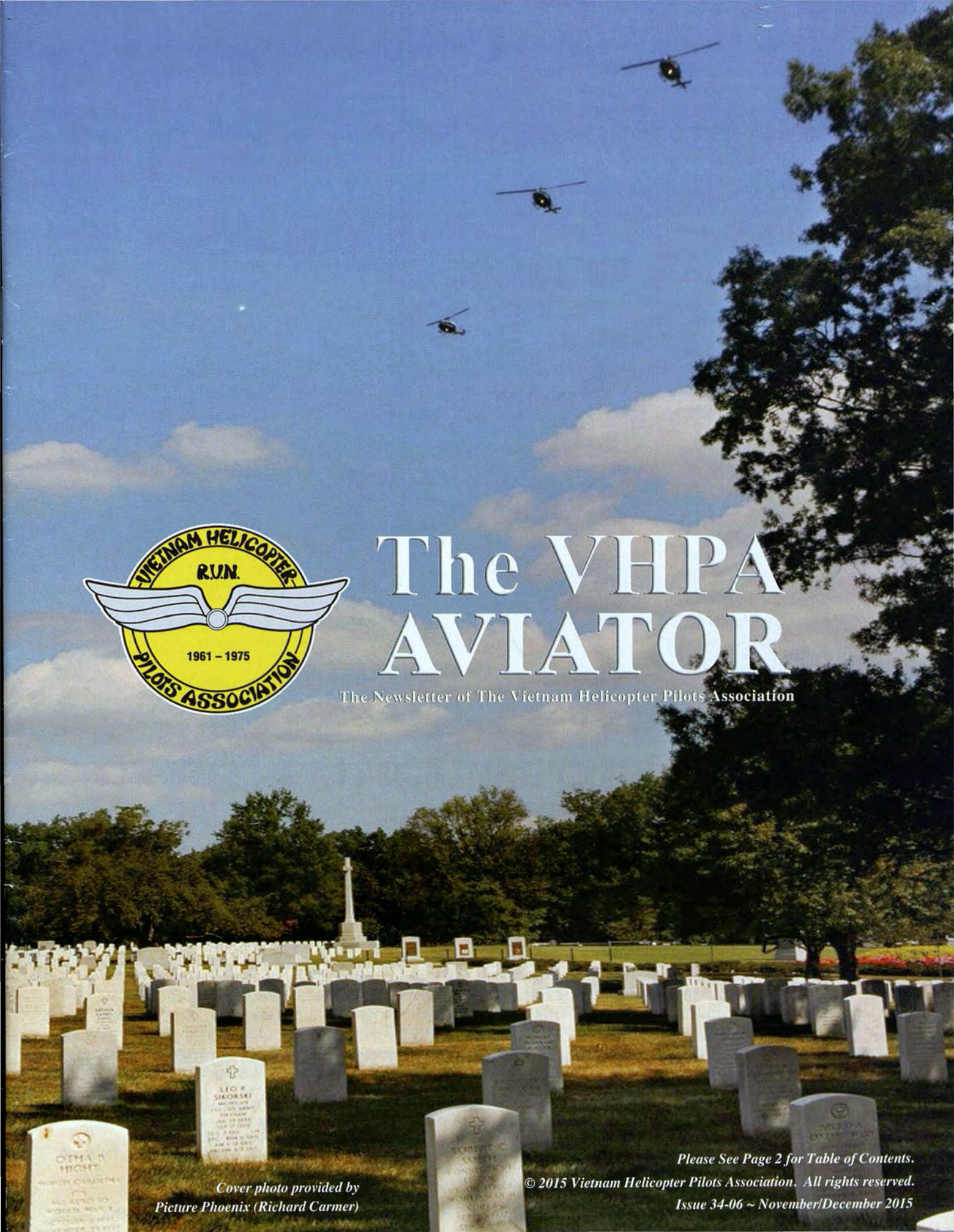




The VHPPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



Cover photo provided by
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VHPA Aviator Newsletter:
Aviator@VHPA.org

VHPA WebSite:
VHPA.org

VHPA Headquarters
and Headquarter Staff
contact Information

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

E-Mail:
HQ@VHPA.org

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

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From the President
of the VHPA

**CLYDE
ROMERO**



With the holidays fast approaching I want to take the time to wish all of you and your families a happy holiday season.

My thanks go to the Old Dominion Chapter for the outstanding work and support they provided VHPA at our reunion in our nation's capital.

I would be in remiss if I did not also mention the women of the Gold Star and Quilting initiatives. The outstanding job they have done with both of those programs adds value to our organization.

The EC has been working hard on improving

the way we do business with regards to our web site and membership request. Our IT revision is in the initial stages and promises to be one that will give our membership what it needs when they need it. They are also committed to continuing the effort to have a memorial stone placed in the ANC.

I and my fellow elected officers are here to serve the membership. In order to respond to its collective voice for change or review of any policy or service, we need your interest and input. Please contact me in the coming year if you have something to suggest or request.

INTERESTING LINKS ON THE WEB

GREAT VIDEO OF THE BELL HELICOPTER ENGINEER WHO CONCEIVED THE COBRA

<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/fort-worth/article34279419.html>

NOSTALGIA: RESEARCH AND PLAY THE TOP TEN RECORDS OF EVERY MONTH FROM JAN 1950 TO DEC 1989

<http://www.45rpmdb.com/Top10HTML/1964.07.html>

VIDEO OF VHPA AUGUST 28 TREE DEDICATION ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EpoYz7z5kM&feature=youtu.be>

AN ENGINEERING VIEW ON GUIDING MISSILES. NON ENGINEERS MAY BE SOMEWHAT CONFUSED

http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=f95_1422455171

VIEW THIS WEBSITE FOR AN UPCOMING VETERANS DAY EVENT IN SOUTHERN CA.

<http://veteransandlabor.com/>

SERIOUS EXTERNAL LOAD WORK IN FRANCE

https://www.youtube.com/embed/qJHIXe_RnYo

A Message from the New VHPA Junior Member at Large

I extend my sincere thanks to the VHPA members at the Annual Business Meeting who voted me onto the Executive Council as the newest Junior Member at Large. Washington, DC was my 30th consecutive reunion (my wife uses the term "committed" and I "think" she is referring to our association).

In earning your trust, I see my office goals as follows: Short-term, learn from the senior council members how our association functions behind the scenes so that I can loyally support their efforts and hopefully make a contribution. Mid-term, although I realize that there may be hotel size restrictions and other factors unknown to me, I would like to explore the possibility of reunion venues we have not visited before: e.g., Charlotte, Pittsburgh, Albuquerque, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Cleveland, and Baltimore just to name a few. Long-term, because we are a last man standing organization, a long-term goal is to earnestly discuss the various ways our history will be preserved.

Scholarships are a fine way and Tom Payne and Mike Sheuerman have done an amazing job. Historical documents and records are central to that preservation, and Mike Sloniker and Gary Roush have been tireless in their efforts. Checks to students and pieces of paper, however, relate only part of our legacy. I would like to look at ways our unique story can be preserved in living, touch and feel, interactive ways. For example: organizations such as the AAHF (Army Aviation Historical Foundation) and the NAHM (National American Huey Museum) restore, preserve, and fly the very Huey aircraft we all trained on and many of us flew in Vietnam. Each year, thousands of people climb up over the skids and get to experience the thrill of a Huey flight. For a few moments they get to imagine what it was like for us skimming the tree tops to insert or resupply troops on the ground, to cover them in a firefight, or to rescue the wounded and bring them to safety. You can watch movies or read articles all day long, but nothing can substitute for hearing the live whine of a Huey turbine cranking up, the moment translational lift is achieved, or the distinctive sound of those blades permanently installed in our memories.

I trust that my great-grandchildren will one day read about our exploits and maybe marvel just a little bit at what we did as 21 year-olds. But, I'd also love to know that the VHPA made its best attempt at recognizing and supporting organizations that are not just museums, but living museums. Before he died, I met Robert Morgan (the pilot of The Memphis Belle), and experienced a 30 minute flight in "Sentimental Journey," a fully restored B-17. I could think of nothing other than the stories my Dad told me about The Army Air Force and WW II, for the entire flight. Yes, all those war movies I watched growing up were great, but those 30 minutes in the air still vibrates my heart! I truly believe that we should think in bold terms when it comes to how our story should be preserved; as bold as we were way back when!

By Art Jacobs

FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

The months keep flying by! It is hard to believe this is the last issue of the year!

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

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 and you can make updates directly to your information.

The deadline has passed for pre-ordering the 2015 directories. If you pre-ordered, you should have received your directory in October. Call HQ to pre-order the 2016 CD Directory for \$10 and the 2016 Paper Directory for \$15 or you can still purchase the 2015 CD directory for \$20 and the 2015 Paper directory for \$25. We have limited quantities of the 2015 directories so call now if you would like one.

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

As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything that we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW! The HQ Staff wishes everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas!

Sherry Rodgers
VHPA Office Manager

TO BE AN AMERICAN

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"35 years ago, if you were to tell me that I am going to stand up here speaking to a couple thousand patriots, in English, I'd laugh at you. Man, every morning I wake up thanking God for putting me and my family in the greatest country on earth.

I just want you all to know that the American dream does exist and I am living the American dream. I was asked to speak to you about my experience as a first generation Vietnamese-American, but I'd rather speak to you as an American.

If you hadn't noticed, I am not white and I feel pretty comfortable with my people.

I am a proud U.S. citizen and here is my proof. It took me 8 years to get it, waiting in endless lines, but I got it, and I am very proud of it.

I still remember the images of the Tet offensive in 1968, I was six-years-old. Now, you might want to question how a six-year-old boy could remember anything. Trust me, those images can never be erased. I can't even imagine what it was like for young American soldiers, 10,000 miles away from home, fighting on my behalf.

35 years ago, I left South Vietnam for political asylum. The war had ended. At the age of 13, I left with the understanding that I may or may not ever get to see my siblings or parents again. I was one of the first lucky 100,000 Vietnamese allowed to come to the U.S. Somehow, my family and I were reunited five months later, amazingly, in California. It was a miracle from God.

If you haven't heard lately that this is the greatest country on earth, I am telling you that right now. It was the freedom and the opportunities presented to me that put me here with all of you tonight. I also remember the barriers that I had to overcome every step of the way. My high school counselor told me that I cannot make it to college due to my poor communication skills. I proved him wrong. I finished college. You see, all you have to do is to give this little boy an opportunity and encourage him to take and run with it. Well, I took the opportunity and here I am.

This person standing tonight in front of you could not exist under a socialist/communist environment. By the way, if you think socialism is the way to go, I am sure many people here will chip in to get you a one-way ticket out of here. And if you didn't know, the only difference between socialism and communism is an AK-47 aimed at your head. That was my experience.

In 1982, I stood with a thousand new immigrants, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and listening to the National Anthem for the first time as an American. To this day, I can't remember anything sweeter and more patriotic than that moment in my life.

Fast forwarding, somehow I finished high school, finished college, and like any other goofball 21 year old kid, I was having a great time

with my life. I had a nice job and a nice apartment in Southern California. In some way and somehow, I had forgotten how I got here and why I was here.

One day I was at a gas station, I saw a veteran pumping gas on the other side of the island. I don't know what made me do it, but I walked over and asked if he had served in Vietnam. He smiled and said, "Yes." I shook and held his hand. The grown man began to well up. I walked away as fast as I could and at that very moment, I was emotionally rocked. This was a profound moment in my life. I knew something had to change in my life. It was time for me to learn how to be a good citizen. It was time for me to give back.

You see, America is not just a place on the map; it isn't just a physical location. It is an ideal, a concept. And if you are an American, you must understand the concept, you must accept this concept, and most importantly, you have to fight and defend this concept. This is about Freedom and not free stuff. And that is why I am standing up here.

Brothers and sisters, to be a real American, the very least you must do is to learn English and understand it well. In my humble opinion, you cannot be a faithful patriotic citizen if you can't speak the language of the country you live in. Take this document of 46 pages - last I looked on the Internet, there wasn't a Vietnamese translation of the U.S. Constitution. It took me a long time to get to the point of being able to converse and until this day, I still struggle to come up with the right words. It's not easy, but if it's too easy, it's not worth doing.

Before I knew this 46-page document, I learned of the 500,000 Americans who fought for this little boy. I learned of the 58,000 names scribed on the black wall at the Vietnam Memorial. You are my heroes. You are my founders.

At this time, I would like to ask all the Vietnam veterans to please stand. I thank you for my life. I thank you for your sacrifices, and I thank you for giving me the freedom and liberty I have today. I now ask all veterans, firefighters, and police officers, to please stand. On behalf of all first generation immigrants, I thank you for your services and may God bless you all.

Quang Nguyen
Creative Director/Founder
Caddis Advertising, LLC
"God Bless America"

"One Flag, One Language, One Nation Under God"

For those who understand, no explanation is needed.
For those who do not understand, no explanation is possible.

<http://www.caddisad.com/howeare.html>

"Huey" Helicopter Dedicated Honoring VHPA Member!



On July 29th at Camp Shelby near Hattiesburg, MS, a Huey was dedicated at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum in honor of Dr. Elton "Mac" Huddleston. While touring the museum in 2009, Dr. Huddleston noticed a large picture on display of a Huey landing on a "Tango" boat in a tributary of the MeKong River in IV Corps Vietnam. Recognizing the large tail number on the Huey he discovered it was a picture of him when he was on his tour in Vietnam. Dr. Huddleston graduated from the US Army helicopter flight school in Class 66-10, and served initially with C/229th Avn of the 1st Cav and then with A/9 Avn of the 9th Inf. Div in the years 1966-67. "I screamed like a little girl who just got the news to be homecoming queen and I realized that I was looking at a picture that was me and I remembered the incident!" He informed the museum director that it was him and then basically forgot about it. Then, this year he found out that a Huey had been acquired by the museum and was to be dedicated in his honor at Camp Shelby. The ceremony took place on July 29th, 2015 with a large crowd of friends and Vietnam Vets who he knew. Also attending was his wife Dr. Flavia Huddleston, MD and their children Rob, Eddie Mac and Amber Clare. Dr. Huddleston is now retired as a Veterinarian in the Pontotoc, MS area with many years of service. Plus, he was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives in 2008 and serves District 15. Mac is a graduate of Mississippi State Univ. and the Auburn School of Veterinarian Medicine. He is also a certified criminal investigator in the State of Mississippi.

Caption: Huey Dedicated to Mississippi State Representative
L to R: Rob Huddleston, son, Dr. Flavia Huddleston, wife
Amber Clare Huddleston, daughter, Eddie Mac Huddleston, son
State Rep. Dr. Mac Huddleston, DVM



Every year since 2006, I've taken a group of 25 to the heart of the Central Highlands of Vietnam. We tour Saigon and Mekong Delta. Three nights in Pleiku and one in Kontum allows us time for visits from Camp Enari to Ben Het including Montagnard Villages and orphanages. We see Kontum, Dakto, Tan Canh, and much more. We drive the passes on the way to the beach resorts of Quy Nhon and Nha Trang. Have lunch in An Khe. We will stop where you want and see what you came to see. This tour is about your return experience. See the web site for detailed itinerary.

The tour starts in Saigon on Jan 14 and ends there Jan 26. The costs is \$1760 per person/double occupancy, single supplement \$550. Included is transportation on our 40 passenger A/C bus (with Wi-Fi), in-country flights, hotels, most meals, entrance fees, English speaking guide and lots more. 3 night tour extension to Dalat is available for \$500. Not included is your roundtrip flight to Vietnam.

For full details and to register for this tour, go to our website at: www.Brothersforever.org or contact me directly at 540-220-9266 (cell), 800-248-1690 (office) or georgedese@comcast.net

By Tom Payne
(portions sourced from WHLT TV Hattiesburg MS)

George DeSerres, CW4, Ret
Flight class 66-13,
Gun Pilot for 189th AHC and 117th AHC,
Slick Pilot for the 189th AHC

From the Editor

Once again, we have changes in the Aviator staff. Due to the loss of David Adams, the VHPA will now be listed as the Publisher. I will assume the duties David performed, and will do so as the Managing Editor. Tom Hirschler is now the Editor. Nothing really changes in our processes other than some administrative assignments. What is different is that as the editor, Tom Hirschler is familiar with the steps needed to compose the magazine in the event I am temporarily or permanently unable to continue. That is redundancy we have lacked since the earliest issues.

One other notification needed is that: In our last issue, two authors were not listed after the final proofs were approved. One was Roger C. Baker – “Yellow One”, the other Peter Rzeminski- “Griffin to Dead-bone”. We apologize to both and thank them for their understanding.

Tom Kirk

“Acing your exams is no guarantee of safety. You share the airspace with all the pilots who scored 70%. ”

~ Dave O'Sullivan CW4/DAC
(Ret.)

A Thanksgiving Memory

As it will this year, my birthday fell on Thanksgiving Day in 1970, and I was in Vietnam. It was one of those days that we all had – a day I will remember for as long as I live.

I had flown a night mission the night before and was sleeping in, setting my alarm for 13:00, allowing time to shower, shave, and get to the mess hall before they quit serving at 14:00. I, and everyone else, was looking forward to a hot meal of turkey, dressing, and all the appropriate side dishes. That, however, is not what happened.

There were about six of us standing at the end of the chow line when they completely ran out of everything! So...instead of turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, etc., we had cold cuts and several cheeses. Bologna, salami, and cheese for my Thanksgiving and birthday dinner! Thankfully, the story does not end there.

One of those in line, waiting for his turkey dinner, was the Airfield Commander. He asked us for our names and units and then invited us to be his guests for supper at the O Club that evening. When we gathered at the appointed hour, we were served grilled T-bone steaks, baked potato, salad, veggies, rolls, dessert, and any beverage we wished!

This would be a “success story” if it ended right there, but it did not. A few weeks later, I was told to report to the Airfield Commander's office. Along with the others, I was invited to be his guest for Christmas dinner. He wanted to make sure we didn't miss out on the turkey and dressing a second time!

As you and your family enjoy your Thanksgiving traditions, I urge you to reflect upon all we have to be thankful for and to remember those serving our country today, especially those in harm's way. No one knows what memories will be made.

By John Sorensen



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Great Christmas Gift!

Born Free (or The Great Chicken Chase!)

by *Marty Twite Capt. USN (RET) C.O. 4/70-4/71*

Operation Born Free started out with a bang, but ended in a whimper. Not everything worked successfully in Vietnam. This fiasco eventually became known as The Great Chicken Chase.

The Binh Thuy Wolves must have thought the skipper had visited Ben Xe Moi once too often when he directed our pilots to practice chasing birds. That's right; he directed that our guys practice chasing birds! Any birds! Anytime! Just get used to it. Why? No reason was given at that time.

Meanwhile, there was a pigeon living the good life on the roof of the COMNAVFORV Headquarters in Saigon. A sailor with pigeon care experience had been ordered in for that purpose. A veterinarian was employed. The food was great! All in all, the pigeon must have thought it had died and woke up in pigeon heaven!

By now you're wondering what this is all about. So, read on. It turns out the North Vietnamese sea supply system supporting the Viet Cong used homing pigeons for communications. A ship off the coast with supplies would release the pigeon, thereby alerting the VC ashore they were ready to rendezvous. Our Market Time forces intercepted and sank one of these small ships in shallow water roughly off the mouth of the Mekong. Subsequent capture of survivors revealed the presence of a homing pigeon. Somebody decided it would be great if we could release the bird, follow it, and make a SEAL insert on the VC position.

The bird was somewhat the worse for its recent experience. In addition, other preparations had to be made. This would take time. Thus the pigeon got VIP treatment in Saigon while the Seawolves were terrorizing all the other birds in the Delta. The plan was to return the bird to the place where it was captured off the coast and release it. A double gunship fire team: two Sealords with SEALs aboard, and a Black Pony flight, all under the command/control of an Air Force C-121 Constellation Spy in the Sky, would then follow the pigeon to its destination.

We learned visually following a bird was somewhat chancy, so the NARDUV command (super technical people) designed a tiny radio transmitter to be strapped to the bird with the antenna affixed to its posterior (details unknown). The gunships had a rudimentary tracking capability using the ILS needle and would at

least know when the transmitter was directly ahead.

The great day arrived, and the forces assembled. The pigeon was taken to the half-exposed sunken ship where it was originally captured. The Seawolf gunships, Sealords with SEALs, Black Ponies, and C-121 were all in a holding pattern to seaward waiting for a signal. The agreed upon signal for start was transmitted, "Born free!" The pigeon was released and the show was on.

The pigeon apparently took one look at the flock of iron birds heading his way and decided to abort the whole thing. It dropped the antenna and di di mau'ed out of there. As a result, the gunships lost both visual and radio contact with the bird, leaving all concerned unemployed, and very frustrated. There was nothing left to do but return to base.

That's the end of the story; a long shot that didn't pay off.

P.S. The pigeon showed up back at the COMNAVFORV HQ demanding chow!

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UPCOMING REUNIONS

Silver Spur Reunion

Dates: April 20 - 24, 2016

Location: Radisson Hotel - Branson, Missouri

Contact: Bill McCalister (Silver Spur 24)

Email: [REDACTED]

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:

Registration forms:

Association Treasurer David Huser at vvhuser@gmail.com

187th AHC reunion

187th AHC will be holding its annual Reunion on November 7-12

2015 at the Island House Hotel in Orange Beach, AL.

Full details on our web site: 187th AHC.net. The POC is Ray

Root [REDACTED]

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

RVN - June 1965 - January 1972

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

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

POC is Pete Rzeminski; email: [REDACTED]

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

Want to see your Reunion listed here?

Send details to: Aviator@VHPA.org




Here is one of our Fort Worth Aviation Museum's outreach programs: "Kiowa for Kids." These Vietnam and Desert Storm veterans travel all around the area for parades and appearances. It is the only OH-58 on display in the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex, where it was produced.

Photo courtesy FWAM


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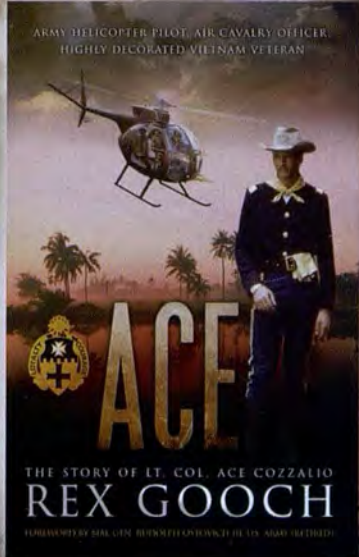
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FIRST LIAR DOESN'T HAVE A CHANCE

Hey, wait a minute! That's a TRUE Sea Story!

Have you ever been eavesdropping at the bar (or in the soda shop) while a truth-teller of unquestionable repute weaves his word tapestry in a manner which should be spellbinding the audience? There surely is a glimmer of skepticism from at least one of the listeners. He (she) has heard enough sea stories (lines) in his (her) time to know there may be some damage being done to the strictest definition of truth as the story unfolds. The skeptic does not yet have enough sea time to learn there is usually a little truth in each of them (the sea stories, that is - there is no truth in the standard line). You can't believe the skepticism! After all, you are fascinated because you know this story to be the truth; you were there!

Imagine my surprise when I was allowed to read an advance copy of the Great Chicken Chase (See preceding article by Captain Marty Twite, CO of HA(L)-3). There was an ongoing veracity check as one reader pantomimed rolling up his trouser legs. But it is a true story! I was there! I flew that mission!

There I was...

While the pigeon was getting the VIP treatment in Saigon, we Seawolves actually spent some time trying to stalk some of the local flying fowl. You take your entertainment where you can find it when in a combat zone. The birds were not amused. They resorted to time-honored evasive maneuvers known to all types of birds, proven techniques known among them as the 'wright split'. This maneuver was developed by sea gulls in residence at Kitty Hawk, NC in 1903, after their raucous laughter at Wilbur's first solo subsided. It was passed down to other avian species as a public service when it became apparent the Wright Brothers would not be denied. Although called the wright-split, the maneuver, as most aviators will attest, is a left break, folding-wing autorotation, accompanied with a burst of chaff. Evidence of the chaff can sometimes be found on the windscreen.

We rapidly tired of being reminded by the birds of exactly how limited we humans were in the realm of flight, and went back to harassing water buffalo (a species to which we were clearly superior when it came to powered flight). We solemnly referred to the Skipper's order with the time-honored signal to start number one applied to the side of the head muttering the phrase dinky dao (Americanized Vietnamese for crazy). Imagine our surprise when our detachment was pulled in to the home base at Binh Thuy to begin practice homing on an FM signal. For the actual mission a transmitter would be attached to the Chieu Hoi, or turncoat, pigeon. We practiced tracking riverine-force patrol boats dashing up and down the river with the homer onboard. It was like flying a very squirrely UHF-DF.

Nobody had much confidence in our ability to track for long. We were really skeptical about being able to track the pigeon to touchdown with enough accuracy and speed for a successful surprise SEAL insert. The SEALs were the most skeptical of all. They were victims of their own reputation as P Hour approached. The popular picture at the time had them dropping in, guns blazing, among

the chosen victims. Had anyone from the Saigon headquarters consulted the SEALs, they would have been given a very different scenario. Their preference was to slip in completely covert, do their thing, and be quickly extracted. Failing that, they wanted to hit a known target in a carefully planned insert. By this time in the war, intelligence in our area (the Delta), was considerably developed. We were conducting numerous helicopter inserts of SEAL teams into occupied LZs, looking for compounds such as, POW, VC hospitals, VCI, (VC infrastructure, such as HQ for intelligence and political officers). and VC weddings.

Yes, we actually inserted SEALs to crash a wedding for some local VC! Good party and reception, but bad pooh-poohs and no honeymoon. According to the hosts, the SEALs were obnoxious and rowdy, and showed no respect for the traditions and customs of the locals at the solemn occasion, but that's another sea story.

These insertions were organized and had: good charts and photos; planned helicopter approaches to minimize early detection and provide best cover; landing zones located to control the area without SEALs getting in each other's line of fire, or the line of fire for the supporting helicopters. This plan had none of these! Nobody knew where the LZ would be, or what the enemy strength was. We didn't know if we would even have an LZ! The Saigon Commandos were not exactly working overtime thinking this one through.

When the day arrived, it went as the Skipper related. The radio transmitter may have naturally failed; after all, we were dealing with the state of the art in technology, (if not intelligence) weren't we? Weren't we? There is also the possibility a party or parties unknown may have caused the transmitter, or transmitter-pigeon interface unit, to malfunction at a critical time. The SEALs really didn't like this operation. The Chieu Hoi pigeon may have merely turned chicken. Whatever the case, once airborne, the transmitter went off the air, and the pigeon apparently executed a smart right break. His use of chaff during the evasion is problematical, unsupported by any visible evidence or excrescence.

We returned to base and proceeded to join up with the SEALs and search for a wedding to crash. We found no wedding as I recall, but that did not prevent a combined SEALs-Seawolves insert into the Army Engineer Officers Club. The Club was adjacent to both the Binh Thuy squadron base and the Third Surgical Hospital, which explains the popularity of the club. It had round-eye female nurses in regular attendance-good news. It also had lots of rear echelon Army officers trying to monopolize the only round-eyed women in sight-bad news. They had to be shown the folly of their ways, and the nurses had to be shown the TRUE WAY, no contest. The SEALs were obnoxious, rowdy, and showed no respect for the traditions and customs of the local Army officers. We, on the other hand, being Naval Aviators, were perfect gentlemen...but that's another sea story too.

By Tom Phillips

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VHPA/QUAD A SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Annual VHPA and QUAD A scholarship awards have been announced and our Association did extremely well. As always our applicants are the cream of the crop, the best of the best-the chosen ones.

This year saw fifty-nine descendants of eligible members apply for our five scholarships. Of that number thirty-six received awards; five were given the VHPA scholarships and thirty-one earned Quad A awards. The total amount dispensed was \$68,500. As an added bonus, three non-current and six potential members' descendants received another \$16,000 in scholarships. Of the \$451,555 in scholarships given out, VHPA descendants received \$84,500 or 18.7% of the total. Congratulations, well done!

Start working on your kids for next year. Let's see 100 applicants in May of 2016.

Tom Payne: Chairman
Mike Sheuerman: Fund Raising

Short biographies of two winners:

QUAD A RECIPIENT

Erin Wheary is a native of Portland, Oregon. She attended St. Mary's Academy (2009) and completed her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Puget Sound (2013) in Tacoma, WA. At the University of Puget Sound, Erin completed the print-making and sculpture tracks within the Fine Art Department. In addition, she served for two years as the course assistant in the sculpture studio. She was invested in firmly connecting the art department with the university and served as the art editor for the literary and arts magazine. In spring 2012 she was awarded a research grant from the university which provided the opportunity to create work independently. Upon graduating with honors, Erin was selected by the UPS Art Department to travel to Germany and create work as a representative of UPS at an artist residency in Leipzig.

Since graduation, Erin has traveled and interacted with artists from around the world, taught art to elementary aged children at Grace Art Camp in Portland, and continued to develop and exhibit her work. Erin is a prospective Master of Fine Arts candidate at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (2018). She is excited for the challenges to come.



VHPA RECIPIENT

Lillian Wheary was born and still lives in Portland, Oregon. She attended local public schools and graduated in 2015 with an International Baccalaureate diploma from Lincoln High School where she was a valedictorian (4.0 grade point average for all 4 years). At Lincoln she pursued many activities including playing varsity tennis for 4 years, and serving as team captain in her senior year. She was a member of her school's Constitution Team that had previously and subsequently won the national championship in Washington DC. This fall Lillian will be attending the University of Oregon, Robert Clark Honors College, starting as an academic sophomore, with her special interests in biology and history, perhaps as a pre-med or pre-law major. Lillian and her father, Denis Wheary (176th AHC "Minuteman 25" 1969 and 120th AHC "Deans" 1970), have attended and enjoyed VHPA conventions in San Diego and San Francisco.



QUAD A RECIPIENTS

Alexander Mark (NC)
Allison Robertson
Alyssa Leaf
Amy Vinson
Andrew Mark (NC)
Avery Saied (Z)
Benjamin Levinson
Chloe Chais
Cody Howard
Daniel Moses
Danielle Williams
David Fish (Z)
Elinor Snyder
Emma Orlando
Erin Wheary
Evan Grandberry
Holly Nelson
Jonathan Chais
Joshua Cox

Kayleigh Smith (Z)
Kimberly Kaiser
Kirby Caraballo (Z)
Kynzie Stanton
Lance Reisetter
Natalie Johns
Peyton Lane
Rebecca Schalip
Ryan Brode
Nicole Leaf
Paul Otto (NC)
Peter Kariher
Sara Tennant
Sarah Biembaum
Scott Earp (Z)
Stephanie Griswold
Taryn Johnson
Taylor Slagle (Z)
Tyler Hyers
Virginia Bulgar
William Edmundson

VHPA RECIPIENTS

Cynthia Roundtree
Emma Copeland
Gloria Garner
Jacqueline Banks
Lillian Wheary

QUAD A recipients not qualified for VHPA consideration:

NC-Eligible member
not dues current.

Z-Eligible Pilot never a member

WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA. Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (**) ID new life members. Line 2, current city and state. Line 3, branch of service. Lines 4 to 6, flight class and Vietnam units and served with, if that info is available.

We welcome these 20 new Members to the VHPA!

All have joined our Association during the period from June 24-September 11, 2015

Badoud William A 'Bill'
Huntsville Alabama
Army
67-20
B/9 AVN 9 INF in 68-69

Bernard Frank J.
Long Beach California
Army
69-37 69-35
C/159 ASHB 101 ABN in 70-71

Bezold Henry E
Reston Virginia
Army
70-34
159 MED DET in 70-71

Dick William H 'Bill' **
Spokane Washington
Army
65-5
174 AHC in 66-67; C/477 ARA
101 ABN in 70-71

Dula James W **
Myersville Maryland
Army
69-43
335 AHC in 70-71

Gillespie Larry
Fairfax Virginia
Army
65-5
A/501 AVN in 65-66; A/3/17
CAV in 67-68

Gingrich Gary M.
McKinney Texas
Army
69-1
11 ACR in 69-70

Green Michael H 'Mike'
Denison Texas
Army
67-10
4 AVN 4 INF in 67-68

Just Edward A. 'Ed'
Little Rock Arkansas
Army
68-513 68-21
25 AVN 25 INF in 68-69

Martin Maurice L. 'Marty'
Chattanooga Tennessee
Air Force
71-22AF 71-22

McCottry Melvin T. **
South Euclid Ohio
Army
242 ASHC in 71; 159 ASHB 101
ABN in 72

Melville Thomas G. 'Tom' **
Heber City Utah
Army
71-22
162 AHC in 71-72

Moran Michael J. **
Palm Beach Gardens Florida
Army
E/82 ARTY 1 CAV in 69-70

Morris Walter J. 'Walt' **
Stanley North Carolina
Army
67-3
HHC 1 BDE 101 ABN in 67-68

Packer William G.
Wyoming Michigan
Army
70-17 70-15
1/9 CAV in 70-71

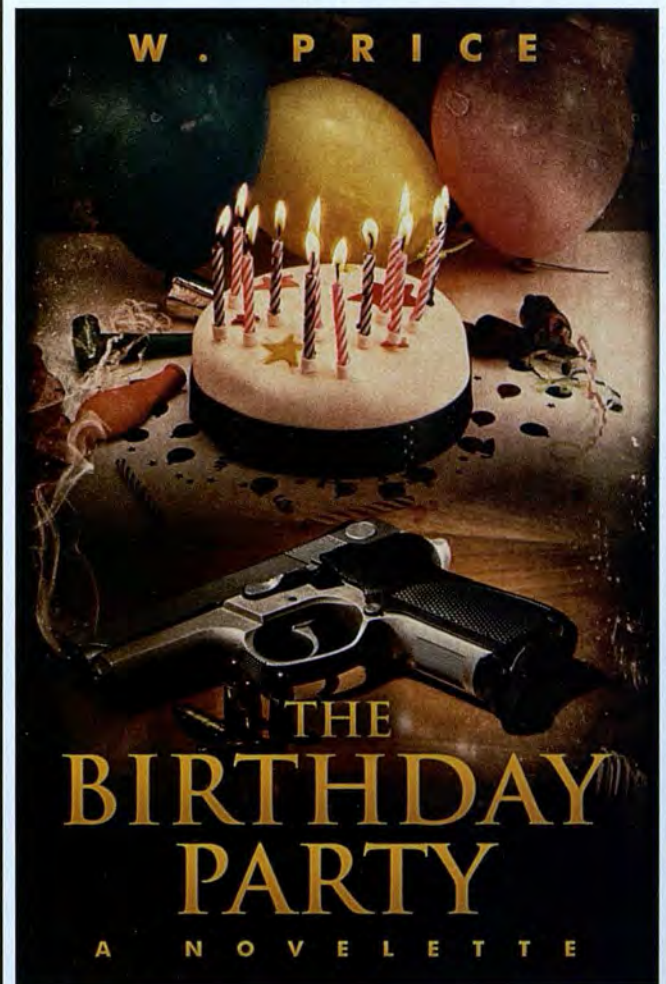
Peterson Bruce A. **
Sugar Grove Illinois
Army
69-42
C/227 AHB 1 CAV in 70; HHC
227 AHB 1 CAV in 70-71

Reed Steven A.
South Whitley Indiana
Army
69-21
C/229 AHB 1 CAV in 69-70

Shoup John G.
Cary North Carolina
Army
70-22
114 AHC in 70-71

Simons David M. 'Mike' **
Artesia New Mexico
Marine Corps
HMM-263 in 69-70

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The Birthday Party: A Novelette by W. Price

"Compelling story with unforeseen ending. Grips your attention with intrigue and relevance in today's world. Everyone can relate to the events affecting this family." Tom Wood, CW4, USA, Ret., B. Co., 101st ABN, '67-'68

"Great read, a tough hero book with a great twist ending you won't expect. Your wife will also enjoy reading this one! Hooyah! I am waiting for W. Price's next work!" Phil King, Capt USNR (Ret), UDT/SEAL, FBI Hostage Rescue Team.

*All author proceeds donated to
Iraq and Afghanistan veterans support groups*

Friendly Target

I spent my first tour with B Co, 4 Avn Bn, 4th Inf Div, call sign Gambler Guns. We were still flying C models; our Cobras were due in a few months. Early in the tour, I was flying with CPT Harry Askilsen on the twenty-four hour standby team for the Division. Its TOC scrambled us in the middle of the night; an unidentified aircraft had flown over the border near Duc Co. I can't remember what happened to our other aircraft. They were always pre-flighted and in "kick the tire, light the fire, pull pitch and go" mode. In any case, we were single-ship heading west toward the Cambodian border. The TOC was vectoring us to the UFO and within twenty minutes we spotted a rotating beacon. We called the TOC and told them we had the aircraft in sight. They said to shoot him down!

At this point, I was the peter pilot, an FNG. I only did what I was told. Harry asked if they had contact with the aircraft. They informed us it had flown over the border without clearance into the AO. All attempts to contact them had been ignored. The order "Shoot them down," was repeated. By now, I was pretty excited. I had never heard of anyone shooting down an enemy aircraft in South Vietnam. I had visions of a big fireball, or at least an aircraft crashing in the jungle. We saw the beacon, but no position lights. I recall how black it was with no city lights and little moon. It

is hard to tell a target's direction of flight; and nearly impossible to judge distance!

Harry came on the intercom and said, "Shoot them down." I fired a long burst from the minigun directly at the rotating beacon and watched the tracers curve behind it. I next aimed the minigun to lead the beacon; fired another burst, and finally fired a big circle around the beacon with the tracers. Within seconds of the second burst, an American voice on guard frequency began screaming: "Mayday, Mayday, taking heavy air-to-air fire over Duco!"

At this point, my excitement turned to oh s***. I just shot down a friendly. As it turned out, it was a Mohawk on a SLAR mission that forgot to clear into the AO. We soon determined he was okay. In fact, there wasn't a bullet hole in the aircraft.

After getting over the shock of what could have happened, we laughed our butts off all the way back to the airfield. We never found out who the pilot was (he might be reading this), but we had a lot of fun at the bar telling our war story of the Mohawk pilot who had to go back in the middle of his mission to change his flight suit.

*By John Parker, Gambler 36, Blue Max 38,
Undertaker 40, Life Member*

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Mini-reunion of 63-1 and 118th AHC Wednesday, Aug 25 2015

Within a month after completing training at Ft. Rucker, twelve members of class of 63-1 went to Vietnam, assigned to the 45th Trans Battalion. We were the first replacements of the following Transportation Companies: 57th-120th (Saigon), 33rd-118th (Bien Hoa), 93rd-121st, (Soc Trang), 8th-117th (Pleiku), and the 81st-119th Qui Nhon. I might have the 8th an 81st turned around.

On Sep. 24, 1963 the 45th TC Battalion was redesignated the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion at which time Hueys replaced the H-21s and the Bandit Platoon of the 118th AHC was born.

We all survived the year and returned to Ft. Benning, GA. We were assigned to the 11th Air Assault Div which became the 1st Cav. Some retired after a 20 year career; while others completed their three-year ROTC aviation commitment and left for the private sector. As a result of our three years together, we kept in touch. Our two biggest mini-reunions were concurrent with the VHPA reunions of 2009 (Philadelphia) and 2013 (San Francisco). We thank the VHPA for providing the venue for these events.

Recently, the 2015 VHPA DC reunion provided yet another opportunity for a get-together. We met at the Army/Navy club on Wednesday August 25.

Allen Laya



Front to back and left to right: Dave and Joani Prewitt, Nancy and Allen Laya; Neil and Joanne Paxton, Marti and Chris Miller, Shirley and Jerry Peffers, Gini and Frank Maus, Connie and Bob Laya, Roz and Marty Cohen.

Lighthorse pilots get together at the 2015 VHPA reunion

From left to right:

Dennis Sorges,
Ray Murphy,
Rick Davis,
Rex Gooch,
Chuck Nole,
Mike Rasbury,
Bob Odenheimer,
Pat Ross,
John Sorensen,
Tom Egleston,
Howard Garrett.



REUNION HIGHLIGHTS 2015

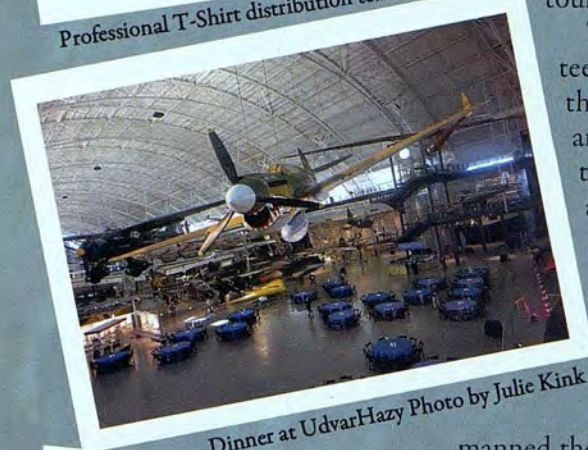
Unless otherwise noted, Photos by Picture Phoenix (Richard Carmer)



128 AHC Alumni



Professional T-Shirt distribution team.



Dinner at UdvarHazy Photo by Julie Kink



Better than a video game!



A familiar scene at all reunions



USMC Band event Photo by Julie Kink



VHPA President Clyde Romero speaks at the closing banquet

Without doubt, each VHPA Reunion is special in its own right. The 1,800 plus who attended our fourth Reunion in Washington DC, the second in the Wardman Park Marriott, certainly have memories. And the weather was wonderful - it rained only once, and that was at night.

The typically high temperature and humidity did not occur, enhancing the enjoyment of outdoor activities.

In keeping with our finest Reunion traditions, there was more than enough to keep everyone busy. There were 46 ticketed events. Certainly more than anyone could attend, yet the agenda provided a great choice of many interesting tours and events.

The large number of volunteers, both members/wives of the Old Dominion Chapter and other individuals, facilitated the many functions and activities provided for the attendees.

The North Carolina VHPA Chapter not only hauled both a gunship and a slick to DC for static display, they also manned the displays day and night. We thank members: Jerry Seago, Brock Nicholson, Edmund Hughes, and Terry Lenior for their efforts. Members and non-affiliated hotel guests were able to either re-visit or discover the iconic aircraft.

The details of each activity were published in the issues leading up to the reunion. There is no need to catalogue each one in this article. Some, however, deserve mention: Many people (700) took advantage of an evening of entertainment by the Marine Corp Band. The dinner at the Uvar-Hazy Center was also a notable event. I enjoyed the Pentagon tour. It was conducted in a highly professional manner by members of the Old Guard. If all of the Pentagon's functions were handled in like manner, we could cut our defense budget in half! The highlight of the multiple-day gathering was the dedication of the previously planted tree in Arlington National Cemetery. This is the subject of a separate article printed on page 24 of this issue.

Shuttle service from the hotel to the Washington Mall and a few additional points of interest made it convenient to design your own tour. There were many other destinations within easy walking distance of the dedicated stops. The DC Metro had a stop adjacent to the hotel. That service is fast, convenient and expansive for self-directed touring.

VHPA founder Larry Clark attended the First Timers' reception, where he described the beginning of the organization. He related that after drinking too much beer during one of flight class 65-3W successful reunions, someone suggested they needed to expand their reunions to everyone who flew slingwings in Vietnam. It must have been a good idea because 32 Reunions later Larry presented Bill Badoud a baseball cap for being member 16,501!

The quilt initiative began in 2009 and featured 50 attendees to that meeting this year. See related article on page 21,

Julie Kink provided information on the Gold Star activities. There were 42 Gold Star Family members, including two Gold Star mothers, representing 18 KIA/MIA pilots at the breakfast. That event and the reunion itself created a growing interest among members to seek out the families of fallen comrades. Julie added there is a Family Contacts Committee to facilitate the outreach. Gary Thewlis [redacted] chairs the committee, which consists of both veterans and family members.

Gary Roush, Editor and Chairman for both the membership directory and the records database, expected to attend solo this year. His wife, Susan, had undergone cancer treatments and her ability to attend was doubtful. In the event, however, Susan made the trip and was seen dancing to the music of the "Hubcaps".

Members of the various VHPA committees and the Executive Council assisted guests in any number of ways, as well as providing answers to the many questions asked. Mike Sheuerman was the arrival ambassador. I believe he greeted, if not all, a substantial number of attendees as they checked in.

The closing banquet was attended by almost 1,200 people. It was a special treat for Larry Clark to be the Voice of the Banquet. Gold Star Family members added items to the Missing Man Ceremony; there was hardly a dry eye in the place.

Mike Law, Reunion Committee Chairman, inevitably cites many other members, the HQ staff and the Executive Council as integral parts of a successful reunion. That is accurate, but Mike is ultimately responsible to ensure it all works. All who attend owe him our thanks.



The Reunion Hotel



Some of the many vendor tables



Evening entertainment provided by the Hubcaps...a great band



O Club



New VHPA VP John Shafer at the business meeting



Old Dominion members staffing the reception desk



Gunship on display courtesy of the North Carolina VHPA



A full banquet hall Photo by Jukie Kink



Members of the North Carolina VHPA noting who brought the 'Hueys'

GOLD STAR DAUGHTER

My Dad, CWO Lawrence L. Kelly, was a Huey helicopter pilot KIA on August 12, 1971. I was six years old at the time. I have a few vivid memories of Dad. The last time I saw him was the day he left to return to Vietnam. I took the notepad he always carried in his flight suit and drew a picture of myself for him. Dad smiled as he carefully put his notepad with my picture back in his pocket and said, "Thank you, but I will never forget what you look like." He hugged me, kissed my forehead and left for the airport.

My next memory is the day of the Door Knock. My Uncle was standing at our front door with an Army Chaplain. Our next door neighbor was at our house and pulled me and my two year old brother aside, while my Mom was notified. I asked what they were saying and why was my Mom crying. Our neighbor said "Your Dad was killed in Vietnam." At six years old, death was a far off concept. All I knew was my Dad's family and Mom were crying hysterically; so I cried too, without really understanding Dad was never coming back home alive. I remember being at the wake and seeing Dad's picture on top of the flag-draped and sealed casket. I kept thinking: "How do they know that is really my daddy in there if we couldn't see him for ourselves?" I later found out it was because there was nothing suitable or recognizable for a viewing. I wasn't allowed to attend the graveside service, because the adults thought it was too much for a six year-old to see.

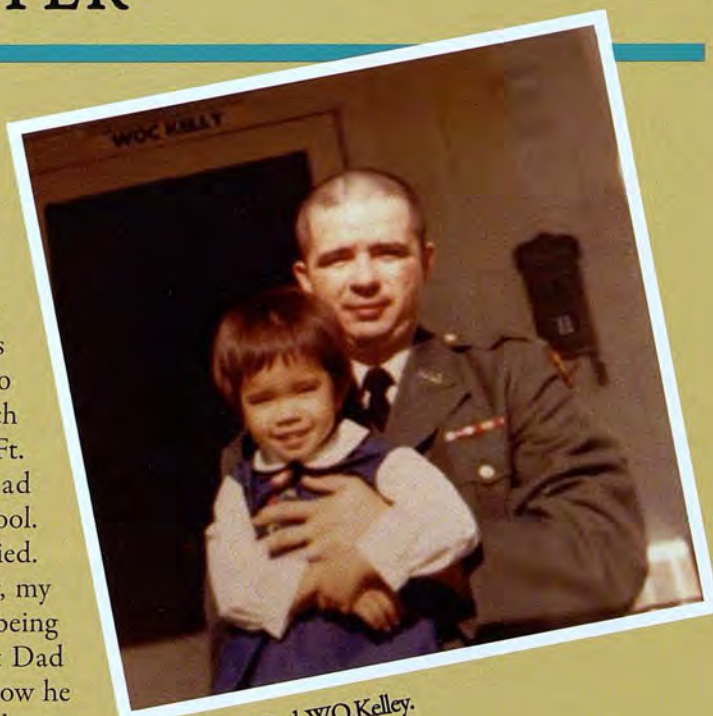
I was told varying stories about Dad's death. None of them made sense. One was his helicopter exploded in mid-air and he was the only one on board, another was it was just Dad and two crew members on board. Wanting to know what really happened drove me crazy as a kid. I couldn't ask Mom; the mere mention of Dad sent her into a depression so deep she would lock herself into her bedroom for two or three days. Mom told me she no longer

believed in a God that would take Dad away from her. Shortly after the funeral, Mom moved us from Munhall, PA, where all of Dad's family lived, to Daleville, AL, which is right outside of Ft. Rucker, where Dad went to Flight School. Mom never remarried.

As I grew older, my frustration at not being able to talk about Dad and not find out how he was killed, grew deeper and deeper. There was no way as a minor child or teenager I could find out how he was killed. I had a terrible childhood after Dad was killed, because of Mom's periods of deep depression. I had to make sure my brother was fed and to get us both on the bus for school, or there would be hell to pay.

Skipping to my 1983 senior year in high school in Gainesville, FL, I graduated at 17 years old and immediately spoke to an Air Force Reserve recruiter about enlisting as an Aeromedical Evacuation Technician. I felt the call to serve and drove Mom nuts until she co-signed my enlistment papers. I left a month later for Basic Training, Tech School, and OJT. After that, I reported in to my squadron, the 31st AES at Charleston AFB, SC for Ground School and Flight Training. I completed my training, flew live and training missions while going to Paramedic School. I eventually worked as a civilian paramedic with EMS and became a Flight Medic Instructor.

Until my squadron deployed for Desert Shield/Storm, I spent most of my time at Charleston AFB, teaching ground school and instructing students in three Flight Medic crew positions. I



Kimberly and Dad, WO Kelly.

logged over 1000 flight hours before Desert Storm by signing up for every live regular bi-monthly mission from Charleston AFB to Howard AFB, Panama to Kelly AFB. I caught a few humanitarian missions as well. We had multiple aircraft and medical in-flight emergencies, and each time I felt Dad at my shoulder. I truly believe that if not for him, we would have suffered catastrophic injuries and fatalities; it wasn't my time to leave this world. None of that compared or prepared me for Desert Storm and the horrific injuries of my fellow service members. I kept thinking, "There but for the grace of God go I." Well that and Dad at my shoulder watching over me and my crew members. I was deployed for six months for Desert Storm supporting the 2nd AES out of Rhein Main AB, Germany. My enlistment was extended indefinitely until August of 1991. I decided to not re-up, because I saw what war does to people and I wanted to marry, have a family, and not leave my children behind. I served over eight years and would do it all over again. I would answer the call to serve to this day if asked to. I get that drive from Dad. He paid the ultimate sacrifice. I

felt it only fair to pay it forward by serving my country, by helping save as many lives as possible, by helping the families left behind to get their loved ones back home alive. It was worth the horrors of war many times over. I got out and have not returned to the medical field.

Flash forward to 2014, I was a single, divorced mom of two boys and one girl. I was yet again doing research to find out anything about my dad. I stumbled across the VHPA and contacted Gary Roush, who put me in touch with Julie Kink. Both were instrumental in my finding out some details about Dad. Julie stayed in constant contact with me, offering true understanding and support. She encouraged me to attend this year's VHPA reunion.

I attended the second and third days of last month's Reunion in DC. I arrived late to the Gold Star breakfast and sneaked in the back trying to hide. Julie's husband, Mike Sprayberry, was waiting for me and pointed out Julie at the microphone. Mike was so kind and offered to get me breakfast, even though breakfast was over. He found me a seat and quietly ushered me to it. I felt such a rush of overwhelming emotion, especially when I heard a family member speak about the Door Knock. I was transported back in time to our Door Knock and my tears immediately started falling. I felt alone so long in my grief and search for answers and understanding. I found I wasn't alone; I was surrounded by others just like me and by the veterans that survived. Thank you so much to the VHPA and all you do!

I met with Julie after the breakfast and made plans to go to the Wall with her and the roommate Julie had set me up with. My roommate, Linda Wilsher-Clance, was late and we didn't meet until it was time to catch the shuttle to go to the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Linda was most kind and supportive. All three of us journeyed to the Wall together.

The Wall is hard to explain. The sight of it is inspiring, but also terrible, because it represents so many lives lost. It makes me catch my breath and my heart skips a beat every time I visit it.

Seeing my Dad's name, brought me to my knees, and I was so thankful to be supported emotionally by my two wonderful Gold Star sisters.

I got a list of names of those from Dad's Cavalry Troop at the reunion. I called Jerry Lay, literally 30 minutes before leaving for home. He answered and dropped his plans with his wife to meet with me downstairs, because he remembered and knew Dad. Shaking Jerry's hand and hugging him felt like I was hugging a piece of Dad. I broke down in tears before he even started talking about Dad's fateful mission. He told me some funny stories about Dad arriving in country and training him. He also told me a harrowing story about a near miss. Jerry didn't know Dad well, but he gave me the Platoon Leader Tom Ford's name and number. He had detailed notes on everything that happened in the unit, and would have known Dad. I am so grateful to have met Jerry. He was a very kind and gracious to me.

I left the reunion on Thursday, overwhelmed with emotion, but finally starting the healing process. I called Tom Ford on Saturday and he answered! He confirmed he knew Dad and the truth about his last mission: Dad's Huey was on a mission near the DMZ and was hit by a heat-seeking missile. The accompanying Cobras saw the missile hit and the huge explosion that instantly killed all nine of those on board. It's a comfort knowing Dad did not see it coming or suffer at all. Unfortunately, the huge explosion dropped the remains danger-close to the DMZ, where the area was heavily infested with the enemy. Tom was told it was too dangerous to recover the remains, but I am thankful he went against orders and organized a recovery team. At great risk, those men went in and recovered all of the remains. I am so grateful to those men and Tom Ford. My journey for the truth has come full circle and one day I hope to shake Tom Ford's hand and give him a hug he so richly deserves. He went above and beyond the Call of Duty and I can never thank him enough for that.

Duty, Honor, and Country: such sim-

ple words, but so meaningful to past, present, and future service members. We leave no man behind, because it's not only the right thing to do, it's the honorable thing to do for our brothers and sisters in arms. Wartime deployments make your outfit family members. Nothing else exists in the heat of war, except for protecting your brother or sister, watching their "six" as they watch yours. That's the brotherhood veterans speak of, now it includes sisters, so it's more like a brother/sisterhood.

I have experienced both sides of the coin. I have been the one left behind as Dad went to war, and I have left my family behind to go to war. It's as hard to walk away and board a plane as it is to be left behind watching your loved one go off to war. It was my honor and privilege to serve with the 31st AES before, during, and after Desert Storm. Freedom comes at a great cost and those that answer the "Call to Serve" are the ones that pay that cost at great risk, some with the ultimate cost and dying for our freedoms that so many Americans take for granted. I proudly salute my past, present, and future service members.

USAF SSGT Kimberly Kelly-Sydow
Desert Storm Veteran
and Gold Star Daughter



*Kimberly-Kelly-Sydow
USAF Aeromedical Technician shortly before Desert Shield/Storm*

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE VHPA, ITS OFFICERS, AND COMMITTEES



Gold Star Breakfast attendees, Julie Kink - far right middle row. Photo By Terrel Fry

Thanks for putting together one of the best reunions ever.

What an honor to be associated with you all. I'm so grateful that you allow me to help you bring Gold Star Families into the fold. I vividly remember my first VHPA Reunion in 1997, being one of only three Gold Star Family members there. I worried that I'd be ruining "the party", considering my reason for being there was my brother's death - one of the bad things that happened in Vietnam. As you know, I found just the opposite, and the rest is history. You continue to feed my passion for helping other Gold Star Family members find the healing connections that I've found among you.

I was impressed as Gold Star Families were mentioned or recognized at every single event during this reunion. Here's what some of them said after the reunion:

■ Daughter: "The Veterans and the surviving family members have made me feel like I am not alone and that I have found hope, peace of mind, and most of all a collective understanding of what we have all been through. I think some of my Dad's family will finally be able to open up and not keep everything buried down with my Dad."

■ Daughter and son-in-law: "We honestly thought it would be a very heavy, somber, emotional atmosphere. We were pleasantly surprised to discover that couldn't have been further from the truth. Yes, there were some emotional moments. But, overall, it was a much needed time for healing."

■ Sister: We both had an amazing time and her [Gold Star daughter/niece] reaction was exactly what I'd hoped for her. She was born after his death, so she never knew him, nor about him in a very real way. Being there and meeting all of those fine people really helped her get a sense of who he actually was and brought him into her consciousness in a way that old family sto-

ries couldn't."

■ Nephew (and a veteran): "I didn't realize fully until we checked into the hotel the impact attending this event would have on me personally stirring deep-seated emotions from such a long time ago."

■ Daughter-in-law: "My husband had such a great time at the reunion. He really enjoyed meeting some of the other Veterans and hearing stories about what life was like in Chu Lai. Some of the guys even showed him a slideshow of photos they took in Chu Lai, where his father was stationed. I think being there made him want to find someone who might have known his father."

■ VHPA members: "I will continue to attend the Gold Star Breakfasts as they are so moving and emotional, but in my way of thinking the highlight of the reunions."

"I am sure [Gold Star brother of a buddy] was glad to be there because he told me it was one of the greatest things he has done since his brother died."

I know what you're thinking...Aviator. I've asked several of the family members to consider submitting letters or articles to the VHPA Aviator.

With your permission, I'll be doing the same thing in 2016 that I did this year - seeking out families of the KIA pilots who (at the time of their death) were from the area surrounding Reno, to invite them to the reunion and the Gold Star Family Breakfast. That research took about 100 hours in 2015, since I chose the 7-state area surrounding Washington DC and tried to find families of the 235 KIA pilots who were from those states. It was time well spent. Per Mike Law's request, I'll work with Sherry on the actual mailing once I capture as much data as I can.



(our Family Contacts Committee is ready to help with these types of requests). Or, they mentioned to me the name of a fallen friend or relative, so we agreed their donation was made "in memory" of someone particular, and I included that on the little book-

It's important to me to personally thank all the members who contribute to the Gold Star Family Breakfast. Sending each of them a thank-you generated some email "conversations" that kicked up some memories and resulted in some requests for help finding families of their buddies

let that I created for the Breakfast.

Thank you from the bottom of my little 'pea-pickin' transplanted Southern heart! I look forward to another great reunion and a well-attended Gold Star Family Breakfast in Reno in 2016.

*Sincerely,
Julie Kink*

Sister of WO David Kink C Trp 1/9th CAV KLA 8-3-1969

My contact Information:

118 Stoneway Trail
Madison, AL 35758

QUILTER'S SHOW AND TELL

The tradition of presenting quilts to our veterans is in its infancy but growing; we were able to present four quilts at the Washington D.C. Reunion. The quilts were presented to CW4 David Clemmer, MAJ James Squyres, CW2 Robert Rich and Lynn Kile (receiving the quilt for CW4 Francis Boisseau).

Thanks to everyone who participated in helping make the presentation of the four quilts to our veterans possible. The gentlemen were very humbled with the honor of being selected as the recipients and appreciative of all the thought, love and work put into the quilts.

I would also like to thank those who donated blocks for the 2016 quilts. A total of 69 blocks were donated. We hope to start the assembling process of the 2016 quilts in October, subject to change, in Springfield, MO. If anyone is interested in participating, please contact me at klksms@aol.com. Although the deadline to donate blocks for the 2016, output has passed, any blocks donated from now, will be saved for the next years (2017) quilts. Mailing address is 12420 W 53rd Terr. Shawnee, KS 66216.



L to R Kathleen Sherfey, (not named), Roslyn Atwood, Jim Squires



L to R Shirley Galo, Roslyn Atwood, David Clemmer



L to R Lynn Kile, Shirley Galo, Roslyn Atwood



Kathleen Sherfey, Bob Rich, Al Michaels

*Text and photos
by: Kathleen Sherfey*

PHASE TWO: The Memorial Campaign Continues

By Bob Hesselbein

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) remains committed to emplacing the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial within Arlington National Cemetery. The mission to create a memorial started when research revealed no national monument specifically honors the almost 5,000 military pilots and crewmembers that died in Vietnam operating rotary-wing aircraft, despite their high casualties and overwhelming contribution to what is commonly described as “The Helicopter War.”

PHASE ONE

Phase One commenced in early 2014 with the goal of installing a suitable memorial within Arlington National Cemetery, (the pre-eminent place of honor for those lost in service to the nation) in time for an August 28th, 2015 dedication ceremony in conjunction with the 2015 VHPA Annual Reunion. The steps would require a suitable design, a comprehensive proposal submission and approval, and then the monument placed within Arlington National Cemetery ANC. First advised this was a feasible plan, recognition of the slow bureaucratic process made clear establishing a stone memorial within ANC would be a slow, uphill struggle.

The milestones of Phase One were marked by lengthy waits as the U.S. Army deliberated. The VHPA delivered the complete proposal to ANC Executive Director Patrick K. Hallinan on September 3, 2014. Following a long, silent, six-month wait, the VHPA was finally invited to present their proposal to the ANC Remembrances Subcommittee on March 12, 2015, and then the ANC Advisory Committee (ANCAC) on March 26, 2015.

Following the compelling presentation, three Vietnam Veterans on the ANCAC voted to support the memorial; the other three committee members, however, voted against it in the belief cemetery space in ANC should be strictly reserved for graves, not memorials. The result was a deadlocked vote, 3/3. This did not end the proposal process, however, as the ANCAC only advises the Secretary of the Army.

This understanding led VHPA members and others who support the granite memorial to contact their legislators to seek their support; many congressmen, senators and other distinguished friends of the VHPA encouraged Secretary John McHugh to approve to monument proposal, but to no avail. Secretary McHugh declined the proposal on July 10, 2015.

Some two months later, following numerous requests for a written decision, the VHPA was notified of the decision in a letter



Battle of the Bulge memorial

from the ANC Executive Director dated September 23, 2015. Mr. Hallinan wrote that the Secretary of The Army did approve placement of a small plaque at the base of the Red Maple tree dedicated August 28, 2015, suggesting this was “...commensurate with how we (ANC) have handled similar requests in the past...”

We heartily disagree. A study of the 142 tree markers and plaques found within the cemetery reveal the overwhelming majority honor a specific military unit from a specific military branch; not one honors thousands of dead from all military branches who shared a common mission...not one. We conclude a plaque, as suggested, would disparage the great sacrifice of combat helicopter pilots and crewmembers that died in the Vietnam War.

The disapproval by the Secretary of The Army effectively concluded Phase One efforts to accomplish the monument mission, and set the stage for Phase Two to begin. Phase two will ascend the mission beyond the Army's structure, and into the realm of the citizen leadership.

PHASE TWO

Phase Two has a simple goal: legislate the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial into Arlington National Cemetery. The strategy requires bipartisan support to create legislation almost identical to that used to emplace the Battle of The Bulge Memorial Monument within the cemetery, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2002. Passed December 6, 2002, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2002, Public Law 107-330, Section 204 authorized the placement.

The VHPA will seek sponsors and cosponsors from both the House and Senate to establish a bill with language directing the Secretary of The Army to place a memorial marker, not a small tree plaque, within the cemetery. The VHPA Executive Council fully supports this effort, and the mission requires your continued support and assistance. Contact your federal representatives and tell them to support legislation placing the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial within Arlington National Cemetery now!

How to effectively get your senator/legislator's attention

Getting your representative's attention has changed with technology. The old days of sending a letter to get results have been replaced by emails and telephone calls. Letters still work, but all posted documents currently take five weeks to reach legislator's desks due to security screening procedures. This has resulted in emails becoming the preferred way of written communications.

The very best way to communicate is by telephone, but be specific. To get the proper attention, seek out the legislator's staffmember responsible for veteran's issues. Odds are you will probably be shifted to the voice mail of the veteran specialist.

Provide your name, telephone number and a brief description of why you are calling. Warning: you have to be persistent. There is a very good chance you will not receive a call back from the often-overworked staffperson, so you must call again and insist the person you speak to knows you are (1) a constituent, and (2) you are unhappy with the service. This comment should lead to a response, and quick!

Once you have the legislative staff's attention, express your thoughts and provide them with the contact information of Past President Bob Hesselbein who will provide them with the specific information they may require: [REDACTED]. Contact Bob with progress reports so he can add this information to the effort.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ARMY NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERIES
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22211-5003

Office of the Executive Director

SEP 23 2015

Mr. Bob Hesselbein
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
2100 N. HWY 360
Suite 907
Grand Prairie, TX 75050-1030

Dear Mr. Hesselbein:

Thank you for your August 31, 2014 letter, on behalf of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, regarding placement of a commemorative monument in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the thousands of combat helicopter pilots and crew members who lost their lives in the Vietnam War between 1961 and 1975.

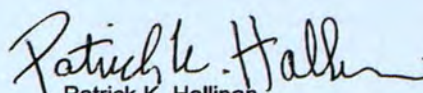
As the stewards of Arlington National Cemetery, Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh and I take these requests very seriously. Secretary McHugh thoroughly and deliberatively reviewed your packet, and ultimately approved the placement of a commemorative plaque at the base of a living tree for those who served aboard helicopters in Vietnam. The placement of a plaque is commensurate with how we have handled similar requests in the past, and balances both the need to conserve the finite amount of space available at Arlington National Cemetery for our eligible fallen heroes, and the desire of your organization to recognize those who served on helicopters in Vietnam.

In addition to approving the commemorative plaque, Secretary McHugh directed me to create a virtual tour on the Arlington National Cemetery Explorer app that focuses on the locations of Vietnam helicopter pilots and crewmembers within the cemetery. We thank your organization for working with us to complete that effort in time for your ceremony held on August 28, 2015.

The staff at Arlington National Cemetery is ready to work with you on the approval and placement of the plaque. Accordingly, please resubmit the plan for your plaque, ensuring the dimensions for the commemorative plaque do not exceed 12 inches in depth by 18 inches in width and a height of 12 inches. Our staff will coordinate with you for a timely placement.

Thank you for your inquiry and your interest in Arlington National Cemetery.

Sincerely,


Patrick K. Hallinan
Executive Director

A MEMORIAL

At 10:00 AM, August 28th, 2015 members of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association stood in the sunshine within Arlington National Cemetery to dedicate a memorial tree placed in honor of the helicopter pilots and crewmembers that died serving their nation in the Vietnam War. They were joined by representatives of the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association (VHCMA), Gold Star Family members, the Order of the Daedalians, fellow veterans of the war, and others who came to share this tribute to the thousands lost during thirteen years of combat.

Preceded by gentle music, the chimes of the Netherlands Carillon bell tower rang out the hour and signaled the start of the service. Following the presentation of the colors and national anthem, VHPA Chaplain John Sorensen provided a thoughtful invocation, setting the proper tone for the day's events.

VHPA President Bob Hesselbein expressed the reason for the tree. "We are here today to honor a living tree sited nearby, planted May 11th, and specifically placed to honor and remember the almost 5,000 young men who died in the Vietnam War operating military helicopters, the rotary-wing aircraft that remains the iconic symbol of that long struggle." He reminded the audience that some 6,000 Americans died in helicopters, over 10 percent of the 58,209 soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen lost in the war.

Gold Star Representative Julie Kink spoke of the pain of the families. Her brother, 19 year-old WO1 David Kink, was a casualty of the war. She spoke of dealing with the loss, and the importance of having places and tributes to honor those who gave the last full measure of devotion to their nation.

Keynote speaker Major General (Ret.) Carl McNair, a distinguished military aviator and leader, gently addressed the audience. He touched the hearts of those gathered as he described the commitment and heroism of those being honored that day, their sac-

rifice to their nation, and the importance to later generations of Americans.

Following a touching rendition of the Vietnam Veterans Anthem, Army Chaplain Mark Olson performed. President Bob Hesselbein and VHCMA President Bob Hesselbein and VHCMA President Bob Hesselbein carried a memorial wreath from the Memorial Amphitheater to the memorial tree placed nearby within Section 60.

While bagpipers played the notes of the Vietnam Veterans Anthem, the young men and women of the 11th Air Force moved down Memorial Drive to the location of the memorial tree. The sound of the bagpipes, along with the unforgettable sound of the 11th Air Force, added their tribute to the event. The 11th Air Force, with its fleet of military rotorblades led to the memorial tree placed before the memorial tree.

Following silent moments, recollections of the Vietnam War were shared. Moved away from the tree as the event progressed, the young men and women of the 11th Air Force, over one hour, the young men and women of the 11th Air Force, generations of visitors to Arlington National Cemetery.

The VHPA wishes to thank the 11th Air Force Chapter, the Arlington National Cemetery, the States Air Force 11th Wing, the 11th Air Force Chorus, and the Kena Sh...



Bob Hesselbein, left, president of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and Christopher White, president of the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association, carry a wreath from the Memorial Amphitheater to the memorial tree at Arlington National Cemetery Aug. 28, 2015. A living tree, planted earlier, was dedicated to the 5,000 Vietnam helicopter pilots and crew members who were killed during the Vietnam War. Over 11,827 helicopters deployed and a total of 5,086 were destroyed, according to a VHPA press release. (U.S. Army photo by Rachel Larue/released)



UH-1N Iroquois helicopters fly over the memorial tree during the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association at Arlington National Cemetery. A living tree, planted earlier, was dedicated to honor the 5,000 Vietnam helicopter pilots and crew members who were killed during the Vietnam War. Over 11,827 helicopters deployed and a total of 5,086 were destroyed December 1975. (U.S. Army photo by Rachel Larue/released)

EVENT

BY BOB HESSELBEIN

rtant, continued value of what their courage means

of "Mansions of Lord" by the U.S. Army Chorus, rmed the benediction. Leading a procession, VHPA CMA Past President Christopher White slowly car-Memorial Amphitheater to the young Red Maple B5.

s of "Amazing Grace," the precession slowly moved tion of the tree. The piper's music slowly blended our iconic UH-1 "Hueys" approaching overhead to combination of bagpipe music and beating cadence ong memories and few dry eyes as the wreath was

ections and tears, the attendees slowly and reluctantly vent concluded. Although the ceremony lasted a lit- will stand for decades, providing color and shade for n National Cemetery.



Ethan Long, center, admires the wreath placed during the living tree dedication ceremony to honor the 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War at Arlington National Cemetery Aug., 28 2015. Long's grandfather, Roy Sudeck, was killed during the Vietnam War. Sudeck was an Army helicopter pilot and served three tours of duty in Vietnam. (Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall PAO photo by Nell King)

ank the following organizations for their assistance in the ceremony: The VHPA Old Dominion National Cemetery Staff, the United States Army Military District of Washington, the United King, 1st Helicopter Squadron, and the U.S. Army Band, "Pershing's Own," Brass Quintet and briner Highlanders Pipes and Drums (directed by Pipe Major Jim McDaniel).



er the Memorial Amphitheater and the memorial r Pilots Association Living Tree Memorial Dedi- cation, Aug. 28, 2015, Arlington, Va. A living tree, or 5,000 Vietnam helicopter pilots and crew mem- bers killed during the Vietnam War. Over 11,827 helicopters deployed and ber 1961 to May 1975 according to a VHPA press larue/released)



Attendees of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Living Tree Memorial Dedication render honors to the American flag in the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery, Aug. 28, 2015. A living tree, planted earlier, was dedicated to honor 5,000 Vietnam helicopter pilots and crew members who were killed during the Vietnam War. We gather today to honor the many thousands of helicopter pilots and crew members, from all branches of service, who gave the last full measure of devotion to our nation during the Vietnam War, Bob Hesselbein, president of VHPA, wrote in the program handed out at the ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Rachel Larue/released)

PAYBACK TIME:

Veteran gives back to military through books

By Ethan McSweeney Green Valley News Jun 9, 2015
Reprinted with the author's permission

While some may simply write a check to support members of the armed services, one local veteran is taking a unique approach to helping GIs — writing books. Michael Lazares, a Sahuarita retiree who served as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, has doled out thousands of dollars to veterans charities from the proceeds of his books, which mostly cover military matters.

Lazares, 70, didn't start writing until after he retired from the military and law enforcement. He said it was his children and grandchildren who first encouraged him to write about his experiences during the war. They kept hearing stories over the years," said

Lazares, who belongs to American Legion Madera Post 131 in Green Valley. "So, they kept prodding me to write down some of my experiences." In 2013, Lazares published "Goodbye, My Darling; Hello, Vietnam!" which recounted his time flying helicopters through enemy fire during two tours in Southeast Asia as well as his journey into the military.

"I just did [the first book] for the family, but then it started selling," Lazares said. "So, I decided to give profits from the book to Wounded Warriors." Wounded Warrior Project is a nonprofit that aids service members who have suffered injuries. He then wrote another book on the Vietnam War, which sold well, too, he said. With those profits, Lazares gave more money to organizations such as the Vietnam Helicopters Pilots Association and the Combat Helicopter Pilots Association. "I thought, 'Maybe I've found a way to make money for the vets,'" Lazares said.

Lazares has written five books in the past two years — four on the Vietnam War and one on his experience as a police officer in Tacoma, Wash. — and has a sixth due out soon. Since his first book went up for sale, Lazares

has given more than \$20,000 to veterans organizations from more than 10,000 books sold through amazon.com and createspace.com.

Lazares doesn't have a shortage of personal experiences to draw on. He was shot down three times and crash-landed another eight times. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Purple Heart, three Bronze Stars and a host of other medals. Following his tours of duty, Lazares served as an instructor pilot and later became a special agent for the Department of Defense, where he worked on protective details for former Secretary of State Colin Powell and former Vice President Dick Cheney, among other top officials. "Powell was a gentleman. Cheney was a jerk," he recalls.

For his three other books on the Vietnam War, however, Lazares also spoke to fellow Vietnam veterans and wrote their stories for a series under the title, "We Gotta Get Out of Here." He said his books have found an audience with fellow combat helicopter pilots and Vietnam veterans, who reach out to him with their stories. Lazares said people he served with and hasn't kept in touch with have also contacted him.

In addition to raising money for veterans charities, Lazares has another reason for writing. He said, like those who fought in World War II, veterans of the Vietnam War are dying off. "I'm 70, and a lot of these guys are older than I am," Lazares said. "It's really necessary to get stories out of these guys before they're gone." It's not easy, he said, because some veterans don't want to tell their stories and others just don't think their stories are worth telling.

For his sixth book, Lazares is trying something new. He said this book will be a fictional and more humorous story about Vietnam helicopter pilots. He plans to donate profits toward the construction of a Fisher House in Tucson, which provide a free place to stay for the families of veterans getting treatment at a VA hospital. Fisher House is seeking to raise \$3 million to build a facility attached to the Southern Arizona VA Hospital.



Michael Lazares, of Sahuarita, holds the five books he's written covering his time as a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War. Lazares donates book profits to veterans charities. Photo by: Ethan McSweeney Green Valley News

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER
Dave Whitney, President

ALASKA CHAPTER
Lynn Kile, President

ARIZONA CHAPTER
Bill Sorenson, President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH
Ken Fritz, President

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER
Tom Mc Millen, President

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER
Adam Steczko, President

GEORGIA CHAPTER
Bob Lanzotti, President

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER
Victor Lent, President

MICHIGAN CHAPTER
Richard Deer, President

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER
Bert Leach, President

MONTANA CHAPTER
Todd Brandoff, President

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER
Les Haas, President

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER
Pete Purnell, President

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER
Larry Pigg, President

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER
Bob Hamilton, President

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER
Wayne S. Guffy, Jr., President

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OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
Don Agren, President

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER
Jim Miles, President

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER
John Wilkinson

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER
John P. Hargleroad, President

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
Sven Akesson, President

VHPA OF FLORIDA
Frank Hoover, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER
J.C. Combs, President

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional
Ken DeHoff - POC

Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

GEORGIA CHAPTER

On September 19 Georgia Chapter VHPA members mustered again at the Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo) in Marietta, Georgia for their bi-monthly breakfast meeting. Past GA VHPA president, Bill McRae, gave Bob Hesselbein's power point presentation on VHPA's proposal to place a Vietnam Helicopter and Crew Member Memorial on the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery. GA VHPA members were dumbfounded by Department of the Army's rejection of the proposal.

Our next meeting will be conducted again at our home base, LZ Romeo Romeo on 21 November. Colonel Skip Bell is scheduled to be our speaker and will highlight his two Vietnam tours where during tour one, used guns as a grunt on the ground, then during tour two, used guns from the air as helicopter gunship pilot.

The Chapter is ordering name badges for all our active members. The badge will display our chapter VHPA logo and will be distributed at the outset of each meeting.

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

By Bob Lanzotti: President

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

In 2013 the mid-South Chapter disbanded and joined the Ohio River LZ Chapter.

Due to the arrival of the VHPA National Convention scheduled for 2014 we elected to concentrate on activities in the Louisville and Cincinnati locations.

Well, all that is successfully in our past and we are taking our reunion to Tennessee for the first time next April. The weekend is expected start with early arrivals on Thursday, March 31st. We have scheduled a great weekend for everyone but with a special emphasis on our fellow Tennessee aviators.

The weekend sets into full-swing after a Friday morning gathering with a bus ride into Nashville for a "Behind-the-Scenes" tour of the Grand Ole Opry. After the tour we go to a restaurant for dinner prior to returning to the Grand Ole Opry for the evening show. We then return to the hotel in historic Clarksville, Tennessee. We have a large block of tickets on the main floor of the Grand Ole Opry. We do expect a special recognition at the show that evening.

Saturday will involve tours and activities at Fort Campbell during the day followed by our main dinner on Saturday evening. Dinner will be at an off-site location in historic Clarksville.

We have obtained a GREAT rate at the hotel that also includes free breakfast every morning, free internet, ample free parking and a nice sized Hospitality Room for our use during our stay. The hotel is less than a year old and all rooms are superb.

Please come and join the group for this fantastic weekend. Never been with the group? We assure you it will be like joining family. (Without any family drama)

Our website is WWW.OHRIVLZ.ORG and you can find all about the chapter, reunion plans, scheduled times, downloadable registration forms and hotel information from the site.

See you at the end of March or April 1st...

By Bob Hamilton: President

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter is a small but active group of approximately 20 members. We meet six times a year, four times for business and twice socially for dinner with spouses or significant others.

We participated in partnership with the Vietnam Veterans Association (VVA) at the Anoka (Minnesota) Air Show in May. VVA has a non flyable UH-1H that was on display. It was the most popular display at the air show, with several hundred kids climbing in and out of the helicopter.

We also attended the 50 year commemorative "Welcome Home" event at the New Richmond Air Field. VVA was there with their non flyable UH-1H. Dave Schmidt brought a flyable UH-1H to the air field on September 12th.

We have members who are acting as mentors to veterans who are in the Veterans' Court System. Feedback has been very positive.

Seven members and three spouses attended the VHPA Annual Reunion in Washington D.C. and had a good time networking with other pilots. The tours were very interesting and the Arlington Memorial Dedication was excellent.

Our next meeting will be November 18th for a social dinner at a site to be selected.

We are incorporated as a 501C-19 Veterans' group and have been recognized by the IRS as a tax exempt organization. Dues are \$20 annually. If you live in Minnesota or western Wisconsin, join us for some good fellowship.

Please contact our secretary Dick Anderson for further details at 7 [REDACTED]

By Bert Leach, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALASKA CHAPTER

The Washington DC Reunion was a roaring success. Thank you to all the people who worked so hard making this event so well organized and wonderfully presented. I never thought I would have a fabulous dinner under the wing of the Space Shuttle Discovery! Just one of the fun and exciting things we had the opportunity to do during the reunion. Three of our members made this trip, and we hope to have a larger group in Reno. I also had the opportunity to accept the Quilt of Valor for our member, Francis Boisseau, and applaud the super effort of the ladies and appreciate the beautiful quilts. I will take it back to Francis; I know he will be very proud to receive it. Again, thanks to all who made this reunion a success.

Meanwhile, back in Alaska, we had our summer picnic and about 45 folks showed up on a very hot Alaskan day! We had a fun gathering and thank the support of the American Legion Post in Palmer for sharing their lake front picnic area. Always good to see old friends and to witness that the orneriest attitudes were still present, even if we only drink one beer now instead of a case!

Our winter dinner is coming up on November 13th. We look forward to another fun-filled evening of spark and wisdom! We will also be donating the fund-raising money we have been col-



Chapter members enjoying dinner at the Smithsonian



Members Cliff Brunsting, Lynn Kile, and Joe Riley at the DC reunion



Summer Picnic

lecting to the Alaska chapter of the Quilts of Valor.

Until then, there is pride in knowing we flew.

**Lynn Kile
Nomad 23**

President, Alaska Chapter

ALAMO CHAPTER

We did not meet in August so as not to conflict with the national reunion, and several of our members attended that reunion in Washington. Our chapter met on September 3rd at the Barn Door Restaurant in San Antonio, and elected officers to serve in 2016, who will assume their duties on January 1st. Ben Treadaway automatically moved from his position of vice president to president. Jim Boykin was elected as our new vice president. Al Flory was re-elected as secretary, and John Deer was likewise re-elected as treasurer. Chic Carter automatically moved from intermediate to senior member-at-large and Chuck Oualline from junior to intermediate member-at-large. Finally, we elected Jim Martinson as the new and junior member-at-large.

After another fine dinner, and after elections were held, we were honored to have as our guest speaker Lieutenant General Quinn H. Becker. LTG Becker served as Surgeon General of the Army from February of 1985 until May of

1988. Prior to that, he had served as Commandant of the U. S. Army Academy of Health Sciences, Chief Surgeon of U. S. European Command, and in many other prestigious positions. He was with the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam. Among other stories, LTG Becker captured our interest with tales of his time spent at Ft. Rucker as a flight surgeon when the Chinook helicopter was undergoing tests, and the aircraft almost did not make it into the Army inventory. He said that he truly identifies with Army aviators.

Our Christmas party will be held on the evening of Friday December 18th in the Army Residence Community Sky Lounge in San Antonio and will commence at 18:00.

As always, members should watch for e-mails and check our Chapter website www.vhpa-alamo.org for scheduled events and details.

By Chuck Oualline



Members and guests dining at the Barn Door



Chapter member Mike Law Reunion Chairman



Two members share opinions

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The annual VHPA reunion in August, 2015 held in Washington, D.C. was attended by at least 17 VHPA members and associates, plus spouses from Michigan.

Chapter member Bob Rich was recognized for his support of the chapter with a magnificent quilt made by the VHPA Quilters. On learning he was to receive the quilt, he expressed his appreciation:

"To: Kathleen Sherfey and all the VHPA Quilters:

On my return home one day in June I found the VHPA Quilters award email awaiting me. To be awarded the Veterans Quilt is really a tremendous honor. I would like to thank Kathleen and all the VHPA Quilters for their hard work making this award. I will do my best to follow in the footsteps of other VHPA volunteer members who have won this award and continue to serve the VHPA and the Michigan Chapter. Again, my personal thanks for a job well done on making this beautiful quilt."

*Bob Rich
Michigan Chapter VHPA*

Documenting our Chapter's participation at the reunion, member Randy Maltby submitted the following AAR:

"The MI VHPA was well represented, as several members and their families enjoyed the better part of a week in our Nation's Capital. Kudos to the hosting chapter and the planning committee for doing a fine job planning and execution, allowing the VHPA members to have several wonderful memories to bring back home from Washington DC.

For those who had not been to DC in several years it was great to revisit The Wall, and to see the Vietnam Women's Memorial, the Korean Memorial, and the magnificent WWII Memorial.

The arrival at the hotel was highlighted with a UH1B Gunship and a UH1H standing proudly on each side of the entrance doors. That made for great picture opportunities for all as everyone could sit in or just stand beside, to



Chapter members and spouses Gary Brydges, Susan & Jim Hunt, Sheila & Randy Maltby



Chapter members Gary Brydges, Jim Hunt, Randy Maltby with B Model gunship



Chapter member Bob Rich receiving VHPA quilt in recognition of his work in the chapter.



Composite photo showing Michigan chapter members at the VHPA Reunion in Washington, D.C.

harken back to yesteryear to a different time and/or place.

The evening dinner and visit at the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum at Dulles was a real highlight, as well as the Pentagon Tour, the Monuments by Water, the dedication at Arlington, the golf outing at Andrews AFB, and all of the other terrific excursions.

Everyone had the opportunity to see old friends, make new friends, and to swap stories about the war, grandchildren and everything in between. I'm sure most members enjoyed seeing their old comrades, and possibly meeting their replacements during the unit mini-reunions.

In keeping with history, getting a group of pilots together for a picture opportunity is like herding feral cats, especially when there are daily excursions and an Officer's Club. A few pictures have been sent and downloaded onto our website for all to enjoy."

*Submitted by,
Richard Deer, Michigan Chapter President*

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The summer allowed the members of the NAVHPA to spend some time with each other and their families. We still conducted our regular monthly meetings at the Schnitzel Ranch in Huntsville. These are always well attended, usually by 50-60 members and their families. So many, in fact "The Ranch", as we call it, opens on Monday (usually their closed night) just for the NAVHPA. A good time with fellowship, memories and war stories always ensues.



Members at DC reunion



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The NAVHPA also conducted two work days to keep Buc-3 in tip-top condition. Most of the work, besides spit and polish, has been fabricating new mounts to prevent Buc-3 from dragging on the road. But our members came through again.

More than 15 members of the NAVHPA attended the 2015 Reunion in Washington, D. C. A good time was had by all. Particularly important was the wreath laying at Arlington. Many were moved to tears remembering their fallen brothers.

Our Fall schedule started on September 12th with a display supporting a "Super Heroes" themed Childhood Cancer Fundraiser in Athens, AL, about 20 miles west of Huntsville. Many children and their parents and guardians were able to experience Buc-3 along with the likes of Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman. This is a really worthy cause that we were pleased to support. Next on the schedule was a parade in Cullman, AL, about 50 miles south of Huntsville on September 19th. Buc-3 was, again, one of the highlights of the parade. Cullman was holding its annual city-wide fair and asked us to support them. Cullman is a regular stop near Veterans Day and several sponsors are there also.

The following Saturday, September 26th, was spent in support of the Yulista Family Picnic at Tate Farms, about 20 miles north of Huntsville. Yulista Aviation is a major sponsor of Buc-3. They have supported its restoration for more than four years. We brought Buc-3 there to allow the families of the folks who support Buc-3 see what their fathers and mothers have done. This is the third year that we have supported this event. Our members had a great time. Many young people were able to experience a Vietnam War veteran without the "war stories". We need to

remind the public and educate the children about Vietnam and those who fought and died there.

We are looking forward to our normally hectic fall. We will be exhibiting Buc-3 at the Madison Street Festival in Madison

Al, just west of Huntsville on October 3rd. Many "opportunities to excel" with Buc-3 are scheduled for late October and early November, culminating with the Huntsville Veterans Day Parade. December will begin with NAVHPA members fluffing wreathes for placement on Veterans' graves over the holidays.

Even though we have a crowd at our monthly meetings, we are still looking for more Vietnam Helicopter Pilots to share the comradery and service with the North Alabama Chapter. If you are a member of VHPA and live in Northern Alabama or Southern Middle Tennessee, we would love to have you join us. For more information please visit our web site at <http://www.navhpa.org/#!meet-don/ctvq>. Or email us at navhpa@gmail.com. We look forward to meeting you so we can have new folks to tell, "There I was..." stories.

By Ralph Weber



NAVHPA members and Buc-3 meeting heroes in Athens



A future aviator of class 2035-2 gets 'the bug'

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER AND OUR HELICOPTER WAR MUSEUM

In the last Aviator we reported that we had lost one of our own, Pat Mahany. This past month we lost another member, Robert Greeno. He was born April 21, 1928 in Englewood, Colorado, and has lived all of his life in Colorado. In 1943 he joined the Civil Air Patrol, soloed in August 1944, and by the time he was 16, he had earned his pilot's license. By 1945, Bob was engaged in crop spraying, ferrying airplanes, and flying in air shows. In 1950, he entered the U.S. Army and enrolled in the helicopter flight school. During twenty months of Korean War service he flew heli-

copters providing medical evacuation and re-supply missions. Greeno received numerous commendations during his life, including a commendation from the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Association and the Federal Aviation Administration's Gold Medal Award for a rescue on Mount Sherman, one of the Colorado Rockies 14,000 foot mountains. Greeno also participated in the international Third World Helicopter Championships in Russia in 1978, in which his U.S. civilian team placed second, and his flight suit hangs in the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Bob Greeno was made an honorary member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter in 2000. While his feats



Eric Air Fair with Rick Beaver and Doug Neil monitoring the crowds, and Barbara Cavalluzzi staffing the outdoor venue.



A patron in the Museum before the crowds and heat hit at the Rocky Mountain Airshow



Honor Flight Welcome Home by our members; L to R Eric Brettschneider, Rick Beaver, Carl Cavalluzzi, Bill Bates, Terry Olson, and John Mitchell.

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were remarkable, Greeno's family will honor him for the mark he left on their lives as a father, grandfather and husband. Greeno is survived by his wife Tinnie Greeno, children Janet Sund, Tom Greeno, Jeanie Brophy and James Greeno, seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

We attended the Erie Air Fair for the first time this year in August. What a great event it was because the show catered to children of all ages. Most displays were interactive. The Experimental Aircraft Association had their newly completed B-25 Mitchell Cockpit. "Legends in Aviation" had two interactive toy aircraft, one airplane and one helicopter that the kids could climb in and take a ride. And, of course, we had our Huey cockpit mockup, in our Helicopter War Museum, with our very own Legends explaining the controls. It was a great show. Lots of folks were out for the day of airplane, helicopters, and antique car displays. They had a band that played all day. Did I mention; Lots of people. Our Docents for this show (in no particular order) were: Bill Robie; Rick Beaver, who performed more engineering marvels; Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi; Dale and Candy House; Tom Jackson, Steve Swaim, and Doug Neal.

We attended the Rocky Mountain Airshow the following weekend. It was an extremely hot weekend with a ramp temperature of over 100 degrees. The air conditioner couldn't keep up with the heat so by noon it was cooler outside than in. Barbara Cavalluzzi showed up early each day with her husband and manned the outside venue and took care of merchandise donations. It was a very productive 3 days with wall-to-wall visitors a good part of the time. The visitor count was estimated at over 5000 for our Museum alone, quite possibly more. A very big Thankyou goes to all the docents that participated; Steve Olson, Dale House, Bill Bates, Jim McNamee, Phil Lanphier, Rick Beaver, Carl & Barb Cavalluzzi, and Tim Pasquarelli.

These Museum events give us the opportunity to tell our story and educate the public. It touches many people,

including us. We find it good therapy to talk about that which we were driven to be silent for so long.

The Honor Flight Welcome Home reception was held at the Signature Flight Facility at the Denver International Airport on September 14, 2015. The Rocky Mountain Chapter along with the Civil Air Patrol, hosts the return of World War II veterans who have visited Washington D.C. for ceremonies held there. This time the group was primarily made up of Korean and Vietnam War Veterans. The following members and guests were in attendance: Terry Olson, John Mitchell, Barbara Cavalluzzi, Eric & Margaret Brettschneider, Rick Beaver, and Bill Bates. Thank you for making this one of the best attended Honor Flights this year.

Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

Upcoming events are participation in the Longmont Veterans Day Parade 2015. Our Annual Christmas Holiday Party will conclude our events for this year.

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Saturday of the month, at 10:00 at American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July. Our December meeting is set aside for a Holiday Party. July is set aside for the National Reunion. The museum development committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and create additional displays, as well as conduct additional maintenance.

We continue to look for artifacts for the museum. Among the items which we would like to acquire is a chicken plate with the cloth holder that our visitors can 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.

FLORIDA CHAPTER

The Florida chapter usually has a quiet time during summer. This summer we had two major events requiring lots of planning, coordination, and ingenuity. The first was moving the chapter from our Tampa location to Lakeland FL. Many years ago, our organization was instrumental in taking a small, unused city park and making it into one of the prettiest veterans' parks in Florida. Today, Hillsborough Veterans Park boasts gigantic oak trees along the Tampa River. There are winding concrete paths that pass by memorials to WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. There are a Cobra, UH-1, OH-58, OH-6, a tank, a field artillery piece, and many free-standing sculptures and displays. There is a museum and several pavilions located on the



B.J. Atkins manned the hospitality suite and did an outstanding job, as always.



Dr. Joe Ponds, newly elected President

grounds.

The park recently was given to Hillsborough County VA, which plans to build a veterans' center. The VHPAF was recently requested to do things such as: build a pavilion similar to the ones in the park to place over the OH-6. They wanted us to remove our storage sheds, even though they were way back in the park behind the

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maintenance buildings and pretty much out of sight. They tried to claim the seven large display cases full of Vietnam memorabilia and other items in the museum which belong to VHPAF.

We realized the objective was to have us leave the park, so started looking for a new home and found a much better location in Lakeland. Sun-N-Fun, the second largest fly-in airshow in the country, is located on the Lakeland airport, as is the Florida Air Museum. The directors of both Sun-N-Fun and the Florida Air Museum came to the Hillsborough Veterans Park and looked at what we had, and both wanted us to join their organizations. We were given a large space to display our memorabilia in the Florida Air Museum, a great location for our sheds, and a sheltered place to display our OH-6, which we can remove for use in parades, supporting veteran events, etc.

We still have some things to bring over to the new location, but have all the major work accomplished and are more than happy in the new location. We have improved from being in a minor museum to a major museum, have a very nice covered location for the OH-6, co-located our maintenance shed with the Sun-N-fun maintenance area, and have the support of a major organization in Sun-N-Fun. Information on our new address will be forth-coming.

The second major event was our annual reunion. The 23rd VHPAF Annual Reunion was held at the beautiful International Palm Resort and Conference Center at Cocoa Beach, FL. Located on the Atlantic Ocean, the hotel has over 500 rooms with 13,000 sq. ft. of inside meeting space and an additional 5,000 sq. ft. of outside meeting space. Our OH-6 was set up in front of the hotel main entrance. Many people driving by stopped to look at it and ask questions.

Our guest speaker was Paul Hiott from the Veterans Administration and he brought all the latest information and provided hints and suggestions on how to work in the system to receive benefits. Paul's speech was very well received by the membership.

New officers were elected and will assume their positions on January 1, 2016. Tom Rountree will remain Chairman, Vice President Dr. Joe Ponds will become President. Stan McGlamery will become the new Vice President. Mike Waugh and Tom Tomlinson will continue as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Chris White continues to manage the server and assumes the new position of Web Master. We thank those leaving the board for a year well done and welcome the new board members.



COL Clark, guest speaker



Seated left to right: Glenna Harvey, Linda Finder, Marilyn Sherman, Diane Shields, Roger Shields.

Standing left to right: Herb Silva, Bill Thompson, J. D. Twenter, Russ Emory, Terry Wilund, Rick Sherman, Syd Morrow, Roger Caffrey, Ken Sherfey, Kim Phillips, Ed Smith, Joe Finder, Kathleen Sherfey, Mike Schuster, Liz Sorensen, Ed Gruetzemacher, Ron Clifton, Lew Phillips, John Clark, John Wilkinson, Paul Harvey, John Sorensen.

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The third quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter, VHPA, was held on Saturday, September 19, at the Rock Bridge Hy-Vee location on Nifong Boulevard in Columbia, Missouri. After the opening Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence for our lost and missing comrades and fellow warriors, chapter president Bill Thompson called on John Sorensen to introduce our special speaker for the day, Air Force COL (RET) John W. Clark. COL Clark is a fellow Vietnam veteran who flew RF4s out of Udorn, Thailand. On March 12, 1967, he was shot down over North Vietnam and was a prisoner of war for nearly six years, released in February, 1973. Following his presentation, there was a question and answer session, after which the group broke for lunch. Following lunch, the meeting reconvened. Bill Thompson spoke about new merchandise items available for sale and made his closing comments as Chapter President.

A change of command followed and Past Presidents Bill Thompson and John Sorensen welcomed John Wilkinson as President for the period 2015 – 2017. John thanked Bill for his service to the chapter and his support, and all of the chapter members for what they have done to ensure the success of the organization. There was a discussion of tentative plans for the first quarter 2016 meeting. Further information will be shared on the chapter website, www.vhpasmo.org, and at the next quarterly meeting. The 4th quarter meeting will be held at The Keeter Center, College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Missouri, on November 7, 2015. The specific time and program information will be communicated by e-mail and on the website as it develops.

I would like to thank all the members of the chapter for their support for the chapter over the last six years and look forward to the opportunities of the future. Again, any ideas for meeting subjects and activities are welcome. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

By John B. Wilkinson



“Looking For”

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT DETAILS

My name is Pat Macha. Charles Younts member number 00062 recommended I contact you about a recently found UH-1 in a High Sierra lake.

My research indicated this was a UH-1A or B model that crashed in the Rocky Lakes Basin. The Huey was an Army aircraft assigned to pick up three USAF officers, one of whom was Chuck Yeager. Yeager would go fishing on a regular basis, and he mentions these fishing flights in his autobiography.

I have no exact date of the accident; but the fall of 1963 has been mentioned. I have no serial number either. All five men on board survived the accident, but a general on board nearly drowned.

I know that this request is a long shot, but I'm hoping someone in your organization might know the details of this story. The UH-1 may have been assigned to Fort Irwin, and attached to Edwards Flight Test Center.

Please Contact: [REDACTED]

LOOKING FOR

On February 19th I celebrated my 82nd birthday with family and friends. I would like to make contact with members of Helicopter Class 58-2 and D/229 BN. Contact: home: [REDACTED]

James Ervi (see photo)



AN APPEAL FOR HELP IN LOCATING TWO PILOTS

On June 6, 1967, I was a Crew Chief on a mission that became the source of PTSD issues for the past 48 years. I remember every part of the mission, but have completely blocked out the names of the other crewmembers, except one. I found the Flight Engineer's name in one of my letters home; and my mother had saved it.

Here's what I do remember: We were on a 178 ASHC CH-47 A # 65-8010 with the nose art "Granny Twitchett" (a character from the Li'l Abner comic strip). It was based in Chu Lai. We were sitting on the ground at Duc Pho, on standby. We got the call for an emergency medevac, requiring a cable extraction. A patrol of 101st airborne troops were in trouble quite far to the northwest of Duc Pho. The mission required five sorties. On the first we had great difficulty locating the group in deep jungle on a mountainside. When we asked them to pop smoke, it appeared in several areas, only one of which contained our guys. We finally found them and took the two worst wounded to Duc Pho. Our fuel allowed for one more lift. On the second sortie a LT on the ground tossed CS around our LZ (a hole in the trees). The gas blinded the whole crew, resulting in our return to base empty. On the third, fourth and fifth sorties, we were able to take nine or ten per lift; we then broke off to refuel.

To the best of my memory, we extracted 23 WIA, 4 KIA (one of whom, from the first lift, died enroute to Duc Pho) and six uninjured. Another KIA resulted from an improperly rigged stokes litter, causing the patient to fall out before the litter reached the aircraft. The unit had

a scout dog with them that was killed. The last man hoisted, the LT was supposed to tie the dog on with him. He failed to do so, greatly upsetting the troops. I as well as a couple of the guys volunteered to retrieve the dog. We were critical on fuel at that point and had to leave.

The aircraft was Boxcar 010. The Flight Engineer was Leslie Rittgers from Colorado; the left gunner was a new kid from New York. I cannot recall the pilots' names and have been unable to locate them from conversations with 178 ASHC veterans.

If you are one of the pilots or believe you know who they are please contact me: [REDACTED]

Dean Nelson

DEAR SIR,

I am trying to locate a Medevac pilot that used the callsign: Galloping Ghost. He picked up some casualties north of Khontum during Tet 1968. My unit was C/1 BN/22 INF/4DIV during 67-68.

Sgt. Elmer Hale, email: [REDACTED]

Note: Unfortunately, attempts to acknowledge Sgt. Hale's message resulted in a "Mail Delivery Failure". If he happens to see the magazine, and rectifies this, I will send him any messages collected in response to his query. Reply to Aviator@VHPA.org - Thanks Ed.

I AM LOOKING FOR ANYONE

WHO KNEW AND SERVED WITH LTC. VINCENT ROBERT RITTS. UNIT: 165TH AVIATION GROUP

*Dates of Service for 2nd tour of Vietnam: October 1969 - September 1970
Location: Lai Khe, Vietnam*

My father passed away in March 1985 when I was 24 and finishing up college at Virginia Tech. When he passed away, he took a lot of stories with him. Like many soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War, my dad didn't like to discuss his experience. After he passed away the family realized that we knew very little about what he did in the war. As a result of investigation, we slowly started to discover things that no one in his family ever knew, including my mother or his siblings. Besides the various assignments and awards that we learned about, there was one in particular that stood out and remains a mystery to this day - the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Many years ago I decided to start a quest to learn more about my father's service. I wrote to the department of records and soon received a note back saying that my father's records may have been destroyed in a fire. Several years later I decided to try once again. This time I had better luck. They sent me his DD-214 along with detailed records and a list of his awards citations. Eventually the records department sent me (without asking) duplicates of all of his medals and ribbons. The description for the DFC, however, was vague and high level.

His surviving family wishes to learn more about him. I have enclosed a photo to help those who served with him to recall those times.

Phil Ritts



TAPS

Bettinger, Francis D. USA Flight Class: 55 RVN: 62-63 18 AVN, 64-66 5 AVN 66 HHC/10 CAV

Francis Bettinger "Frank" COL (Ret.) of Remington, VA passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, April 18, 2015, surrounded by family and loved ones. He was 81 years old. Born in Dayton, OH, January 25, 1934, Frank graduated from Christian Brother Academy and received his Bachelor's degree from University of Nebraska. Frank served his country honorably in the U.S. Army as a Green Beret with tours in Vietnam, as well as stations in Germany and the U.S. Some of those stations included Fort Benning, Ft. Knox, KY, The Pentagon, Huntsville, AL and Fort Monroe, VA. He also graduated from National War College.



He was a highly decorated military soldier. Among his accomplishments, he received numerous medals, some of which included the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Meritorious Service Medal. He also attended the Army and General Staff College. However, his most outstanding accomplishment was as father, protector, provider, advisor and friend.

An astute business man, after retiring from the Army, he began his public sector career with Hay Corporation. Later, he would work for EER, a defense contractor, eventually starting his own company, The Culpeper Veterans Association. Frank was a philanthropic citizen, supporting his beloved church and organizations such as Catholic Charities, Boys Town, and Fisher House, to name a few. He is remembered for his sharp wit, wonderful sense of humor and a wry smile that usually followed his best jokes.

The network of treasured friends Frank leaves behind is vast. He is survived by his loving wife, Denise and two daughters, as well as five grandchildren.

Bjornaas, Forrest R. USMC (Ret.) Flight Class: 21-51, RVN: 65-66 MAG-16, Callsign: Junkman

Forrest R. Bjornaas "Dick" was 25

years in the military, 20 in Marine Corps aviation. He was born in MN, and entered the Navy to serve as required, and then decided to go into the Marine Corps after flight training in Pensacola, FL. He made it a career, serving two tours in Vietnam; first as a helicopter pilot and next time as a C-130 pilot. When he retired from the military, he joined Jewett Insurance Agency in Yuma in the 70s and remained there until it was bought by Yuma Insurance, Inc. He retired from Yuma Insurance in 2007. Along the way, he mentored many insurance professionals, impacting their careers with his integrity and business ethics. After 28 years, he retired from the insurance business. It was time to just enjoy life for a while and take a well-deserved rest. He moved from Yuma to the Phoenix area until his passing.

He leaves his loving wife Mary Lou of 59 years, five children, five grandchildren, and four great grandchildren who love him very much and will miss him forever and one grandson who is following in his footsteps in the United States Marines.

Dick will be buried in Yuma at Desert Lawn Memorial Park.

Bortolus, Gary P. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 66-15, RVN: 66-67 C/229 AVN 1 CAV. Callsign: Wagon Wheel

Gary P. Bortolus, retired U.S. Army reservist helicopter pilot and Chief Warrant officer (CW4), 71, of Tampa, passed away August 30, 2015. Born in Weehawken, NJ, to Dominic and Gelindes Bortolus, Gary earned a degree in civil engineering at the State University of New York but his love was flying. He served his country as a combat assault pilot with the 1st Cavalry in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross. He spent 22 years with the 348th Medical Detachment in Orlando and flew medevac helicopters in Desert Storm. A past president of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assoc. of Florida, Gary was also a member of Quiet Birdmen, American Legion Post



#152, Tampa, and DAV, and Tampa Bay Parrot Heads. He flew the news helicopter for WFLA, Channel 8, and owned Town 'N County Video with his wife of 40 years, Ingelore, who died in 2009. Gary also worked for Ford Motor Credit and Chase, both in Tampa, and for Piper Aircraft in Lakeland.

He is survived by his daughter; 3 grandchildren, one brother and his companion, Deborah Rebuck. Gary was buried in Bay Pines National Cemetery with military honors. Memorial donations may be made to www.usocentralfloirida.org, wounded-warriorproject.org, DAV.org or a local American Legion.

Bowling, Ernest R. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 64, RVN: 66-67 189 AHC/68 1 AVN BDE/68 48 AHC

Ernest R. Bowling, 77, recently from South Charleston, WV, died quietly Monday August 3, 2015, at his home in Elizabeth-town.



Bowling retired at Fort Knox in 1981 after serving 20 years in the U.S. Army. He moved to South Charleston, WV, and joined Bowling Sales Corporation, working alongside his father and son, Duane. Bowling Sales closed its doors this past December, after more than 75 years in business. He served two terms in Vietnam, as a helicopter pilot and a Ranger. He received the following medals: Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service, Air Medal, Army Commendation, National Defense Service, Vietnam Service, Armed Forces Reserve, Vietnam Gallantry Cross and Republic of Vietnam Campaign.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Jennie G. Bowling; two sons, one daughter, four granddaughters, a grandson, a step-grandson, two great-granddaughters and two sisters. A memorial service will be at a later date in South Charleston, WV.

Donations to Hosparus of Central Kentucky may be made by going to www.hosparus.org or calling 800-264-0521.

TAPS

Clarke, Marshall E. Jr., USA Flight Class: 66-17, RVN: 66-67 116 AHC, 69 E/725 MNT BN, Callsigns: Hornet 42/Green Tape 55

Marshall Evans Clark Jr. passed away August 22, 2015. Marshall was a retired Major in the US Army and a decorated Vietnam War veteran with 20 years of service. During his military career as a helicopter pilot, he earned numerous honors and awards, including three Purple Hearts and 15 Air Medals. As a civilian, he held positions as a Logistician, Director and Vice President for various Defense Contractors. He was preceded in death by his parents, Marshall Sr. and Blanche Dean Clarke and his son. He is survived by: his wife, Judith Letendre Clarke, a daughter, a granddaughter, one brother, and one sister. Memorial donations are being accepted by St. Vincent's Back Door Ministry and the Army Transportation Museum, 300 Washington Blvd Ft. Eustis, VA.

Downs, Curtis H. III USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-30, RVN: 69-70 B/159 AVN 101 ABN, Callsign: Varsity 26.

Curtis Downs III died on August 5, 2015 in Groom TX. Curtis was born July 22, 1945 in Memphis, TN to Betty and Curtis H. Downs Jr. The family moved to Pantex Village in 1953. As the oldest of three boys who were known as the drug-store kids, they played lots of baseball in jeans and t-shirts, not uniforms as the Amarillo teams did. He graduated from Panhandle High School in 1963 and from West Texas A&M University in 1967. In January of 1971, after returning from a year in Vietnam, he married the love of his life Dondra Burgin in Groom, TX. As a military man, Curtis was qualified as CH-47 Pilot, achieved two Distinguished Flying Cross Awards, the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal Award, Vietnam Service Medal with three stars, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Senior Army Aviator Badge, Joint Chief of Staff Identification Badge and many others. Curtis was a member of the First Baptist Church of Groom where he served as Deacon and Treasurer, Groom Lions Club Treasurer for many years, currently Chairman of the Board of the Carson County Museum, Board Member of Groom Independent School District, and served on the Carson County Tax

Appraisal Board. He is preceded in death by his parents, a daughter and son. Curtis is survived by his wife Dondra Downs, a son, two granddaughters and two brothers. Cancer may have overtaken his body but his spirit soars in Heaven. Burial was conducted at the Groom Cemetery.

Freitas, Frank USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 63-5WT, RVN: 65-66 114 AHC/68-69 B/159 AVN 101 ABN, Callsign: Knight/Varsity

Frank Freitas, born January 9, 1940, passed on April 23, 2015. He was born in Stockton, CA and was raised in the Brentwood, CA area, where his family had a dairy farm. Throughout his life, Frank was very close to his brothers, Rich and Joe. All three of the brothers passed within ten days of each other. After graduating from high school, Frank chose the US Army as a career, becoming a helicopter pilot. Frank served 24 years. Among Frank's military accomplishments were two tours in Vietnam and rescue missions in Saudi Arabia. Frank is survived by his wife, Hannelore (Eve) Freitas, two daughters, and three grandchildren.

Military Services for Frank were held at the Tahoma National Cemetery, 18600 SE 240th Street, Kent, WA. The family suggests donations, if planned, to the Alzheimer Foundation.

Gray, Joe E. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 59-8FW/62-5Q, RVN: 65-66 D/229 AVN 1 CAV, Callsign: Tiger 32

Joe E. Gray, 85, a retired Army colonel and Bell Helicopter Textron employee, went to be with the Lord on Friday, Sept. 11, 2015, in Fort Worth. Memorials: charity of choice. Joe was born November 19, 1929, in Lawrenceville, IL. He attended secondary schools in Illinois, California and New Jersey, and received a Bachelor of Science degree from the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy. He was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity and Theta Tau engineering fraternity. He was a Corps of Engineers officer, retiring after active and reserve duty career spanning 32 years. He served overseas tours in Germany, Libya, Iran, Central America, and Vietnam as a member of the First Cavalry Division.



Col. Gray was awarded the Bronze Star with V device, Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Air Medal with 18 oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, U.S. Army Reserve Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Government of Guatemala Honor al Merito Medal and the 2012 Congressional Veteran Commendation. Joe was a 2012 world record setter with the Masters of South Texas Relay Team in the 4-x-200 free relay. Col. Gray joined Bell Helicopter Textron in 1968 and held many marketing management positions during his 26 years working in Fort Worth, California and Singapore. He was instrumental in the introduction of the Bell models 212, 412, 222 and the 214ST. He retired in 1993. His most recent venture had been as the majority shareholder in Kachina Aviation of Boise, ID. He was an active member of Bear Valley Church in Colleyville and was involved in its single parent mentoring program.

He was preceded in death by his father and mother, Leonard O. Gray in 1982 and E. Lucille Gray in 1996. He is survived by his wife, Edith Charlotte Gray, two sons, two daughters, four grandchildren, and a sister.

Grow, Gary L. USA Flight Class: 70-21/70-25, RVN: 70-71 A/158 AVN 101 ABN, Callsign: Ghost Rider 58

Gary Lynn Grow, age 66, of Providence Forge, VA died peacefully at home in his wife's arms on Friday, August 28, 2015 after a defiant battle with a second cancer. He is survived by his wife Patti (Patricia Pope Grow), and two sisters.



Gary was born in Lexington, VA, but lived most of his life on the Peninsula. He graduated from York High School in 1968, where he and Patti met and dated. He joined the Army in 1969 to learn to fly helicopters. A very proud young man became a Huey helicopter pilot and a warrant officer and in September 1970, was ordered to Viet Nam. He flew on dozens of missions before being shot down over Laos. His crew survived. The

TAPS

helicopter did not. He returned home in September 1971. On October 28, 1972, Gary and Patti were married in Williamsburg.

Gary worked a year at Newport News Shipbuilding before hiring on at Verizon. He retired as a cable maintenance tech after 32 years and several career changes within the company. Gary flew several years in the National Guard and was trained at Fort Sam Houston in Emergency Triage and First Aid for the newly formed 986th Med Detachment. He was one of the original founding members of New Kent Volunteer Fire Dept. Company 3. He spent 12 years as a firefighter and eight years as an EMT. He and Patti were also raising horses and other farm animals on their two farms in New Kent. His dogs were his "children".

Gary and Patti planned to retire to their beautiful property in CO, but could not get the house built fast enough. Gary fought a warrior's fight to the end.

Memorial contributions may be made to New Kent Fire Dept. Company 4 Building Fund c/o Lanexa Station 4 Auxiliary P.O. Box 21, Lanexa, VA 23089 or a charity of your choosing.

Hagen, John F. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 67-1, RVN: 67-68 DIV ART 4 INF/ 68 HHC/4 AVN 4 INF

John Frederick Hagen, 72, originally of Kalamazoo, MI, passed away Friday, August 14th, 2015, after a courageous battle with cardiovascular disease. He was surrounded by his family and close friends.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, University of Southern California, and Fresno State University, he applied his education in the service of the United States Army, the National Test Pilot School and the Federal Aviation Administration. His distinguished career included service in Korea, Vietnam, West Germany, and the United States. He was a military commander, an engineer, a test pilot, and an educator.

In addition to his loving wife Lynda of 48 years, John is survived by his two sons, two sisters, a brother-in-law, and a sister-in-law. Donations may be made to the UT Southwestern Cardiovascular Clinic via the St. Paul Medical Foundation, 214-645-1000.

Junko, Allen L. USA Flight Class: 54, RVN: 63 81 TC CO/67 281 AHC, Callsign: Snoopy 6/Intruder 6

Allen Leo Junko, 84, 405 Stoney Mountain Dr., Guntersville, AL, died August 7, 2015, from injuries sustained in an auto accident.

He was born in Detroit in 1930, served in the Army for more than 20 years. From January 1967 to August 1967, he was the third commander of the 281st AHC in Nha Trang. After leaving the Army, he worked in the auto industry, and retired from Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, MI. In retirement, he relocated to Alabama where he lived until his death.

His wife of 39 years, Patsye, and a daughter survive him. A son, Larry, preceded him in death.

Allen is buried in the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo, AL.

Kilcrease, Jack USA Flight Classes: 69-50/70-2, RVN: 65-66 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV - 68 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN 70 - A/3/17 CAV - 71 HHC/12 CAG

Jack Kilcrease passed away in his home on September 6, 2015.

Jack trained with B Troop, 3-17 Cav at Fort Benning and was in the formation when the colors of the 3-17 were cased and those of the 1-9 Cav were unfurled. He deployed to Vietnam by sea, and was among the squadron's first combat casualties, wounded in the "Hospital Fight" in the Ia Drang Valley that preceded the "We Were Soldiers Once" battle at LZ X-Ray.

Latimer, Philip Flight Classes: 66-8, 67-18, RVN: 67 147 ASHC/67-68 242 ASHC, Callsigns: Hill-climber/Muleskinner

Philip Newton Latimer, 75, passed away on Thursday, August 20, 2015 in Raleigh NC at his home surrounded by family and special caregivers.

Born July 5, 1940 in Atlanta GA, he was the son of Joel and Bertine Latimer. After graduating from Georgia State University, he flew Chinooks (CH-47) in Korea and Vietnam as a Captain in the United States Army. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart. After serving in Vietnam, he joined the Army National Guard and also pursued a successful career in industrial

sales as a civilian.

He will be remembered for his outgoing personality, his sense of humor and his ability to make everyone laugh and smile. He was a constant source of strength, love and care, and a selfless provider for his wife and family.

He leaves behind his wife of 52 years, Beverly, their three children, three grandchildren, a brother and twin sister.

The family greatly appreciates the tremendous love and support of their family, friends, neighbors, caregivers and Transitions Hospice-Care of Wake County during Philip's battle with cancer. Donations, if planned are suggested to flowers, Wounded Warrior Project. For more information, go to: <http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/donate.aspx>.

Laughlin, Virgil M. Jr. USA Flight Class: 68-1, RVN: 68-69 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, Callsign: Apache 29 CAV

Virgil M. Laughlin Jr., a proud American passed away on Sept. 6, 2015. Virgil was born on July 26, 1944 to Virgil and Betty Laughlin Sr. in Sweetwater, TX. He was a graduate of LD Bell High School and served in the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot. During his time Virgil received the National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Army Aviator Badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal, 2 O/S Bars and 50+ Air Medals for his admirable actions. Virgil was a former member of AMBUCS, lifetime member of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, a lifetime member of the National Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and served on the board of the Fort Wolters Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. He loved traveling, history and most of all being a devoted Husband, Dad, Grandpa and Friend.



Preceding him in death were his father Virgil Laughlin Sr. and son Kevin Laughlin. He is survived by his beloved wife of 23 years Mary Sue Laughlin; two daughters, one son, nine grandchildren, and a sister.

He was buried in the DFW National Cemetery with Military Honors.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association or Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association scholarship fund www.vhpa.org.



TAPS

Messer, Kenneth R. USA Flight Class: 69-21/69-23, RVN: 68-72 191 AHC, Callsign: Boomerang

Kenneth R. Messer of Granbury returned to his Savior Jesus' home on August 20, 2015, surrounded by his loving wife and family.

Ken was born on January 8, 1942, to Virgil and Rose Messer. He served in the US Army during the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot. He then spent 32 years as an over-the-road truck driver, where he met the love of his life, Patti. Ken and Patti were united in marriage on November 12, 1988, in California. He enjoyed reading and football, especially the Raiders.

He is survived by his wife Patti, three sons, two daughters, 13 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. He is also survived by two sisters and a brother.

Miller, William E. Jr, USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 65-13W, RVN: 66-67 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF, 68 1 AVN 1 INF

William Emil Miller, a decorated Vietnam Army helicopter pilot, lost his battle with cancer on August 3, 2015. He was born on November 23, 1941 in Baltimore, MD.



He attended Towson High and the University of Baltimore. He met his wife of 50 years, Barbara, in Towson. Married in 1964, he left on his first tour of duty in Vietnam early in 1966 and returned for a second tour in 1968. It was there he earned two distinguished flying crosses and two bronze stars, along with numerous other medals and awards. He returned home as an instructor pilot, flying helicopters and fixed wing airplanes at Triangle Airways in Laurel, MD. He had the pleasure of flying Bob Dylan and Santa Claus to their destinations.

Bill earned his Bachelor degree from Columbia College and completed both Command & General Staff officers training and US Army War College. He steadily climbed the ranks of the military in the Active Reserve, stationed at Ft. Meade, Maryland until his last posting as Deputy Assistant Commandant at Ft. Rucker, Alabama. Appropriately, the two Huey choppers he flew in Vietnam now flank the gates at Ft. Rucker. He retired in 1994

and moved to Delaware.

After retirement, he worked for Boeing as a consultant. He also served as the Building Official in Dewey Beach from 1996 to 2001. Then, pursuing his passion for construction and remodeling, he spent time designing kitchens, including both daughters and his own. Bill was blessed with the ability to fix anything and enjoyed old cars and old boats.

Bill and Barbara traveled extensively, visiting Egypt, China, England, Germany, France, and Italy. They also enjoyed excursions to Hawaii, Alaska, and the Caribbean.

In addition to his parents, Bill was preceded in death by his sister. He is survived by his wife Barbara, two daughters one grandson, two brothers and a sister.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Greenebaum Cancer Center. Checks should be made payable to the University of Maryland Baltimore Foundation, Inc. (UMBF, Inc.) and sent to the School of Medicine Office of Development at 31 S. Greene St., 3rd Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201.

Potter, Thomas USA Flight Class: 70-4, RVN: 70-71 180 ASHC, Callsign: Big Windy 8

Tom Potter, 68, died peacefully on August 27, 2015 after a long illness. He had been a resident of Sunrise Senior Living, Sandy, UT, where he received loving and attentive care from the staff for more than two years.



Tom was a 1964 graduate of Palmer, MA High School and a 1968 graduate of Norwich University in Northfield, VT. After graduation, Tom served eight years as an officer in the U.S. Army, including one tour in Vietnam. He piloted Chinook helicopters on missions to retrieve downed aircraft in active combat. After leaving the Army, Tom was the operations officer for various manufacturers including Gulfstream, Sperry, Maruka Corp. and Nurad Corporation, where he became president. Later, Tom helped his partner of eighteen years, Joyce Freeman, revitalize and manage the Gold's Gym in

Camp Hill, PA.

Tom's parents were Helen and Ralph Potter of Palmer, MA and Ormond Beach, FL. Tom leaves two brothers and two sons and his former partner, Joyce Freeman. Funeral arrangements are being handled by Garner Funeral Home, Salt Lake City, UT. Memorial donations are suggested for The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (www.theaftd.org).

Redmond, DeLyle USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 59-11/64-1Q, RVN: 63-64 ACTIV/68-69 HHC/269 CAB/ 69 MACV.

At the end of WWII, DeLyle joined the Marine Corps from his home state of WI. After discharge he attended Ripon College. At graduation, he was commissioned as a regular Army LT and deployed to Korea. He was wounded twice while leading a Rifle Platoon with the 17th Regt, 7th INF DIV. Later he became a Paratrooper CO CMDR in the 101 ABN DIV. He also jumped with the Vietnamese Airborne. He served two tours in Vietnam as both a Fixed Wing and Helicopter Pilot and BN CMDR. He was a Combat Infantryman, Master Army Aviator and a Paratrooper. He has received over 40 citations for valor and meritorious service, while serving in Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Germany and Iran. Retiring after 29 years of service, he and his wife Evelyn lived in Roseville for over 30 years.



Reznicek, G. Daniel USMC RVN: 70 HMM-364/70-71 HMM-262

G. Daniel "Danny" passed away on September 22, 2015 in Nashville, TN at the age of 67. He was preceded in death by his father, Gus Reznicek; brother, Joe Reznicek; and sister, Bonnie Reznicek.



He is survived by his mother, Marie Reznicek, his wife of 48 years, Lynda Reznicek two sons, two daughters, and six grandchildren.

Danny was born October 30, 1946 in Carlinville, IL. From a small town, Dan

met the love of his life, Lynda McKinney Reznicek, at age ten. They were married at age 20 and he went on to graduate from the University of Illinois. With courage and dedication, he volunteered to serve his country in Vietnam as a Marine Corps Aviator. He served his country honorably flying helicopter missions in Vietnam. Upon completing his service, Dan once again showed courage and wisdom moving his family to Nashville, TN in 1974. Over the next 41 years, Dan and Lynda built and lived a full and vibrant life while guiding their children through Holy Rosary, Father Ryan, UT Knoxville and the University of Illinois. During this journey, Dan built a successful business and touched people's lives building friendships wherever he went.

"Hunter Dan" had a deep relationship with nature. He was an avid outdoorsman with a passion for hunting, fishing, and camping. He made it his mission in life to inspire that same love of nature. His greatest joy was sharing this part of his spirituality with his family and friends.

Donations in his memory can be made to either the Tommy Bateman Memorial Scholarship fund or to Operation Stand Down, TN.

Rigney, Michael E. USA Flight Class: 69-37/69-41, RVN: 70-162 AHC, Callsign: Vulture 23

Michael E. Rigney, 65, of Marlborough, died Friday, September 11, 2015 after a courageous battle with cancer. He was the husband of Betty A. (Bourgoine) Rigney for the past 44 years. He was born in Marlborough, the son of the late Edward F. and Mildred P. (Campbell) Rigney, and was a 1968 graduate of Marlborough High School. He graduated from Quinsigamond Community College in 1978 with an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice, and later from Fitchburg State College with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services.

Mike was a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War, serving as a helicopter pilot, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star & Air Medal.



In 1972, he began his 32 year career in law enforcement with the city of Marlborough Police Department, retiring in 2004 with the rank of lieutenant. He was a past president of the Marlborough Police Patrolman's Union from 1978-1988. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, as well as a number of other veterans groups.

He will be remembered as a proud, loyal, committed, determined man. He was devoted to his family and affectionately called "Baba" by his five grandchildren.

Besides his wife, he leaves his son, daughter, brother, a sister, and five grandchildren. Michael was buried with military honors in the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 111 Glenallen St., Winchendon.

Runk, Adam E. USA Flight Class: 63-6, RVN: 65-66 119 AHC, 68 E/725 MNT 25 INF, Callsign: Alligator 12/Delta 8

Major Adam E. Runk, Sr., 79, U.S. Army, Retired, died July 27, 2015 at the William Childs Hospice House, Palm Bay, FL. He is survived by his wife, Sandra A. Runk, a daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Adam was born September 19, 1935 in Jackson Township, PA and raised in the York, PA area as one of four children. After graduating from high school and joining the U.S. Marine Corps in 1954, he was assigned to the 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa. Following three years of service in the U.S. Marines, he worked a brief period with his father-in-law in Ft Lauderdale, FL, with Gateway Trucking Company. In 1957, he reenlisted the military service where he served as an Aircraft Crew Chief and Mechanic in the U.S. Army, stationed in Texas, Colorado, and Germany. In 1962, Adam was selected to attend Officer Candidate School, followed by flight training at Camp Wolters, TX and Fort Rucker, AL, where he became an outstanding helicopter pilot. He served at numerous duty stations, including tours of duty in the Republic



of South Vietnam, Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, and Virginia. Adam's leadership, training and piloting skills were legendary; earning him numerous awards for exemplary service and valor, including the Bronze Star, Valorous Unit Award, Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Army Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Overseas Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Senior Aviator Badge and 25 Air Medals, including the V device for Valor.

Adam was the first in his family to obtain a college degree. After retiring from the U.S. Army as a Major, he worked in waste-water management for Brevard County, the state of Florida, Cape Canaveral and Patrick Air Force Base. His skills with waste-water and environmental waste management were renowned and he was recognized by both state and federal agencies for outstanding performance.

Adam was a dedicated family man, spending as much time as possible with his wife of nearly 61 years, his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. He took a special pride in his family and their successes, cheering and mentoring them to reach their goals. Adam was a member of the Shriners and Masons, and remained a founding member of the U.S. Army Aviation Branch, The American Legion, The Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. He was active in the local community and supported his home church, Ascension Lutheran Church in Indian Harbour Beach.

He is interred in the Florida Memorial Gardens Life Event Center. Donations may be made to William Childs Hospice House, Palm Bay, FL.

Tassie, James A. USAF LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 61-E, RVN: 69-70 38 ARRS DET 7, Callsign: Pedro

James "Jim" A. Tassie, 75, passed away on August 23, 2015 in Gilbert, AZ. Jim was born in Bristol, CT on September 22, 1939, the only child of Seymour R. and Avis Johnson Tassie. Jim is survived by his wife, Janet Tassie and a son.

At the age of 18, being guided by a deep patriotic spirit and a desire to "get out there," Jim enlisted in the U.S. Air

Force, went through enlisted Airman Basic training, and was subsequently accepted into the U.S. Air Force Aviation Cadet Pilot Training Program. His service career highlights were flying the KC-135 (jet) refueling/tanker aircraft, and HH-43 rescue helicopter; flying more than 200 combat missions and resulting in 12 combat saves. Among his many services awards he received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Jim earned his Bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and while stationed at the Pentagon, he earned his Master's degree from Central Michigan University. Following his 20-plus years in the Air Force, Jim joined the prestigious international consulting firm of Booz, Allen & Hamilton (BA&H). In retirement, he served as a sacristan at St. Mary's Catholic Church of Chandler, AZ.

The family would like to express their deep appreciation to Dr. Timothy Baker and Dr. Matthew Ulrickson; staff at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Arrangements entrusted to Queen of Heaven Catholic Mortuary, Mesa, Ariz. 480-892-3729.

Underwood, Joe D. USA LTC (Ret.)
Flight Class: 55-J, RVN: 61-62 8 TC
CO/67-68 128 AHC, Callsign: Medicine Man

Joe D. Underwood, 83, of Loveland, CO, formerly of Longmont, passed away August 16, 2015 at the Medical Center of the Rockies. He was born August 1, 1932 in Chickasha, OK to Claude and Iva E. (Goodwin) Underwood. Joe grew up in OK and graduated from Rush Springs High School in 1950. He attended Oklahoma State University, earning a bachelor degree in animal husbandry and was a member of the ROTC program. Following his graduation in 1954, Joe entered the United States Army.

During a 20 year career his duty stations included tours in Korea and Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

He married Doris J. Wuestenberg on September 16, 1957 in Colorado Springs, CO. They lived many places during Joe's Army career. He retired from the Army in 1974 and moved to



Estes Park, CO. Joe had an entrepreneurial spirit. In Estes Park he owned and operated a The Karmel Korn Shop. He moved to Longmont in 1979. Doris passed away on November 30, 2004. Joe married Shirley Geesaman on December 31, 2006 in Greeley, CO and they have made their home in Loveland since.

In Longmont, Joe was a member of New Creation Church and in Loveland, at Resurrection Fellowship. He enjoyed traveling, camping, watching sports and golf. Joe was preceded in death by his parents, wife Doris, a brother and grandson. Joe is survived by his wife Shirley, two daughters, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Joe was interred at Estes Valley Memorial Gardens. Memorial contributions may be made to the Longmont Christian School in c/o Ahlberg Funeral Chapel.

Wiklanski, Michael E. USA Flight Class: 69-31, RVN: 70-71 A 7/1 CAV, Callsign: Apache 21

Mike Wiklanski, 'Ski-Bo' 65, of Carson City, NV died of an apparent heart attack on August 30, 2015 in his home. He is survived by his beloved wife Sue. Mike was born in Chicago, IL on September 16, 1949. After graduating from High School, he began his fixed wing training while working as a Mill Wright. As his status progressed he became an Instructor Pilot and successfully trained numerous students. When he entered the Army, his passion to fly led him through Flight School. Ski-Bo became a Warrant Officer and was sent to Viet Nam as a slick pilot. To enhance his career he became an IP.

While serving, he was awarded the DFC, Purple Heart, Air Medal with "V" and Oak Leaf Cluster device, RVN Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Ribbon, one Over Seas Bar and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. He also was involved with the invasion of Cambodia and became a Chief Warrant Officer Aircraft Commander.

When his tour with the Army ended, he obtained his Commercial ratings for Helicopters and Multi-Engine fixed



wing aircraft. This led him to travel to AZ where he was employed at Arizona Helicopters flying contracted flight assignments, air ambulance services, and fighting forest fires. Mike then went on to Las Vegas, NV where he worked for Herbst Oil Company. He flew dignitaries to destinations and fought forest fires. After training and a lot of hard work, he achieved his A & P Mechanics Certificate. As his experience progressed, he made the move to Reno, NV as Chief Pilot for El Aero Services where he flew a King Air for charters, continued to fight forest fires in a Bell Jet Ranger and did line work for Power Companies. His career total flight time totaled over 21,000 hours. Mike was a member of the VHPA, Blackhawks Association, the VFW, and DFC Society.

Winn, Terence M. USA Flight Class: 69-10, RVN: 69-70 128 AHC, Callsign: Tomahawk 16

Terence Michael Winn March 20, 1946-August 31, 2015 lived a life of adventure, exploration, dedication and love. He grew up in Pacific Grove where he was a leader in Scouting and received an Eagle Scout rank. He completed his military service as an Army Captain and pilot in Vietnam earning the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroic efforts.

Terry completed a Business degree from San Jose State University and worked internationally in Iran for Bell Helicopter and in executive management positions in Thailand and the U.S. for several high-technology electronics firms, including Radionics, GSS Array, Gateway Computers, and Cabletron. He retired in 1998 and settled in Carmel Valley.

Terry loved traveling, and his zest for life took him to more than 60 countries on six continents. He was preceded in death by his father, Francis E. Winn and mother, Rita Winn. He is survived by his wife, Rita B. Winn; two sisters, and a brother.

Donations in his name may be made to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, where he volunteered.



Records of the recent deaths of the following nineteen 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).

Adkins, Lat G. USA CW4 (Ret.) died on August 9, 2015 (no other data).

Klinkert, Charles R. USAF, RVN: 37 ARRS 68, died on July 13, 2015.

Allison, Russel USA CW3 (Ret.) Flight Class 70-3 died on September 18, 2015 (no other data).

Magnum, George S. USAF died on September 9, 2015 (no other data).

Bliss, Gustav E. USA Flight Class 58-2 died on September 13, 2015 (no other data).

McGee, Michael F. USA Flight Class 70-37 died on September 22, 2015 (no other data).

Cruse, Greydon D. USA Flight Class 68-43/68-523 died on August 13, 2015 (no other data).

Miller, Vard L. USN LCM (Ret.) died on September 18, 2015 (no other data).

Falen, Robert S. USA Flight Class 70-6 died on August 16, 2015 (no other data).

Robertson, Carlton F. USA COL (Ret.) died on August 9, 2015 (no other data).

Fritzsche, Grant C. Sr. USA Flight Class 66-1 died on September 3, 2015 (no other data).

Simons, James P. Flight Class 66-4, RVN: 66-67 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV died on July 30, 2015.

Gove, Larry USA Flight Class 70-3/69-49, RVN: 70-71 B/101 AVN 101 ABN died on August 8, 2015

Stewart, Gregory L. USA Flight Class 68-1/68-3, RVN: 68-614 TC DET /69-135 AHC died on September 9, 2015.

Henderson, Robert D. USA LTC (Ret.) died on September 6, 2015 (no other data).


Summerfeldt, David G. USA died on March 10, 2015 (no other data).

Kirkpatrick, Joseph I. USA (Ret.) Flight Class 57-12 died on August 7, 2015 (no other data).

Vorholt, Gerald E. USA Flight Class 63-4 died on August 22, 2015 (no other data).

Klackner, Dean K. USA Flight Class 68-43/68-523 died on August 9, 2015 (no other data).

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~ Letters to the Editor ~

To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator

The 1970 RVN Christmas party picture is not the most flattering, but as they say, "It is what it is." A typical Cav team in D-Troop 1/1 Cav: two gunnies, a loach and slick drivers. As the 1970 + 40 San Antonio reunion picture shows, the four of us had reunited and kept in touch. The sad part of

reality at this September's reunion at Ft. Leavenworth was our team was one gunny short. We celebrated Dave's and all the troopers' lives that have gone before us, and mourned their passing. As we said in our Missing Trooper Ceremony, "They were there for us, now we are here for them."

Thank you. Gary B. Smith, CW4 (ret)



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Pictured on the cover: US Navy H-46 in the Gulf of Tonkin, late 1972 — photo by VHPA member Frank Jensen.



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Above: MHT wishes all a Merry Christmas, Chris Noel on tour & a Seasonal Slick of HML -167 near Da Nang. Right: 50 years has flown by, isn't it time to go back!



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

VHPA member Life Member Marc Liebman has written **CHERUBS 2**, the second in his fast moving Josh Haman Series. The story begins in the Tonkin Gulf where Liebman served in 1970 and again in 1972 and 73.

Early in Haman's tour of duty flying CSAR off the USS Sterett he discovers his AC uses many ruses not to recover downed pilots, leaving them to face death at the hands of the NVA or a trip to the "Hanoi Hilton." Taking risks being part of the job, Haman succeeds in getting the AC "boarded" and sent to a desk job but makes a lifelong enemy.

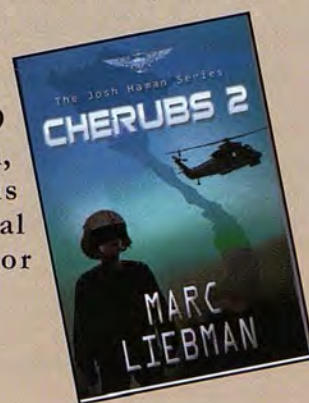
This is war and Haman has many enemies to contend with. With Haman in on the planning, he and a team of Marines procure an intact SA-2 missile and a control van. Following the success of that mission, Haman is tapped for other covert assignments. The Pentagon wants to know if the Chinese are moving missiles into North Vietnam by via railway to Ha Giang – just south of the Chinese border. Haman is assigned to a combined team to insert Navy Seals into the People's Republic of China to find out.

The key to good fiction is character development, no easy feat with this novel's large cast of

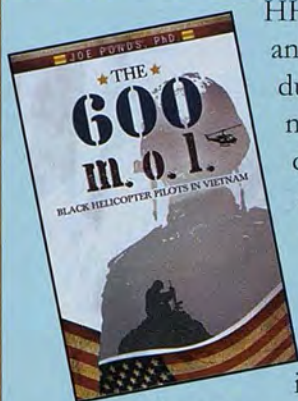
characters including air crewmen, Seal team members, Russian and Chinese officials, CINPAC and top officials at the Pentagon, and Haman's love interest - just to name a few. The book also includes the historical specifications on the operating Naval ships in the region and their aircraft rosters complete with call signs, during the time frame of the book. This is a page turner and not easy to put down. The story concludes, but it is left open for some characters to return and cause difficulties for Lt. Haman in future volumes.

Marc Liebman is also the author of Big Mother 40, and Render Harmless.

Cherubs 2 (466 pages, paperback \$19.99, \$9.99 Kindle) by Marc Liebman, ISBN: 978-1611793550 is available from your local book store, Amazon or other book suppliers.



VHPA life member Dr. Joe Ponds has written **THE 600 m.o.l.: BLACK HELICOPTER PILOTS IN VIETNAM**. The book is a memoir of his life, his Vietnam service in 69-70 with 162nd AHC,



HHC 13th CAB, and 121st AHC, and most importantly a long overdue recognition of all black Vietnam helicopter pilots. Ponds describes enduring prejudice and discrimination in order to serve their country, flying every type of helicopter and mission in Vietnam.

This book is somber reading. It reveals the depth of additional struggles and challenges beyond the known rigors of flight school, not experienced by the white pilots, which were placed in the path of every black helicopter pilot candidate. Ponds notes there is no official count of black Army Aviators who served in Vietnam. However, of the more than 37,500 Army helicopter pilots deployed to Vietnam, only an estimat-

ed number between 559 and 620 (600 more or less) has been made. Their service was no less than any other Army Aviator. Dr. Ponds has opened the door; hopefully others will also share their stories.

The 600 m.o.l.: Black Helicopter Pilots in Vietnam (126 pages, paperback \$13.99) by Joe Ponds, PhD. ISBN: 978-1680287981 is available from his website (www.the600mol.com), your local book store, Amazon or other book suppliers.

**MEMBERS - HAVE
A BOOK FOR JOHN
TO REVIEW?**

**CONTACT HIM AT:
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By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



Retired naval officer Douglas Campbell has published two volumes of nearly 9,000 separate reports of damaged or destroyed US Navy and US Marine Corps fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft during the Vietnam War. **VOLUME 1** is listed by ship and squadron and **VOLUME 2** is the complete set of all 2,550 aircraft listed by Bureau Number. There are also some 2,240 people named in Volume 2 who are associated with all these aircraft; their names have been indexed in the back for ease of use.

This set completes the author's 6-volume set that includes three volumes comprising US Navy

and US Marine Corps aircraft lost during WWII (15,069 aircraft) and a single volume of US Navy and US Marine Corps aircraft lost during the Korean War.

U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps Aircraft Damaged or Destroyed During the Vietnam War, Volume 1: Listed by Ship Attached and by Squadron, and Volume 2: Listed by Bureau Number by Douglas E. Campbell. All of Campbell's extensively researched books can

be found at Syneca.com (click on publications) which provides a link to www.lulu.com



SHARING THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

This summer Northern California Chapter chapter displayed its UH-1C at the presentation of the travelling Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Roseville, California. The Wall is a powerful attraction bringing together Americans with connections to the men and women whose names are engraved there. Our Huey is a perfect addition to that event. Hundreds of families visited with us and climbed into an example of the aircraft many of the soldiers rode in, one way or another.

When my son and 9-year-old grandson came up, I took the opportunity to connect them with one of our own, WO1 George Hayward. I had made a poster of George and his short bio, and I attached it to the back of the Huey's pilot seat



Author points out poster of George Hayward



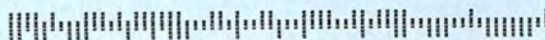
Author points out poster of George Hayward

for all to see. I described how I had served almost all of my one-year tour in Vietnam, and George was my replacement. I was glad to see him, and I thought he was a pretty good guy. I explained that about a month after I left, on February 5, 1969, George was killed when his Huey was shot down and crashed while performing a night resupply mission. Then I took Cory and Wesley over to The Wall and showed them George's name engraved there along with over 58,000 others who gave their lives in the service of our country during the Vietnam War.

We sat there silently for a moment, then Wesley reverently said, "I'm sure glad you didn't die over there, Grandpa." Me too, young man. Me too.

By Curt Knapp

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