troop commander in the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry. Between tours Skip attended flight school and returned to Vietnam to fly guns for the 3rd of the 17th Cavalry. Skip prefaced his presentation with a brief 'YouTube' video which is a real attention getter for Vietnam veteran aviators. I invite and encourage you to view it. Just Google - 'UH-1 Huey Vietnam Rolling Stones' for a real 'Blast from the Past.'

Our next meeting will again be conducted at our home base, LZ Romeo Romeo, on January 16th, 2016. Our scheduled speaker will again be one of our members, Terry Garlock. Terry is the author of "Strength & Honor, America's Best in Vietnam." The book covers Vietnam veterans and their stories. Terry delivered a speech at the 2015 VHPA Annual Reunion and is a frequent guest speaker at local high schools and various veteran organizations in the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

Former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots interested in joining our Chapter, please view our website at www.ga.vhpa.org for a schedule of meeting dates or contact me at [REDACTED]

By Bob Lanzotti, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Two consecutive NCVHPA reports are presented together. A file problem resulted in the omission of the earlier report. ~Ed

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

NCVHPA had been busy the 1st quarter. We participated in the Navy vs Air Force Baseball Freedom Classic February 28-March 1, at Historic Grainger Stadium, Kinston, NC. Have you ever wanted to hang out with a Naval Academy or Air Force Academy baseball player? Brock Nicholson with a Huey H model and Sam McLamb with an M-model Dust Off helicopter did.

We participated at the NC Museum of History on March 27-29 for Etchings in Stone; a play about the experiences of visitors to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall. Written by NC Vietnam veteran Ron Harris, Etchings in Stone admission was free. In an interesting twist, the play's short segments place audience members "inside" the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, so individuals

are privy to the words and unspoken thoughts of passing visitors. The play centers on different perspectives of visitors to the memorial, conveying the views of veterans, family members, friends, and others about how the Vietnam War affected them. Music, video-clips, and photographs from the Vietnam-era are featured between segments. Do not miss it if it comes around. Brock Nicholson of NCVHPA displayed the H model Huey for the event

May 6-12, in Conyers, GA, we participated at Walk of Heroes Veterans War Memorial at the display of the Moving Vietnam Wall. The Walk of Heroes was developed around a visual and interactive concept at Black Shoals Lake to cultivate a public understanding of the sacrifices made by veterans on the battlefields during and since the 20th century, and by their families whose sacrifices helped to protect and maintain the freedom enjoyed by Americans today.

While there, we participated in a Veterans review at



Veterans review at the Atlanta Braves Ball Park, Turner Field.



NCVHPA in Swannanoa, NC with four aircraft on display.



Sheraton Convention Center, Myrtle Beach, SC. AH-1G 68-15095. It flew in Vietnam as an 11ACR, Thunder-horse. Painted up as the "Widowmaker" some of you may have flown her.



Vets display their quilts at Myrtle Beach SC.



J.D. Lawson's Funeral.



J.D. Lawson was transported in an OH-6



Jerry Seago, Terry Lenior, and Vic Rose at the Glenn Allen, VA VFW Military Vehicle Day with our Mule, Jeep, and Huey Gunship.



Col. Bob Bunting, CO of the 48th AHC during Lam Son 719



Jerry Seago setting up for Veterans' Day, Burlington, NC

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

the Atlanta Braves Ball Park, Turner Field, and saw the Braves and Philly play. We took four helicopters to the event.

We participated at Vietnam War Commemoration, Myrtle Beach, SC, Boardwalk Park South of Skywheel, May 14-16, providing a Charlie model gunship, with Jerry Seago, and an OH-58

Kiowa, with Terry Lenior for a display and their parade.

We participated on May 16-17 at the Wings over Wayne, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base Air Show, at Goldsboro, NC. We brought three helicopters for display: Brock Nicholson with a Huey H model, Sam McLamb with a Dust-off UH-1M model, and Ed Hughes with an OH-6 "loach"

We participated on May 22-28, honoring Vietnam Veterans for Memorial Day events at the Sheraton Convention Center, Myrtle Beach, SC. We showed off our helicopter AH-1G 68-15095. It flew in Vietnam as an 11th ACR, Thunder-horse. Painted up as the "WIDOWMAKER", some of you may have flown her.

The 3rd Qtr started with NCVHPA's Charlie model Gunship and UH-1H model helicopter at the VHPA Convention in Washington, but you all know about that. All our people had a great time. We hope all of you did too.

NCVHPA was in Swannanoa, NC the week of September 9-14, with the Moving Wall and a 9 - 11 remembrance. We displayed our UH-1C Gunship, UH-1H Slick, OH-6, and OH-58. Two search lights were placed behind the apex of the wall for a tribute to the first responders of 9 - 11. It is worth mentioning that most fallen helicopter pilots were first responders. Their names are etched in stone as the 9 - 11 first responders names are raised in bronze. What they have in common are the names not on the respective memorials due to their sacrifice.

During the same time, September 11 and 12, The



From L to R, Ed Hughes, Brock Nicholson, Jerry Seago, Lynn Stephens, Terry Lenior, Larry Pigg



48th Assault Helicopter Company Monument. Dedicated on Nov. 6, Ft. Rucker, AL

State of North Carolina and others put on a Veterans Fair, 1st Strike, in Raleigh, NC. We provided support in the way of our AH-1G Gunship and M model Dust Off helicopters.

A mission that was asked of us, we wish we would never have to do again, to assist in the funeral of our long-time member and four-time President, Dustoff pilot J.D. Lawson. Adding a black shroud to the mast we convert-

ed our Dust Off Huey to a helicopter hearse. Ashes were picked up and delivered to his long-time church for a memorial. Afterward, a police escort led the way for the helicopter hearse and others to J.D.'s house for a private service that involved a keg of beer.

We all agreed J.D. always pulled his weight, the OH-6, and our legs. It was therefore fitting that we pull him in the OH-6 to Fort Leavenworth, KS, to be buried. 1140 miles later, J.D. was laid to rest in the fringe of a garden of stones in an area acceptable to a Dust off, if required.

NCVHPA's activity for the recent quarter has been impressive.

During the quarter Sam McLamb and ED Hughes took the UH-1M (Dust-Off) and the OH-6 to Cape Fear Academy and talked to approximately one hundred students between the ages of four and eighteen. Ed Hughes took the OH-6 to the Two Rivers Church and talked with sixty children in their Trail Life Program. He also took the OH-6 to Mitchell's Hardware Store in New Bern to support American Legion Post 539 efforts to sell wreaths for Wreaths Across America.

On November 6, 2015, Brock Nicholson took our UH1-H Model to Fort Rucker for the presentation and erection of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company Monument. The 48th arrived on VN exactly 50 years ago in 1965 on that date. The names of 36 men lost during the Vietnam War adorn the monument erected in Veterans Park where more than 200 veterans gathered to honor those lost, as well as the rest of those who served in the 48th Assault Helicopter Company

By Larry Pigg President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The North Alabama Chapter (NAVHPA) has completed our usual frantic fall. We have supported more events and provided more service man-hours to the community than ever before.

We began with pulling Buc-3, our UH-1C/M, to the Cullman County Fair Parade in Cullman, AL on September 19th. Cullman is about 60 miles south of the Huntsville Executive Airport where Buc-3 is hangared. This was the NAVHPA's first time at this parade. Cullman's population is about 40,000, the police estimated that approximately 10,000 of them saw the parade. Buc-3 was again a big hit.

September 26th saw us at Tate Farms, near the airport in northern Madison County for the Yulista employee family picnic. Yulista is our greatest sponsor. So, we were glad to bring Buc-3 there so the families could see what their parents and grandparents had been talking about. More than a thousand were able to see, and sit in a Huey that had flown in Vietnam. Then on the 30th, we were asked to bring Buc-3 to the grand opening of the first Cabela's in Alabama.

October began with NAVHPA members assisting our partner, The Schnitzel Ranch, manning a German food booth at the Madison Street Festival. On October 15th we exhibited Buc-3 at the AAAA Oktoberfest celebration the Huntsville Botanical Gardens. Many former aviation folks got to lay hands on a Huey for the first time in many years. The 24th saw about 40 NAVHPA members and their families visiting the Southern Museum of Flight in Birmingham, AL. There we saw many aircraft and lots of aviation memorabilia. The highlight may have been an OH-6 Scout and UH-1H in a diorama of an assault operation complete with audio recorded in RVN. Many of our members reported "chills" remembering their own experiences brought to life again.

November was also non-stop for the NAVHPA. We started by volunteering to "fluff" wreaths that would be placed on the graves of over 2000 veterans interred in local cemeteries. This is our third year assisting this



worthy cause. In early December we will take a couple of days to place the wreaths on the graves before Christmas. This is part of the nationwide "Wreaths Across America" tribute to our fallen veterans.

Then we began our normal (busier than h—l) November round of parades and displays. Many local schools request our presence as they teach the importance of veterans to our grandchildren. We try to accommodate all that we can.

November 4th began a week of activity back in Cullman. On the way south we pulled Buc-3 in the Gadsden Veterans Parade celebration and ended the day in Cullman in preparation for displays at Cullman High School on the 6th and a display at the Cullman Veteran's Day celebration on the 7th. The featured speaker at the Cullman Hero's Dinner on the 6th was our own former astronaut, experimental test pilot and Vietnam cobra pilot, BG (ret) Bob Stewart. Then it was back to Huntsville for a display at the Jackson Center supporting the national 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War lecture series there.

On November 11th, more than 50 NAVHPA members



It takes a big crew to display Buc-3, Endeavor Elementary School



Buc-3 was the hit of the parade in Cullman



BG (Ret) Bob and Mary Stewart at the Cullman Hero's dinner

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

and our families marched with Buc-3 in the Huntsville Veterans Day Parade. Buc-3 was, again, the hit of the parade. Several of us expressed that thought that, either the parade was going faster or we were getting slower. We decided to ask them to slow the pace next year because obviously they went too fast this year. It couldn't be us!

November 13th saw us displaying Buc-3 at Endeavor elementary school in Huntsville. Our fame had preceded us. It seemed the entire student body wanted to sit in the pilots seats. On November 23rd we again supported the Schnitzel Ranch in providing German food at the Madison Kris Kindle Market. German Stollen, Bratwurst and pretzels were a hit. Then we took a break

for Thanksgiving with our families.

December 14th will mark our annual NAVHPA Christmas Party. After the pace of our fall activity, we plan to gather to celebrate the season with more than 50 of our members and spouses, eat some good food and perhaps even consume some 'adult beverages'. We think we deserve a party.

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. Come on out!! We'll give you a chance to get all those good old war stories out of your system.

By Ralph Weber

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

We have been very busy since the Reunion. We cruised the Rappahannock river aboard the Captain Thomas on September 12th. We viewed many American Bald Eagles on the way to Ingleside Plantation Winery; where we enjoyed lunch, and tasting.

On October 24th we conducted a luncheon meeting at Olde Liberty Station Restaurant in Bedford VA., after which we toured the National D-Day Memorial. Bedford lost 19 sons on the first day of that invasion. Our chapter is purchasing a brick on the Veterans Memorial Walk. A number of us stayed at the Peaks of Otter Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Our officer elections were held on November 7th. I was re-elected President, Jim Squyres as VP, Jim Holden as Treasurer, and Hugh Adams as our Secretary.

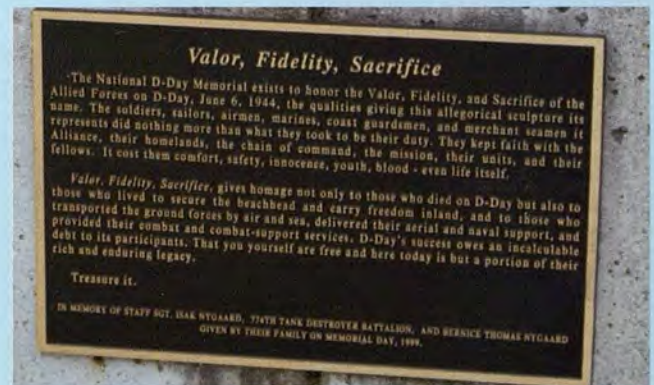
We are joining the Richmond Chapter of the MOAA for our Christmas Gala at the Meadowbrook Country Club in Richmond on December 4th.

At 11:00 on April 22nd, we will support Rich Severin at the 59th re-dedication of the Charlottesville



Dogwood Vietnam Memorial. It was initially dedicated in April of 1966 as the first public-civic memorial in the US to honor all who served, especially those who lost their lives in Southeast Asia. We will likely revisit Vietnam War Foundation Museum in Ruckersville on the same or next day.

By Don Agren, President



Plaque at the National D-Day Memorial



Old Dominion members and wives at the National D-Day Memorial



The Olde Liberty Station Restaurant in Bedford VA

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The So Cal Chapter had our annual business/election meeting at the Newport Beach Elks. We had a great turnout, see attached picture. I am again your SoCal President. Ron Warner is still your Vice President and Jim Grimm is our new Secretary/Treasurer.

The 14th Annual Wings Wheels and Rotors Expo was held at the Los Alamitos Army Airfield and was a real success. We shared our space with Quad A (Army Aviation Association of America). This year we were unable to have a helicopter next to our booth; however Andy Hoder drove his three-wheel Morgan Classic and it helped draw a crowd. Many old and new friends came by but it was hard to get everyone together at the same time for the photo shoot.

Fisher House SoCal had their groundbreaking ceremony at the Long Beach VA and over 400 attended. Next summer we will have a 16 unit facility on the VA grounds where Veteran families can stay for free while visiting Veterans at the VA Hospital. This will be the 65th Fisher House built for Veteran families. I am



A group of members at the Newport Beach meeting.

proud to say that our VHPA SoCal Chapter was able to help contribute funds to make this happen.

I'd like to thank everyone for their support and help. All of you have made it possible to have a successful Chapter.



Manning the tent at the Wings and Rotors Expo at Los Alamitos AAF

By Sven Akeeson, President

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

On November 7, 2015, the fourth quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter, VHPA, was held in the Silver Dollar City Parlor of the Keeter Center, College of the Ozarks. Upon completion of the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence and prayer for missing friends and fellow warriors, chapter member

Harris Flanagin conducted the Missing Man Ceremony in remembrance and honor of those we have lost.

When the ceremony was completed with the playing of Taps, chapter president John Wilkinson welcomed the members and spouses attending, and several special guests. On Friday the College of the Ozarks dedicated the Veterans' Grove, which has been established in



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

conjunction with the Missouri Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. The college has also established a program, the Patriotic Education Travel Program, which pairs students from the college with Veterans, taking them back to the battlefields where they fought. This program has been developed to reinforce the Patriotic Goal of the college by honoring veterans and educating the students about the sacrifices of those who have served their country. Several veterans who participated in the Vietnam trip in the fall of 2014 attended the dinner. Veterans attending were John Clark, Tom Egleston, Lou Eisenbrandt, Paul Frampton, and past chapter president John Sorensen. Student hosts also at the dinner were Molly Matney, Caleb McElvain, Jonathan Minner, and Jacob Mullet. Also guests were Dr. Jerry C. Davis, President of College of the Ozarks, and Dr. Fred Mullinax, Executive Vice President.

Molly Matney spoke briefly of the impact the Patriotic Travel Program has had on her and other student participants, Dr. Davis made some brief comments which included the fact the College of the Ozarks was the only educational facility recognized for its outstanding support of the



National Guard and Reserve, and past president John Sorensen made a presentation on behalf of the chapter to Dr. Mullinax, who is retiring at the end of the year, in recognition of his support for the chapter.

After the meal, John Sorensen introduced Lou Eisenbrandt, our speaker for the day. Lou was a nurse, serving with the 91st Evac Hospital in Chu Lai 1969-1970. Her talk about her tour and her pictures of

the hospital environment were interesting, and provided a view of war that many of us never saw. Lou is the author of the book titled "Vietnam Nurse: Mending and Remembering." Excellent book; available at bookstores.

The scheduling of the next meeting is in process with the Public Affairs Office of the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB. It is tentatively scheduled for late March or early April. Information will be sent as available by e-mail and posted on the chapter website, www.vhpasmo.org.

I would like to thank everyone who came to this meeting, all those who participated, and all those from the College and the Keeter Center for their help and support. Thank you all.

By John B. Wilkinson, President

COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



The CHPA is a non-profit military association of Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, and former U.S. Military Combat Rotary-Wing pilots and crew members, from all wars.

DUTY · HONOR · COURAGE · NEVER EVER FORGET

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The CHPA is a non -profit military association of Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, and former U.S. and commonwealth military combat rotary wing pilots and crewmembers, from all wars.

Our purpose is Unity, Legacy, and Remembrance of fallen comrades.

For Information on Preserving Our Legacy, visit the website or request a brochure from our HQ in Divide Colorado

www.CHPA-US.org

Combat Helicopter Pilots Association
PO Box 42
Divide, CO 80814-0042

COMBAT HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION



Dear Editor

My name is Erin Miller. I'm a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and I'm currently writing a book about Wisconsin's MIAs from the Vietnam War. As I've been doing this, I've been given the opportunity to talk to dozens of veterans and heard their stories.

I tell you this because I've been in close contact with members of the 148th AHC, and was recently forwarded this email from Dennis Wilson.

I wonder if a note could be posted inquiring about anyone who may have gone through flight school with my younger brother, CW2 Michael Richard "Dick" Wilson. Dick was with the 118th AHC, when he was shot down, and later died of his injuries in 1968. With many pulling multiple tours in RVN during that time, I'm thinking there may be some of his buddies who knew him in flight school or RVN. If you have the appropriate information please contact me.

Thanks, Dennis [REDACTED]

Class Photo

Does any VHPA member happen to have a class photo of Class 68-20 B-4 2nd Officer Student Company? My copy is in poor condition. I am trying to gather memories for my father in law Ronald Root. Please contact me if you can be of assistance.

Thanks,

Rebekah Root [REDACTED]

Project and personal request

I am the author of "First Over There," a book published this summer by Macmillan which tells the true story of America's first battle and victory in WWI. Link follows: <http://www.amazon.com/First-Over-There-Cantigny-Americas/dp/1250056446>

None of that has anything to do with the VHPA, but my current project covers part of America's experience in Vietnam, and I am trying my best to get in contact with some helicopter pilots and crews (I have interviewed quite a few infantry and artillery guys, but would really like to hear pilots' perspectives) to get the history right. I understand your time and your members' time is valuable and fully understand those who do not wish to share, but I would appreciate knowing if anyone is willing to speak with me about their own memories and experience. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Personally, and most importantly, my father-in-law, Cpt. Jessie W. Watson, Jr., flew a UH-1(C, I believe) with the Blue Ghosts of F Troop/8th Cav, which was assigned to the 1st Armored Cav. during his tour in '68-'69. He passed in 2000 but we have a few pictures your association might be interested in, and if there are other members of his troop / regiment out there, I'd like to connect with them for my wife and mother-in-law.

Thank you for your time, and all best regards,

Matt Davenport vietnamwarhistory@yahoo.com

UPCOMING REUNIONS

Silver Spur Reunion

Dates: April 20 - 24, 2016

Location: Radisson Hotel - Branson, Missouri

Contact: Bill McCalister (Silver Spur 24)

Email: silvertip_trading@yahoo.com

Additional info online: [google](http://google.com) A troop 3/17th Air Cav

All 3/17th Squadron members welcome!

15th Medical Battalion Association

18th Annual 15th Medical Battalion Association Reunion

April 11-18, 2016 Olympia, WA Red Lion Hotel

Reunion Coordinator Larry Hatch at:

campingout@comcast.net (360) 491-6486

Registration forms:

Association Treasurer David Huser at vvhuser@gmail.com

Aviation Platoon, HHC 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

RVN - June 1965 - January 1972

Call signs - Eagle, Griffin, Little Griffin, Deadbone.

3rd Annual mini-reunion, 2016, February 12-13, Ft. Myers, FL

POC is Pete Rzeminski: email: pjr@pjr.net

phone: 708-361-1330

<http://www.vhpadata.org/unit/HHC1BDE101ABN.pdf>

D-Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry Regiment

2016 Annual Reunion

April 28 through May, 2016

Location: Daytona Beach, FL

Contact & Information: Rick Roll

Email: rroll@comcast.net

www.lighthorseaircav.com

227th Assault Helicopter Battalion Reunion

Company A, Company D, their guests and other members and friends of the 227th AHB

April 27 - April 30, 2016

Location: OMNI Atlanta Hotel / CNN Center, Atlanta, GA

Information online at: <http://reunion.a227ahb.org/>

1st Aviation Brigade 50th Anniversary

May 12th - May 15th, 2016

Location: Fort Rucker, AL

POC: Larry Castagneto

Email: Goldenhawkes.1stavnbd50th@gmail.com

Legion of Valor of the USA

April 13-17, 2016

Location: Fresno CA

POC: Phil Conran

4704 Calle Reina, Santa Barbara, CA 93110

(805) 692-2244

Want to see your Reunion listed here?

Send details to: Aviator@VHPA.org

TAPS

Butler, John H. USA Flight Class: 70-11/70-9, RVN: 70-71 B/7/1 CAV, Callsign Dutchmaster 17

John was born on June 2, 1947, to Henry Caston Butler and Haskell Vance Butler in Philadelphia, PA. He served his country first in the U.S. Navy as an Air Traffic Controller and then in the U.S. Army as a Cobra Helicopter pilot. He did two tours of duty in Viet Nam. In civilian life he served his community as a Law Enforcement Officer. He retired as Captain of the Carrboro Police Department.

John loved his family very much. He died on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, in Burlington, NC. He leaves behind his wife, Pamela Tucker Butler; two daughters and two sisters. He is preceded in death by his dear brother, Rick.

John made us laugh often and will be greatly missed.

DeVito, James USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 68-2, RVN: 68 A/7/17 CAV, 69 B/7/1 CAV, Callsigns: Ruthless Rider 12, Dutchmaster



Jim passed on October 26, 2015. He was the kind of man Teddy Roosevelt described as, "The man who is actually in the arena; who strives valiantly; who errs... because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

He was born on November 29, 1946, the son of Louis and Verona (Budden) DeVito. He grew up in Carmichael when it was new and shiny and kids roller skated in the streets and drove their hot rods on those same streets when they got to be teenagers. Hot rods became the first of his great enthusiasms in life, the other being helicopters. He liked things that went fast. And then there was golf.

When his country called in 1968, he answered, was selected for Officer Candidate School, trained to fly helicopters

and then volunteered as a scout pilot. The scout's mission was to fly as low and slow as possible to search for signs of enemy troops or to find them by drawing fire, to dare greatly and be fearless as hell. And that was perfect for Jim. He made the military his career, first in the Army and then full-time for the California National Guard, where he retired in 1989.

After living around the U.S., overseas, and parts of California, he moved back to Carmichael. He fought valiantly against the cancer that ended his life. He'll join his brothers in arms at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery. Jim's great devotion was to his family and friends, the people he loved who so loved him back. He is survived by his mother Verona, wife Gina, a daughter, a son, two stepchildren, a brother a sister, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his father Lou, wife Jeni, He was never small, cold or timid, and always based his decisions on what was best for others. He lives on in all of us.

Dewitt, Roger J. USA: Flight Classes: 66-19/66-17, RVN: 66-67 A/229 AVN 1 CAV, 70 23 ART GRP, Callsigns: Star 3A/Red Wing



Roger 'Huey Taxi' Juan DeWitt, 69, of Lakeland, Florida passed away on October 6, 2015 from cancer. Roger was born in Penny Farms, Florida on August 2, 1946. He was married to Robette on May 18, 1968.

Roger spent the majority of his adult life in the Citrus Industry, retiring from Florida's Natural Growers. He served two tours in Vietnam with the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot flying Hueys and ended his service as Captain in Artillery. He earned many awards and medals for his military service.

Roger's biggest passion was always for fast sports cars and photography. His other passion was his love of our local baseball team, The Flying Tigers.

Roger was preceded in death by his father, Charles, and mother, Phyllis, as well as his son Ryan. Roger is survived by his wife Robette "Robie", a daughter and a granddaughter.

Ferguson, Joel D. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 68-501/68-1, RVN: 68-69 281 AHC, 71 192 AHC, 71-72 52 CAB, Callsigns: Wolfpack 37/Tiger Shark 34/Dragon 36A



Joel David Ferguson, age 68 of Clarksville, passed away Monday, October 12, 2015 at his residence. Joel was born April 3, 1947 in Lincoln, Nebraska, the son of the late Manfred Ferguson and Leola McKee Ferguson. He retired after 20 years of service, including 2 tours in Vietnam from the U.S. Army as a Cobra Helicopter Pilot. He is a member of the Attack Helicopter Pilot Association and a member of Clarksville Church of God.

He is survived by his two daughters, two sons, four grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Fort Campbell Fisher House, at 652 Joel Drive, Fort Campbell, KY 42223.

Fleming, Russell K. USA CPT (Ret.) Flight Classes: 69-46/69-42, RVN: 70-71 B Troop, 7/1 Cavalry, Callsign: Dutchmaster

Russell "Snuffy" Fleming, 67, died on August 26, 2015 after a long term illness. He was born on February 11, 1948 in San Antonio, Texas, and was a long term resident of Junction, TX.

He graduated from Junction High School in 1966, and then attended Abilene Christian College. While in college, he enlisted in the Army, and subsequently completed Officer Candidate School and flight school. Snuffy completed the Cobra Transition Course enroute to Vietnam. Upon arrival in RVN, he was based in Vinh Long. Toward the later part of his tour, he accompanied his unit to Quang Tri and flew Cobras in Laos during Lam Son 719. An outstanding pilot, during his tour he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with "V" Device. Following his tour in RVN he was assigned to Ft Hood, TX, and was later medically retired. Returning to Junction, Texas, he served as a County Commissioner. An avid hunter and fisherman, in his spare time he was a deer guide, and enjoyed spending time with his family

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He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Mary Katherine Fleming, who herself is a real trooper and hero for serving as his primary caregiver for many years after his illnesses began. He is also survived by two daughters, a son, six grandchildren, a brother and a sister. He will always be remembered by all who knew him as a genuine Texan, with a warm heart and quick wit.

Holbert, Donald L. USA
Flight Class: 63-1T, RVN: 67-68 240 AHC, Callsign: Mad Dog 6



Donald "Don" L. Holbert, one of Arkansas' great aviation pioneers, died September 27, 2015 in Little Rock, AR. Born on March 6, 1940 in Little Rock to Claud and Gladys Holbert, Don was a distinguished aviator who dedicated his entire life to his passion, aviation. His father began Central Flying Service, Little Rock, in 1939 where he instilled in Don a great love of aviation from a very young age. Don soloed the day following his 16th birthday, and by age 20 he received his instructor's license and began teaching at the family business.

A graduate of Wentworth Military Academy, Lexington, MO, in 1957 and Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR, in 1961, Don was a distinguished ROTC graduate and won many medals for his championship marksmanship.

Following his education, Don received a commission with distinction in the U.S. Army where he rose to the rank of Captain. He was a platoon leader and gunship helicopter pilot in Vietnam earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, 32 Air Medals and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

He returned stateside in 1968 and continued his career in aviation at Central Flying Service that spanned 60 years. Don helped to establish Arkansas' first medical transport helicopter in 1985. The helicopter, a Bell 206, known today as "Angel One" provided critical care transport to pediatric patients across Arkansas and surrounding states.

His father, who was a pilot himself, taught Don the skills to be an expert aerial photography pilot. His ability to fly while holding the aircraft incredibly steady earned Don the rights to some very

interesting assignments. Among them, on June 11, 1977, Don was the pilot of a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter for NBC's national news crew covering the escape and capture of James Earl Ray, the alleged killer of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Another assignment, Don was called upon to fly was the national news crew for CBS on August 18, 1975 to cover the funeral of Elvis Presley in Memphis, TN. CBS entrusted Don and his steady abilities to navigate through the media frenzy, which earned CBS top coverage of the event.

Don served as board member to the National Air Transportation Association, an organization that represents general aviation interests in Washington, D.C. He was currently serving on the Board of Visitors, Wentworth Military Academy, and the Executive Advisory Board of the School of Business at Ouachita Baptist University. Don was a founding member of the Arkansas Aviation Historical Society and inducted into the Arkansas Aviation Hall of Fame in 2006.

Don obtained an Airline Transport Pilot Rating with privileges in single and multi-engine airplanes and Lear jets. He accumulated 5,000 flying hours, half in fixed wing aircraft and half in helicopters. He was co-owner and Chairman of the Board of Central Flying Service, Inc. until his death.

Don was an avid hunter and fisherman. He also loved restoring antique cars. Don won numerous medals for his restoration skills. He was a philanthropic man and a member of many organizations who silently and generously donated to most all of them.

He is survived by wife of 54 years, Linda Vail Holbert, a son Steve, a granddaughter, and a brother.

Heath, Lester E. Jr. USA Flight Class: 65-21, RVN: 66 69 SIG BN/39 SIG BN, Callsigns: Cable Car/Wolf House

Lester Ellis Heath Jr. of Weatherford passed away Tuesday, October 20, 2015 at his residence. Lester was born November 6, 1939 in Bossier City, LA to Lester and Benita Jahn Heath. He was an avid fisherman, golfer and photographer with travels including multiple safaris in South Africa. Lester was a CW3, with one tour in Vietnam flying helicopters, a flight instructor at Fort Wolters in Mineral Wells and was consid-

ered a Decorated Hero for saving people from a burning oil rig off Lafayette LA while working for PHI (Petroleum Helicopters Inc.). Lester is survived by his wife Becky, two grandchildren, two sisters a brother and his Ex-wife, Jackie Rhoten of Weatherford.

Kimel, Gerald D. USA (Ret.) Flight Class: 65-8W, RVN: 66 HHC 3 BDE 4 INF, 66-67 C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, Callsign: Brave Fighter 13

Gerald D. "Jerry" Kimel of Daleville passed away on Sunday, September 20, 2015 at The Flowers Hospital.

Jerry was born July 27, 1943, in Detroit, MI, to the late John and Freida Mitchell Kimel. He retired from the United States Army after twenty years, during which time he served in Vietnam and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church.

Survivors include his loving wife of 54 years Gail Kimel of Daleville; two daughters, a son, a sister, six grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. The family thanks Covenant Hospice for their loving, compassionate care.

Burial with full military honors will follow at a later date in Arlington National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Jerry may be made to Covenant Hospice, 104 Rock Bridge Road, Dothan, AL 36303

Maltais, Richard T. USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Class: 67-7 RVN: 67-68128th AHC, Callsign: Tomahawk 9



Richard Maltais died on October 20, 2015 from diabetes related complications in his Knoxville, TN home. He is survived by his son. Rich grew up in New Jersey and was born in Teaneck on March 23, 1941. He completed one tour in Vietnam flying UH-1s in the Army, and also flew CH-37s after the war. Rich entered as a Warrant Officer and retired as Major after serving 20 years. In addition to aviation, his appointments included air traffic control, company command, and research and development on Army

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communications systems. His duty stations included Korea, Germany, Colorado, New Mexico, Missouri, Virginia and New Jersey. After retirement from the Army, Rich continued in the private sector as project manager on military communications systems.

Regardless of time or vocation, Rich's identity as a Huey pilot endured through the years. His other great passion was railroads. In retirement he rode a number of vintage railroads throughout the country, and traversed New Zealand, Africa and Alaska by rail.

Rich was a man of high standards throughout his life who didn't hesitate doing whatever it took. In his later years his unconditionally kind and charitable nature was notable.

McDonald, Robert W. USA Flight Class: 65-3W, RVN: 65-66 D/227 AVN 1 CAV, Callsign: Devil 23

Robert "Bob" William McDonald, born January 14, 1943, deeply loved husband of Joanie McDonald passed away peacefully on October 3, 2015, of prostate cancer.

He served in Vietnam as a helicopter Pilot and later flew for almost 40 years for Era Aviation, working on the Alaska Pipeline and later USDA Forest Service and Fire Fighting. He is missed every day.

O'Donnell, Bernard J. USA Flight Classes: 68-515/68-27, RVN: 68-69 134 AHC, Callsign: Demon 74



Bernard John O'Donnell (born 1948) Vietnam Veteran, CW2 Helicopter Pilot passed on November 15, 2015.

He leaves his companion, Nancy; ex-wife Cathy, two daughters, a grandson, two sisters and four brothers.

He was interred in the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. Memorial donations: Vietnam Veterans of America Chicago Chapter 242.

Refsell, Lloyd P USA (no other data)

Lloyd Refsell Menomonee Falls, WI died on November 8, 2015, at age 71. He is survived by his wife of 47 years Kathryn; two sons, two grandchildren, and a brother. He was preceded in death by his parents, Rev. Dr. Lloyd G. and Mar-

guerite K. Refsell; and his brothers, Steve and Jon.

Paul was a graduate of Dana College in Blair, Nebraska and was an Assault Helicopter Pilot in the US Army serving two tours in the Vietnam War. He retired from Sears after 35 years of service. Paul was a humble, gentle, loving spirited man, intuitively considerate of others and loved athletics of all kinds, especially golf.

Memorial donations: First Tee of South-eastern Wisconsin, 11350 W. Theodore Trecker Way, West Allis, WI 53214.

Reynolds, Dabney A. USA Flight Class: 72-16, RVN: 72-73 F/9 1CAV, Callsign: Saber Spoon



"Ray" Dabney passed away in Alpine, Texas on September 15, 2015. He was born September 23, 1947 in Munich, Germany to Walter Davis Dabney, Jr. and Charlotte Ramsey. He was the second of nine children. He spent his childhood and then high school years in San Antonio and Uvalde, graduating from Highland Park High School in Dallas in 1966.

He next attended Texas A&M University in College Station, and was a member of the Corps of Cadets Company D-1 "Spider D", graduating with the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 1970. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Parks and Recreation. Upon graduation, Ray was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Army, spending 13 months in 1972 and 1973 flying helicopters with the 1st of the 9th Air Cavalry F Troop in Vietnam, earning a Bronze Star and fourteen Air Medals.

After being honorably discharged as a Captain, he spent a short time in Georgia and then returned to Texas and attended graduate school while working at the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority in Edna, Texas.

In 1977, he married his sweetheart, Laura Dishman, in Uvalde. During their time in Edna, they had two children. In 1981, the family returned to Uvalde where Ray started working for his father-in-law at Kinney County Wool & Mohair. In 1991, he began working for Del Monte Foods. He thoroughly enjoyed becoming an expert on the crops of the Winter Garden area, and especially working with and becoming friends with, his coworkers and numerous farmers in the area.

Ray and Laura both retired in 2011. They spent the last four years traveling to various places in Europe, as well as around the United States, kayaking, and spending as much time as possible with their children and grandchildren.

Ray was a lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church, USA and spent a great deal of his time faithfully serving his local church in several capacities.

Ray is survived by his loving wife of 38 years, Laura; a daughter, a son, a grandson, three granddaughters, five sisters, and three brothers.

A service for the celebration of Ray's life was held at First Presbyterian Church Uvalde, September 23, 2015, his 68th birthday. A private interment ceremony was held the morning of September 24 with family at Hillcrest Cemetery in Uvalde.

Honorary pallbearers were the men of First Presbyterian Church Uvalde, pilots in the 1st of the 9th Air Cavalry Vietnam '72-'73, Texas A&M Corps of Cadets classmates of Company D-1 "Spider D", West Texas mule deer hunters, and the men of the Uvalde agricultural community.

Memorial gifts in honor of Ray may be made to First Presbyterian Church Uvalde or the American Red Cross.

Tiesing Jack E. Sr. USA Flight Class: 67-3, RVN: 68 HHC 3 BDE 82 ABN, 68-69 191 AHC, Callsigns: Kiwi 27/Boomerang 00

Jack Edward Tiesing, Sr. of New Albany, Indiana, passed away on Sunday, November 15, 2015.

He had a love for his country, helicopters, and all aviation. He was a member of the American Legion, VFW, Masons, and Shriners. Jack was a United States Army veteran that proudly served his country during the Vietnam War and was honored for his heroism. Jack was one of the fifteen original members of the Ohio River LZ VHPA chapter. He enjoyed hunting in his younger years, making primitive clothing, painting and building weapons. He enjoyed the time he spent with his friends at the Aero Club. Jack retired from General Electric in Louisville.

He was born on April 15, 1946 in Belvedere, Illinois to the late Ferdinand and Gladys (Stevenson) Tiesing. Jack is

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survived by his two sons; four grandchildren, and a sister.

His burial was at the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central (2501 N. Dixie Boulevard, Fort Knox, KY 40121). Contributions in Jack's memory may be made to the Masonic Lodge #335 (805 E. Market Street, New Albany, IN 47150) or the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Wiley, Raymond F. USMC MAJ (Ret.)
Flight Class: 4-56, RVN: 65 VMFA-513,
68 HMH-463

Raymond F. Wiley born in Orange, NJ on February 12, 1933 died on October 22, 2015.

He was raised in Rockville Centre, New York. He entered flight school in Pensacola Florida and became a Naval Aviator on June 14, 1957. After receiving jet training in Memphis, TN he received orders to El Toro Air Station to squadron VMFA 311. Highlights of his flying career include; flying several types of jets including the Phantom. He served two tours in Vietnam, 1964-1965 and 1968-1969. In 1971 served as the Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of HMH-362(the Ugly Angels), a CH-53 squadron. During the period 1972-1974, he was a CH-46 test pilot at MCAS Cherry Point Reworks Facility. Major Wiley retired from the US Marine Corps in 1976.

He was a school teacher and taught science at Jacksonville Jr. High and science and math teacher at Trexler Middle School. He retired in June 1998.

Beginning at age 26 while stationed at MCAS Beaufort, SC he began officiating high school basketball and football. Upon arriving in Onslow County he continued officiating basketball until 1995 and in 1996 with his good friend Chuck Henry as line judge, he officiated his last football game. In 2013, he officiated at his last volleyball game. He was 80 years young!

He was most proud of participating and officiating at two Special Olympics World Games: 1999 at Chapel Hill and 2003 in Ireland. He served as president of New River Officials 1975-1076, was a member of the Over 40 Softball League for 15 years, served on the North Carolina Volleyball Officials' Board, served for 10 years as USA Volleyball Referees' Chairman, Umpired 5 Exhibition softball

games between The King and his Court vs US Marines at Camp Lejeune.

Those left to cherish his memory are: Gloria, his wife, (married July 20, 1957) three daughters, two grandsons, and four sisters.

Raymond was buried in the Coastal Carolina State Veterans Cemetery with military honors. Memorials may be made to The Camp Lejeune Fisher House, 4 Recovery Way, CLNC, 28547, and Infant of Prague Catholic Church 214 Marine Blvd. Jacksonville, NC 28540.

Wikinson, John L. USAF
(Ret.) Flight Class: 51,
RVN: 69-70 AFAT-I, Call-
sign: Radio John

John L. Wilkinson Jr., a military hero, devoted father, accomplished traveler, food lover and ladies' man, died Thursday, October 15, 2015, surrounded by family and friends at a Fort Worth nursing home. He was a lifetime member of the Order of the Daedalians.

When Face Timing with grandchildren, he said he was just like Captain Kirk. The Dallas Cowboys was his favorite team, and he rarely missed a game. John relished the outdoors. Flying was an early passion; boating ran a close second. After retiring, he loved taking his motor home on long trips, camping in the mountains, boating with his grandkids and gardening. At the beach, he snorkeled and kayaked daily.

John was especially proud of his military service. He would say he served "31 years, 11 months, seven days" in a variety of assignments that began as a single-engine instructor and spanned World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, which culminated as a base commander. A highlight of his career came when he was chosen as one of President Eisenhower's helicopter pilots. The photo of him landing on the White House lawn is a family treasure. He flew countless medical evacuation and rescue missions in the Korean and Vietnam wars, often flying directly into teeth of the enemy to save the wounded under the most dangerous conditions. While there were medals, ribbons, oak leaves and citations, the one thing he cherished most was being one of the lucky ones, and always making it



home to family. He knew the true meaning of "Freedom is not free."

Memorials: donations may be made to the Daedalian Scholarship Fund to the Order of Daedalians, 23rd Flight, Box 8236, Fort Worth, Texas 76124-0236.

Wyman, Theodore P. USA
LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 72-
4.RVN: 72-73 F/1/9 CAV 1
CAV, Callsign: Saber 36



Theodore Phillips Wyman, 66, passed peacefully on Sunday, October 4, 2015. He died as he lived, with bravery, dignity, and surrounded by his loving family. His strength, knowledge, leadership, and sense of humor will be missed by all those who knew him. Ted was a leader, humble, considerate to a fault, honest, accepting, generous, determined, articulate, and loving. Ted was a gentleman, always displaying kindness, gratitude and grace.

He was a decorated Vietnam Veteran and Norwich graduate. His military career spanned 34 years. He was the recipient of numerous awards to include: Meritorious Service, 3 Air Medals, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, and the Order of St. Michael. His passion for aviation safety led to his key positions as instructor pilot, flight examiner, commander of the VT Army Aviation facility, and State Aviation officer. Although he cherished his command positions, his greatest satisfaction came from teaching and mentoring his fellow guardsmen to ensure the overall success of the Army Aviation program. His ability to lead and inspire was held in great respect by those with whom he worked. He considered it an honor to serve alongside of his fellow Guardsmen.

He was an active member of the Richmond Congregational Church, VT, Respite House volunteer, and loving caregiver for his grandchildren. He enjoyed preparing meals for his loved ones, model building, and hoping the Giants would win occasionally.

He is preceded in death by his parents Marion and Thomas Wyman. Ted is survived by his wife, Barbara; a daughter, a son, two grandsons, a sister and three brothers.

Memorials: Richmond Congregational Church or Vermont Respite House.

TAPS

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

Barrett, Alfred USA Flight Class: 68-12/68-18 died on March 3, 2015 (no other data).

Lachance, Michael USA Flight Class 69-34 died on October 4, 2015 (no other data).

Clements, Glenn R. USA Flight Class: 70-1 died on October 11, 2015 (no other data).

Mashaw, Thomas J. USA Flight Class 70-4 died on November 13, 2015 (no other data).

Clapp, Frederick L. USA died on November 21, 2015 (no other data).

Newton, Albert USA died on October 25, 2015 (no other data).

Elmeer, Philip S. USA Flight Class 69-40 died on November 3, 2015 (no other data).

Pedrick, Eugene S. USA died on November 9, 2015 (no other data).

Hegdahl, James O. USA, RVN: 65 A/1 AVN 1 INF, 71 HHC/10 CAB died on October 20, 2015.

Provencher, Conrad USA LTC (Ret.) RVN: 65-66 162 AHC, 66 120 AHC, died on November 21, 2015.

Huffman, Johnny W. USA Flight Class 70-38, RVN: 66-67 1/27 INF 25 INF 72-73 120 AHC, Callsign Red 17, died on October 27, 2015.

Simon, Robert P. USA Flight Class 69-17 died on October 22, 2015 (no other data).

Kenny, James P. USMC CPT (Ret.) RVN: 65-66 HMM-261 died on October 28, 2015.

Sylvester, Ernest A. USA LTC (Ret.) RVN: 64-65 57 MED DET died on August 14, 2015.

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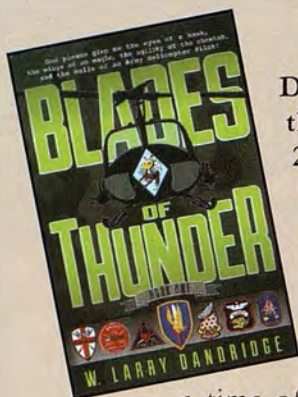
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VHPA member W. Larry Dandridge who served with the 121 AHC (68-69) and the 235th AWC (69) has written *Blades of Thunder: Book One*. It is an engaging story of the first tour of duty of six young Army aviators fresh out of flight school and their air crews. It was

a time of learning, sacrifice, and loss. None returned unchanged.

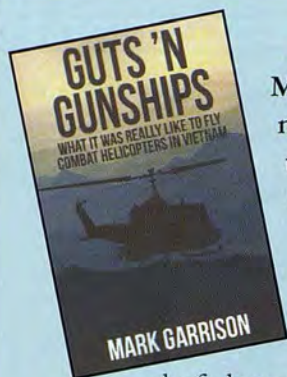
Clear concise narration of their combat missions in their AO including Soc Trang in the Mekong Delta out toward the Seven Mountains and the Cambodian border makes for compelling reading. Dandridge points out non-typical missions were often filled with dangerous events. Pilots always had to think quickly and seize upon opportunity such as executing the rescue of

Major James N. Rowe.

Blades of Thunder however is far more than a personal memoir. It includes biographies of many of the men Dandridge served with along with an extensive Vietnam War resource in the form of a number of appendices including Lessons Learned and Lessons Perhaps Not Learned.

Blades of Thunder: Book One (426 pages, 46 photos, \$15.99 paperback, Kindle \$9.99) by W. Larry Dandridge, ISBN: 978- 0578156378 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

All profits from this book go to Fisher House, Charleston, SC. Fisher House serves the needs of veterans undergoing treatment at the VA Medical Center in Charleston.



Guts 'N Gunships by VHPA Member Mark Garrison is a memoir of his service with the 119th AHC in 68-69, call sign "Croc". Garrison's journey to a C model Huey in RVN began when his student loan at Southern Illinois University came up short. His

draft board promptly reclassified him 1A.

A sympathetic Army recruiter suggested flight school and Garrison was soon headed down the WOC pipeline and the tender mercies of the TAC officers at Ft. Wolters, and the mysteries of IFR training at Ft. Rucker.

Arriving "in country" at Bien Hoa he moved on to Camp Holloway to join up with the 119th "Alligators" and "Crocodiles" whose AO was the entire Central Highlands including Plei Trap Valley and portions of Laos and Cambodia. His first combat mission was a violent introduction to the missions the 119th flew including inserting and recovering LRRPs from "hover holes" under fire and on the

run from the NVA. The 119th AHC flew other dangerous missions including "safe" gunship cover for C-123 Agent Orange ops. In due course, as FNG Garrison became more proficient, he was moved to the gunship platoon aka "Crocodiles."

Garrison has done a great job bringing out the personalities of his fellow pilots and crewmembers and his superb narration creates an intense reading experience. The war seemed unwinnable and getting as many of their fellow Americans home alive became the mission of the men of the 119th. Sadly, like many other Vietnam veterans, Garrison was met by war protestors when he arrived back in "the world." Garrison, like many Vietnam veterans came home "wounded" but after all those years he says "things finally did get better."

Guts 'N Gunships: What it was Really Like to Fly Combat Helicopters in Vietnam, (265 pages, \$13.46 paperback, Kindle \$3.99) by Mark Garrison, ISBN: 978-1629670539 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



364 Days and a Wakeup, by VHPA Member Michael Lazares who served with E/82 ARTY 1 CAV in 67-68 at Chu Lai, call sign Woodpecker, is a work of adult fiction based on his unit. As portrayed by Lazares, the men of E/82 are a strange bunch of characters indeed with no end of

mishaps and crazy, lunatic, and interesting situations. Fortunately, Lazares uses nicknames.

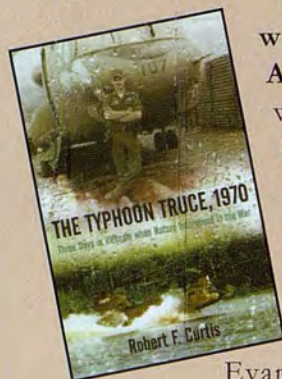
When a book begins with “any resemblance to actual people or events...” you know there is some truth to the stories. You will have to figure that out on your own. Flying naked, shooting at critters in the rafters of the hooch, “local

relationships”, a sling load “requisition” of a refrigerator, and some downright crazy people will keep you reading.

In spite of all the shenanigans, the men of E/82 are ready to roll when units like the LRRPs or some of their own are in a tight spot. Lazares, who served two tours of duty in Vietnam, is a master narrator of combat. His descriptions of the Woodpeckers in action make for an intense reading experience which is hard to put down.

Lazares has donated the profits of his books to veteran’s charities. He plans to donate the profits from this book toward the building of a Fisher House in Tucson.

364 Days and A Wake-UP (316 pages, \$15.00 paperback, Kindle \$3.99) Michael D. Lazares, ISBN: 978-1515258902 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.



Life member Robert F. Curtis who served with C/159th ASBH, call sign “Playtex,” has written his second book titled, *The Typhoon Truce, 1970*.

The rainy season challenged the Chinook pilots and crewmembers supply missions to the fire support bases in the mountains west of Phu Bai, Camp Evans, Quang Tri, and Dong Ha.

Low clouds aborted some missions, followed by an IFR climb to 6000 feet to clear the mountain tops and a radar vector back to base.

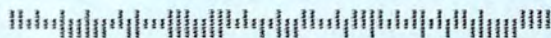
Super Typhoon Kate arrived in October 1970, and the Playtex crews found themselves with a new mission. An unofficial truce during wartime allowed for mercy missions rescuing villagers flooded out of their homes

and delivering food to other villages cut off from dry land. These missions saved lives, and fostered trust on both sides as men, women, and children were moved to higher ground – away from certain death.

Curtis, who uses a pseudonym as narrator of this story, has written what he calls a “non-war war story.” He has done a great job detailing the day to day operations, the command structure and the personalities of C/159th, complete with their triumphs and tragedies. You will have a hard time putting this one down.

The Typhoon Truce, 1970: Three Days in Vietnam when Nature Intervened in the War (257 pages, \$32.95 hardcover, Kindle \$11.49) by Robert F. Curtis, ISBN: 978-1612003290 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

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