



The VHPA AVIATOR


The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

On-line Membership Join/Renewal is Here!

After many years of often-interrupted development...

VHPA HQ is excited and pleased to announce it's now possible for you to renew your membership and new members to join on-line.

See Page 45, for more details.



Welcome, **Your Name Here**
[Home](#) [Logout](#)

Search

By Person's Name VHPA

By City, State & Zip

By Unit(s) in Vietnam

By Flight Class Number

By Call Sign

By Non-Army Services

Other Services

[Update My Information](#)

[Renew VHPA Membership](#)

Our records indicate that your membership has expired. Your membership expiration date is highlighted below. **Renew today** for access to the VHPA online directory and start receiving The Aviator magazine again.

Your Name Here

Status: MEM
Membership Expires on: Feb 28, 2000

Good Address? Yes
Good Email? Yes
Good Phone? Yes

4600 Sample Ave
Las Vegas, NV 89102

Home Phone: 205-583-1400

Email: reunion@vhpa.org

Occupation: Example

[Flight Class\(es\):](#)
69-XX

[Call Sign\(s\):](#)
MASHER

Anyone whose dues are expired sees this message.

Click here to begin your on-line renewal.

Update Details

Member #: **M00007** Renew Date: Feb 28, 2000

Before renewing your membership, please ensure that all information is correct. Please click the "Continue" button at the bottom of the page to continue the renewal process.

Name

For First, Middle or Last Name

First Name: Michael

Nick Name: [] Title: []

(Mr., Dr., CW2, CPT, etc. (Jr., Sr. etc))

Address

If needed, update your information, then scroll down to click the CONTINUE button at the bottom of the page.

Changes were saved successfully.

Renew Your Membership

Member #: **M00007** Renew Date: Feb 28, 2000

VHPA Membership

Membership dues are tax deductible. Tax deduction is based on the following age groups:

Age 80 and above:	\$75.00
Age 75 to 79:	\$100.00
Age 70 to 74:	\$150.00
Age 65 to 69:	\$250.00
Age 60 to 64:	\$350.00
Age 59 and below:	\$450.00

If your membership has not expired and you will receive a \$3.00 credit for any future dues.

Description	Choose an option below	Price	Item Total
Membership Dues	1	36.00	36.00
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 Year: \$36.00		
	<input type="radio"/> 3 Years: \$99.00		
	<input type="radio"/> Life: \$150.00		

Total for VHPA Membership: **36.00**

Click the appropriate button to select your membership choice. If you desire, further down the page you may order CDROM/paper directories and make a Voluntary Contribution before clicking CHECKOUT.

Please See Page 2 for Table of Contents.

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Vice President	John Shafer	
Past President	Bob Hesselbein	
Senior Member	Mike Sheuerman	
Midterm Member	John Sorensen	
Junior Member	Art Jacobs	
Secretary/Treasurer	John Powell	
Founder	Larry Clark	

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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



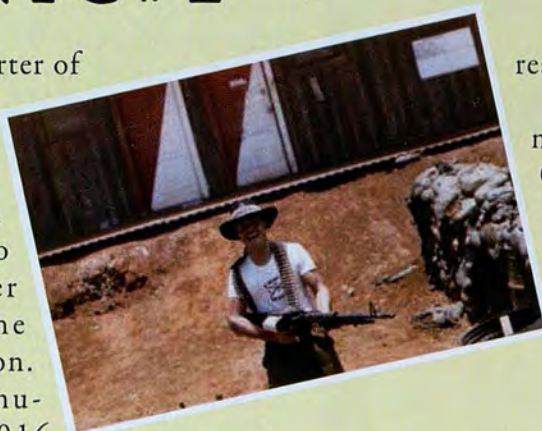
45 years ago this picture was taken at Khe Sanh. We were up to our ears in Lam Son 719. One of the pilots Jim Kane (in the center) has the distinction of directing a severely wounded scout ship back to Khe Sanh, with the observer flying the LOH. Later on that week he was to be shot down in Laos. I can only speak for myself, but Lam Son 719 was a defining moment as an Army pilot. On another note, we have members that had the distinction of serving in Desert Storm which was 25 years ago. Yes it is true, the Army National Guard and Reserves were called up for that operation and many Vietnam Era Helicopter Pilots after leaving active duty went on to the reserve components. In August of 1990 Desert Shield

kicked off, followed by Desert Storm in January 1991. In fact, our Managing Editor was one of those pilots who went to the sand box!

Enough history, the reunion in Reno is a little over 90 days away, have you signed up? The Executive Council and headquarters have been working towards updating the way we do business and the initial outlook is very promising. Pretty soon you will have a world class web site and be able to access data much more easily. We need all of our members to contact your member of congress that deals with military affairs and tell them that you want them to vote YES on HR#4298 which will allow the Vietnam Helicopter Memorial to be placed in ANC.

WONIC #2

Time flies. A quarter of the year has passed; so far so good as the year has been busy. I'm looking forward to the State chapter meetings and the 2016 VHPA reunion. In reading the January/February 2016



issue I note there are a lot of activities scheduled for the Reno reunion. Get signed up early to be scheduled for what you want. I've heard from friends the Peppermill Resort is

really an excellent site to host the reunion.

The VHPA is still working on The Vietnam Helicopter Crewmember Memorial Act. Get involved by contacting your state's Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor the bill HR 4298 which is led by Representative Mark E Amodei of Nevada. See the memorial update in this issue.

By John Shafer
Vice President VHPA
Treasurer Washington State Chapter VHPA

** Warrant Officer Next in Charge*

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 March of 1987, Incoming Mail

NO CLASSES, BUT TONS OF CLASS

I've been reading letters some of the Army pilots have been writing and was particularly struck by the way everyone seems to have their reunions by class or whatever they used to define their groups. I thought it might be time to clue some people in on how we Marines were organized and how come we don't have class reunions. This may take a while, so bear with me, I'll try to be brief and clear.

There were no organized classes in flight school (Pensacola). People just reported in and were assigned to begin training. Actually, there were groups that started together but everyone advanced at a different pace so you could pass a guy or be passed. It depended on a whole list of variables.

One major distinction was that all Marine and Navy pilots were officers. Some Navy people started as what was called NAVCADS and some Marines started as MARCADS. But this was only basic training and they still were commissioned before they could start flight training.

We all started flight training in the Beechcraft T-34 and usually accumulated 50-70 hours in it before advancing to the next stage where you were either chosen to fly jets, transports, or helicopters. This was determined by the number of open slots available that particular day at Meridian (jets), Kingsville (transports) or Whiting (the helo pipeline). One day everyone would go to Whiting, the next everyone went Meridian. It was rare for anyone, especially a Marine to go to Kingsville.

At Whiting we flew the T-28 and received aerobatic and instrument (both basic and advanced) training. We then went to Wolf Field and got qualified in fixed wing planes. It was at this point that we then started helicopter training.

We started out in the Bell TH-13M and after our solo in that went on to the H-34 for advanced training. Upon completion of this training we were awarded our Navy wings and were officially designated as a naval aviator (MOS 7599).

We were then sent to training squadrons on either the East or West Coast. Here you were further broken down as to whether or not you would fly heavy, medium, or light, and went to the appropriate squadron. Training in type was then commenced and eventually you received your final MOS according to type (7562 for us medium flyers).

We were then sent overseas, individually, but usually three or four of us would be together. Upon arrival at DaNang we were given our operational squadrons and away we went.

Because of this set-up we have squadron or group reunions instead of class reunions. You have to remember that there were only 5000 Marine pilots at any one time so after being in a couple of years, there were very few people you did not know. So we don't mind guys from other squadrons showing up. What the hell, after a bunch of drinks who cares anyway?

Jon A. Bouile, Phrog Phlyers HMM-161

FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

We hope everyone had a great holiday!!

On Line Registration is up and running so be sure to register for R2016 in Reno! There are tours that have limited capacity and some are already sold out so you want to register early! We hope to see you there!

You can now pay your dues on line through the On Line Directory! Instructions on how to do this are listed in a separate article in this issue.

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.

Also, you can go on line to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. 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 to make direct updates to your information.

Call HQ to pre-order the 2016 CD Directory for \$10 and the 2016 Paper Directory for \$15, and 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.

HQ is in the process of scanning all previous years' VHPA Calendars onto the VHPA Server to preserve the history. The only year we do not have is 1997. If anyone has a 1997 VHPA Calendar and would be willing to loan it to HQ for scanning onto the VHPA Server, please give us a call. We will be happy to return it to you once we have completed scanning it to the server. You can also call HQ if you would like to purchase a printout of any of these old calendars.

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 we can do to make that happen, **PLEASE LET US KNOW!**

Sherry Rodgers
VHPA Office Manager

From the Chairman of the VHPA Reunion Committee, Mike Law

An Update on the 33rd Reunion of the VHPA

Speaking for the VHPA Executive Council, the Headquarters Staff, and the entire Reunion Committee – I cordially invite you to attend the VHPA's 33rd Annual Reunion in Reno, Nevada from Monday, July 4th through Saturday, July 9th 2016 at The Peppermill Reno hotel. We have a wonderful Reunion planned for you, your family, and your friends! The Jan/Feb issue of *The Aviator* devoted thirteen pages to the Reunion. The Reunion has five in this issue – by design. The leadership team determined years ago there is little value in reprinting the same information in issues after “the big one” in Jan/Feb. Therefore, the Reunion information in this issue is more along the lines of a sitrep with an updated event schedule and registration form. There will also be at least one detailed piece; for example, the More Details Concerning Sleeping Rooms at the Peppermill Resort, Spa & Casino in this issue. So, here are six points for your consideration.

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

As you can see in the Morning Report on www.vhpa.org, the Reunion registrations are coming in at a brisk pace since the Online Reunion Registration Application (ORRA) opened to the public in mid-December. As of 1 February, the Reno Reunion Registrations are higher (just slightly) than the last three Reunions (Washington, DC, Louisville, KY, and San Francisco, CA)! We'd hoped for a good turnout but this is a pleasant surprise! THANK YOU. Our hotel reservations are also especially strong when compared to our last Reunions. 60% of the VHPA's room block at the Peppermill is taken. Clearly we need to go to the hotel for more rooms and we'll do that in February. So THANK YOU for all who registered early as we begged you to do.

Second, WHAT'S NEW? – Well, some COOL additions! Thanks to some local VHPAers.

- ❖ Our friends with the Vietnam Helicopters Museum in Cordova, CA www.vietnamhelicopters.org will bring their famous “Pancho's Huey 961” to the Stead airport. They were part of the VHPA's “aircraft display” at San Carlos airport during the 2013 Reunion. If we are lucky, they will also bring an AH-1 Cobra, an OH-58, and a YO-3A. The current plan is for them to be available to Reunion attendees on the 7th and 8th near the same ramp where we will visit with the Nevada National Guard's CH-47s. We will make this available at no extra costs to VHPAers. But we are asking folks to purchase the Reno Shuttle tickets to help us with the bus costs. Exact schedule to be announced later.
- ❖ One of our local “scouts” discovered a great private museum with lots of unique WW II items: the Harrah Military Museum. Again, we will offer this as a Reno Shuttle stop - at no extra cost to attendees. The owner will open it and serve as a docent especially for us. Exact schedule to be announced later.
- ❖ Scheels Sporting Goods outlet is not far from the Harrah Military Museum. This is a “Cabela's class” outlet that is easily added to the Reno Shuttle route and schedule. Again no extra cost. Exact schedule to be announced later.

Third, Status of the Reunion Events

As we've done past years, we have several “small event” tours - meaning they are capacity controlled for one or two buses. Our two NAS Fallon tours are sold out. All of our “back of house”

Geothermal plant tours have reached their 20 person cap, so they are sold out. When our initial allocation of 30 tickets to the July 4th baseball game sold, we got 20 more. There is no guarantee we can get more if needed; but we will try. We were especially pleased this year to be able to offer many “flexible capacity” versus “guaranteed count” tours. By way of example, the custom tours to historic Virginia City: just pure fun! So long as we put at least one full bus on the tour each day, we won't lose money. On the other hand, we can accommodate as many as seven full buses each day! Why stop at seven? Well, they don't have the parking spaces for any more large buses! We were able to do basically the same deal on the evening dinners and Heavenly sight-seeing tour. THANK YOU again for all who registered early as we begged you to do! It really helps with the planning – thank you!!

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

I've repeatedly sung the praises of Don Agren of the Virginia Old Dominion Chapter for their help with the Washington Reunion and of Bob Hamilton of the Ohio River LZ Chapter for the Louisville Reunion. This year Ken Fritz with the VHPA California Chapter North (CCN) will “drive in” (literally) with their restored Huey and helpers. However, even they will for sure need “reinforcements.” Please go to www.vhpa.org and see the Volunteer Schedule AKA “Duty Roster” – dates, tasks, number of people needed, etc. This has worked very well for the last few years. Surprise, surprise – the list of volunteer opportunities is LONG! Big party – big list - go figure!?! Please call Melissa Allen at HQ (Mondays and Fridays are her normal days) or send her a message at melissa@vhpa.org. THANKS!!

Fifth, book your Mini-Reunion NOW!

VHPA Reunions are all about renewing old and making new friends based on our common bonds forged when we were soldiers once and young. The Morning Report helps you see who is currently coming. Here's a common mistake: I run an article in *The Aviator* telling everyone about our flight class reunion. When I get to the Reunion nothing is scheduled!!! Duh! You have to communicate with Melissa if you want a Mini-Reunion room. Get the form and procedure, see “To schedule a mini-reunion, please use this form” on the Reunion Information page just below the Reunion Logo. Please, please invite your friends and plan on having a good time.

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

This VHPA Reunion follows our pattern of having literally a “hundred moving parts.” As GREAT as *The Aviator* is [and it is GREAT!!]; there is no way we can communicate details and status to you with printed media. Please, please use www.vhpa.org, then the Reunion Information page. For example, see the “Details for all reunion information” line. The underlined and bolded “reunion information” is a link. Double clicking on it lets you see the entire document.

Questions or Comments...? As always get in touch with HQ at 800-505-8472 or HQ@vhpa.org or Mike Law at reunion@vhpa.org.

VHPA'S 33RD ANNUAL REUNION

More Details Concerning Sleeping Rooms at the Peppermill

By Mike Law, Reunion Committee Chairman, Late January 2016

With three separate room types and the possibility of sold-out conditions on parts of your stay, making your room reservations can be confusing and stressful. Reading the following should help reduce or eliminate your stress level.

■ **First**, while bearing in mind sleeping room management is a fluid process, on the Reunion Information page at VHPA.org please review details about the sleeping room options at the Peppermill, www.vhpa.org/R2016RoomDetails.pdf. Also, remember what we've said many times in the past, this hotel will most certainly sell out over the weekends and the 4th of July holiday. Procrastinators are hurting themselves.

■ **Second**, we've received a number of calls at HQ from members concerned about the Resort Fee listed in their Reservation Confirmation. So, let's look at the note on the Peppermill website for VHPA reservations. When you select a room type within the VHPA block, you will see the following in the fine print:

TAX POLICY

Room Rates shown do not include the 13.00%

Hotel Room Tax (subject to change)

The Peppermill's resort fee of \$15.00 per room, per night will be waived for attendees of this group who book through this website. This fee will be removed from your bill upon check-out. Effective August 21, 2015, there will be a \$2 Tourism Surcharge added to each paid room per night (S.B. 312).*

**The resort fee is waived for all rooms in the VHPA block.*

The Resort Fee and Resort Fee Tax (red note and bars) are waived so long as the rooms are booked in the VHPA block. The line with the blue text "Room Tax:" is the 13.00% Hotel Room Tax mentioned in the Tax Policy above. The Room Tax is not waived.

■ **Third**, the best rooms are in the Tuscany Tower, but the Peppermill Tower and rooms in the North or West Wings are also good rooms. Because the Tuscany Tower block sold out on two occasions, we've already made adjustments to the room block inventory. We will make more adjustments as we get nearer the June 1, 2016 cutoff date. Specifically, in about March we will sign a contract addendum to adjust the blocks so they align with our pick-up demand. We have done this for every Reunion. Again, this is a fluid situation!

■ **Fourth**, for example, you plan to stay from the 5th thru the 10th in room type X. But the VHPA block for this room type is sold out on the 10th. In this case, you might decide to book the 5th thru the 9th in the VHPA block and the 10th outside the block at the hotel's rate. If you do this, you will be charged the Resort Fee and Tax for the 10th at check-out time. Instead, we recommend you book another room type in the VHPA block for the 10th. Doing this you avoid both the Resort Fee and the much higher room rate.

But you say, "Mike, I don't want to relocate rooms for one night!" The answer is the hotel doesn't want you to move either! As I wrote at the bottom of the third item above, the VHPA will be making adjustments. I am very optimistic we will work things out for you without relocating and without paying the higher fee. However, I must restate the obvious, please book someplace within the block.

■ **Fifth**, please do your best to book what you want by the website or telephone. Once you have a booking and should you still be stressed, contact HQ or me [redacted] or reunion@vhpa.org.

*A close-up
of the
Reservation
Confirmation
Daily Rates
area looks
something
like this:*

Daily Rates	
Jul. 4th, 2016	\$99.00
Jul. 5th, 2016	\$99.00
Jul. 6th, 2016	\$99.00
Jul. 7th, 2016	\$99.00
Jul. 8th, 2016	\$99.00
Jul. 9th, 2016	\$99.00
So long as you book in the VHPA room block, these charges are \$0 at check-out	
Reservation Total:	\$594.00
Resort Fee:	\$90.00
Resort Fee Tax:	\$11.70
Tourism Surcharge:	\$12.00
Room Tax	\$77.22
Reservation Tax:	\$77.22
Estimated Total w/ Taxes:	\$784.92

~ RENO, NEVADA JULY 5-10, 2016

R2016 BANQUET MEALS

ADULT MENU

Dinner Salad - Torn Romaine Lettuce, Croutons & Pear Tomatoes, served with Raspberry Vinaigrette

CHOICE OF:

* Grilled New York Steak - English Mustard Rubbed Grilled New York Sirloin Steak, with Caramelized Onion Jus, Stout Barley, Chef's Vegetables

* Grill Breast of Chicken - Roasted Natural Breast of Chicken, with Thyme Broth, Marble Potatoes, Root Vegetables

* Vegetarian Entrée - Ratatouille, With Herbed Spaghetti Squash Nest

Dessert - Carmelia Chocolate Tart, Crunchy Praline Rolls and Butter

Hot & Iced Tea & Coffee

Note: Soft Drinks (assorted Pepsi products) Beer, Wine and Mixed Drinks are available from cash bars.

Note: For "Special Meals" (gluten free, salt free, etc) please call HQ with this info no later than Friday, June 24, 2016.

CHILD MENU

Chicken Fingers with French Fries, Fruit and Drink

CASH BAR MENU

Imported Beers & Micros for \$5.50/glass include:

Samuel Adams, Corona, Heineken, Sierra Nevada

Domestic Beers for \$4.75/glass include:

Budweiser, Bud Light, Coors Light, Miller Light

Premium Wines for \$7.50/glass include:

King Estate Pinot Gris, Geyser Peak Sauvignon Blanc

House Wines for \$6.50/glass include:

Kenwood "Yulupa" Chardonnay, Kenwood "Yulupa" Merlot, Beringer White Zinfandel

Super Premiums/Cordials for \$7.50/glass include:

Grey Goose Vodka, Patron Tequila, Glenlivet Whiskey, Kahlua Liqueur, Kailey's Irish Cream, Courvoisier Cognac, Grand Mariner Liqueur, Amaretto Di Saranno

Call Brand Cocktails for \$6.00/glass include:

Smirnoff Vodka, Dewar's Scotch Whiskey, Tanqueray Gin, Jim Beam Bourbon, Bacardi Rum, Jameson Whiskey, Sauza Tequila, Korbel Brandy

Premium Brand Cocktails for \$6.50/glass include:

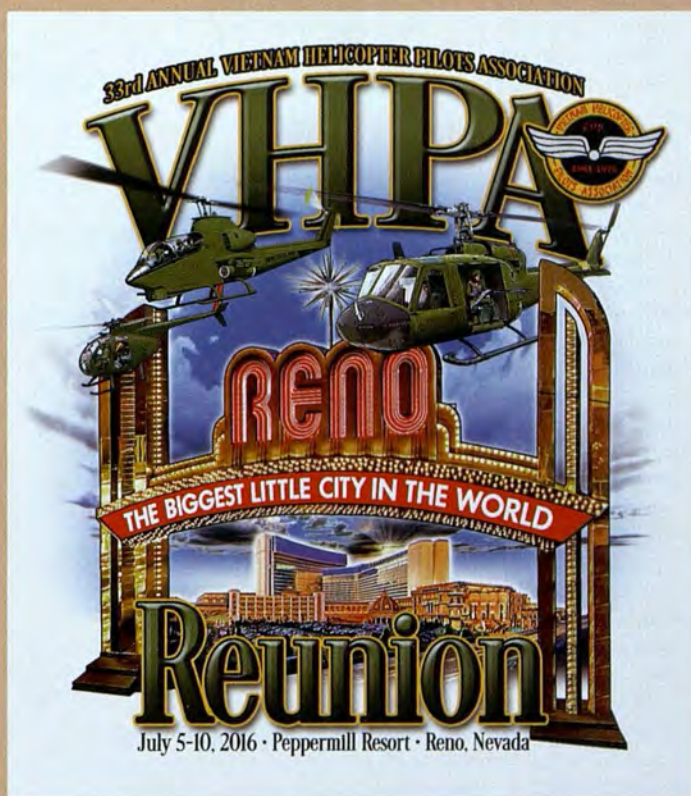
Ketel One Vodka, Jack Daniels Whiskey, Crown Royal Whiskey, Bombay Sapphire Gin, Captain Morgan Rum, Absolut Citron Vodka, Malibu & Meyers Rums

We make every effort to provide the latest information concerning tour/event status in the Aviator.

The lead time for printing, however, means that some tours/events shown as available may have sold out in the interim. Please consult the website

vhp.org

for the current status of all reunion activities.



BRING YOUR LANYARDS TO RENO!

The Reno Reunion will be here before you know it. Please bring your old lanyard(s) from past reunions to re-use (I think the current term is "re-purpose") them or turn them in to HQ. Every one re-purposed or turned in saves VHPA \$3 or more. And every dollar saved helps VHPA maintain and sustain its financial strength.

See you in July!

VHPA Executive Council

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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

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
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 - 1:00 pm	Nevada Army National Guard Aviation Tour
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
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:00 pm - 5:45 pm	Studio Photos
5:45 pm - 10:30 pm	Closing Banquet w/Entertainment - "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)

VHPA'S 33rd Annual Reunion ~ Reno, NV ~ July 5-10, 2016

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

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

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

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

Email: HQ@vhpa.org

Fax: (817) 200-7309

Member name:	DOB:	Member No:	Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Address:	Telephone:	Zip:	Last 4 of SSN:
City:	State:	See * at bottom of page regarding SSN info	
Email address:	Phone:		
Spouse name:	City:	DOB:	Last 4 of SSN: Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB:	Last 4 of SSN: Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB:	Last 4 of SSN: Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB:	Last 4 of SSN: Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	DOB:	Last 4 of SSN: Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes

EVENT	DATE	NUMBER	PRICE	TOTAL
Registration through 4/30/2016 **			\$20 EA	
Registration for under age 21 **			\$15 EA	
Registration 5/1/2016 and after			\$25 EA	
Take Me Out To The Ballgame	July 4		\$29 EA	
Reno City Shuttle	July 5-9		\$25 EA	
Reno Shuttle with Museum Pass	July 5-9		\$47 EA	
Naval Air Station Fallon Tour #1	July 5	Sold Out	\$33 EA	Sold Out
Virginia City Tour #1	July 5		\$69 EA	
Early Bird Gathering	July 5		N/C EA	
Golf Outing - Lakeridge Golf Course	July 6		\$125 EA	
Breakfast with Speaker #1 ~ Vietnam Now	July 6		\$16 EA	
Heavenly Day in Tahoe w/Sightseeing Cruise #1	July 6		\$82 EA	
Virginia City Tour #2	July 6		\$69 EA	
Frey Distillery & Winery Tour #1	July 6		\$51 EA	
Writers Workshop	July 6		NC EA	
1st Time Attendee Reception	July 6		N/C EA	
Welcome Reception	July 6		N/C EA	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast	July 7		\$16 EA	
Breakfast with Speaker #2 ~ Bill Albracht ~ FSB Kate	July 7		\$16 EA	
Nevada Army National Guard Aviation Tour ^^	July 7		NC EA	
Heavenly Day in Tahoe w/Sightseeing Cruise #2	July 7		\$82 EA	
Virginia City Tour #3	July 7		\$69 EA	
Quilters Show & Tell	July 7		NC EA	
Movie Night #1 - "Cathy at War"	July 7		NC EA	
Tahoe Dinner Cruise #1	July 7		\$103 EA	
Dinner at the National Auto Museum #1	July 7		\$61 EA	
State of VHPA Breakfast	July 8		\$16 EA	
Naval Air Station Fallon Tour #2	July 8	Sold Out	\$33 EA	Sold Out
Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City #1	July 8		\$24 EA	
Quilter's Shop Hop ^^	July 8		NC EA	
Frey Distillery & Winery Tour #2	July 8		\$51 EA	
Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City #2	July 8		\$24 EA	
Movie Night #2 - "Cathy at War"	July 8		NC EA	
Tahoe Dinner Cruise #2	July 8		\$103 EA	
Dinner at the National Auto Museum #2	July 8		\$61 EA	
Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker TBA	July 9		\$16 EA	
Memorial Service	July 9		N/C EA	
Spouse/Guest Event (Picasso & Wine)	July 9		\$53 EA	
Closing Banquet - Adult	July 9		\$50 EA	
Closing Banquet - Child	July 9		\$16 EA	
Non-Registered Guest at Banquet	July 9		\$60 EA	

Total From Sidebars

VHPA Dues (if not dues current) *** 1 year @ \$36 or 3 years @ \$99 \$36/\$99

Life Membership (Call HQ for exact amount) **

2016 CD Directory Fee *** (# of years x \$10) \$10 EA
 2016 Paper Directory Fee *** (# of years x \$15) \$15 EA

GRAND TOTAL

^^ Requires Reno City Shuttle Ticket.

* Date of Birth & last 4 numbers of social must be provided for each person registered for the Nevada Army National Guard Aviation Tours and the Naval Air Station Fallon Tours.

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

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

July 5 - 10:00am-11:00am Geothermal Tour #1	Sold Out
July 6 - 10:00am-11:00am Geothermal Tour #2	
July 6 - 2:00pm-3:00pm Geothermal Tour #3	
July 7 - 10:00am-11:00am Geothermal Tour #4	Sold Out
July 7 - 2:00pm-3:00pm Geothermal Tour #5	Sold Out
July 8 - 10:00am-11:00am Geothermal Tour #6	
July 8 - 2:00pm-3:00pm Geothermal Tour #7	

Banquet Meal

___ Beef ___ Chicken ___ Vegetarian

Banquet Seating Preference

___ S @ \$18 ___ M @ \$18 ___ L @ \$18
 ___ XL @ \$18 ___ XXL @ \$19 ___ XXXL @ \$20

T-Shirts

Total \$

*** Voluntary Contributions:

Gold Star Sponsorship @ \$16	\$
Membership Fund @ \$10	\$
Reunion Sponsorship @ \$10	\$
Scholarship Fund @ \$10	\$
National American Huey Museum @ \$10	\$
Army Aviation Heritage Foundation @ \$10	\$

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

REFUND GUARANTEE FEE

10% of Total Events \$

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CANCELLATION

DATE IS CLOSE OF BUSINESS, CST
 FRIDAY, 17 JUNE 2016

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC/Visa #

Expiration Date:

CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

In lieu of a credit card, you can mail a check or money order payable to "VHPA" with your completed form

KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE

Originally written for the Fayette County (GA) paper

By Terry Garlock

How do you know when you are rubbing shoulders with someone who has left footprints in history? Well, sometimes you don't. I'll tell you about two men here in Peachtree City who left footprints serving their country when it was not easy, and how you can help keep their history alive.

Cliff Stern and his wife Paula live in the Interlochen development. A retired US Army LtCol., Cliff is past President and currently the Executive Director of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF), a unique non-profit volunteer outfit of veterans and civilians with a hangar at Tara Field near the racetrack in Hampton. AAHF keeps a number of Vietnam War aircraft maintained in tip-top flying condition. You might instinctively worry about helicopters over 40 years old, but the intensity of AAHF maintenance puts these birds in far better condition today than they ever were when we flew them into combat in Vietnam.

The AAHF flies in airshows and provides static displays and rides all over the country. Last week they flew to Nashville to display at the Army Aviation Association of America convention. They have done numerous flybys at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC and at other venues on Memorial Day and other events. Two weeks ago Cliff's group flew a Huey and a Cobra into the soccer field at Newnan High School, where a number of us who flew in the Vietnam War gathered around the aircraft to talk to hundreds of students interested in the helicopters and our experience.

Why is Cliff so passionate about connecting veterans and civilians by capturing attention with helicopters that flew in the war? Well, he was a Huey helicopter pilot in that war, flying combat assault lift missions as a Platoon Leader with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, flying loads of ground troops into and out of landing zones. Cliff's son, John, owner of John's Golf Carts here in Peachtree City, so admires what his father did decades ago that he built a beautiful golf cart for him with silk-screened images from the war.

On his first day with his unit in Vietnam, Cliff had his customary check ride in the morning, and that very afternoon, because they were one pilot short, this new guy flew an emergency extraction mission for a Special Forces team under attack by enemy forces. He hoped things wouldn't get worse than that initial excitement, but they did.

Near the end of the war in February of 1971, the massive Lam Son 719 operation had been planned for five to seven divisions to cross the border into Laos to cut the enemy's Ho Chi Minh Trail where they had operated unchallenged for years. In execution only three divisions were committed against an enemy dug in very deep.

The staging area was Khe Sanh where they launched on Feb 8. The huge lift flight of about 100 Hueys were loaded with South Vietnamese grunts because most American ground troops had been withdrawn from Vietnam and by order of the 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment in Congress, no American troops were permitted to put boots on the ground in Laos. Americans provided support in logistics, artillery, air transport and air cover.

When Cliff flew into LZ Hotel that first day, he was in front only because the two aircraft that had been in front of him had already been shot down. He had Bob Gentry as his wingman since they had



Cliff Stern (L) and Wayne King (R) in front of Huey 624, a helicopter Wayne flew in combat in Vietnam

worked together every day and knew each other's moves and signals. When Cliff took off after dropping his ground troops he spotted an enemy anti-aircraft team setting up and just seconds later they shot Bob dead, though his chicken plate (chest protector). He had celebrated his 22nd birthday two days prior. Bob's co-pilot, Steve Burch, quickly took the controls to recover the aircraft. Steve died in a fiery crash a few weeks later.

On that same day, Cliff flew fresh loads of troops back into that same LZ five more times, and at the end of the day he picked up eight wounded South Vietnamese soldiers and delivered them to a hospital. Cliff received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism that first day of Lam Son 719.

Joe Galloway, the most respected correspondent of that war, covered the big operation and says a spy in Saigon leaked the plan to our enemy a month in advance, and 60,000 battle-hardened enemy were dug in, waiting. The bad guys had 19 anti-aircraft battalions in the area including the feared .51 caliber plus larger 23mm, 37mm and 57mm guns guided by radar. Cliff saw more than a half-dozen helicopters shot out of the air by big guns, including Cobras hit broadside and broken apart mid-air.

The operation proceeded for more than two weeks, but with our Vietnamese allies losing the ground fight against a much tougher enemy and weather hampering air support, a withdrawal was initiated which Cliff summarizes as just awful. When he flew in to pick up South Vietnamese grunts, they panicked and rushed to overload the helicopter with too many so the Crew Chief and Gunner had to throw troops off; even then some held onto the skids in desperation to get out until they fell to their injury or death from altitude. Cliff said they had to do something to get the grunts out without overloading and causing a fatal crash, so they greased the skids.

When the operation was over, out of the 33 Hueys Cliff's unit flew into Laos, only five remained. These are memories that do not fade.

US Army Major (Ret) Wayne King also left footprints in history flying Hueys in the Vietnam War. Wayne lives just down the road from Cliff in the Highlands development with his wife, Cookie. Like Cliff, he flew lift missions in the Vietnam War but with the 61st Assault Helicopter Company based at LZ English. Since 6+1 is a key roll of the dice in the game of craps, the 61st takeoff pad was known as the Crap Table and the Huey lift platoons were called Lucky stars.

As a helicopter gunship pilot myself, I often watched lift pilots taking troops into a hot LZ, clustered in a tight formation to fit into a small clearing with gunfire zipping through the thin-skinned aircraft, and I asked Wayne to explain for students the pucker factor of taking fire in that setting. He told me they should think about it this way.

With a load of armed grunts in the back, the ride was usually at the treetops to evade enemy fire, dipping and rolling with the terrain and the grunts with their feet hanging over the side sometimes yelled their delight at the ride. When the LZ was not far away the pilots climbed to tighten up in formation with just one rotor blade of separation since they needed to touch down and take off as one to minimize exposure to enemy fire, and room in the LZ was often tight. They stepped up toward the back, keeping the next rotor to the front lower and level with the horizon, jockeying to stay in position, trying to prevent the dangerous stretch and compression of a slinky, and keeping the right rear skid strut visually lined up with the left front strut on the aircraft to the front left to stay in position, even in a slow turn, listening intently to radio traffic announcing the marker rounds from artillery indicating their prep fire was complete, then gunships like mine were along-side firing rockets, trying to nail the enemy or at least keep their heads down while our grunts got on the ground, sometimes scaring the hell out of the lift pilot if it was close, listening for other pilots announcing "Taking fire from three o'clock!" and being ready for the sudden change of "Go around! Go around!" if enemy fire was still too heavy, scanning the gauges every few seconds as always while the Crew Chief and Gunner on either side just behind you tried to bust your eardrums as they opened up with their M-60s to shoot back at the treeline, staying lined up tight with the other birds as the ground approached and watching intently for an enemy to pop up from the deep grass to punch your lights out, and ready before the skids touch the ground for the grunts in the back to jump out and scramble away from the helicopter because it is such an inviting target, and without touching down, rock it forward to take off, still keeping formation separation while gaining altitude until you had enough room to drift apart since scattering might lead to a midair collision. Who had time to worry about rounds whacking through the aircraft, Wayne asked? He said they just looked for bullet holes when they got back to base and fixed what needed fixing so they could go do it again.

On his off time Wayne and his buddy, gunship pilot Richard Benicewicz, used their construction skills to build things, like a bar-racks, or to fancy up their own room. They scrounged and horse-traded for material, and covertly "borrowed" from the Air Force what they needed in quick excursions they thought of as the virtuous practice of "reallocating Uncle Sam's resources to a higher and better use." Horse-trading and making things with hammers, saws and his hands with Richard at his side was one of two things that kept Wayne's sanity amidst all the killing and dying. The other was his wife, Cookie, writing him a letter every day, telling him about life with their young boys back home.

Cobra and Huey 624 flown in to Newnan High School soccer field on Mar 18



On one of the worst days of his life, Wayne was flying a combat assault lift mission, escorted by Richard's and another gunship on the way to another LZ when Richard's aircraft had a freak catastrophic rotor failure. His Huey gunship dove into the ground like an anvil and the entire crew was killed. Wayne was never the same. He switched to flying guns, said it was time to shoot back.

After Vietnam Wayne flew helicopters and fixed wing aircraft in a number of US Army capacities, including covert missions in Central America that he still cannot talk about to you or me.

Both of these men have deep in their bones a permanent love of the aircraft they flew in battle, and the crews who will always be their brothers. The hangar at Tara Field is where they come together and labor with meticulous and intense care to maintain these Hueys and Cobras to exacting standards, even better than they did in Vietnam long ago.

Wayne has a special connection to one of the AAHF aircraft, a Huey with tail number 624. Wayne flew this very aircraft in combat with the 61st AHC during the Tet Offensive of 1968. He says he could have been flying 624 the day Richard was killed, but he doesn't know.

Huey 624 is a prime example of why the crews who flew them still love them so much. They were tough, resilient, reliable and absorbed much abuse. 624 flew over 2,200 combat hours in Vietnam. Several of her crew received Purple Hearts for wounds received on missions with her and several others died in her seats. She was shot down multiple times, including from enemy mortar fire while preparing to take off from the Crap Table.

At the end of the Vietnam War Huey 624 was returned to service in Germany, Korea and finally with the Alabama National Guard in Birmingham until acquired by AAHF. After passing the rigorous maintenance standards and tests at AAHF, 624 was put into service in air shows, displays and rides. Wayne is not only proud to be a life member of AAHF; he has his own combat chariot in 624 that is also now a life member. He and his entire family including five grandkids have taken a recent ride in 624, a Huey that has served America long and well.

Two weeks ago 624 was the Huey the AAHF flew in to Newnan High School, and Wayne was on hand to talk to the kids about flying that same bird in the war over 40 years ago. How cool is that?

As time moves on, AAHF will be looking for opportunities to acquire more recent aircraft that our soldiers flew in Iraq and Afghanistan, a more recent history equally vital to keep alive, especially as we Vietnam vets are not getting any younger.

The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation also wants to involve more civilians in its mission, and they have an invitation for you, whether you are a veteran or not. Become a partner keeping the history alive. Google their name to find the website: <http://www.armyav.org/>. Become a member for just \$48 per year. Call them at 770-897-0444 to schedule a visit to the hangar for yourself or a group, to see the aircraft and talk to the men who flew them. Ask the men you meet about their story. You could take a group or even a school class on a field trip. If you take the simple act of becoming a member, you can be part of this legacy not just for the vets, but for the students eager to learn what really happened. Help us keep history alive.

Terry Garlock of Peachtree City, GA was a Cobra helicopter gunship pilot with the 334th AHC based in Bien Hoa in 1969 during the Vietnam War. His email is [REDACTED]

RESCUE

There are certain dates in a lifetime of events that stay etched in your memory. I can vividly remember, for example, my wedding day, where I was the day JFK was assassinated, and other events important to my family. Another date is March 18, 1972.

I was the pilot, call sign "Hotel 70", on an H-34D helicopter for Air America, Inc. It started as a routine flight from Udorn, Thailand to Pakse, Laos. My passengers were mainly flight crews "dead heading" up-country for a crew rotation. I was scheduled to remain six days in Pakse.

"King" was the call sign of the Air Force airborne controller for search and rescue (SAR) missions in Laos. I was about ten minutes from landing for refueling in Savanaket, Laos when King broadcasted a message for "any Air America helicopter in the Savanaket area that might be available to help with the rescue of a downed pilot."

Normally, the military took care of their own SARs, but Air America made many rescues simply because we were in the area. Sometimes, the Air Force was its own worst enemy; by the time birds were scrambled, briefed, cover provided, MIG cap provided, and authentication of the downed pilot -as if the enemy would stage a fake crash- was made, he'd probably be captured. On two other occasions, I'd picked up a downed crew, moved them to a safe area, and finally the military made their pick up.

I responded I could be available after refueling, and was given a radio frequency to contact "Sandy One" once I was back in the air. He would be the on-scene commander directing the rescue operation.

The downed aircraft was an OV-10 forward air controller out of Vietnam. It had been shot down over route nine, part of the Ho Chi Min Trail about 40 miles east of Savanaket. The crew was hiding on the east side of the road which was alive with massive AA activity; a quick pickup could avert certain capture by the NVA.

I contacted Sandy One shortly after takeoff and was advised to "head east to route nine and take up an orbit, but don't cross route nine." "Hotel 70 rogers." Sandy One and Sandy Two were a flight of A1E Sky Raiders and normally escorted the CH53 Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters. As I flew closer to the area, I could hear Sandy One talking to the downed pilot over the UHF guard frequency. He was OK, but NVA soldiers were starting to look for him.

March is the height of the smoky season when farmers in that part of the world slash and burn, clearing areas of the jungle for planting the next season's crops. Because of the smoke, visibility was down to about one mile with no ceiling.

I flew to route nine and began an orbit calling Sandy One with my position. I also requested the coordinates of the downed airman, which he refused to pass. "Besides," he said, "the Jollies were on the way and would be making the pick up."

That was just fine with my crew and me. We didn't relish the idea of flying through 37mm AA, not to mention the 23mm and 12.7s reported in the area.

Finally, I heard the Jollies call Sandy with an ETA of fifteen minutes. Sandy One replied, "Continue inbound while I descend toward the target to get visual on the downed pilot."

A few seconds later, Sandy Two reported ground fire directed toward Sandy One. Sandy One replied "Roger, I heard the shots, but didn't take any hits." Even though I was only a mile or so away from the pick up point, I had yet to see the Sandies because of the smoke.

The next radio transmission was from one of the Jollies saying with a nervous sounding voice that he needed to RTB (return to base) because of a fluctuating gage. Number two came back with "I'm right behind you." He sounded relieved.

I called Sandy again and requested coordinates. He was going to make another pass over the area and would get back to me. Again Sandy Two broadcast, "You're receiving fire." Sandy One answered, "I've been hit and I'm on fire!" I interjected at that point to turn to 270 before bailing out. "Negative, I'm heading south and ejecting right now!"

Obviously, I wanted him to head west toward us and bail out on the west side of route nine. We didn't have visual on him yet. As he was making his last transmission, I turned the UHF homing switch that showed his position from us as 080 degrees.

I was orbiting at 3000 feet and nosed over to descend to tree-top level before crossing route nine. The two other crewmembers, Captain B.J. Ruck, my co-pilot, and Flight Mechanic Jim Nakamoto, both agreed to go on with the rescue. There was no doubt this one could definitely turn into a "shit sandwich." We all needed to be on the same sheet of music.

Another Air America H-34 piloted by Dave Ankerberg and Bill Johnson arrived as my backup and would remain in orbit west of the trail while I went for the pickup.

We were low level with the wheels inches from the tree tops, heading 080, pulling lots of power, maintaining max air speed, no doubt above VNE. When we crossed route nine, which seemed like a four-lane highway, we were exposed much longer than we anticipated. It took about ten to fifteen seconds to cross! The "pucker factor" was also "red lined," but we never heard a shot. Back over the trees we breathed a bit easier.

Looking ahead through the smoke and haze we could see the fire and black smoke billowing from Sandy One's wreckage. I turned a few degrees left figuring the plane probably flew on for a few seconds after the pilot ejected.

About then, Sandy One called on his survival radio that he could hear us and we were headed straight for him. I spotted his orange parachute and noted with some dismay he was hanging about fifty feet up in a tree. I settled to a low hover over him for a hoist pick up with the jungle penetrator. Jim operated the hoist as I hovered the aircraft. B.J. had his loaded Uzi on his lap, watching out the left side. As if the Uzi would do us much good against a squad of pissed-off NVA soldiers with AK-47s!

Sandy Two was in a tight orbit over us. We felt good about that, those A1Es packed a lot of firepower. The pilot was looking up at us with a big grin as Jim worked the hoist to lower the penetrator. I was thinking it was a bit early for celebration; we had a long way to go.

This particular hoist only had one speed, slow. It seemed to take forever for it to get to him. Meanwhile, we were expecting the bad guys to come running out of the jungle with guns-a-blazing. Under the triple canopy the ground appeared open.

Jim came over the intercom and advised us our grinning pilot couldn't reach the penetrator. Jim was trying to swing it to him, but because of the dense tree foliage, it wasn't happening.

About that time, we heard the first round explode above us! I'm not sure if "Charley" was shooting at our cover A1E or was trying to lob an air burst at us. Anyway, times were a bit tense.

We retrieved the hoist while the pilot rappelled to the ground, unhooked from his survival pack, and moved to a more open area. We moved over him and lowered the penetrator; he hooked up and we began the extraction. A second explosion was heard close overhead.

To add to our concerns, the 30-minute low fuel light had been illuminated for approximately 20 minutes. We finally got him into the aircraft and figured we'd been hovering for 34 minutes. Luck was with us, the bad guys were still a no-show.

I gave King a call to let him know we had Sandy One on board and were heading out. King advised us not to recross in that area, but to head south and cross the road where it was safer. Unfortunately, we were too low on fuel to go far. If we were going to run out of gas, the west side of the road was our best option. I advised King we'd have to cross at the same area where we came in.

I'd radioed to have a drum of fuel brought out. After crossing route nine again without incident, we rendezvoused with the other chopper, landed in a field, and hand pumped 55 gallons of gas into what must have been only fumes left in the tank.

While we were refueling, we were all feeling pretty good about saving the downed pilot, but mainly we were glad to still be alive. Being the nice guy I am, I decided to have a little fun with the pilot. There was a rumor going around with the Air Force that Air America crews received a \$10,000 bonus when we recovered a downed airman. Not true.

I got with the pilot and told him that we wouldn't be taking him directly back to his base (NKP Thailand) and would be going on to Pakse. Of course, at that point anything I said would have been fine with him. I further explained he was worth ten grand to my crew and me, and I hadn't been paid for our last rescue. So, we wanted to make sure we turned him over to the right person to get credit for the bonus. Naturally, it all sounded very reasonable to him.

Within an hour we landed at the Pakse Airport, turned the happy pilot over to his Air Force representative, and reported in to our "customer," Jim Butler. Jim told us to assemble in the briefing room. We had an ex-fill mission; another hot one to finish out the day, March 18, 1972.

Three helicopter crews assembled in Jim Butler's briefing room. Then into the room came CIA case officer Jim Logan, call sign "Sword". The crews looked at each other with the same thought - Jim Logan didn't have the greatest reputation for honesty. He'd tell a chopper crew whatever they wanted to hear so they'd attempt the mission. He was determined to win any battle, even if a chopper was shot down in the process.

The Pakse airport is located on the Mekong River and during that time was a relatively safe area. The high plateau of the Bolivan begins about 15 miles east. The Royalists (Lao Army) had occupied most of the populated areas of the plateau until late 1971. Gradually, the NVA had pushed the Royalists out and by March 1972 controlled most of the Bolivan.

On the Bolivan, the NVA had artillery and some light armor. The Lao and Thai soldiers were not as heavily armed. All they had was limited air support when the weather permitted and, of course, Air America.

A battalion of Thai soldiers on the Bolivan plateau had been under daily attack by NVA artillery and had about thirty wounded soldiers to be picked up. They were moving to an area safe enough for a helicopter pick-up. The LZ would be on a high open area about thirty miles east of Pakse.

I was to be flight leader in Hotel 70, with the other two H-34s to follow close behind. The third aircraft would remain high and become the SAR aircraft in case one of us was shot down. Piece of cake!

The plan was for Jim Logan to ride in my bird, be dropped off at the pick-up zone, sort out the wounded while we orbited over head, and call us in when they were ready. We would land one at a time. If the first aircraft didn't receive fire, the second

would land and pick-up more wounded. We'd continue making trips until all the wounded were picked up, or we started to receive fire.

After about fifteen minutes of flight time, we were nearing the LZ. We remained high and looked for the proper signal panel on the pad. A white "O" was put out and I could see about thirty soldiers standing around the LZ. That they were not hidden from view meant there probably hadn't been any recent enemy contact.

I dropped off Sword while the other two H-34s remained high over-head. The landing caused a great deal of brown dust which would definitely alert any enemy in the area that a chopper had landed.

In about five minutes, Sword called; they were ready for the first aircraft- mine. The litters with the wounded were lined up next to the pad where I landed; again creating a large cloud of dust. I kept the RPM up and the aircraft light on the struts, expecting incoming fire at any time. The wounded were being loaded when I heard the first explosion about three hundred meters behind us! I would wait about ten seconds before taking off, giving Sword a chance to get in the aircraft. I hopefully figured if a second round was fired, it still wouldn't hit us. There were several litters and walking wounded at the doorway when the second round hit right in the middle of the troops next to the aircraft. Five feet left and we would have been history.

I was looking down from the right seat at the loading procedures when the round exploded. The concussion and

noise from the impact were instantaneous, but the resulting mass of bodies being thrown in all directions seemed to happen in slow motion like a Spaghetti Western.

I hoped Sword had jumped aboard because we were out of there. We had a heavy load, and because of the high elevation, it seemed to take forever for the H-34 to gain airspeed. As we were climbing out, another round went off under us. They were trying to shoot us out of the air.

Sword was with us in the aircraft, but had a shrapnel wound. There was also a wounded soldier hanging on to the wheel strut. The back of his shirt was covered with blood and as we gained airspeed and altitude, I expected to watch his body drop hundreds of feet into the jungle. Suddenly, the muscular arm of my flight mechanic Jim Nakamoto reached out the aircraft cargo door, grabbed the soldier's shirt yanking him inside. Another life saved; we heard later the soldier survived his wounds.

By the time we arrived back at Pakse the sun was setting. We inspected the aircraft for damage, but there were only a couple of small holes. The mission would be continued in the morning giving the Thais time to move to another location. Meanwhile, after a very eventful day, we were ready to suck down a few cool ones. As I mentioned before, March 18, 1972 is a day I'll always remember.

by Benjamin A. Van Etten

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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 14 new Members to the VHPA!

All have joined our Association during the period from December 12-February 3, 2016

Aamodt Donald V. **
Lake Mills Iowa
Air Force
20 HS 14 ACW in 67-68

Ayscue John A.
Williamsburg Virginia
Army
68-512 68-20
5 TC BN 101 ABN in 69; 2 BDE
25 INF in 69-70

Croom William T.
North Myrtle Beach South Carolina
Army
69-9
128 AHC in 69

Duerksen Forrest C.
Tucson Arizona
Army
69-33 69-31
71 AHC in 69-70

Emig Calvin L.
Manhattan Kansas
Army
71-4
48 AHC in 71-72

Gilyard William 'Gill' **
Augusta Georgia
Army
68-516 68-28
23 ART GRP in 68-69

Haglund Ronald L. 'Ron' **
Redington Shores Florida
Air Force
57-C
ARRS in 68-69

Kato Matt J. **
Fairbanks Alaska
Army
66-5W
128 AHC in 66-67

McBride Thomas R.
Burns Tennessee
Army
68-515 68-27
173 AHC in 68-69

Olinger Michael L. **
Indianapolis Indiana
Army
70-3 69-49
ACT/11 ACR in 70-71

Osgood Raymond C. **
Destin Florida
Army
68-511 68-17

Sanders Darrell E.
Odessa Texas
Army
68-513 68-23
235 AWC in 68-70; 7/1 CAV in 70-73

Thompson Richard L. **
Lakewood Washington
Army
69-3
B/7/17 CAV in 69-70

Wojtasik Bernard H.
Palm Harbor Florida
Army
68-24 68-42
3/17 CAV in 69-70

CHAPTER VISIT

Carolyn and I recently spent a month in Florida now that we are both retired. Out of curiosity, I visited the VHPA of Florida's website. I noted that on the day before our return, the chapter would be supporting an event. This was the Volusia County 10th Annual Military/EMS Expo, attended by three-thousand students. I'm sure they will have more detail in one of their chapter reports. I mention it, because it created an opportunity to visit members of a local chapter. I'm glad we stopped by.

We are of an age where travel is likely more frequent and unhurried. I suggest that in your travels, you check a local chapter's website for any activities they may be involved with and visit them. Alternatively, they may have a meeting scheduled at a time and location that is convenient.

By Tom Kirk



Tom Kirk extreme left speaks with ROTC Cadet.

Frank Hoover Extreme right (blue jacket) speaks with visitor at the Volusia county EMS / Military Expo.

Sustaining the VHPA Until the Last Man Stands

By Bob Hesselbein and Bill "Moon" Mullen

The expectation is clear: the VHPA should exist until the last member expires after sipping from the preserved 1961 Chivas Regal bottle currently stored at the Grande Prairie HQ. The goal is to operate as an organization until that event, sometime after 2044. The challenge is also clear: how do we sustain the organization's efforts—superb reunions, the bi-monthly AVIATOR Magazine, historical data gathering and preservation, membership functions and scholarships—in the face of an aging and declining volunteer participation?

The demographics of our group were studied by VHPA member Bob Potvin (Investments Committee Asst. Chairman). "The average age of the VHPA membership is now 71 years old, the youngest member is age 63, and by 2044 we should have 81 members still functioning," he said. "This means we could have members survive beyond 2050!" Statistically, the ability for most individuals to actively participate declines significantly past the age of 75.

Since the 1983 incorporation as a 501(c) (3) non-profit veteran's organization, the Association has matured and thrived. As the membership grew, the organization evolved operations to the current combination of member volunteers and part time staff employees working together to get the work done. Although robust at the moment and working well, the structure is fragile and fraught with multiple single points of failure.

The single points of failure are found within the thinning ranks of VHPA members performing much of the current planning and work. Although many volunteer to assist at reunions (thank you, local VHPA chapters) almost all areas of intense effort are accomplished by ONE skilled volunteer without a backup to carry on the work if the primary fails. Few volunteers have appeared to take on the duties requiring an almost full-time commitment.

This cold reality hit home with the loss of former Aviator editor David Adams. David grew the magazine and improved the quality almost single-

handedly, and it was only by fortune the current editor, Tom Kirk, volunteered to assist and apprentice in the months before David's illness destroyed his ability to carry on the work. The VHPA was lucky; without Tom's learned expertise, new publications of the Aviator would not have appeared for a lengthy time, and without the same quality. The VHPA dodged a bullet.

It is reasonable to conclude the VHPA is approaching the identical stage of member participation experienced by World War II veteran organizations some 25 years ago. As we age, our ability to accomplish the needed legacy work will understandably decline; we must accept and adapt our organization to the reality if we wish to function until the last man dies. The solution to our aging volunteer challenge can be found by the WWII organizations surviving today.

WW II Last Man Standing organizations, such as the Doolittle Raiders and the Tuskegee Airman, still exist today awaiting the final passing of their original members. As of this writing, two Doolittle Raiders survive, and approximately 100 of the original 996 "Red Tail" members live today. Both legacy organizations are sustained by "friends" organizations and chapters made up of children, grandchildren, and admirers who carry out the work once done by the veterans themselves. They perform this work because they admire the veterans and wish to keep their legacy and activities alive until the end.

It is time for the VHPA to consider the same solution to our growing problem. We presently face serious risks due to the thin ranks of those who do the volunteer work, and we must proactively build a solution before another crisis challenges our ability to sustain the organization's activities.

How the VHPA will function during the remainder of the organization's lifetime is another subject for a different article, but for the moment we must address how to find and vet a younger generation of volunteers willing, able, and dedicated to keeping the VHPA functioning until the last man no longer stands. We must be proactive and address this challenge now.

This resolution will be presented to the VHPA membership for approval at the 2016 Annual Business Meeting as a solution to the concern identified in the preceding article, Sustaining the VHPA Until the Last Man Stands. The Resolution directs the VHPA Executive Council to: 1 - determine a solution for sustaining the volunteer services of the Association by adding an associate membership category; 2 - report to the Association membership in the January-February 2017 Aviator Magazine with a tentative policy for associate membership options; and 3 - prepare a policy for presentation and an approval vote during the 2017 VHPA Annual Business Meeting.

Resolution: VHPA Establish Limited Membership Policy

Whereas the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) is chartered to enhance and accredit the esprit de corps and traditions of rotary-wing aircrew combat valor in the Vietnam War;

Whereas the VHPA is established as a "Last Man Standing" organization wishing to fully function until the last Vietnam combat helicopter pilot member passes away;

Whereas the average 2016 VHPA member age is currently 71 years old, and demographic tables suggest members of the VHPA will likely survive through 2045;

Whereas the expectation of VHPA members continuing to accomplish complex, time-consuming association duties past the age of 75 is unrealistic, yet the opportunity for members to enjoy reunions, support Vietnam combat rotary-wing historical research, provide scholarships to deserving students, and enjoy the AVIATOR Magazine will continue well past that age;

Whereas research shows successful veteran organizations such as those established to honor World War Two "Last Man Standing" aviation organizations, such as the Doolittle Raiders and the Tuskegee Airman, have approved and incorporated limited, conditional memberships for younger individuals such as relatives or Gold Star Family members; and

Whereas limited memberships within similar veteran organizations have allowed younger members to carry

on the volunteer duties required to sustain a vibrant veteran's organization; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association:

- 1. directs the VHPA Executive Council to explore conditional association membership models and policies for sustaining the volunteer services of the Association;*
- 2. report to the Association membership in the January-February 2017 AVIATOR Magazine a tentative policy model for associate membership options; and*
- 3. prepare a policy for presentation and approval vote during the 2017 VHPA Annual Business Meeting.*

Mover:

Bob Hesselbein, [REDACTED]

Seconders:

Art Jacob, [REDACTED]; Bill Mullen, [REDACTED]
John Powell, [REDACTED] John Shafer,
[REDACTED]; Mike Sheuerman, [REDACTED] John
Sorensen, [REDACTED]

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The Crash of Falcon Eight Zero

By WO-1 Dennis Dupuis

The night of August 31-September 1, 1969, I had been in the 114th AHC for three weeks. The lead aircraft in a flight of three was shot down in an LZ in Cambodia. As a new guy, I sat in the cockpit and watched as we immediately left the crashed Huey and crew. The crew survived somehow and carried the wounded U.S.



advisor. They had to be picked up by a Medevac helicopter four or five hours later and miles from the crash site. The American advisor died after the "coordinated rescue". My thought as a new co-pilot was "I'd never leave 'em behind."

This is what I remember of the crash of Falcon Eight Zero: The Cowboys had taken off from Bearcat base camp at 06:00 hrs. February 3, 1970. Twenty hours later, the next morning (February 4, 1970 about 02:00 hrs.), our ten Huey helicopters were still flying, fully loaded with troops, conducting combat assaults. The slicks were in a tight, staggered-right formation. The Falcons, our UH-1B gunships, were escorting the flight to the LZ. There were no night vision aids, no night-vision goggles, just our naked eyes. I think I was the youngest in our crew of four, a twenty-year-old WO1 pilot. I had been an AC, Aircraft Commander, for only a month.

I had the flight controls. The radios were quite busy. On the UHF radio, the C&C ship, Command and Control, was giving directions to Cowboy 23 (the lead slick) about conditions in the LZ, and to the Falcons suppressing the enemy in the LZ. On the VHF radio the Falcons were coordinating their movements, while the ground unit communicated on the FM radio frequency.

We were the second aircraft flying about 75 feet (1 to 3 rotor discs) to the right and behind the lead helicopter. The formation made a right turn toward the LZ. My eyes focused on the lead aircraft. As my view of Lead changed in the turn, I could see less of the side and more of the top of his helicopter. Flying on the inside of the turn, we had to make a little sharper turn; our airspeed had to be a little slower. I adjusted our turn a little more to maintain our angle and distance. Suddenly, another helicopter flashed between Lead and me. They were so close I could see the top of the roof. I could see the small dim white navigation lights on the roof. I could see the green house windows over the pilots' compartment. In an instant it was gone! Instinctively, I had turned our aircraft away from Lead. Was it

real or an illusion? I wasn't sure; we had logged more than 12 hours of flight time since the previous morning. I refocused and concentrated on Lead.

No way had it happened, I must have imagined it! I took a deep breath. I needed to slip back into a tight formation. Then I heard on the UHF radio, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday Eight Zero's going down."

Then, the radio went silent, "That was one of our Falcons, I said."

Still with the flight and in a right turn, a quick glance revealed the position/navigation lights of an aircraft below and to the right of us.

"Eight zero's going down!" The voice from Eight Zero, Merv Kinnan was even louder and more assertive.

Usually the trail ship of the formation would respond but there was only silence on the radio. I could see Eight Zero below us and going away to our right. Their lights were becoming dimmer.

"G*d Da** it, EIGHT ZERO IS GOING DOWN" Eight Zero's call was now very loud and angry.

While keeping Eight Zero in sight, I turned the aircraft hard right and keyed my microphone, "Two One's gotcha." We had departed the formation, and I rolled out above and about a quarter to a half-mile behind them. "Eight Zero, I'm on you. I got you in sight." I could see they still had control of the aircraft but were in a steep descent. They landed hard in the vicinity of a few hooches or huts. I turned on the landing light, picked a clear area and looked for any obstacles as we approached the ground.

We landed to the rear of the crashed gunship. Illuminated in the dusty glow of our landing light, I saw the tail boom was bent down onto the ground and their rotor was slowly turning. The Vietnamese troops got out of our aircraft. My eyes were still locked on the crashed B-model. There was no movement from the crew. I do not remember hearing any shots firing. I do not remember seeing any ground fire. I do not remember any radio transmissions, but even today I can still see that broken B-model at the end of a tunnel of light.

I whispered into the intercom, "Andy. Go see about the crew." I don't know why I whispered, but Andy jumped right out and started forward. Cowboy Two Nine, chalk four from the flight, landed to our right rear. Ambrose, our right door gunner, then jumped out with his machine gun and headed

toward the downed aircraft. I turned off the landing light when Eight Zero's crewmembers started toward our ship. Our crew helped an injured crewman to our ship. Ambrose, carrying his M-60 machine gun, escorted them and was ready to kill anyone who shot at us. The crew of Falcon Eight Zero got onboard and we took off. We were climbing to 1,500 feet and turning to the west toward the hospital about 40 miles away. We had 'em and they were safe now.

We radioed the 3rd Surgical Hospital in Binh Thuy that "We're inbound with four American helicopter crewmen, ETA fifteen minutes." It was important to let the hospital know we had Americans on board. Vietnamization had started in IV Corps area. The entire 9th Infantry Division had been gone since the summer of 1969. We often received and flew Medevac missions, but if it was for an American, we were more enthusiastic for the mission. The 3rd Surgical was an American hospital that treated many Vietnamese and a few American casualties after the 9th Div went home. I knew they would pull all their resources quickly for an American, especially an American aircrew.

After the injured crewmembers were taken from our ship, we parked to the side of the Medevac helipad, and shut down. While our crew looked for any battle damage, I went into the hospital to check on Eight Zero and his crew. An American nurse stopped me just inside the emergency room, and told me not to worry; the staff was taking care of my friends.

I returned to the helipad and was informed our aircraft was flyable having no battle damage. We reported take off from the hospital pad and went to Can Tho airfield for fuel. Radio transmissions were restricted during hot refueling operations, so as soon as we left Can Tho's control area we changed to the Cowboys frequency to request further instructions from C&C. My goodness, there was a lot of radio traffic on that frequency involving the downed aircraft. Delta Six, our 164th group commander was in the air. Air Force FACs, Forward Air Controllers, were calling. Artillery observers and others were being told to stack every 500 or 1,000 foot interval above the C&C ship, and others; and others; and others. Where the hell were they when our mission had to go into overtime? I couldn't get a word in edgewise. Finally, I got a break on the radio and was instructed to RTB, Return to Base. The Cowboys had been released. Good! It had been 22 hours since we'd left Bearcat. I was glad to go home, mission complete.

The Cowboy Flight had already landed at The Corral and was shut down before we arrived and parked our aircraft in its revetment. I took a deep breath, exhaled slowly as I rolled off the throttle and thought about the last 24 hours, my longest mission.

The operating RPM of the aircraft was like its heartbeat and was matched by mine. The tempo reflected the excitement and danger of flying helicopters. As the revolutions of the rotor blades decreased, my mind and body relaxed. When the rotors finally stopped, I unstrapped my seat belt and shoulder harness. I removed my bullet-proof chest protector, pushed back the seat's sliding armor side plate, and climbed out of the aircraft. The sun was coming up. I was physically drained. I was alive. It was a new day and we were home.

During our routine post-flight inspection of the aircraft the crew chief called me to the tail boom. As he tied down the rotor, he saw a yellow smudge impression on the bottom of one of the rotor blades. It was the same yellow color and width of the tip of a tail rotor blade. It could have only come from Eight Zero's aircraft; our main rotor blade had contacted Eight Zero's tail rotor blade. We had survived a mid air collision of two helicopters.

Our mess section delivered breakfast to the flight line. It was a great treat to have breakfast brought to us as we performed the after-flight duties and debriefing. Many times on a mission I had a box of C rations for lunch, while sitting in the helicopter. That morning, I sat on the metal floor of the helicopter with my legs dangling over the side, sharing a hot breakfast with three other guys. I was relaxed, stress free. We had shared the day, the night, the mission, and the danger. We were brothers. Life was good.

"Life and death aren't simple but we were quite simply, alive." And a Hard Rain Fell by John Ketwig

Epilogue:

- Gary Hayes' recollection of the event in Dominic Fino's "The Making of a Falcon" was different than what I remember.
- Andy Dyndul asked me to substantiate his statement to a Congressman. It was different than what I remember.
- Fred Miller's reply to Andy was different than what I remember.
- The Army's record Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated:
Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Also: OPERA (Operations Report) Total Loss to Inventory Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1B tail number 62-02028
The Army purchased this helicopter 06 1963
Total flight hours at this point: 00002680
Date: 02/04/1970
Unit: 335th Assault Helicopter Company
South Vietnam Crash site at UTM grid coordinates: XS570167

By Dennis Dupuis, CW2

Monument Update: Winter, 2016



The proposed Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial for Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) continues to gain traction in Washington,

DC. On December 18, 2015, Congressman Mark Amodei (NV-Second District) introduced HR 4298, the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act. This bill will direct the Secretary of The Army to place the memorial within ANC.

Following the refusal by then-Secretary of the Army, John McHugh, to the VHPA monument proposal, volunteers such as VHPA members Dan Dennison and John Powell began to seek support on Capitol Hill for legislation. Representative Amodei, a strong supporter of the memorial, stepped forward to enact the legislation. Since that time, other representatives have signed on to co-sponsor this non-partisan bill assigned to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Many bills "die" in committee, never moving to the greater assembly. More sponsorship and encouragement by our membership is needed to ensure the bill receives a committee hearing and a vote by Congress. Through our efforts, contacting individual representatives (importantly, repeated telephone calls to their military affairs staffperson), we will make this proposal a reality.

This effort will meet resistance from the Army. Although we see the historical value and importance of honoring the extraordinary sacrifice of the many who died flying the iconic symbol of the Vietnam War, others do not. The Secretary of The Army staff will argue a small marker by the Living Tree (donat-



ed and dedicated August 28th, 2015) is appropriate. It is not.

The VHPA researched the 142 tree markers within ANC. Almost without exception, the small stones honor specific units (ship crews, regiments, or events), not the multi-branch sacrifices of thousands over a decade of combat. In conclusion, a tree marker is inappropriate to the significance of the broad missions and resulting casualties.

A suggested communication to your representative, as well as a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document, is provided to help you advocate. The very best way to get your representative's attention is by calling and speaking with a military liaison staffperson, then by sending email, and last by mailing correspondence (letters average five weeks to delivery due to security screening). Getting the physical attention of a staffperson works the best option to a successful contact.

Creating a lasting legacy in the nation's capital is a challenging undertaking, but not impossible. With your help we will complete the work of placing the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crew Memorial where it belongs, in Arlington National Cemetery.

Dear Congressman/Senator _____:

I am a Vietnam veteran writing to request your support and cosponsoring of HR 4298, the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act. This bill directs the Secretary of The Army to place a memorial honoring the thousands of helicopter pilots and crewmen who died serving their country in the Vietnam War, commonly described as "The Helicopter War." Approximately 5,000 pilots and crewmembers from all branches of service--almost ten percent of all Vietnam combat fatalities--died performing this hazardous duty.

Arlington National Cemetery is the appropriate place for this memorial. The reasons are clear: approximately 20 percent of all Vietnam War casualties

buried in Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) are helicopter crewmembers; the cemetery remains the destination of Missing in Action (MIA) helicopter crews still being recovered years after war; and almost all helicopter pilots who earned the Medal of Honor are at rest among the granite markers.

No national memorial exists anywhere honoring the combined service and losses of the valiant helicopter pilots and crewmembers from all branches of service who gave the last full measure of devotion to their nation in the Vietnam War. Recognizing their extraordinary sacrifice is long overdue. I ask you to help ensure this memorial is placed where it belongs, in Arlington National Cemetery, by cosponsoring and voting for HR 4298.

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 that 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 who 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.

(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.

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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

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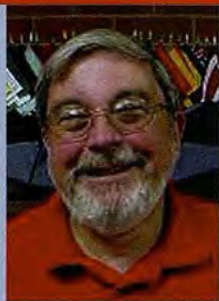
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EDITING THE VHPA NEWSLETTER-AVIATOR



By Jack Swickard

I became editor of The VHPA Newsletter in 1991 almost by accident.

After returning home from my first reunion in 1988, I thought the association might want to add some guest speakers to its programs. In the summer of 1989, I was moving from

Roswell, in southeastern New Mexico, to Farmington, in the northwest corner of the state. As a result of the move, I missed the 1989 reunion in Chicago. But I had not forgotten about helping book guest speakers; as luck would have it, three Cabinet and sub-Cabinet members in the administration of President George H.W. Bush were friends of mine. I wrote to VHPA Headquarters and offered to get one of my friends as a reunion speaker.

Within a week, incoming VHPA president Greg Ross was on the phone. "How do you know these people?" Greg asked me. I told him I was editor of The Farmington Daily Times, as well as former editor of the Roswell Daily Record and ex-city editor of The Albuquerque Tribune. "I've covered them for years," I added. In New Mexico, reporters, editors and most voters are on a first-name basis with politicians statewide. It's an advantage to living in a state with a small population.

Greg picked up on my job description. He told me the current Newsletter editor planned to leave the job and it would be nice if I offered to take over. I agreed, but it was more than a year before I moved into the job, succeeding Mike McDonald as editor after the 1991 reunion in Reno. By then, Greg Ross had completed his term as president and Gary Slaughter had succeeded him.

When I began work on the September 1991 issue, I came across several things I knew would have to be changed:

- The VHPA staff was laying out the pages for publication and coordinating with the printer. As editor, I assembled articles and photographs, edited the articles and cropped the photos, and then sent them in an envelope to Headquarters in Cincinnati.

- The Newsletter was printed in blue ink on buff-colored paper. I knew it was tough for members to read, plus I didn't see any way we could publish a color photograph without a white background.

- Only a single, small ad appeared in the Newsletter. Though members' dues paid Newsletter expenses, the lack of advertising restricted any improvements that could be made to the publication.

My newspaper in Farmington had embarked on the road to "Pagination," assembling a full newspaper page on a computer. I bought a desktop publishing program and began building The VHPA Newsletter pages on my home computer. This gave me control of appearance, allowed me to push back deadlines, and cut costs. And, now I was communicating directly with the printer; next, I told the printer to begin using black ink on white paper.

Then I came up with an advertising policy, with ad prices set to generate a profit. The policy also included rates tied to ad sizes, breaks for buying multiple ads during the year, and color ad rates. The Newsletter also began publishing color ads, which allowed us to break out of the black-and-white printing world and begin running color photographs. Within two years, advertising was generating enough revenue that in 1993 we expanded from four to six issues of the Newsletter a year, and increased our page count per issue. The publication had evolved from a newsletter to a magazine.

In June 2005, we published the final VHPA Newsletter. And in August 2005, the publication became The VHPA Aviator, with the unanimous approval of members attending the reunion in San Francisco.

I continued editing The Aviator until 2008, when David Adams took over as editor. Eight years earlier I left the newspaper business and started a public relations consulting company, The Triton Group. Business was good and I was finding I had less time for volunteer work. I figured 17 years was enough time to donate to the publication. It had become a full-time, volunteer job.

David and his successors have done a great job with The Aviator.

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Aerobatics at LZ East

1745 Hrs. 11 January 1969

It was Happy Hour in Chu Lai. Tonight most of the OH-23G drivers sat at the Div Arty Officers Club with their favorite beverage in hand. One of the benefits here, if one could accept there might be benefits being in Vietnam, was the bar fare. It was twenty-five cents for a Dewars and water, the pilots' drink of choice. You couldn't find Happy Hour prices like that anywhere.

Happy Hour often spawned story telling one of the favorite pastimes of the pilots. The pilots' tales or TINS as they called them were an important part of the culture and entertainment at Div Arty Air. The young warriors loved to tell stories, especially flying stories. The TINS were also a way of learning from each other's experiences and mistakes. Flying alone, as they did, the tales sometimes didn't get out quickly. However, secrets were hard to keep at Div Arty Air and the important TINS were always told. Once someone started a story, others often poured out making for a lively evening. It was like that tonight.

Captain Fuller, the section leader said to the pilots sitting around the coffee table in the bar, "Girls, 'let's roll the dice for another round of drinks. There is plenty of time before dinner. Anyone know anything?"

"Well," said Lieutenant Birmingham, I got an interesting call on the fox mike today at the ops hut."

Everyone turned to Birmingham, the unit's Operation Officer.

"The XO out on LZ East called," said Birmingham, "to report a Twenty-three doing aerobatic maneuvers. I had to question him real close because, I never thought a Raven could do aerobatic maneuvers."

He paused for effect and looked around until he had everyone's undivided attention.

"Well," he continued, "the XO said that a twenty-three was doing spins and twisty turnee kinds of things, real low and slow like, across his firebase. He didn't much like it because all his people stopped what they were doing and had to watch the show. He said his folks are lazy anyway, and he sure didn't need a Blue Angel act above his hill - good air show or not. The XO added his First Sergeant was especially pissed getting his people's work interrupted like that and everything. Nevertheless, the Sergeant was apparently real impressed."

"The XO added he didn't know much about flying, but it looked kind of dangerous to him. He was surprised because he thought only the Blue Angels always did stuff that looked that dangerous. The XO mentioned it would be great if I could fix it so the Old Man could ride in the chopper for the next show. They would like to do something nice for the Old Man and give him a thrill."

Birmingham paused again and smiled before saying, "It must get boring up there on the hill."

Birmingham then continued, "Anyway, the XO asked me to check into it. I told him right off that we didn't have any Blue Angel rated guys here, but I would try to find out which unit did and maybe I could get tickets for our entire section to watch next time."

"Guys," he added, "it's got to be better than Bob Hope. Don't you think?"

"Anyway," he continued, "Guys, I got to checking and it seems that only one of Div Arty's pilots was anywhere near LZ East today, and that was Mr. Lincoln."

Everyone in the group, but CW2 Lincoln, rolled in the floor laughing their butts off. Eyes turned toward the pilots' table. The Div Arty Air Group was creating a disturbance in the Club and getting stern looks from a nearby group of non-rated Division field-grade-types. Fuller hushed everyone down. When the room was quiet, he said softly, "Mr. Lincoln," he paused then continued, "...and what did you do at the office today?"

"Huh? Oh, ah, well," said Lincoln, uncomfortably, "Ah, I did have a problem this afternoon."

EARLIER THAT AFTERNOON

Sergeant Johnson strapped Mr. Lincoln into the Raven and wished him luck. He checked in with Ky Hai tower and hovered to the active. Receiving clearance, he departed south over the South China Sea. Lincoln banked sharply left and descended down to twenty feet and low-leveled over the bay and nearby fishing village. It was a nice, warm wintertime afternoon. Below him he saw lots of fishing and crabbing taking place in the Chu Lai bay from fisherman in round reed boats.

Link, as his buddies called him, low-leveled across the marshes at a magnetic heading of 300-degrees. The helicopter flushed out nesting waterfowl as it sped overhead. The pilot's heading would lead him to Highway One just south of his destination, Hill 54. Lincoln banked sharply right over the highway and followed it north a short distance to Hill 54. He popped up sharply to an altitude of five hundred feet, circled once around the hill, and landed on a sandbag landing pad, feeling sharp and frisky.

A lowboy truck moved toward the idling chopper with all kinds of gear on it.

Now where in the hell are they going to put all that stuff in my helicopter?

Two bare-chested soldiers walked up to him. One said, "Sir, we were told you would take this stuff to LZ East."

"O.K.," yelled Lincoln over the noise of the idling chopper. "It may take me two trips."

They piled on boxes of small arms, a mail sack and boxes of who-knows-what in the right seat. They carefully strapped everything in with the seatbelt and rubber tie down hooks. In the left seat, they had some kind of survey equipment, bundles of heavy-duty cotton rope and a large cargo net with a hook attached. They strapped the gear down and gave him the thumbs up signal.

Great, they fit everything in thought Lincoln. One trip and I am out of here. It's a big load. Need to be careful and make real sure this old gal can still hover with all this gear on board.

He wouldn't want to be overloaded when landing on LZ East. The

mountaintop LZ was on a sharp, knife-edge ridge with heavily wooded steep slopes on both sides. Landing on the high, narrow ridge was tricky, especially with a heavy load. Lincoln would need plenty of contingency power to land with a margin of safety.

The warrant officer carefully picked up the loaded Raven to a hover. It hovered easily and the center of gravity felt fine telling him he would have adequate power to land safely on the mountain top.

No problem ... a piece of cake.

He departed into the wind and turned north along Highway One climbing at five hundred feet per minute to an altitude of 2,000 feet. He passed the Province Capital City of Tam Ky off to his left and noticed schoolchildren playing soccer in the large athletic field on the south side of the city. Ten miles past Tam Ky, Lincoln veered northwest west into the highland forest leaving the relative sanctuary of Highway One. As he climbed, he saw puffy white, cumulus clouds threatening to build into afternoon thunderstorms.

Entering a pass through the mountains, the Raven picked up moderate turbulence. The small helicopter, pilot and cargo bounced vigorously. Link looked around to visually check the cargo.

Hmm, Everything looks O.K. thought the pilot.

One item wasn't. A heavy-duty cargo net used by the large Chinook cargo helicopters to sling load cargo, worked its way loose from its tie down on the left seat. Some of the net reached the floor and worked its way in between the pedals on the floor of the empty co-pilot's seat.

Soon LZ East appeared directly ahead. The heavily fortified position with six 105-howitzers and two quad-50 machine guns stood out distinctly on the horizon. The men on the LZ lived and worked in buried bunkers constructed from heavy timbers and sandbags on the bald ridge. Triple canopy jungle and steep slopes leading into broad valleys surrounded it.

Lincoln squeezed the trigger on his cyclic and said, "Ranger Zero-Four, Phoenix One-Niner approaching from the east, request smoke, over."

"Roger, One-Niner, smoke is coming, over."

The pilot needed the smoke to judge the wind for landing. Winds were tricky on these mountaintops, dangerous to small, heavily loaded helicopters.

Link squeezed his trigger and said, "Zero-Four, I have purple smoke."

"Roger, purple smoke," crackled the radio.

The small helicopter circled to set up for a normal pinnacle approach into the wind. The warrant officer smoothly lowered collective, added right pedal and eased back the cyclic skillfully slowing the Raven down to 50-knots.

The Raven slowed to 40-knots approaching the white landing pad. Seconds from landing, a sudden downdraft, a common occurrence in the mountains, pushed the helicopter down dangerously shallowing



There were approximately 100 OH-23s in Vietnam; of these, approximately 93 were destroyed.

the approach angle. Lincoln immediately corrected by adding power with his collective and pushing in left pedal to counter the additional engine torque.

The left pedal didn't move. Without the left anti-torque pedal, the helicopter suddenly yawed sharply right providing the pilot an unwanted view out the left open door of the cockpit. The raven descended sideways toward the LZ a mere 50 feet from his landing spot. Experiencing an almost debilitating burst of stark, abject terror, the pilot pulled up hard on the collective to clear the ridge. This stopped his descent, but it also caused the helicopter to spin 720-degrees in a clockwise direction. Link saw LZ East appear twice as he spun over the narrow ridge. The Raven spun lazily, as if slow motion, off in the thin air on the north side of the mountain ridge. Soldiers on the ridge stopped what they were doing and watched the Raven spin off in amazement.

Once clear of the ridge, Lincoln lowered the collective to slow the spinning and lowered the nose slightly. The spinning slowed and stopped. With the nose now pointing forward, he lowered it to gain airspeed. Reaching 75-knots, the pilot trimmed pitch and roll with the electric button on his cyclic and applied friction to steady the collective. With the aircraft now stable, he took his left hand off the collective and reached over to the left side of the cluttered cockpit and worked the net free from the co-pilot's pedal. This took some doing, long arms or not on the tall, lanky pilot, he could barely reach down to the pedals. He had to stretch and carefully tug, pull and shake on the net to free it. After several minutes of straining, he freed it.

He leaned back, took a couple of deep breaths and tried to relax. Turning toward the coast, he looked at his shaking left hand and thought, Shit, nearly bought the farm on that one. I don't know if I can even land this thing on LZ East right now. Screw them and their net. It nearly killed me today; I am going home.

Lincoln finished his version of the story to his pilots, who smiled at him. Fuller stood up and said with a grin, "Now, wasn't that special?" Everyone chuckled. "Let's eat, girls."

By Arthur Darryl James, Life Member



"Looking For"

INFORMATION SOUGHT REGARDING HELICOPTER CRASH

I am looking for anyone with knowledge of an incident which occurred with the 128th Assault Helicopter Company on about 27 July 1967. The incident resulted in the helicopter crashing from enemy fire, resulting in the death of the door gunner and an infantry passenger. The other crewman, Corporal Lawrence (Larry) Ralph Smith was wounded multiple times. The remaining crew and infantry passengers engaged in ground combat for the next two hours until being rescued by another helicopter. It has been mentioned that Smith received a Distinguished Flying Cross as a result of this action; however, the National Records Center and the Department of the Army have no record of the award. Any information provided will assist in a more extensive search of the records and may be necessary should an award recommendation be submitted.

Information may be forwarded to LtCol Mac Kolar, USMC (Retired) at [REDACTED]

LOOKING FOR CREW

I am looking for the crew that flew a mission out of Tuy Hoa in 1970. I lost track of the crew and hope this extract from the after action statement may assist in getting them together.

At 2040 hours, 05 Dec 70, a Regional Force Company was involved in a meeting engagement with a platoon-sized VC force. As a result of intense VC B40 rocket fire, the Vietnamese (RF) platoon leader was very seriously wounded in the head and body by rocket fragments. Request for medevac was denied by VNAF due to nighttime flying conditions, combined with extremely poor visibility caused by seasonal rains. A medevac request was then made through American channels. An American medevac ship was in the process of making another medevac and upon our request volunteered to perform our mission. The crew names were unknown, but the call sign of the U.S. "Dustoff" aircraft was "Dustoff 112".

Thanks for any assistance,

Larry Newsom [REDACTED]

PHOTOS OF MARINE AVIATOR

My Dad (LTC Richard G. Courtney) was a Marine Corps chopper pilot who flew the UH-34D based at Marble Mountain, Da Nang, RVN from 1967-1969. He was the skipper of HMM-163 "Ridge Runners". He also flew the Marine Corps CH-46 Sea Knight. My Dad filed his final "flight plan" in March 2010 at age 82.

As a proud "Marine Brat" and veteran of USAF/US ARMY, I would deeply appreciate anyone who might have any photos of my dad piloting one of those choppers. It's probably a long shot and I doubt he would have been given photo credit, under the circumstances. I'm just asking for the chance to go through them, if any exist, and uncover any information that might show him at the controls or looking out a window.

He got in on the ground floor of Marine Corps "vertical aviation" after either "volunteering" or being "drafted", depending on who is telling the story, after flying F2H Banshee photo recon missions with VMJ-2 as a "jet jock" in 1962 and was assigned to HMX during the Eisenhower years.

I was thinking you just might have a sizeable Marine contingent among your members, and maybe some guys who flew with my dad? So here's hoping something may come of your posting of my request.

Thanks very much, [REDACTED]

TRYING TO GET INFORMATION

Elaine Parker contacted the VHPA Aviator as well as Gary Roush in her attempt to gather details about her late husband's service in SE Asia. Gary determined that he was not a helicopter pilot, but he could have been involved in Aviation.

Elaine notes: "My husband was Ronald Kermit Parker. He was in the Air Force June 9, 1956 - June 8, 1965 and was in Thailand between 1960-65. His DD214 says Hq12SADDV and SOG-12, SOG-23, and SOG-63. One of his medals is wings with a star above. Nobody has been able to tell me what any of the organizations that are on his DD214 did. No one knows.

Ron was stationed at NKP in Thailand. Maybe someone from the SOG or Air Force can help Elaine. If so, here is her email: parker-productions2@icloud.com

CAN ANYONE ID THIS PATCH?



If so, contact Mike Law at: [REDACTED]

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By Mike Sheuerman

**2016 VHPA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE
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If you haven't already reminded your descendants, it's time to apply for one of the five VHPA Merit Scholarships valued at \$3,000 each. The online process is as follows: log on to vhpa.org, click on scholarship@vhpa and follow the prompts. Any descendant of a dues current member of VHPA or of a descendant of a pilot who died while flying a helicopter in Vietnam or SE Asia between 1961 and 1975 is eligible to apply and receive an award. Applications must be postmarked by May 1, 2016.

Since AAAA manages our scholarship you or your descendant must be a member of AAAA. This will make your applicant eligible for many of the AAAA scholarships and grants available. Last year almost 50 of our descendants sent in applications, five received a VHPA scholarship and almost 30 others received scholarships and grants from AAAA. The total was over \$80,000.

This is a win-win for our children, their children and their children's children. Please get your descendants to

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apply. If you have any questions feel free to contact Tom Payne or Mike Sheuerman through hq@vhpa.org.

**By Tom Payne/Chairman
Mike Sheuerman/Fundraising
Scholarship Committee**

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator,

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

I would like to thank and commend the staff of the VHPA for all the tireless work that they do. I have been a member of this group of guys for a long time (L00283) and was the Junior Member at Large and the Reno Convention host in 1991 (I will attend the Reno gathering this July). The VHPA AVIATOR magazine is an exceptional piece of correspondence that has kept all of us, in and out of the aviation field, involved with each other over the past 33 years.

As the Class "Coordinator" for W.O.C. Class 66-23/67-1, I have often used another truly outstanding reference book to keep track of the over 300 classmates who graduated in the mid 1960s; the VHPA Directory. With the use of its accurate and timely information, and some great investigative researching from my wife, I have been able to find, contact, correspond with, and confirm information about our classmates and pass that info on to the rest of the class.

With the use of the Directory, I have just learned that our 76th classmate passed away in November of 2014: Robert S. (Stan) Henderson Jr. Stan was a classmate who was picked from the "line" and spent his time, right from Ft Rucker, as a VIP pilot in Korea. He never did serve in Vietnam but came out of the service and had a solid aviation career with TWA and American Airlines...his family now lives in Southlake, Texas.

Our class, 66-23/67-1 will get together again in April, 2017 in Kansas City for our 50th Anniversary of Graduation From Flight School ReunionClass Blast 2017. Information can be obtained by contacting me at tpsp@cox.net.we already have over 100 classmates signed up.

A huge thank you to the staff of the VHPA, The VHPA AVIATOR and especially to Mike Law and Gary Roush for their tireless work on keeping us all informed.

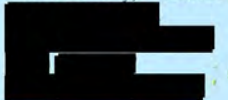
With the warmest of regards,

**Tom Percy, Sr.
L00283**

"Original" Blueghost 18

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

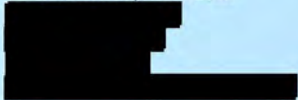
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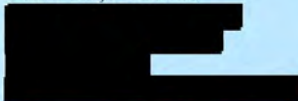
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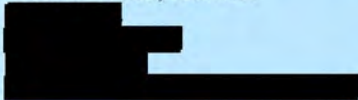
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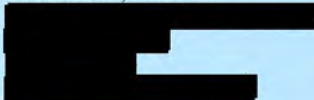
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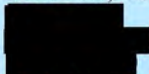
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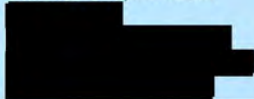


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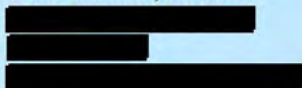
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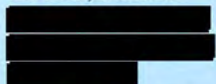
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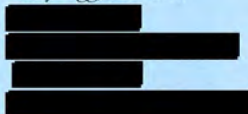
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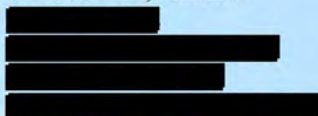
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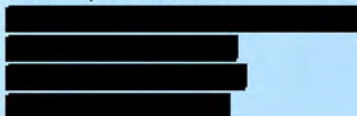


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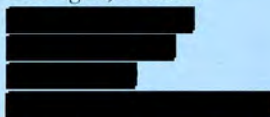
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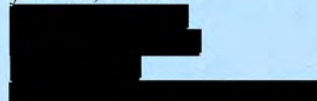


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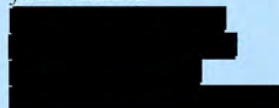
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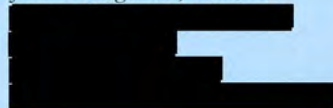
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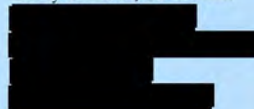
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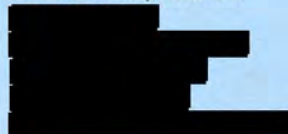
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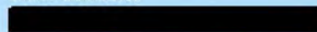
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Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

New President Ben Treadaway chaired an Alamo Chapter Directors meeting on January 14th, to define goals and schedule Chapter activities for the New Year.

Our Past President, Dave Whitney arranged another private tour, on February 11th, of the extensive warbird collection of Mr. Rodney Lewis (Lewis Air Legends). 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. Once again, the Alamo Chapter thanks Mr. Lewis and Mr. Robert Cardin for their generosity and courtesy in allowing us to admire these historic old aircraft.

Our ladies have continued their monthly luncheons with one at the Army Residence Community (in conjunction with a tour of the facilities) on January 13th, and another at the Cheesecake Factory at La Cantera (San Antonio) on February 12th. They plan to continue these very popular gatherings, which usually are scheduled on the second Friday of each month.

Trying to keep up with our wives, we pilots met for lunch on February 10th at Bourbon Street Seafood Kitchen in San Antonio. These lunches are likely to be scheduled monthly, and 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, with wives and guests, will be at the Barn Door Restaurant at 1800 on Thursday, March 31st. A very interesting guest speaker will be there.

Our Christmas party has already been scheduled for the evening of Friday, December 9th, 2016, so members have plenty of time to put this one on their calendars.

By Chuck Oualline

ALASKA CHAPTER

All is quiet on the Alaska front this time of year... So many snowbirds yet when we are having little snow and a mild winter again. It's crazy but nice. Our next scheduled event is not until February 26th during the Fur Rondy dog races. After that we really get going.

It is a pleasure to announce we are steadily growing in membership and we are now a partner with The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration! As a new Commemorative Partner (CP), we join a team of more than 9,000 organizations dedicated to assisting the nation in thanking and honoring our 7.2 million living Vietnam veterans and the 9 million families of those who served. We will be working to Honor Vietnam members throughout the year in all our events and we encourage other Chapters to look into this opportunity at www.vietnamwar50th.com as well as our website: www.VHPA-Alaska.org

In closing, we look forward to a fun filled 2016 and expect to make an Alaska Chapter assault on the Reno Reunion!

Until then - There is Pride in knowing WE FLEW

By Lynn Kile, Chapter President

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

As many VHPA members know, the Fort Wolters Chapter started a project years ago to establish the National Vietnam War Museum as a means of public education about the war and appreciation for the service that we all gave to our country. At that time the chapter decided to "spin off" the museum so as to be able to get as many other people involved as possible. From its inception to now, the museum has made great progress. It has not yet, however broken ground for the main museum building; taking perhaps too much advice from outside consultants. The board of directors has recently decided that the museum should be built within our lifetimes and have engaged a contractor to do so in a four-phased approach.

From the board: "Do you want the museum built before you die? Then help us build it. We have an affordable plan and we have started the fundraising with \$180,000. We are raising funds through the Builders Club. To become a member of the builders club requires a donation of \$10,000. We only need 82 more people and we'll be done."

The Fort Wolters Chapter is already a member, so we challenge all of the other chapters to match us. We raised our builders' club donation in about ten minutes during our last regular meeting! With \$1M we can build phase one and have it open in 2016. It's time to do this.

See the museum website at nationalvnwarmuseum.org for information.

By Ed Faight, Chapter President

GEORGIA CHAPTER

On 16 January 2016, The GA VHPA Chapter enjoyed our first bi-monthly breakfast meeting of the New Year at our meeting headquarters, LZ Romeo Romeo (a.k.a. Rib Ranch in Marietta, GA). Our speaker was Terry Garlock, author of *Strength and Honor: America's best in Vietnam*. Terry's subject was "Wounded Warriors", a fitting subject as Terry himself, a Cobra pilot in the 334th Armed Helicopter Company, was shot down and severely wounded, necessitating evacuation back to the States. Terry related his own experiences and that of others he met during his recovery as well as emphasizing that special bond that is developed between men who experience combat. He also invited several local Vietnam veteran grunt friends to our meeting; many of them wounded during their combat tours in Vietnam.

Our March meeting will again be conducted at LZ Romeo Romeo on March 19th. Our guest speaker for that event will be Tom McIntosh. Tom is a commercial pilot who regularly flies into Vietnam and has a family residing there. He will relate to us what happened in Vietnam after our departure in 1975. The abandonment of our allies and the US Congressional action to cut all supporting funds for South Vietnam had consequences, unfortunately, terrible ones that our members will learn about.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots interested in joining and/or learning more about our Chapter may contact me by email at [REDACTED].

By Bob Lanzotti, Chapter President

MICHIGAN CHAPTER



The Michigan Chapter will hold a spring meeting with date and location TBA. Chapter members and interested parties on the email list should watch for details as it gets closer. The meeting will be in a restaurant including lunch offerings. Attendees are encouraged to bring their spouses. It will be a great opportunity to share stories, swap lies, and build friendships.

Among the agenda items, we will be discussing events for our chapter's participation this year. We will be participating 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.

The spring meeting will also include election of chapter officers. We are seeking candidates to fill the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer positions. 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, Chapter President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH (VHPA-CCN) 2015 Chapter Report

The chapter had a very busy 2015. We started with a Holiday party in January at our President's house and ended in December with showing off our Huey in the Placerville Christmas parade.

Our Huey rolled out for 13 missions over 17 days in 2015 (11 static displays and 2 parades). We had at least 1500 guests on board and many more observers. We required 4 hangar maintenance days (plus individual work by many and a few extra days at the hangar by Ken Fritz and Curt Knapp). Several members also supported 1 fund raising event for the Sacramento Veterans Stand Down Organization and the chapter held 1 Holiday party.

In February, we displayed our Huey at a President's Day event in Fair Oaks and then started some much need maintenance at our hanger in West Sacramento in March and April. We finally completed the rotor head assembly (had been held together with bungee cords!) and installed and a repaired number of other parts. Later in April, we showed the Huey at America Legion Post 521 in Rio Linda at their annual motorcycle run event.

May was a very busy month for us. We first completed another round of maintenance on the Huey. The passenger seat was repaired and we secured the stabilizer bar on the rotor system. If the stabilizer does not stay parallel to the ground, we exceed the maximum trailer height, making it tough to "fly" under overpasses. May continued with a display

in Rancho Cordova for the Parks and Recreation Department and another 500+ kids and adults learning about our Huey. The next week, on Armed Forces Day, we displayed the Huey at American Legion Post 264 in Lincoln and then at the annual "Vettes for Vets" car show co-sponsored by the California Auto Museum in Sacramento. We ended the month at a 4 day display in Roseville in support of the "Moving Wall" exhibit.

In June, Mike Nord, Jim Stein, and Greg Hutson represented the chapter in a Golf Fundraiser for the Sacramento Area Stand Down for Veterans. They all tied for first place in the event! The same day, Curt Knapp, Greg Vitaich (a non-flying Vietnam Vet), and Jim Clarke (friend of the chapter and great mechanic), along with Frank Kulhavy (hangar manager) finished up some loose ends on the Huey.

The Huey rolled out again for the July 4th parade in Carmichael with our new sound system. California Congressman Ami Bera stopped by to say Hello. The Huey sounds got a lot of attention!



*July 4th Parade in
Carmichael*

Marsha Fritz, Ken Fritz, Ed Morris, Al Doucette, Ami Bera, Greg Hudson, Curt Knapp, Ken Smith, Jim Cunningham, and Wesley (Curt Knapp's grandson)

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

In August, we displayed the Huey in El Dorado Hills at a Golf tournament in support of the El Dorado County Veterans Monument.



El Dorado Hills Display
Note WWI Fighter Plane Fly Over

In September, the Huey was transported to Grass Valley, CA, for a 2 day event, "Cruisin the Pines", one of the largest auto shows in Northern California. We were escorted by a local motorcycle group and the California Highway Patrol up Highway 49 to the event. This was the first time we used our new portable VHF radios for communicating between the Huey driver and a lead and trail safety vehicle. The HH350 units were donated by the local Cobra Marine dealer. Curt Knapp also prepared a second display board that was donated by the "Cruisin the Pines" group, with Vietnam era information. We now have two display boards with information about our Huey and the Vietnam War.



"Cruisin the Pines"
Curt Knapp, Ken Lake, and Ken Fritz showing off our new radios

We did two displays in October. The first was at McLellan Airpark in Sacramento. This "Touch a Truck" event was sponsored by the Sacramento Junior League and our Huey was again very popular with the kids and adults who attended. We even had a visit from "Digger", the Sacramento River Cats minor league baseball team mascot.

Digger barely fits!



The next week was off to "Corvettes for Vets" at the Redhawk Casino in Placerville, complete with a visit from the "Hooters girls"!

"Hooters girls" taking a ride!



Veterans Day in November found us at Sierra College in Rocklin for "Walk a Mile in Their Boots". We met a lot of college students, recent veterans, military recruiters, and veterans representatives. We got a photo op with California US Representative - Tom McClintock, who gave the keynote address at the event. Thanks to our new radios and Ken Fritz's trailer backing skill, we were able to back the Huey down a narrow walkway into the event area. A little more tree trimming helped us get out of the LZ.



Veterans Day

Greg Hudson, Tom McClintock, Jim Cunningham, Curt Knapp, Dave Anderson, Tom Inks, Ken Fritz, Al Doucette, and Jim Clark

In December, we rounded out the year with American Legion Post 319 at the Placerville Christmas Parade.

Happy New Year! The chapter is now preparing for a big 2016. We will be scheduling more maintenance days for the Huey and MOC in between expected upcoming events. We will be bringing our Huey and our famous Mobile Officer Club (MOC) to the 2016 Reno, NV reunion. Hope to meet you all there!

Dave Anderson
VHPA-CCN webmaster

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FLORIDA CHAPTER

At our first meeting in January and my first as President of VHPAF, we welcomed two new members, Rodger Renzulli and Ira Putnam, both of whom are life members of VHPA. Ordinarily, that wouldn't be a big deal except that they arrived to the meeting flying a Cobra (AH-1G)! It was a very GRAND entrance to say the least, and brought back a lot of great memories. They both flew Cobras in Vietnam and were assigned to the 2/20th ARA, 1st Cavalry Division in 1969. Since their greatest desire was to become involved with VHPAF, we put them to work right away!

Our first major event of the year was January 29th in support of the 10th Annual Volusia County EMS/Military Expo. The event was hosted at University High School in Orange City, Florida. Approximately 3,000 high school students, mostly JROTC, from throughout the county were in attendance. We were joined by members from the Air Force, Army Reserve, Coast Guard, U.S. Customs Border Protection, Wounded Warriors, Volusia County Fire & Rescue, Florida Dept of Health, Florida Dept of Wildlife, Marines, Navy, Orange City Fire & Rescue, Volusia County Emergency Services, Orange City Police Department, Volusia County Sheriff's Office, Florida Highway Patrol, NASA, the Florida Army National Guard, and a host of other agencies. We brought in our LOACH for a static display, and the Cobra flew in along with eight helicopters, some of which included the Coast Guard (HH-60), Navy (HSM-70), and the Florida National Guard (CH-47). By the way, we had a very pleasant 'surprise' visit from Tom Kirk (Managing Editor of the VHPA Aviator). He and his wife Carolyn were in the 'neighborhood' and decided to drop by and meet the VHPAF crew. We all had a great time at the event!

Our next event will be in Eustis, Florida on February 29th in support of the 114th consecutive annual celebration of George Fest, the second oldest festival celebrating George Washington's Birthday in the nation and the longest running festival of any kind in Florida. Among all the festive activities, there will be a parade in which we will participate with our LOACH and small "kiddy ride" helicopter. The parade is always very well attended with people coming from many of the neighboring cities and towns. Attendance has grown from the original handful of locals to thousands of eager and patriotic fun-seekers. No other city in Florida has as long-standing a tradition of a patriotic celebration in honor of America's founding father, George Washington, during his birthday. We look forward to being a part of it each year!

By Dr. Joe Ponds, Chapter President



Our LOACH on static display at the 10th Annual Volusia County EMS/Military Expo. Frank Hoover and Tom Rountree are answering questions from interested High School students.



The Cobra on final for the EMS/Military EXPO at University High School, Orange City, FL.



The Cobra shutting down at the EMS/MIL EXPO at University High School, Orange City, FL.



The Cobra on static display at the EMS/MIL EXPO, University High School, Orange City, FL

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.



Summary of 2015 NAVHPA Activities:

- BUC-3 Events: 18 (displays at Vet events; parades; school displays)
- Other Events: 8 (e.g., 4 separate Wreath events; AAAA function; Mad Street Fest; WWII Vets support)
- Socials: 3 (Pizza party; Birmingham Air Museum; Christmas Dinner).
- Monthly Meetings: 11.
- BUC-3 Workdays: 10.

Needless to say, our 62 members were both dedicated and busy.

December 14th marked our annual NAVHPA Christmas Party. After the pace of our fall activity, we gathered at the Space Center Marriott to celebrate the season with more than 50 of our members and spouses, ate some good food and even consumed some 'adult beverages'. We deserved a party and we had a good one. Our guest speaker was retired CW4 Michael Durrant, pilot of the MH-60L shot down in Somalia in 1993 and later made famous in the book and movie, "Blackhawk Down". Mike is now an entrepreneur and business executive in Huntsville, AL. He spoke about the Mission of "Super 64", on that fateful day and his subsequent capture by forces loyal to a Somali warlord. Mike was the sole survivor of his crew. His story was a somber reminder that, even in peacetime, our military is still in harm's way on a daily basis. It was also a reminder that soldiers' bravery and valor are a commonplace today as in Vietnam.

Our members and spouses gave many hours over nine days in December and January to honor several thousand deceased veterans by placing wreaths on their graves. We fluffed wreaths to make them look nice again after a year of storage in boxes, prepared them for use and placed them on the graves. After the holidays, our members and spouses recovered all of them and packed them away to be ready for Christmas 2016.

The New Year has started as busy ever. We met to work on Buck 3 on January 9th. We were able to clean it up after the holidays. "Spit and polish" is still the name of the game. Our electrically inclined members worked to resolve some nagging issues with the trailer and towing lights.

We met for the first time in 2016 on January 18th at the

Schnitzel Ranch in Huntsville. This is our perennial meeting place. But, as large as the meeting room is, the NAVHPA may outgrow it soon. More than 50 members and spouses gathered to do business, socialize and chart the chapter's course for the year.

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



Members of the NAVHPA with Mike Durrant (R) at the Christmas party



The crew of Super 64, Oct 3, 1993. Mike Durrant at right



NAVHPA Spouses preparing wreaths to honor deceased veterans.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Upcoming Events for 2016

February 6: Second Meeting of the year at 13:00 Legend Brewery Richmond, VA

March 5: Lunch meeting at 12:00 County Grill 1215 A George Washington Hwy (US Route 17) Yorktown, VA 23693. Following the meeting we will go to the NASA Virginia Air and Space Museum. See details@www.vasc.org

April 22: 50 year Dedication Ceremony of First Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Charlottesville, VA with Richard Severin at 11:00.

April 23: Meet at 10:00 at Vietnam War Foundation Museum 6265 Spring Hill Rd Ruckersville, VA 22968; followed by a 12:30 luncheon meeting at the Blue Ridge Cafe 8315 Seminole Trail (RTE29) Ruckersville, VA 22968. After the meeting we will visit wineries in the Barboursville, VA area.

April 30: Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society Al Orgain Annual Spring Party and Fundraising Auction @ Virginia Aviation Museum 17:30 to 21:00. Tickets just \$35.00 Each. This is "The Best Aviation Party of the Year!" Call [REDACTED] to Register.



May 30: Dedication Ceremony of our two Bricks at the National D-day Memorial in Bedford, VA.

July 5 – 10: 33rd Annual VHPA Reunion Peppermill Resort Reno, Nevada

By Don Agren, Chapter President

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

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

Christmas is behind us now and our Annual Christmas party was a success that Greg Mann hosted with about 30 members and their wives present despite our usual Christmas party snowfall. We held our January and February meetings at the American Legion Post #1.

Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

At our January meeting we discussed future Chapter activities, among them; "Stories of War Time", a program hosted by Regis University on the Denver Campus. This special series is dedicated to the stories of veterans who have served since WWII. Each two-hour presentation is moderated by Rick Crandall of KEZW radio station. The

Vietnam War was covered on February 11, 18 and 25th. Members of the Rocky Mountain Chapter participated.

We hosted an Honor Flight reception for returning WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veterans from ceremonies held in Washington, D.C. on May 1, 2016. This is the first year that Honor Flight will host Vietnam Veterans at large for this special ceremony held in Washington, D.C. The Rocky Mountain Chapter welcomes the Colorado participants return on May 2, 2016.

We have been working with the Wings Over the Rockies Museum to obtain a Vietnam era helicopter. We have been unsuccessful thus far. If anyone out there has any contact information to obtain a Vietnam era helicopter, please inform us at the email address below. We are excited and looking forward to another full year of planned

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

activities for the Helicopter War Museum. Stay tuned in the next issue of the Aviator for our event schedule.

Meeting Schedule and Other Information:

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

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum; among these items is a chicken plate with the cloth holder that our visitors can put on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President John Hargleroad or Dale House, Museum Curator, with anything you'd like to donate or

loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com

By Dale House



RMC Xmas Party with L To R; Mike Silva, Doug Neil, Gregg Mann (host), Tom Jackson and their wives, and two un-identified.



Stories from War Time, Regis University; Rick Crandell (moderator).

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

SoCal Chapter had a great breakfast at FLO's Airport Cafe; followed by a tour of the Yanks Museum at Chino airport.

August Swanson, chapter member and owner of Warbird Connection gave us a guided tour of the museum. The museum has a very nice Huey H model that August helped restore.

Our annual St Paddy's Day Meeting and BBQ will be on Saturday March 19, 11am at Wings and Rotors Museum, French Valley Airport in Murrieta. Last year about 50 members, family and friends attended.

By Sven Akeeson

August Swanson with his restored Huey



L/R are August Swanson, Ed Sakihama, Sven Akeeson, Ron Warner, Randy Krekler USMC, David Fey USAF, Jim Davidson, Tom Crosby, Jim Grimm, and Bob Piatt.



The same group in the hangar.

Flight of The Truculent Turtle

*Printed by the courtesy of Navy Patrol Squadron Two,
<http://www.patron2.com>*

The Flight...

Taxiing tests had shown that the P2V-1 landing gear might not be able to handle the extreme weight of the Turtle and that the landing gear struts could fail in turns under such weight conditions. For that reason, the Turtle was only partially filled with fuel before it was positioned at the head of the Pearce Aerodrome runway 27 at 7:00 a.m. on September 29th. Lined up for take-off, all fueling was completed by 4:00 p.m. At the same time, JATO packs were attached to the fuselage for the jet-assisted take-off that would be needed to get the Turtle off the ground.

The Turtle would take-off with CDR Thomas D. Davies, the pilot in command, in the left seat and CDR Eugene P. (Gene) Rankin, the copilot, in the right seat. In CDR Rankin's own words:

"Late afternoon on the 29th, the weather in southwestern Australia was beautiful. At 1800, the two 2,300 hp Wright R-3350 engines were warming up. We were about to commence a takeoff from a 6,000 foot runway at a gross weight of 85,561 pounds (the standard P2V was rated at 61,000 pounds), of which about 50,000 pounds were gasoline. Sitting in the copilot's seat, I remember thinking about my wife, Virginia, and my three daughters and asking myself, "What am I doing here in this situation?" I took a deep breath and wished for the best, knowing the takeoff would be the greatest risk of the entire flight."

At 6:11 p.m., CDR Tom Davies stood on the brakes as the throttles were pushed forward to maximum power. At the other end of the mile-long runway he could make out the throng of news reporters and photographers. Scattered across the air base were hundreds of picnickers who came to witness the spectacle of a JATO takeoff, and who stood when they heard the sound of the engines being advanced to maximum power. Tom Davies and Gene Rankin scanned the engine instruments, which all showed normal readings. Davies then released the brakes and the Turtle reluctantly began to roll. On this day, September 29, 1946, the Turtle was a veritable winged gas tank that was more than thirteen tons over maximum gross weight.

The Turtle rumbled and bounced on its tires that had been over-inflated to handle the heavy load. Slowly it began to pick up speed. As each 1,000-foot sign went by, Rankin called out the speed and compared it to predicted figures on a clipboard in his lap. With the second 1,000-foot sign astern, the Turtle was committed. Davies could no longer stop the aircraft in the runway remaining. It was then, quite literally, fly or burn. When the quivering airspeed needle touched 87 knots, Davies punched a button wired to his yoke, and the four JATO bottles fired from their attachment points aft on the fuselage. The crew could hear the roar of the JATO bottles and feel their push. For a critical twelve seconds, they provided the thrust of a third engine. At about 4,500 feet down the runway, 115 knots was reached on the airspeed indicator, and Davies pulled the

nose wheel off. There were some long seconds while the main landing gear continued to rumble on the last of the runway. Then the rumbling stopped as the main landing gear left the runway and the full load of the aircraft shifted to the wings.

As soon as they were certain that they were airborne, but still only an estimated five feet above the ground, Davies called "gear up." Rankin moved the wheel-shaped actuator on the pedestal between the pilots to the up position, and the wheels came up. Davies likely tapped the brakes to stop the wheels from spinning, and the wheel-well doors closed just as the JATO bottles burned out. Behind the pilots in the aft fuselage, CDR Walt Reid kept his hand on the dump valve that could quickly lighten their load in an emergency. LCDR Roy Tabeling, at the radio position, kept all his switches off for now to prevent the slightest spark.

The Turtle had an estimated 20 feet of altitude and 130 knots of airspeed when the JATO bottles burned out. The JATO bottles were not just to give the Turtle additional speed on take-off, but were intended to improve the rate of climb immediately after lift-off. The Turtle barely cleared the trees a quarter of a mile from the end of the runway. The field elevation of Pearce Aerodrome was about 500 feet, and the terrain to the west sloped gradually down to the Indian Ocean about six miles from the field. So, even without climbing, the Turtle was able to gain height above the ground in the critical minutes after take-off.

Fortunately, the emergency procedures for a failed engine had been well thought out, but were never needed. At their takeoff weight, they estimated that they would be able to climb at a maximum of 400 feet per minute. If an engine failed and they put maximum power on the remaining engine, they estimated that they would be forced to descend at 200 feet per minute. Their planning indicated that if they could achieve 1,000 feet before an engine failure they would have about four minutes in which to dump fuel to lighten the load and still be 200 feet in the air to attempt a landing. With their built-in fuel dump system, they were confident that they were in good shape at any altitude above 1,000 feet because they could dump fuel fast enough to get down to a comfortable single-engine operating weight before losing too much altitude.

Departing the Aerodrome boundary, the Turtle was over the waters of the Indian Ocean. With agonizing slowness, the altimeter and airspeed readings crept upward. Walt Reid jettisoned the empty JATO bottles. The Turtle was thought to have a 125 knot stall speed with the flaps up at that weight. When they had established a positive rate of climb, Gene Rankin started bringing the flaps up in careful small increments. At 165 knots, with the flaps fully retracted, Tom Davies made his first power reduction back to the maximum continuous setting. The sun was setting and the lights of the city were blinking on as the Turtle circled back over Perth at 3,500 feet and headed out across the 1,800 miles of the central desert of Australia. On this record-breaking night, one record had already been broken. Never before had two engines carried so much weight into the air.

The plan was to stay fairly low... about 3,500 feet... for the first

few hundred miles, burning off fuel and reducing weight so the eventual climb to a higher cruising altitude would require less gas. But the southwest wind, burbling and eddying across the hills northeast of Perth, brought turbulence that shook and rattled the overloaded Turtle, threatening the integrity of the wings themselves. Tom Davies applied full power and took her up to 6,500 feet where the air was smoother, reluctantly accepting the sacrifice of enough fuel to fly an extra couple of hundred miles at the other end of the flight.

Alice Springs at Australia's center slid under the long wings at midnight and Cooktown on the northeast coast at dawn. Then it was out over the Coral Sea where, only a few years before, the Lexington (CV-2) and Yorktown (CV-5) had put down the Japanese ship Shoho and turned back Shokuku and Zuikaku to win the first carrier battle in history and prevent the cutoff and isolation of Australia. Within a day, the Turtle would fly near the site of the Battle of Midway, which changed the course of World War II in the Pacific only a month after the Battle of the Coral Sea.

At noon on the second day, the Turtle skirted the 10,000 foot peaks of southern New Guinea, and in mid-afternoon detoured around a mass of boiling thunderheads over Bougainville in the Solomons. As the sun set for the second time since takeoff, the Turtle's crew headed out across the vast and empty Pacific Ocean and began to establish an "at sea" routine. They stood two-man four-hour watches, washing, shaving, and changing to clean clothes each morning, and eating regular meals cooked on a hot plate. Every two hours, a fresh pilot would enter the cockpit to relieve whoever had been on watch the longest.

The two Wright 3350 engines ran smoothly; all the gauges and needles showed normal conditions, and every hour another 200 or so miles of the Pacific passed astern. The crew's only worry was Joey the kangaroo, who hunched unhappily in her crate and refused to eat or drink.

Dawn of the second morning found the Turtle over Maro Reef, halfway between Midway Island and Oahu in the long chain of Hawaiian Islands. The Turtle only had one low-frequency radio, because most of the modern radio equipment had been removed for weight reduction. Calls to Midway and Hawaii for weather updates were unsuccessful due to the distance. Celestial navigation was showing that the Turtle was drifting southward from their intended great circle route due to increased northerly winds that were adding a headwind factor to their track. Instead of correcting their course by turning more northward, thereby increasing their headwinds, CDR Davies stayed on heading and accepted the fact that they would reach the west coast of the U.S. somewhere in northern California rather than near Seattle as originally planned. With the wing tip tanks empty, they were jettisoned over the ocean as the Turtle eased up to 10,000 feet and later 12,000 feet. At noon, CDR Reid came up to the cockpit smiling. "Well," he reported, "the damned kangaroo has started to eat and drink again. I guess she thinks we're going to make it."

The mission in which Joey's dim marsupial brain may or may not have acquired confidence was no stunt, despite her presence. In the fall of 1946, the increasingly hostile Soviet Union was pushing construction of a submarine force nearly ten times larger than Adolph Hitler's at the start of WWII. Antisubmarine warfare was the Navy's responsibility, regardless of the views of the Army Air

Forces. The Turtle was among the first of the P2V Neptune patrol planes designed to counter the sub threat. Tom Davies' orders derived straight from the offices of Secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. A dramatic demonstration was needed to prove beyond question that the new P2V patrol plane, its production representing a sizeable chunk of the Navy's skimpy peacetime budget, could do the job. With its efficient design that gave it four-engine capability on two engines, the mission would show the Neptune's ability to cover the transoceanic distances necessary to perform its ASW mission and sea-surveillance functions. And, at a time when roles and missions were being developed to deliver nuclear weapons, it would not hurt a bit to show that the Navy, too, had that capability.

So far, the flight had gone pretty much according to plan. But now as the second full day in the air began to darken, the Pacific sky, gently clear and blue for so long, turned rough and hostile. An hour before landfall, great rolling knuckles of cloud punched out from the coastal mountains. The Turtle bounced and vibrated. Ice crusted on the wings. Static blanked out radio transmissions and reception. The crew strapped down hard, turned up the red instrument lights and took turns trying to tune the radio direction finder to a recognizable station. It was midnight before Roy Tabeling succeeded in making contact with the ground and requested an instrument clearance eastward from California. They were 150 miles off the coast when a delightfully female voice reached up through the murk from Williams Radio, 70 miles south of Red Bluff, California.

"I'm sorry" the voice said. "I don't seem to have a flight plan on you. What was your departure point?"

"Perth, West Australia."

"No, I mean where did you take off from?"

"Perth, West Australia."

"Navy Zero Eight Two, you don't understand. I mean what was your departure airport for this leg of the flight?"

"Perth, West Australia."

"But, that's halfway around the world!"

"No. Only about a third. May we have that clearance?"

The Turtle had departed Perth some thirty-nine hours earlier and had been out of radio contact with anyone for the past twenty hours. That contact with Williams Radio called off a world-wide alert for ships and stations between Midway and the west coast to attempt contact with the Turtle on all frequencies. With some difficulty due to reception, the Turtle received an instrument clearance to proceed on airways from Oakland to Sacramento and on to Salt Lake City at 13,000 feet. The weather report was discouraging. It indicated heavy turbulence, thunderstorms, rain and icing conditions. As Gene Rankin wrote in a magazine article after the flight, "Had the Turtle been on the ground at an airport at that point, the question might have arisen: 'Is this trip necessary?'"

The Turtle reached the west coast at 9:16 p.m. about thirty miles north of San Francisco. Their estimated time of arrival, further north up the coast, had been 9:00 p.m. They had taken off about forty hours earlier and had covered 9,000 statute miles thus far. They had broken the distance record by more than a thousand miles, and all of their remaining fuel was in their wing tanks which showed about eight-tenths full. Speculation among the pilots

began as to how much further the Turtle could fly before fuel exhaustion.

The static and atmospherics closed in again as did the weird and wonderful phenomenon of St. Elmo's fire that added to the problems of the Turtle's crew. The two propellers whirled in rings of blue-white light. Violet tongues licked up between the laminations of the windshield. Eerie purple spokes protruded from the Neptune's nose. All those distracting effects would increase in brilliance with an accompanying rise in the volume of static on all radio frequencies then suddenly discharge with a blinding flash and a thump only to slowly rebuild. The Turtle's oxygen system had been removed for the flight, so the pilots were using portable walk-around oxygen bottles to avoid anoxia at the high altitude.

The St. Elmo's fire had been annoying but not dangerous. It can be a heart-thumping experience for those witnessing it for the first time. The tachometer for the starboard engine had been acting up, but there was no problem synchronizing the engines. The pilots kept the fuel crossfeed switches, which connected both main tanks to both engines, in the "off" position so that each engine was feeding from the tank in that wing. Somewhere over Nevada, the starboard engine began running rough and losing power. After scanning the gauges, the pilots surmised that the carburetor intake was icing up and choking itself. To correct that, the carburetor air preheating systems on both engines were increased to full to clear out any carburetor ice as quickly as possible. Very quickly, the warm air solved the problem and the starboard engine ran smoothly again.

With an engine running rough, CDR Davies had to be thinking about their mission. The Turtle had broken the existing record, but was that good enough? It was just a matter of time before the AAF would launch another B-29 to take the record up another notch. The Neptune was now light enough for single engine flight, but how much farther could it go on one engine? And was it worth risking this first expensive aircraft of what should one day be a family of hundreds for the sake of improving a distance record?

Over Nevada and Utah, the weather was a serious factor. Freezing rain, snow and ice froze on the wings and fuselage, forcing the crew to increase power to stay airborne. The aircraft picked up a headwind and an estimated 1,000 pounds of ice, which was problematic since the plane's deicing and anti-icing equipment had been removed as a weight-saving measure. Three hours of higher power settings and increased fuel use at 13,000 feet were estimated to have cut about 500 miles of distance from the flight.

After passing Salt Lake City, the weather finally broke with the dawn of the Turtle's third day in the air. The Turtle was cleared to descend to 9,000 feet. All morning, CDR Davies tracked their progress eastward over Nebraska, Iowa, and the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. To the north, the haze of Chicago was in sight. But now, not surprisingly, fuel was becoming a problem. The wingtip tanks had long ago been emptied and jettisoned over the Pacific. The bomb bay tank, the nose tank and the big aft-fuselage tank were empty. The fuel gauges for the wing tanks were moving inexorably toward zero. CDR Davies and his crew consulted, tapped the fuel gauges, calculated and recalculated their remaining fuel, and cursed the gauges on which one-eighth of an inch represented 200 gallons... more than an hour's flight. At noon they concluded they could not safely stretch the flight all the way to Washington,

D.C., and certainly not to the island of Bermuda. CDR Davies chose the Naval Air Station at Columbus, Ohio to be their final destination.

At quarter past one that afternoon the runways and hangars of the Columbus airport were in sight. The Turtle's crew were cleaned-up and shaven and in uniform. And the fuel gauges all read empty. With the landing checklist completed and wheels and flaps down, CDR Davies cranked the Turtle around with a left turn onto final approach. As the plane leveled out on final, the starboard engine popped, sputtered and quit, but the port engine continued to provide power. At 400 feet, both pilots realized the problem and reached for the fuel crossfeed valves on the floor between their seats. In the banked turn, the near empty starboard fuel tank had stopped feeding fuel into the starboard engine. Within seconds, the starboard engine began running smoothly again and continued to run. The Turtle had been in no danger, since they were light enough to operate on one engine, but it would have been embarrassing to have an engine quit at that point.

At 1:28 p.m. on October 1st, the Neptune's wheels once more touched the earth... touched it hard... with tires that had been overinflated in Perth, 11,236 miles and 55 hours and 17 minutes from where they had taken off.

After a hastily called press conference in Columbus, the crew was flown to NAS Anacostia in Washington, D.C. by a Marine Corps Reserve R5D, where they were met by their wives and the Secretary of the Navy. The crew were grounded by a flight surgeon upon landing in Columbus, so the Turtle was flown to Anacostia by a flight crew flown in from NAS Patuxent River. Before the day was over, the Turtle's crew had been awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses by Secretary Forrestal, and were scheduled to meet with President Harry S. Truman the next day. And Joey, observably relieved to be back on solid earth, had been installed in luxurious quarters in the Washington zoo.

The record established by CDR Tom Davies and the crew of the Truculent Turtle stood not just for a year or two or three, but for decades. The distance record for all aircraft was broken in 1962 by a jet-powered B-52. The Truculent Turtle's record for piston/propeller driven aircraft was broken by Burt Rutan's Voyager, a carbon-fiber aircraft, which made its historic around the world non-stop flight in 1986... more than 40 years after the Turtle landed in Columbus, Ohio.

After a well-earned publicity tour, the Truculent Turtle was used by the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland as a flying test bed for advanced avionics systems. Although assigned on paper to join VP-2 along with the other P2V-1's that were first to come off the Lockheed production line, it never did. The Truculent Turtle was retired with honors in 1953 and put on display in Norfolk, Virginia, where it was repositioned in 1968 at the main gate of Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia. In 1977, the Truculent Turtle was transported to the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida where it now holds forth in a place of honor in the museum's Hangar Bay One display area.

Many thanks to the Naval Institute Proceedings magazine, Naval Aviation News magazine, the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation magazine, CDR Eugene P. Rankin, CDR Walter S. Reid and CDR Edward P. Stafford, whose articles about the Truculent Turtle were the basis for this website article.

All Army Aviation Veterans, Listen up!

Update on the Big 50th Birthday celebration for the Golden Hawks!

The 1st Aviation Brigade Fort Rucker Alabama, wishes to announce its 50 plus years of service and excellence Anniversary celebration - unofficially known as the Fort Rucker Veterans Event - May 12-15, 2016 at Fort Rucker.

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, and all Vietnam Veterans, regardless of unit, rank, or MOS. If you are Aviation MOS, you are a veteran of the 1st Aviation Brigade, based on your training at Fort Rucker and other Aviation Schools. Bring your families and guests!

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. Huey rides at no, or nominal cost are still in negotiation. 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. Saturday morning will be the AAAA Golf tournament; golfers may register when you sign in Thursday or Friday...lots of prizes and other goodies. There will be an early social event Thursday night for all early attendees.

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, post the registration website below 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.

We would appreciate your registration and payment as early as possible. There are many up-front items and support needs that will be negotiated well in advance on the basis of attendance. So, please register early!

As soon as it is available from the 1st Aviation Brigade, there will be information posted on what is needed to enter Fort Rucker under the new security measures.

Website for registration, payment, lodging, and travel is: <https://13thdeltacombataviationbattalion.shutterfly.com/>

I hope this helps all, and answers your questions. I look forward to seeing you there...you do not want to miss this event, Fort Rucker is planning to lay it on thick.

Larry Castagneto - Event coordinator,
[REDACTED]

Copperhead 34 162nd AHC
Can Tho RVN

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.*

Welcome home, and thanks for your service.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

Army Aviation Reunion

7/1 BLACKHAWKS

Sept. 21-25, 2016 ~ San Antonio, Texas

Contact Fred Young ~ [REDACTED]

2016 ANZAC Day Memorial Ceremony Fort Rucker, Alabama

The annual ANZAC Day Memorial Ceremony and 135th

AHC mini-reunion will be held on April 24-25 2016

(Sunday-Monday), Fort Rucker, Alabama.

For more information visit <http://www.135ahc.net>

and select "2016 Events" from the navigation menu.

POC: Fred Dunaway [REDACTED], fdunaway55@att.net

Silver Spur Reunion

Dates: April 20 - 24, 2016

Location: Radisson Hotel - Branson, Missouri

Contact: Bill McCalister (Silver Spur 24)

Additional info online: google 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:
[REDACTED]

Registration forms:

Association Treasurer David Huser at vvhuser@gmail.com

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

2016 Annual Reunion

April 28 through May, 2016

Location: Daytona Beach, FL

Contact & Information: Rick Roll

[REDACTED]
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: [REDACTED]

Legion of Valor of the USA

April 13-17, 2016

Location: Fresno CA

POC: Phil Conran
[REDACTED]

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

TAPS

Correction; In the January Taps section of the Aviator on page 49 the notice for Reynolds A. Dabney displayed his name in reverse order (Dabney A. Reynolds). We apologize for the confusion.

Bither, Rodney D. Sr. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Classes: 63-10FW, RVN: 66-67 174 AHC, 67 161 AHC, 69-70 325 AVN DET, Callsigns: Shark 6 / Scorpion 6 / Volunteer 6



Rodney D. Bither Sr. age 80, died Wednesday, December 24, 2015 at Banner Desert Medical Center surrounded by his loving family. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Barbara Bither; two sons, a daughter, two grandchildren, one sister and two brothers.

He was born in Houlton, ME, where he spent much of his childhood. After joining the Army in 1952, serving nine years in the enlisted ranks, he became an Officer, graduating at the top of his Class from Officer Candidate School. He served for 38 years, including two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot as well as a tour in Africa performing geological surveys. Later in his career, he had the opportunity to fly the Apache Helicopter and was the Army's representative for the acquisition of the Apache in Mesa. He was inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame at Ft. Benning, GA.

After retiring from the Army in 1990, he spent 10 years as a Project Manager helping deliver Apache training devices for The Boeing Company in Mesa, AZ. His time as an Army Aviator led to a lifetime love of flying. He was an avid reader and also enjoyed spending time on the links with his golf buddies. Those who knew Rod, even for a brief time, often drew inspiration from his words as well as his deeds. Above all, he was a loving and selfless Husband, Father and Grandfather. Services will be held at a date yet to be determined at Arlington National Cemetery.

Boyd, Harold USA MAJ (Ret) Flight Class: 55-G, RVN: 67-68 235 AWC, Callsign: Delta Devils



Harold Boyd died on Jan. 18, 2016 at the Diversicare

of Dover, TN. He was one of 12 siblings. During his 20 year career Harold served in Vietnam, Germany, and Korea flying both fixed wing and helicopter aircraft.

He graduated from Stewart County High School and the University of Nebraska in Omaha. He continued his Pilot Career after the military service, with Aircraft Services out of Salina, KS, and Blue Beacon out of Salina, KS, and Air Midwest out of Wichita, KS, and Mesa Airlines out of Farmington, NM.

He was preceded in death by his parents Patti and Frank Boyd. He is survived by; his wife Shirley Boyd of Dover, TN, Two daughters, a son, five grandchildren, three brothers and five sisters.

Brooks, Ronald A. Sr. USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Class: 58, RVN: 67-68 11 ACR, 71-72 162 AHC, Callsign: Vulture 6



Ronald Anthony Brooks Sr., loving husband of Barbara Cooper Brooks, passed peacefully on January 11, 2016 at St. Francis Hospital Eastside in his 79th year. He was born in Wheeling, WV to the late Luther Clyde Brooks and Dorothy Marie Adams. Dr. Brooks was a 1963 graduate of Bob Jones University and received his Master's in Education from Troy State University in 1970. In 1994, he received his honorary doctorate from Maranatha Baptist University. Ron was chosen as the alumnus of the year by Bob Jones University in 2002. Major Brooks was a highly-decorated veteran of the U. S. Army with 26 years of distinguished service, including two tours of duty in Vietnam. After Ron's military career he taught on the faculty at Bob Jones University. He served on the pastoral staff at Southside Baptist Church, before moving to Heidelberg, Germany, where he planted Calvary Baptist Church. Ron continued on with Baptist World Mission as Field Director for many years. He was a devoted member of Calvary Baptist Church.

Surviving in addition to his loving wife are three sons, a daughter, nine grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and a brother.

The family respectfully suggests memorials to Baptist World Mission at www.BaptistWorldMission.org.

Crotty, Howard R. USA Flight Class: 63-7WT, RVN: 65-66 A/101 AVN 101 ABN, B 159 AVN, Callsign: Thunderbird 3



Howard Ronald "Ronnie" Crotty, 77, passed away Friday, January 15, 2016, in Dallas. Ronnie was born May 5, 1938, in Herndon, WV., to the late Howard Richard Crotty and Thelma L. Patterson Crotty. He was a retired U.S. Army helicopter pilot, serving two tours in Vietnam, and an active member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Benbrook VFW. Ronnie was a graduate of UNT. Ronnie was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Mary Crotty. He is survived by: two daughters, three grandchildren, a brother and a sister. He was interred in the DFW National Cemetery, Dallas, TX.

Etcheverry, Louis USMC Flight Class: 46-30, RVN: 64 HMM-364, 65-66 VMO-6, Callsigns: Purple Fox/Klondike



Louis Etcheverry, 75, of Bakersfield, CA passed away suddenly on January 1, 2016. A Bakersfield native, Louis was born to Pete and Elvira Etcheverry on June 25, 1940. He attended St. Joseph Elementary School, Garces Memorial High School, St. Mary's College in Moraga, CA, and San Francisco State University before enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1960. His Marine Corps service began in Pensacola, Florida, with flight school, after which he served ten years of active duty that included two tours in Vietnam, the latter as a helicopter medevac pilot. Everyone who knew Louis knew how proud he was to be a Marine and to serve his country as a real patriot. After leaving the Marine Corps with the rank of Major, he entered the University of Idaho School of Law and graduated in 1973. Because of his love of Bakersfield and pride in being part of the Basque community, he returned to Bakersfield with his family and began the practice of law. In addition to his work as a local attorney, Louis became a part-time U.S. Magistrate Judge, Eastern District, and served in that capacity until he was appointed to be a Court Commissioner

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for the County of Kern in May 2002. In April of 2005, he was appointed to the Kern County Superior Court where he served until his retirement in 2013.

In 1965, he met and married his wife of 50 years, Eleanor, and together they became the proud parents of two children. Louis loved being involved in his children's and grandchildren's school and sporting events, as well as skiing, go-carting, hunting, and fishing with them. Faith, family and work in the legal field were foremost in his life. He was a devout Catholic who served his church as Eucharist Minister, Lector, and teacher of RCIA and Confirmation classes.

In addition to the medals he received while serving as a Marine, Louis was proud to be an inductee in the Garces Memorial Hall of Honor, member of the Kern County Veteran's Stand Down Court, President of the Kern County Bar Association and member of the University of Idaho Law Review.

Louis was preceded in death by his parents, Pete and Elvira Etcheverry and sister Julie Etcheverry. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor, a daughter, a son, and five grandchildren.

Donations may be made to Garces Memorial High School or the Wounded Warrior Project (supportwwp.org/wwp).

Gause, Stanley USA Flight Class: 67-10, RVN: 67-68 134 AHC, 71-72 162 AHC, Callsigns: Devil 19/Vulture 26A



Stan Gause, a decorated Army helicopter pilot, died peacefully after a short illness on December 12, 2014. He was a resident of Boca Raton, FL. Stan was born in Marion, NC on April 28, 1944, the son of Reva Ferguson Gause and Henry Rudolph Gause. His father was killed in action (U.S. Army) in the Battle of the Hurtegen Forest, December 1, 1944. Stan grew up in Spartanburg, SC, graduating from Spartanburg High School. He attended Clemson College (at the time, a full military ROTC school) and was commissioned as a first lieutenant upon graduation in 1966.

Stan was the last man out the door when the 162nd AHC stood down on April 2, 1972! He had ALL the company's

records from its first deployment in Vietnam in February 1966 and those records became the basis for the databases (aircraft & personnel) that make up the spreadsheet workbook that he made for everyone to share, including the ultimate Vietnam database located at Texas Technical University, and be preserved for eternity. He also wrote the narrative "History of the 162nd AHC" This is also included in the ultimate Vietnam database located at Texas Technical University. In addition, he was the creator of the 45 minute 162nd AHC unit video that covers the unit's deployment in Vietnam from 1966 to 1972. This is also included in the ultimate Vietnam database also located at Texas Technical University.

After leaving the Army in 1973, Stan attended graduate school at the University of South Carolina, receiving his MBA in 1975. He began a 22 year career in Finance with W. R. Grace & Co., working in both the European headquarters in Switzerland and corporate headquarters in New York. He finished his career at Dycom Industries in South Florida. He will be remembered as a proud, loyal, committed and determined man. Besides his wife, he leaves five sons and two daughters. Stan was buried with military honors in the South Florida National Military Cemetery in Lake Worth, FL.

Greening, Ernie L. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 63-7WT, RVN: 66-D/227 AHB 1 CAV, 66-67 B/228 ASHB 1 CAV, 69-12 CAG

Ernie Leroy Greening died on January 12, 2016 at age 78; at Hospice of the Hills House in Harrison after a 25 year battle with Parkinson's disease. He was born in Stoutsville MS in 1937. He finished high school in 1955 and immediately began his career in the U.S. Army. Ernie went on to serve 28 years in the military. During his service, he performed two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and was decorated 64 times. Ernie completed 6290 hours in rotary wing aircraft and 2133 hours in fixed wing aircraft during his military career. To commemorate his service in Vietnam, a toy company called Corgi created a die-cast model helicopter to replicate Ernie's UH-1C Huey Gunship, 227th AHB as part of its Unsung Heroes collection. He retired from the Army in

1985 and moved his family to Arkansas, where he could continue to fly airplanes.

In Harrison, Ernie was an adult probation officer for ten years and worked for Boone, Newton, and Marion counties. In his retirement he enjoyed hunting, especially with his mules, and getting on the computer to share his military stories and find his Vietnam friends.

Ernie was preceded in death by his parents; Emmet and LaFern, his brother, Lowell; his first wife, Karin, and his eldest son, George. Ernie is survived by his wife Kris; his two sisters, his brother, three daughters, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Full military honors burial will be at Fort Riley, KS at a later date. Donations may be directed to Hospice of the Hills, PO Box 1927, Harrison, AR 72602, or Branson Bible Church where he was a member.

Grove, Robert L, Sr. USA CW3 (Ret.) Flight Class: 67-15, RVN: 67-68 D/3/5 CAV, 69-70 271 ASHC, Callsigns: Spook 2/ War Wagon 15/ Innkeeper 13



Robert Leroy Grove, Sr., a resident of Daleville, Alabama, aged 77 passed away Sunday evening, March 22, 2015. Bob was a distinguished Vietnam Veteran who served two tours as a helicopter pilot. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross as well as numerous other honors for heroism. He was a lifetime member of VFW Post 6020 in Daleville, and also a founding member of the PHPA. He is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Deloris Ann Grove; a son, two daughters, and three grandchildren.

A burial with full military honors was conducted at Daleville Memorial Gardens. Memorial donations may be made to Wounded Warriors, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675.

Hampshire, Frank H. USA Flight Class: 69-19, RVN: 69-70 D/2/ 1 CAV

Frank H. Hampshire aged 67, of Chapel Hill, NC passed away on September 16, 2015 after a long illness. At the time, he was surrounded, as he always was, by the love and warmth of family and very dear friends.

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He was born in Walla Walla, WA in 1948; he was the son of the late Frank H. Hampshire, Sr., and the late Lucille L. (Fink) Hampshire. As part of a military family, Mr. Hampshire spent most of his early life growing up in the South Pacific islands of Johnston, Guam, and lastly in Hawaii, where he spent most of his years and which he always identified as "home." It was from his youthful, often overnight, forays into the jungles and wilds that he developed a deep and enduring love of nature, and a lifelong, insatiable thirst for knowledge about plants, birds, stars and skies, weather patterns, as well as the universe of microorganisms. His passions also included radio communications, electronics, and all things "optical" - microscopes, telescopes, and just about everything in-between.

In 2011, Mr. Hampshire retired after 19 years as Senior Director of Market Research for the automotive trade groups MEMA, AASA, and HDMA. Prior to joining MEMA he was Manager of Forecasting and Strategic Planning for Allied Signal Automotive, and served as a consultant on a variety of automotive projects ranging from new product introduction to the marketing of remanufactured motor vehicle parts.

He received his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of New Hampshire and his MBA from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. He also held master's degrees in experimental psychology and biomedical engineering. While a graduate student, he was employed by the U.S. EPA, conducting research in behavioral toxicology, and completed an internship in strategic marketing with Xerox Corporation.

Frank was an active duty helicopter pilot and aircraft commander in the US Army and in the Massachusetts Army National Guard., His military awards included the Bronze Star and 16 air medals for his service as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 34 years, Nancy, a stepdaughter and a sister.

His wife cannot thank enough their extended family and in-laws, including many nieces and nephews, all of whom have shown him extraordinary love over

the years. She also thanks the many amazing friends, relatives, and neighbors who assisted her and Frank during his prolonged illness with random acts of kindness, love, friendship, and devotion.

Heilman William, W.
USA CW4 (Ret.)
Flight Class: 66-11,
RVN: 66 116 AHC, 66-
67 129 AHC, 68-69
C/7/1 CAV, Callsign:
Comanche 38



William (Bill) Heilman was called home by the Lord Sunday, January 24, 2016. He was born July 7, 1945 in LaPorte, IN. Bill worked for the NASA Shuttle Program in Houston where he was over Navigation. He was awarded the Silver Snoopy Award that is given by the astronaut team to a handful of people each year. He also served his country as a Veteran of the U.S. Army for 33 years. He retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 and had served in Vietnam for two tours of duty where he flew helicopters for troops and supplies. In between tours of duty he taught other soldiers to fly helicopters at Ft. Wolters, TX. Bill grew up in Knox, IN with his mother and four sisters. He was a Bee Keeper while in Knox High School and spent all of his salary on flying lessons for fixed wing airplanes. He is survived by his wife, Jean, his son, a daughter, a grandson and three sisters.

Bill was a member of First Presbyterian Church, Hooks. He had also been a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church where he served as a Ruling Elder, Treasurer, and leader of a small group. He was a Scout Master in Houston and Elder at Clear Lake Presbyterian Church. He was also a member of the VFW in Knox and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Contributions may be made in his name to: the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 4777, New York, NY 10163-4777.

The following member's obituary was published earlier in the potential (brief) member format. The database has now been corrected and we submit the standard Taps entry. Ed

Huffman, John W. USA
MAJ (Ret.) Flight Class:
70-38, RVN: 66-67 1/27
INF, 72-73 120 AHC,
Callsign: Red 17



John W. Huffman lost his battle with cancer on Tuesday, October 27, 2015.

He was born November 29, 1946, in Hemphill, TX, attended elementary school in Pineland, TX, junior high and high school in Jasper, TX, and graduated summa cum laude from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in FL. He enlisted in the Army Airborne in 1966 and served two tours of combat duty in Vietnam, the first as a private, and subsequently as a sergeant, retiring as a major in 1986 with three Purple Hearts, three Bronze Stars, sixteen Air Medals, one Army Commendation Medal, two Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Medals, and various other service and campaign ribbons. After military retirement, John launched a real estate company and operated seven NASCAR speedways in five states, created an automobile racing and sanctioning body, the American Racing Association, and developed three touring series. Later John delved into writing and received numerous first place awards for his eight published novels. John enjoyed spending time in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina with his "bride" of 21 years, Misty. He is also survived by his three sons four granddaughters, one brother and three sisters. He was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers, and one sister.

Myers, Anthony E. USA
LTC (Ret.) Flight Class:
71-6, RVN: 71
A/377/ART 101 ABN,
71-72 A/229 AVN 1
CAV, Callsigns: Gunner
11/ Bandit 15



Anthony E. Myers, 71, passed away on Thursday, December 31, 2015.

Tony proudly served his country in the United States Army, retiring after 21 years. Afterwards, he had a distinguished 20 year career in the Intelligence Community. He is survived by; his beloved wife of 46 years, Karen Myers, two daughters, two sons, eight grandchildren, a brother and a sister.

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Services were held at the Quantico National Cemetery, 18424 Joplin Road, Triangle, VA 22172. Donations may be made in Tony's name to the Wounded Warrior Project or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Mitchell, Robert W. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-5, RVN: 69-70 281 AHC, Callsign: Bandit 24



Bob Mitchell, 67, died Friday, December 11, 2015. He was born April 25, 1948 in Jackson, TN, the son of Robert Samuel Mitchell and the late Marie James Mitchell. Bob graduated from Southside High School and earned a B.A. in History. He was former owner of Mitchell's Body Shop, retiring in 2010. Prior to joining Mitchell's Body Shop, he was associated with Truex Chevrolet. He served on the Madison County Commission and the McKellar-Sipes Regional Airport Authority. He retired from the Tennessee Army National Guard and served in Vietnam as a pilot in the 281st Assault Helicopter Company, the first Special Operations Helicopter Company in the United States Army.

Bob was a respected and admired business man. He generously provided advice and support to others in business. His counsel was highly valued.

Bob is survived by three daughters; his father, two sisters and five grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife Sherry in 2014 and his mother, Marie James Mitchell. He was buried in the Highlands Memorial Gardens with full military honors. Memorial donations may be directed to the 281st Scholarship Fund, c/o Walt Pikul, P.O. Box 41035, Fayetteville, NC 28309.

Norton, Dewey G. USA Flight Class: 67-13, RVN: 67-68 173 AHC, Callsign: Crossbow 31

Dewey Norton aged 68, passed away January 4, 2015. He is survived by Kathy, his wife of 48 years, a daughter, a son, and two brothers. Donations may be directed to the Wounded Warrior Project.



Oliver, John H. USA Flight Class 63-1T, RVN: 65-66 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 69 334 AHC, 69 HHC 145 AVN, 70 HQ USARV AVN ARM, Callsign: Saber 6



John Henry "Jack" Oliver was born about 1936 in Adams, Tennessee, the son of James Herschel Oliver and Edith Louise (Porter) Oliver. He was married about 1959 to Sue ?

Jack was 77 years old and a resident of Clarksville, TN when he passed away on March 10, 2014 at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Survivors include his wife; a son; two daughters; six grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

Burial was in the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery-West with full Military Honors.

Pelletier, Charles J. II USA CPT (Ret.) Flight Class: 70-22, RVN: 68-69 (non-aviation) 70 C/7 1 CAV, Callsign: Comanche



Charles Joseph Pelletier II, 72, died Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016, from complications of pneumonia surrounded by his family and friends. Chuck was born on October 24, 1943, in Highland Park, MI to Charles Pelletier, M.D., and Mary Hankerd Pelletier. He graduated from Notre Dame University in 1965 then attended Eastern Michigan University for graduate school. He served in the U.S. Army, reaching rank of captain. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam, earning the Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, and the Distinguished Flying Cross, among others. He was a Cobra helicopter pilot and was severely injured in November of 1970, then retired from the Army because of disability. Chuck was founder and director of Mother & Unborn Baby Care of North Texas. He dedicated his life to saving the lives of unborn babies and the souls of their mothers. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Pat, two daughters, three sons 14 grandchildren, as well as thousands of babies who are alive through his efforts. Interment was in the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. Donations may be directed to Mother & Unborn Baby Care, 3704 Myrtle Springs Road, Fort Worth, TX 76116.

Rockett, Clyde S. USA Flight Class 66-17, RVN: 66-67 2 BDE 1 CAV, 69 235 AWC, Callsigns: Silver 13/ Viper 33



Clyde S. Rockett, age 70, of Nebo, passed away on Saturday, January 9, 2016, at Autumn Care of Marion following a period of declining health. Steve was born in Burke County on January 15, 1945 to the late Ned Rockett and Sarah Melton Rockett. He served his country honorably in the U. S. Army doing two tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. His service placed him in harm's way many times and he received 100% disability as a result. Following his military service he graduated from Western Carolina University with a double major in business administration and psychology. He then worked for a while as a quality control supervisor at Baxter Healthcare. Following that, he transitioned into a career in the transportation industry as a transportation operations manager, working with several companies during his career and ultimately retiring from Yellow Freight Lines.

Impulsive, and with an inquisitive personality, he had many interests but golf was surely at the top of the list. He was a member of the Marion Lake Club and also the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. He loved to travel and his interest in family genealogy and the Civil War took him far and wide in search of his forebears. He had a heart for the disabled and served as a volunteer at First United Methodist Church with the special needs program. He was a loving and devoted father to his children.

He is survived by a son and daughter and two brothers. Memorials may be made to the Steve Dalton Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Judi Dalton at 4705 Sugar Hill Road, Marion, NC 28752, or to the American Diabetes Association at 16A Brozinni Court, Greenville, SC 29615.

Schuler, Richard T. USA Flight Classes: 67-25/ 68-501, RVN: 68 B/7/17 CAV, 68-69 C/7/17 CAV, 69 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN, Callsigns: Ruthless Rider 21 / White 21/ Condor 21

Richard Thomas (Skeet) Schuler was born in Miami, FL in October, 1946 and went to meet the Lord on November 9,

TAPS

Orange. He graduated from Miami Southwest High School and continued his education at Miami-Dade Community College where he received both an AA Degree and an AS Degree. There, he was a founding member of Omega Chi social fraternity. He held a BS Degree from Florida International University and attended graduate courses at Nova Southeastern University.

In 1967, Richard enlisted in the U.S. Army. After completing basic training at Fort Polk, LA he started primary helicopter flight training at Ft. Wolters, TX. He then completed advanced flight training at Ft. Rucker, AL, where he was commissioned as a Warrant Officer and Army Aviator. Richard then went on to Ft. Stewart and received Cobra gunship training before being deployed to Viet Nam. There Richard flew the Cobra gun ship from 10 June 1968 through 10 June 1969. He completed his military career in 1971, receiving

an Honorable Discharge as an Infantry Captain. He was Member of VHPA.

In 1972, Richard began his law enforcement career with the Miami Beach Police Department. He moved to Colorado Springs, CO in 1975 and was a Deputy Sheriff with the El Paso County Sheriff's Department. He returned to Florida in 1977 to become a Campus Police Officer at Florida State University. Then, he moved back to Miami to become an Investigator with the Florida Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering. His final step in law enforcement was to become a Detective with the State Fire Marshal's Bureau of Fire/Arson and Explosion Investigations. Mr. Schuler retired from the Division in 2008 as a Law Enforcement Supervisor.

During his 25+ year law enforcement career with the Fire Marshals, Richard Schuler had conducted over 1850 fire/explosion investigations. He has been

certified as an expert witness in both Federal and State Courts in both civil and criminal cases. He has been an active member and officer in several law enforcement and fire organizations.

Richard is survived by his wife Mary Ellen; three sons, six grandchildren and two sisters. He was preceded in death by his brother Greg Schuler and parents Calvin and Jane Schuler.

Siebe, Wayne USA Flight Class: 67-5, RVN: 67-68 B/101 AVN 101 ABN

Wayne passed away in 2012, but we did not receive notice. His colleague, Ed Carpenter provided these comments: "Wayne and I flew together in RVN in 1968 in the 17th AHC which became B/101. I did not have contact with him after our tour but did see a notice of his passing in the QB magazine. He was a truly nice person and good pilot. It is sad he died so young."

Records of the recent deaths of the following thirteen 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).

Burford, Stanley R. USA Flight Classes: 68-20/68-34 died on January 24, 2016 (no other data).

Carlson, Terry A. USA Flight Class: 69-26, RVN: 70-71 HHC 1 BDE 101 ABN died on December 11, 2015.

Craig, Robert E. USA Flight Class: 67-17 died on December 15, 2015 (no other data).

Fouts, Joe C. USAF LTC (Ret.) Flight Class (transition) 1969, RVN: 69-71 40 ARRS died on January 5, 2016.

Lewis, Garrett O. USA Flight Class: 67-10, RVN: 67-68 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF, 69-70 398 TC 11 ACR, 70 56 TC CO, Callsign: Outcast 7/Monkey 5 died on November 26, 2015.

Martin, Bill C. USMC Flight Class: 11-62 died on December 7, 2015 (no other data).

McCrary, Wiley W. USA Flight Class: 65-22, RVN: 69 2/20 ARA 1 CAV died on January 7, 2016.

Moore, Leo M. USA Flight Class: 67-15 died on January 2, 2016 (no other data).

Phillee, Kenneth E. USA Flight Class: 67-26, RVN: 67 HHT 7/17 CAV, 68-69 B/7/17 CAV, Callsign: Ruthless Rider died on December 8, 2015.

Roach, Dick E. USA LTC (Ret.) died on January 20, 2016 (no other data).

Roberson, John C. USMC died on December 17, 2015 (no other data).

Smith, Dennis A. USA Flight Classes: 67-11/67-13, RVN: 67-68 48 AHC, 68 134 AHC, 70-71 A/228 AVN 1 CAV died on December 15, 2015.

Vietti, Raymond E. Flight Class 71-4 died on December 24, 2015 (no other data).

On-line Membership Join/Renewal is Here!

After many years of often-interrupted development by Mike Law, Gary Roush, and Greg Pattillo, VHPA HQ is excited and pleased to announce it's now possible for you to renew your membership and new members to join on-line.

The following screen shots show how easy the process is...

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Occupation: Example

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- Age 60 to 64: \$350.00
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BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life Member:
JOHN PENNY

SHOULDA PLAYED THE FLUTE

by Dick Elgin is a memoir of his time in Vietnam as a LOH pilot with the Americal Division, 196th LIB at Chu Lai and later with A/123rd AVN, Americal Division as a UH-1 AC in 69-70. His journey to the cockpit of a helicopter in Vietnam began when he flunked out of college and lost his deferment. A visit to an Army recruiter soon had him on his way through the "pipeline" to Vietnam via Ft. Polk, Ft. Wolters, and Hunter Army Airfield. His journey included an offer to play the flute in the band at Ft. Polk (as he had in high school).

Arriving in-country at Chu Lai, Elgin noted the sobering sight of Viet Cong bodies hanging in the wire after their previous night's assault on the base! As a LOH pilot living and operating out of LZ Baldy, call sign "Charger", Elgin flew a wide variety of missions for the 196th. Later in his tour he transferred to A Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion, the "Pelicans," flying a Huey out of Ky Ha in Chu Lai.

Elgin's narrative of the missions he flew and the men he served with are well written, flow smoothly, and contain a level of dark humor well known to Vietnam helicopter pilots. He occasionally notes the title when in a tight spot, he remembers the Ft. Polk offer...Shoulda played the flute! Elgin's ability to weave together the missions and the personalities of the men he flew with makes for a great reading experience.



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Elgin has written this book for his kids and grandkids and for the kids and grandkids of other helicopter pilots who served in Vietnam to better their understanding of the rigors of flight school and the sacrifices and risks their relatives endured in Vietnam.

Shoulda Played the Flute (212 pages, \$20.00 paperback, footnotes, maps and photos) Richard L. Elgin, ISBN: 978-1519614353 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, or other book suppliers.

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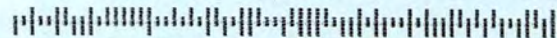
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