



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



**California North Chapter Provides  
a Fitting Center Piece for the Reunion**

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# 999 From the President of the VHPA

## ~ JOHN SHAFER ~



I just received the July/August 2016 The VHPA Aviator magazine; I certainly enjoy reading the articles throughout the magazine.

We all have books in us; though

we all are not going to write those books we can certainly tell stories. So, tell your stories in The VHPA Aviator with pictures or without pictures, no matter how short or long. Make them available to your spouse, kids, grandkids, and the rest of the VHPA members. There are so many untold stories out there, funny ones, not-so-funny ones, and just day-to-day ones. There are stories about your buddies and with your buddies. Tell us your stories or simply provide a picture with a description.

This picture is of the Scalphunters and the Major of B Troop 7th/17th Air Cav, outside the Scout hooch and our bar at Camp Holloway sometime mid-1971.

At the Reno Annual Business Meeting, Nevada's 2nd Congressional District Representative Mark Amodei, the sponsor of H.R. 4298, The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act, spoke to the membership. He reported on the progress and emphasized the bill needs more co-sponsors. As I write this, there are only 13 co-sponsors out of 435 Representatives.

Visit the website: [www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr4298](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr4298) to determine if your Representative is one of the 13. If not, call your Representative's Military Legislative Assistant and ask WHY NOT? In such case, ask WHEN ARE THEY GOING TO DO SO? We need as many co-sponsors as we can enlist. This is what every member can do to help the placement of the memorial in Arlington National Cemetery.



Standing left to right, John Beckman, Allan Krausz, Robert Cassity (Major)(DAT), John Shafer, Pete Bradsell, Bob Stevens, sitting, left to right, Bob Richardson, Steve Moody (DAT).



Proposed Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Memorial

Arlington National Cemetery

Proposed memorial

## FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

Thank you to everyone that stopped by HQ at the Reunion to purchase a 2017 Calendar. If you were not able to purchase one you can still order these through Acclaim Press. You can visit their website at [www.acclaimpress.com](http://www.acclaimpress.com), call them toll free at 877-427-2665 or mail an order form to Acclaim with your payment. If you do not have an order form, give HQ a call & we will be happy to email one to you.

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

Don't Forget.....if you move, you can go on line to <https://directory.vhp.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other

Services". Under "Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information. You can also call HQ with an update to your contact information! If we do not have your correct address on file, you will not receive your Aviator!

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

As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

*Sherry Rodgers, VHPA Office Manager*

# HQ Announces Two New Products

Printed copies of previous VHPA Calendars

Digital images of all previous VHPA Calendars on a CD

Based on the Reno Reunion feedback, effective immediately HQ is taking orders for two new VHPA Calendar related products. Recently HQ made digital scans of all 24 issues of VHPA Calendars. 1994 is the first edition and 2017 is the 24th edition. At the last three Reunions, HQ had a limited supply of the next year's calendars. While these were well received by the attendees, we often hear comments like: "Hey, I missed getting a copy of 2016. It is now sold out - can you guys print me a copy?" When people saw the entire digital collection playing on the 14-foot x 8-foot screen in the Peppermill, they came to HQ asking for a copy.

With the exception of the 1996 issue, all VHPA Calendars were printed in color on 11"X17" paper without borders. Each month has a photo page and a grid page. The grid page contains the actual calendar plus a narrative description (who, what, where, why plus the story behind the photo) of the photo. As a general rule, each issue has a cover photo, twelve monthly photos, and two bonus photos for a total of 15 large print photos or photo collages on thirteen 11"x17" pages printed on both sides.

You may order a copy of one calendar issue (26 pages) printed on 11"x17" paper for \$10 including packaging and postage; each additional issue costs \$10.

You may order a CD containing all 23 sold out issues (1994

through 2016) of the VHPA Calendar for \$8 including packaging and postage. Once the 2017 issue sells out at Acclaim

Press, then it will be included in the next version of the CD.

For those not at the Reno Reunion, I can assure you of a one of a kind photo collection.

*Mike Law*



## Selections from Past Newsletters

*This issue's column is from March 1990, Incoming Mail  
Damn The Torpedoes...Full Speed Ahead*

On my first tour, I was in the recovery section of the 611th Trans. Co. (third echelon maintenance). We had three CH47Bs we used for recovery and one CH-21C we used as our gunship and to haul the recovery team to rig downed aircraft. We also used any of the aircraft in for maintenance on transfer status.

I had the mission in late 1964 to recover an ARVN L-19 shot down southwest of Saigon. I used a UH1B slick to recover the L-19; I also had two UH-1B gunships with me. After we rigged and picked up the L-19 and started for home base we met a tornado. You can see one of the gunships in the lower left bottom of the picture and a sharp cloud by the funnel. It was also a funnel cloud, so at times there were two funnels on the ground running side by side.

I don't remember who the pilots were in the gunships but they were trying to get me to release the L-19 and get out of there. Because we would have to go back for the L-19, I elected to continue with it, and as you can see, we made it.

On the CH-37B we used for recoveries, the FE put a heart for each recovery of a downed aircraft and above the hearts he put B.U.M.F until the General asked what the BUMF stood for. The FE said Big Ugly M.F. Needless to say the General had that part removed.

*Until the next time -  
Royce Raley*



## A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



## THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

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

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

# A SUMMARY ON THE 33RD REUNION IN RENO

*By Mike Law, Chairman of the VHPA Reunion Committee*

As I look back at the Reno Reunion, several thoughts come to mind. Since I usually share bullet points with the readers prior to a reunion, I think it might be OK to do the same afterward. This article was written on 30 July. Here are FIVE points for your consideration.

## **First, THANK YOU! - Especially those who preregistered!**

Officially we had 1,425 Reno Reunion attendees with 759 primary registrants (mostly former pilots). For those keeping score, we had 1,836 in Washington, 1,744 in Louisville, 1,544 in San Fran, and 1,841 in New Orleans. Our contract with the Peppermill included 3,000 room nights. Our revenue room night pick-up was 3,037. This year we had 941 at the Closing Banquet while there were 1,191 in Washington. Yes, we are a last-man-standing organization; but these are still rather heady numbers! From a VHPA Reunion perspective, Indy (our 2017 location) and Louisville (our 2014 location) are peers because both are in the Midwestern states, both are good driving distance cities, and both are new to the VHPA Reunion. Clearly, the Indy Reunion will be an important data point of our Reunion attendance forecasting.

A number of those 3,037 rooms were used by walk-up members, but HQ on-site staff came through, especially at the beginning of the Reunion. Though there were longer lines than anyone enjoyed, we had four of our best working flat out at the time consuming process of helping folks decide what tickets they wanted from what wasn't already sold out; then, after completing the paperwork, the HQ staff input the data into the Online Reunion Registration Application (ORRA).

## **Second, Financially - Most bills are paid and by the time you read this all Refund Checks should be in people's hands.**

As a general rule, when HQ gets an invoice, it is processed for payment within a day or two. We have only two or three expected invoices we've not yet received. Same is true for those who owe us money - only two or three outstanding. Once everything is processed and audited, we can start the Reunion P&L report for the EC.

As is our custom, we mailed out 78 first class letters providing folks with their refund details within two weeks after the Reunion closed. The checks from Chase start going out the first week in September. This year the refunds totaled \$17.3K. Last year there were 109 refunds for \$24.4K. This year nine registrants who had not purchased the Refund Guarantee Insurance(RGI) had to cancel after the 17 June cutoff date. Several missed events that would have been covered by the RGI. It is always hard on our hearts to work these cases.

## **Third, We are expanding the Reunion Committee to include Welcome Desk coordinator and a Volunteer coordinator.**

Jim and Patti Squyres from the Old Dominion Chapter who provided wonderful service in both Washington and Reno agreed to

be our Welcome Desk Coordinators for the Indy Reunion. Briefly, the Welcome Desk is the VHPA Reunion's version of a concierge. Everything you ever wanted to know - you can ask them and expect to get the correct info! This year we had VHPAers purchase event tickets that included bus transportation, then ask the hotel concierge desk where to catch the bus. They were directed to catch the city bus across the street from the hotel! OUCH!! It is OK for you to contact Jim or Patti [REDACTED] if you have comments or suggestions about the Welcome Desk.

Gary Jones will be the Volunteer Coordinator for the Indy Reunion. Briefly, each Reunion needs about twenty souls to staff about four or five positions (e.g. T-Shirt Distribution, ticket takers, pre-registration packet distribution) in four-hour shifts especially during the first three days of the Reunion. In October 2015, we had a "Recon Meeting" at the Peppermill for potential volunteers. More than 20 attended and many provided great service to the Reunion in July. We will have an Indy "Recon Meeting" as well. Contact Gary [REDACTED] > if you have questions, comments, or suggestions about volunteering at the Indy Reunion.

## **Fourth, and the WINNERS are those who helped sponsor the Gold Star Family Breakfast and the Quilters' Show & Tell!!!**

Once again several hundred attendees made sponsorship donations that not only paid for the meals for KIA Family members invited for this Reunion by Julie Kink and her committee, but also helped cover the committee's administrative costs to reach out to these Gold Star Families. We also used some of these funds to help Kathleen Sherfey's Quilters. This year they gave out six beautiful works of art in the form of quilts. One went to a Gold Star Family member for the local Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe. As a side note, the Executive Council directed that all Gold Star Family sponsorships be included in our annual IRS contributions report to each member.

## **Fifth, there was a lot of time and attention given to various aspects of the VHPA's Legacy at this Reunion.**

While the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial and the recent progress made with The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech are getting most of the face time, I hope everyone recalls that an important part of the VHPA's Legacy is each individual's history - especially their oral history. There are several organizations that can help you with this important effort. Witness To War has done oral interviews at VHPA Reunions for years. It doesn't cost you anything, but the recorded memory you leave behind is priceless. Check out their website [www.witnesstowar.org](http://www.witnesstowar.org) and see if they are coming to a location near you. We'll do our best to see them in Indy next year.

*Questions or Comments...? As always, get in touch with HQ at 800-505-8472 or [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) or Mike Law at [REDACTED]*

# Gold Star Family Breakfast VHPA Reunion 2016

Whether it started with a telegram saying a family member was injured or a knock at the door by a uniformed service member, losing a loved one during the Vietnam War usually marked the beginning of a long, uncomfortable silence. We were told very little about the circumstances of their deaths. There were no homecoming parades for them, no one to tell us about their last days. They were gone, and we just didn't talk about Vietnam anymore.

The Gold Star Family Breakfast, held annually during the VHPA Reunion, is a rare opportunity for family members to talk about the loved ones we lost . . . among veterans who can help us learn not only how they died, but more importantly, how they lived.

About 130 people attended the Gold Star Family Breakfast on July 7: nearly 100 VHPA members/wives and almost 30 family members. Gold Star Family members were there in memory of: Cpt. Eddie Molino Jr., C/7/1 CAV KIA 5-26-1970; WO David Lindford Nelson, C/158 AVN 101 ABN KIA 3-5-1971; LT Gregory Charles Engel, 128 AHC KIA 7-24-1969; LT Dan Cheney, A/3/17 CAV KIA 1-6-1969; WO Gerald McKinsey, 282 AHC KIA 1-21-1968; WO Vernon Lee Leuning, A/7/1 CAV KIA 3-4-1968, and WO David Robert Kink, C/1/9 CAV KIA 8-3-1969. Several members of the family of CPT James C Ungaro, C/1/9 CAV who died tragically after his tour in 1983, also attended.

As I passed around the portable mic, each family member said a few words about their loved one. Tears were shed. Family Contacts Committee/VHPA member Jim McLaughlin provided a map for each family showing the exact location of their loved one's incident. Many had never before known the location of the loss. VHPA member Gary Rossomme read a beautiful poem written by Gold Star Mother Evelyn Hatley, as he does each year.

Many VHPA members contributed to the breakfast, continuing the tradition of covering the breakfasts for the Gold Star Family members attending and supporting the event in general. This year, a donation from the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe was received, thanks to George Molino, brother of Cpt. Eddie Molino. At the closing banquet, three Gold Star Family members placed objects on the Missing Man Table during the Missing Man Toast.

I want to thank so many people for supporting the Gold Star Family Breakfast, not the least of whom are the VHPA staff including Sherry Rodgers and Ashley Bird,



Gold Star 1 Family Breakfast program - photo was by VHPA Member Jerry Mellick



Missing Man Table at Gold Star Family Breakfast - photo by Julie Kink

and VHPA Reunion Chairman Mike Law for making it all happen smoothly. The Gold Star Family Breakfast has grown over the past 13 years from five of us Gold Star Sisters having breakfast together during the reunion, to the event that is now a treasured part of the reunion agenda.

In a few months I'll start searching for families of the fallen who were from the area surrounding Indianapolis, where the next VHPA reunion will be held. (This year, I sought out families of the 312 KIA pilots who were from the 9-state area surrounding Reno.) I hope we get some of the families to register early enough that

I can contact fellow members from their loved one's unit who may be able to spend a few minutes with them during the reunion.

Even if you didn't know a particular KIA, as a Vietnam helicopter pilot, you have a lot to share with a family member who never heard stories of the missions, the good times, the bad times, the terrain, the types of aircraft flown, what the country of Vietnam was like, what you guys ate, drank, laughed or cried about. Families are hungry to know these things. Who else but you can tell us about chicken plates, C-4, pucker factor, elephant grass, incoming, cold showers, warm beer, nuoc mam . . . and other fringe benefits of your "all expenses paid" trip to tropical Vietnam?

Thanks to everyone who supports us Gold Star Families. You are the reason our loved ones will never be forgotten, because we know that you loved them, too.

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



Gold Star 2 Family group - photo was by the reunion photographer, Richard Carmer, Picture Phoenix

# Honoring those who have died in the past year

By Gary Roush  
9 July 2016

288, that is how many of us have died in the past year. 229 have died since our last reunion.

55 of these men were in the Air Force, Navy or Marine Corps. This is a higher portion than those who served because their average age was older than Army pilots. The reason is almost all of them had to be college graduates and fixed wing rated before flying helicopters. Army pilots did not.

We are here to remember and honor those who have died since their service in the Vietnam War, especially those who have died in the past year. And we are here to celebrate their lives. Just over 10,000 Vietnam helicopter pilots have died since the Vietnam War. Adding the 2,165 who died in Vietnam means about one-third us are gone!

You may have heard a lot about Army warrant officers being 19 when they served in Vietnam. The requirement was that warrant officer candidates had to be 19 when they received their wings. Sixty-one of our KIAs were 19 which means only about 3 percent of helicopter pilots were 19 when they served in Vietnam. The average age of the 2,165 helicopter pilots killed in the Vietnam War was 25.4 years old.

Who were these men? These were the boys who went off to war in their early 20s and came home men just like their fathers and uncles who served in World War II. These were the sons of the greatest generation. Their fathers and uncles went off to war to fight the evil empires in World War II. Their mothers and aunts took the places of the men in factories and kept the home fires burning while their men were off to war for two to five years at a time. It was shortly after the great depression. It was a time of rationing and shortages and great hardships for all. Many men did not return. Causalities were enormous and all families were affected directly or indirectly. But it was a time of unwavering patriotism.

They grew up in the aftermath of these life changing events. They were told of the sacrifice and heroics and honor of their elders. They were taught to be proud of our soldiers and our country. They learned that Communism like Nazism was the source of all evil. They dreamed of the day they too could proudly serve our country and fight Communism like their fathers fought before them. All of them volunteered to fight in our war, the war in Vietnam.

Their war was the helicopter war and they were its pilots. They were the taxi drivers and the delivery men and the gun support. They carried the infantry into battle and they brought them out.

They were the lifeline, the supply line, and the ambulance for the grunts. Joe Galloway claims they were God's own lunatics. They were young, mostly in their 20s, and they were crazy and they came of age with rotor blades above them and bullets flying all around them. They were part of a generation of soldiers General Hal Moore claims to be every bit as brave and noble as those who stormed the beaches of Normandy. He thinks they were as great as the greatest generation.

As Vietnam helicopter pilots, they accumulated more true combat flight time than any other combat pilots before or since. Their main helicopter was the icon of the Vietnam War, the UH-1 Huey. Like them, the Huey, along with the Huey Cobra have more combat flight time than any other aircraft in the history of warfare. They paid the price for this unprecedented exposure. Fourteen percent of KIAs in Vietnam were officers and 28% of those officers were helicopter pilots. We will not forget our fallen.

World War II was the good war fought against evil. To many of our generation, our war was the immoral war filled with atrocities, hopelessness and victims. They were wrongly portrayed as the biggest victims of all. They were not - and are not victims.

War is a messy business. Approximately 300 American soldiers were executed during and after World War II for crimes and atrocities while none were executed from the Vietnam War. Yet the vast majority of World War II veterans upon their return were rightly received as heroes, while all of us were unfairly vilified for unspeakable atrocities. The news media was heavily censored during the "Great War" while we had television and totally uncontrolled and uncensored reporting. Unfortunately, too much of the media had - and has exercised a bias that greatly distorted what they did and how they did it.

Out of the 2,583 listed as missing in action in Vietnam, all but a few have been accounted for. By contrast, there are still 78,000 unaccounted-for Americans from World War II. The accounting of our missing is unprecedented in warfare. This is in large part due to their helicopters and those who flew them into hot LZs and the teeth of enemy fire, to take out the wounded and dead who in earlier times would have been left on the battlefield.

There are many myths out there about our brothers. Even today there is the perception that Vietnam veterans are homeless, drunken addicts, who have a high rate of suicide and incarceration. These are just not true.

The truth is their service was basically no different than their fathers' service. They served our country just as honorably as their fathers did. They have proven all of the Vietnam War critics wrong.

Not only were the critics wrong about the morality of the Vietnam War, they were also wrong about our brothers. Unlike their fathers, they came home from war to ridicule and scorn with no support network. Their fathers had welcome home parades and organizations like the VFW and the American Legion. They had no parades and although they qualified to belong to those organizations they were not initially welcomed. The ideals and respect they had for the greatest generation did not apply to them. Their treatment was unfair, unwarranted and unprecedented.

So what did they do? They got on with their lives. They became very productive members of society. They were more successful than their non-military peer group and they advanced America to even higher prosperity and greatness. Their parents had the wind at their backs after World War II which made it easier to prosper. Our brothers had to overcome unfair and unjustified stereotypes to succeed, but they did and they proved they were as great as the greatest generation.

Our war was a major battle in the Cold War and it became its turning point. Up until the Vietnam War, more countries in the world were switching to Communism. That reversed during the Vietnam War and more countries started moving toward democracy and finally the collapse of the Soviet Union. So they helped win the cold war.

The domino theory was correct. Their involvement in Vietnam provided time for countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand to stay free of Communism. Without the Vietnam War, that whole region would have been lost to Communism.

Finally, they did not lose the war in Vietnam. All of them could honestly say, "We were winning when I left!" because it is true. Their war was over in early 1973 following the peace settlement signed in Paris in January '73 and the final withdrawal of combat troops in March '73. The fall of Saigon happened two years later in April 1975 because the U.S. Congress cut off funding to the South Vietnamese causing them to run out of fuel and ammunition.

They were rightly proud of their service and deserve the honor and respect bestowed on generations of warriors before them. Not only did they serve our country honorably, but they also have taught their children to honor and respect national service. Many of them have children who have served or are serving in our armed forces today.

As part of my responsibilities as database chairman, I read nearly all of the obituaries as they are entered into our databases. These obituaries are brief snapshots of these men's lives and they are truly remarkable. As an example in the past year three Marine Corps and two Army pilots have died who flew with the presidential flight detachment as part of their exemplary military careers. Imagine being responsible for the in-flight safety of the most powerful person in the free world.

Here are a few statistics about those who have died over the past

year. About 17 percent continued careers as pilots after leaving the service. A similar percent worked as entrepreneurs, retailers or in private industry. Eleven percent were government contractors and nine percent did public service. The rest were farmers, educators, engineers, bankers, policemen, ministers, medical professionals, lawyers and even one was an actor and one a professional card player. They don't sound like homeless dope addicts or baby killers to me.

There are mistakes in our data. Hardly a week goes by without being contacted by someone who says, "Despite the rumors I am not dead." You might be surprised that some of these mistakes come from the Social Security Deceased Index but mainly from similar names reported by well intentioned people.

These men were our mentors, teachers, students, confidants, antagonists, tormentors – they were our brothers and family. They were our comrades in arms who were willing to give their lives for us as we were willing to give our lives for them. They trusted their lives to us and we to them. It was a bond that to understand you have to experience. Believe me this bond is very powerful and strong.

In Vietnam we had to manage our mourning and grief because when we lost our brothers in combat we had to strap those helicopters back on and get on with our jobs. Grieving could wait, so now as we mourn the loss of more of our brothers, the grief pushes itself to the front and sometimes becomes difficult to bear, but as we learned in Vietnam, life is for the living and life goes on. That is what our brothers would want and what we want when our names are inevitably added to the list. So today we honor our brothers by paying tribute to them with this upcoming memorial service and if you are like me you think about them nearly every day. We will not forget our fallen.

Our membership database contains over 40,000 names. All of those names will eventually be added to the died-after-tour database to become our legacy. We have arranged with the Vietnam Center and Archives at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX to receive this final database to make available to the public in perpetuity. We have also established an endowment fund with the Vietnam Center to fund the management of the VHPA Collection forever. The most important part of the VHPA Collection will be information about all of us in this final database. So it is critically important that we collect as much information as we can.

One idea in this regard is to encourage you to write your story in a way that it can become your obituary. All of you either personally knew or knew of David Adams who was the editor of our magazine, The VHPA Aviator. David died on the 11th of August last year. He did incredible things to make our magazine world class. One unique thing he did was to write his own obituary. It was in the September-October 2015 issue of the Aviator. All of you can do the same thing. Tell us your story. Not only will this make writing your obituary easier for your family, but it will provide us with accurate information about you to add your piece of our legacy to be read by your relatives who have not yet been born.

In the course of a single week over the past year, I learned of four good friends dying. One of those men was a very special person as he saved my life. His name is Adam Runk. Adam enlisted in the US Marine Corps out of high school and served for three years. He then enlisted in the Army where he served as a crew chief, attended officer candidate school and then helicopter flight school. Adam was a faithful VHPA member and attended many reunions over the years. Adam was my instrument flight instructor during flight school at Fort Rucker in 1967. He was by far the best flight instructor I ever had in my almost 50 years of flying. He was a kind and gentle man while being cheerfully demanding at precision flying while under the hood. He took a personal interest in his students. For example, Adam and his wife Sandy attended Susan's and my wedding while I was his student. They made up half of the audience as it was a very small wedding at a Fort Rucker chapel.

Adam came to visit me while in Vietnam on his second of three tours. He also kept in contact over the years, even visiting us in upstate New York driving all the way from Florida where he worked for NASA at the Kennedy Space center after retiring from the Army. A few years ago he called me in tears to tell me he was no longer physically able to travel to attend that year's reunion. VHPA reunions meant a great deal to him and he meant a great deal to me. I learned after his death that his relationship with me was not unique as he befriended nearly everyone he met. He was truly a wonderful human being and he is sorely missed. How he saved my life is a story for another time. Adam died July 27, 2015.

My guess is that nearly all of you have similar experiences. One of the sad things I have to do is tell people the person they are looking for has died. So get in touch with those friends from long ago before it is too late.

I am proud to have known some of these men and I am proud to have served with a couple of them. They had achieved as much if not more than the greatest generation. We will not forget our fallen.

*Copyright 2016 Gary B. Roush*

**Editor's Note:** Gary's 2016 VHPA Reno Reunion Memorial Presentation has been edited to accommodate the Aviator's publishing standards and space restrictions. The complete, unedited Presentation is available at [www.vhpao.org](http://www.vhpao.org).

## Quilter's Show and Tell



So many things happened at this year's reunion. We displayed several quilts in the vendor's room which was a first for us. Many attendees stopped to talk and ask questions about the quilts and to see what the quilters have been doing this past year. Thank you to those who showed an interest and special thanks to those who made donations to the quilting program.

Secondly, the quilters, both men and women, went on an excursion to Windy Moon Quilt Shop where owner Sandi Sullivan demonstrated the electric Go Machine. Some of the ladies tried the machine and were surprised by the ease in cutting designs for applique. Maybe this will give the husbands an idea for a Christmas present. We also took time to do a little shopping before returning to the hotel.

The last item for the quilters and most important was the presentation of our quilts to VHPA veterans followed by our Show and Tell program. With the effort of all our participating quilters

the group proudly presented five quilts. Linda Kau, the Alaskan coordinator for Quilts for Valor presented a quilt to CW2 James Crigler. We were honored to witness the presentation by Lynn Kile of additional quilts from the Alaskan Quilts of Valor organization to three veterans. We completed the day with the quilter's Show and Tell. Many showed their blocks that will be in next year's quilts and some brought projects they had completed or projects in progress.

Many thanks are due to Linda Kau and the Alaska Quilts of Valor for their generosity and all who had made this year a success. I would also like to thank the VHPA Executive Committee and the many quilters and supporters of the Quilter program.

Next year is just around the corner, please continue constructing those blocks. You can bring the blocks to the next reunion or if not able to attend, mail them to: Kathleen Sherfey, [REDACTED] Shawnee, KS [REDACTED]. Please use this contact for any questions about the program or processes.

*By Kathleen Sherfey*

# BATTLE OF MICHELIN RUBBER PLANTATION

27 November 1965

*An Additional view of My Longest Day - Part 2*

COL James W. "Pete" Booth

When I arrived at the Michelin, the 7th Regiment's situation was chaos. The only realistic descriptions of ARVN troop locations were from LT Moody. Additionally, the overhead cover of rubber trees added to the difficulty in precisely locating ARVN forces. Any US advisors still alive knew only of the situation in their immediate vicinity. LT James Van Vleck, a courageous, skilled gunship pilot and experienced fire team leader, was flying with me that day.

The ARVN regimental headquarters had been overrun early that morning with the loss of most of their senior officers, a very large numbers of soldiers, plus most of the Regiment's US Advisors. The remaining portions of 7th Regiment's battalions were scattered all over the area. Surviving ARVN Commanders and US Advisors were attempting to stabilize their situation and recover casualties. They were in a total defensive and survival mode.

After talking to Playboy 13 and one of the few remaining US advisors, the ground situation became clearer. NVA/VC forces were withdrawing from the Michelin by attacking toward a range of large fortified hills in the jungle north and northwest of the plantation. Home base of the VC 9th Division, these large hills had been a VC stronghold for years. Stay-behind forces were left to ambush, delay and harass any pursuing ARVN forces, but there were no pursuing ARVN forces - none. From what I could see and monitor on the radio, 5th Division Headquarters made no contribution to the battle; the division command group made no attempt to attack or block the withdrawing NVA/VC forces with ground units. At most, perhaps they sent the Forward Air Controller (FAC) who arrived mid-afternoon.

I talked to LTC Chuck Honour on our command channel several times that afternoon. Honour commanded the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion consisting of the 197th Armed Helicopter Company and five Assault Helicopter (lift) companies. We did not discuss a heliborne troop assault, but his presence surely indicated the 145th was ready if the 5th Division wanted it done. But no help came for the 7th Regiment. It appeared to me 5th Division HQs was sitting on its hands. The destruction of 7th Regiment took the fight out of them. Or, perhaps they did not have additional forces that could be committed thereby risking further losses. In any event, their opportunity to turn a disastrous morning into victory, or at least a stiff fight, slipped away.

During the afternoon, I flew several missions supporting a U.S. Army Advisor to one of the battalions. Later in the afternoon, a USAF FAC 0-1 arrived overhead. After I gave him the Advisor frequency and call sign, the FAC contacted the Advisor asking for tar-



Major James W. "Pete" Booth - Commander 197th Armed Helicopter Company.



197th gunship attempts to medevac critically wounded ARVN 7th Regiment soldiers from Michelin Rubber Plantation 27 November 1965.

gets. There was considerable discussion between the FAC and the Advisor about identifying targets. A Tactical Air flight of "fast movers" was overhead but low on fuel. The flight leader wanted to quickly drop their bombs on a target. Jet Fighter pilots do not like to land with live ordnance strapped to the wings and belly of their aircraft. If there is a landing accident and the ordnance explodes, the pilot's chance of survival is zip.

After 10 minutes or so, the Advisor gave the FAC a target. The ARVN unit was in an area of rubber trees and their exact position difficult to identify precisely, even from our much lower and slower helicopters. For jet aircraft attacking from 10-15,000 feet it was almost impossible. I moved my fire team west and observed the strike from several kilometers away. Very shortly after the bombs hit the ground the Advisor came on the radio saying, "I want the names and organizations of the FAC and Jet's Flight Leader. Your bombs hit in the middle of our ARVN battalion. We have 50 or more dead and many wounded." Thereafter followed a heated discussion between the Advisor and the FAC as to who was at fault for the misplaced air strike.

After the jets departed, the Advisor told me he had many wounded and asked us to medevac the more critical cases. Our standard procedure was to medevac critically wounded after we had fired all our ammunition, thereby lightening our load so we could lift them out. With ammunition expended, we could carry three to four ARVN wounded per helicopter.

There was a small open area along a road near the Advisor's location, where we had seen VC mortars exploding in the area several times earlier - they had it zeroed in. But, there was no other area suitable for landing anywhere nearby. I talked to the Advisor, told him to get his critically wounded ready for our quick in and out attempt to avoid getting mortared while on the ground. I specifically told him, "Do not load any dead on the helicopter, we want your critically wounded only, nothing else." He replied, "Wilco."

I led in, covered by my wingman Saber 7. As soon as we touched down, a rush of ARVN soldiers began jumping into the helicopter. I turned to look in the back compartment. There were so many ARVN soldiers back there it looked like the Mormon Tabernacle choir had moved in. I told my crew chief SP4 Frank Batts, to throw them out. He forcefully did so.

Other ARVN soldiers ran to the helicopter carrying dead soldiers and tried to load them in the back compartment. Chaos reigned within the ARVN unit. No one was controlling the loading of wounded. Many, with no wounds, were trying to desert the battlefield.

I was angry. Mad as hell! I shouted at the Advisor on the radio using several words not meant for polite society. Meanwhile, Jim was saying, "We're going to get mortared. We have been on the ground too long." Jim was right. Finally, we got some wounded on board and took off. But, they were not the critically wounded.

I must say the actions of these ARVN soldiers were not typical. The unit was demoralized. A significant portion of their Regiment had been overrun by a strong, disciplined NVA/VC force earlier in the day resulting in the loss of most of their leaders and US Advisors. And they had just been bombed in error by US close air support jets inflicting further heavy losses. Many ARVN units were very good. I cite the 52nd Ranger Battalion at Dong Xoai 10 June 65, and many other Ranger units in heavy combat actions. The Airborne Brigade was superb. I once saw them make a night attack in War Zone C that would have been envied by any army in the world. But, many ARVN units were led by officers who received their appointments for political reasons rather than their leadership qualities. Some were inept - some corrupt. Their soldiers did not trust them to act in their best interest when the going got tough.

In retrospect, the Advisor's job was not easy under any circumstance. He was never in command of ARVN units, and was dependent on the ARVN commander to carry out his recommendations. In this particular case, having been overrun by the NVA/VC and bombed by supporting US TAC AIR it was probably too much to expect him to control the situation effectively. Moreover, the ARVN commander was probably very angry with Americans who had just bombed his unit killing many of his men.

Twenty seven November was a tragic day for ARVN. One could attempt to draw many lessons from this fight. But if you were not there, getting it right would be difficult.

Jim E. Moody, Colonel (Ret), US Army  
James W. (Pete) Booth, Captain US Army 1965-1969, Honorary Colonel 9th Cavalry Regiment

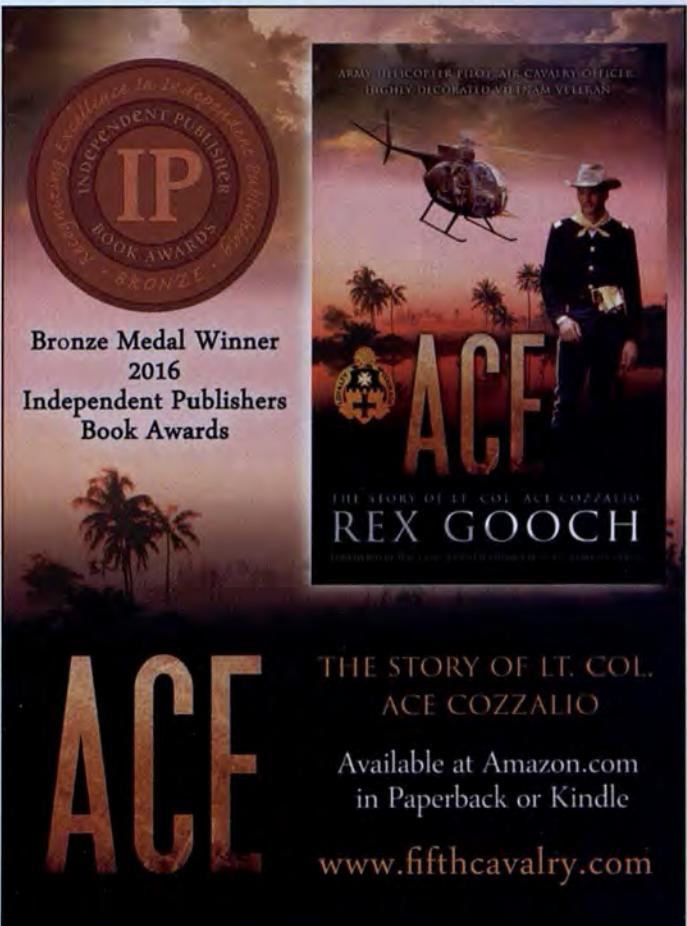
*Deputy Assistant Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation, retired, 1970-1976*



## 118TH THUNDERBIRDS VHPA MINI REUNION, 2016

VHPA member and California National Guard Major General (Ret.) Robert Brandt and his daughter, Laura Yeager, California National Guard Brigadier General, were among those at the 118th Thunderbirds VHPA mini-reunion in Reno. MG Brandt served two tours in Vietnam; the first tour was as a Lieutenant in the 33rd Transportation Company, The Thunderbirds 1962-1963. The 33rd and its CH-21s, along with its sister companies, paved the way in what was to become "a helicopter war."

Senior Aviator Laura Yeager was promoted to Brigadier General May 31. Yeager flew Black Hawk helicopters in Iraq, and is one of two female generals serving in the California National Guard.





## To the Editor of the Aviator.

First of all, thank you for your service! I have a friend who flew helicopters in Vietnam - I could listen for hours to his experiences during the war. He has a Rolex GMT that many pilots wore in Vietnam. I am looking to purchase one for sentimental reasons - they are a great part of American History.

If any of your members would like to sell one, can you ask them to reach out to me?

Best Regards,

## To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Erin Miller, and I am a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. About two years ago, I began volunteering at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and conducting interviews with local Vietnam veterans.

While doing research for this, I came across the 37 servicemen from Wisconsin who are, or were previously, listed as missing in action from the Vietnam War. I tried to follow up on the accounts of several of the servicemen, including Warrant Officer Albert Trudeau, but was not able to find out much beyond federal reports. Honoring our veterans and soldiers is something I feel very strongly about and I hope to do this for the Vietnam War MIAs. I've been working on a small book about these servicemen, and putting together short biographies about their lives before and during their service. To do this, I have been reaching out to friends, families, and others who served with these men.

Warrant Officer Albert Trudeau was a member of the 68th Assault Support Helicopter Company starting in February 1971. On October 26th of that year, he was the co-pilot of a CH-47B cargo helicopter which crashed off the coast of South Vietnam. He was then classified as MIA-BNR.

I found the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association website and wonder if any of the members might have known WO Trudeau and would be willing to speak with me about him. If you think this is possible and could forward this email along, I would greatly appreciate your help. Anyone can contact me at this address

Thank you for your time.

Erin Miller

## Looking For

I am looking for Blue Max and D Troop 17th Cav Cobra pilots who escorted a single Blue Star Huey on an emergency extract of wounded South Vietnamese from a battalion surrounded by an NVA regiment on 14 July 1972 in Northern I Corps. There were two Blue Max cobras and two D Troop cobras. I was flying dash two D Troop snake.

Medals were promised but due to the turmoil of the Easter Offensive and the withdrawal of US forces, never materialized. That Huey pilot was the bravest guy I've ever seen. I tried to initiate this in 2000 but there was no interest. I think the interest is there now.

Thank you

Mike Williams

Colonel, USMC (Ret)

Formerly CW2, USA

## INTERESTING LINKS ON THE INTERNET:

[www.boeingimages.com/archive/CH-47A-Chinook-Helicopter-Lands-on-Deck-of-MSTS-Corpus-Christie-Bay-for-Maintenance-2F3XC5UWIXW.html](http://www.boeingimages.com/archive/CH-47A-Chinook-Helicopter-Lands-on-Deck-of-MSTS-Corpus-Christie-Bay-for-Maintenance-2F3XC5UWIXW.html)

[www.virtualwall.org/iStates.htm](http://www.virtualwall.org/iStates.htm)

First click on a state, then scroll down to the city where you went to high school.  
Clicking on a name gives details of the person's death, a picture or at least their bio and medals.

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

The FAA Rotorcraft Directorate will host its 2nd International Rotorcraft Safety Conference.

The conference's goal is to reduce the national helicopter accident rate.

The free event will be held October 25-27 at the Hurst Conference Center near Ft. Worth, TX.

# Letters to the Editor

## *Lt Little*

After reading The Aviator May/June 2016 article about "LT Little", I had to think it was way too much of a coincidence for my story not to be connected. I was assigned to the 214th Avn Bn, 191st AHC, the Boomerangs and Bounty Hunters in March of '68. We were located at Bear Cat, 9th Division HQ. Our A.O. was west of the Saigon River and north of the Mekong. I was an FNG and guess about my first month and we were northeast of Dong Tam making a 6 ship insertion, when Lead called "Taking Fire." I was the Peter Pilot in chalk 6 and LT Richard "Dick" Little was the Peter Pilot in the Lead Aircraft. Months later when he was able, LT Little recounted what went on in the hot seat, so this is a combination of our two accounts.

After Lead called "Receiving fire 12 O'clock", our Bounty hunters took out Charlie's machine gun quickly and the LZ went quiet, we touched down and I called "Lead, unloaded." Only 5 troops got off Lead; one was killed, so his body was left on the aircraft to return to the base. I remember LT Little saying his neck was bleeding and he had blood on his hand from an arm wound, plus I think he took a round through the leg. He said after touchdown the AC said, "I've got the aircraft" and he jumped because he was so surprised the AC was still alive after the left side windshield and instruments were all shot away!

As we climbed out of the LZ, chalk 2 came on the radio and said "Lead, I have got fuel, hydraulic and transmission fluid all over my windshield." Lead replied "I will stay low level and head straight back to the base." I think he also mentioned the "Lit-up" warning panel. Chalk 2 said "I'll stay with lead." Chalk 3 continued to climb and led the remaining flight of four Boomerangs in a large sweeping "S" turn, because the base, (Maybe Tan An) was only about 10 klicks away. As we four were landing, we approached low over a field beside the base where our next sortie was waiting. I saw Lead and chalk 2 flying very low and very slow, crossing directly beneath us and over the field of troops. I was watching them through my chin bubble with the sun glinting off their rotor blades, when to my horror, Lead became a ball of flame, the transmission ceased, separated from the aircraft. The crew, one dead G.I. and pieces of the aircraft fell all around the waiting troops. I told my AC "Lead just blew up." We sharply climbed from the updraft about the same time as the fire ball came into his view. He radioed "Lead blew up, I am breaking off to pick up survivors." The rest of the flight did likewise. Within seconds, the troops on the ground tended to the downed crew members and then we landed close by, loaded and carried one of the crew across the base to the MASH landing pad. Everyone of that crew was receiving medical treatment within less than 5 minutes of the explosion, and all four survived!

*Dave James*

## *To the Editor of the Aviator*

As a Lifetime VHPA member I sure do understand "Last Man Standing." The thinning ranks puts all the more load on those now serving as staff. But I think the fact that toward the end of our time, organization work will have to be performed "friends" and successors is key here; to wit – "being proactive" needs to take a larger view of how Vietnam service fits into national history.

It's worth noting that introduction of helicopters into combat/defense was an integral part of conflict without declared war, when political turmoil hamstrung what should've and could've been accomplished. Without amazing helicopters and pilots, it would've been infinitely worse... To put it in perspective:

The VHPA is thus a key part of the history picture that should be preserved, and what you've brought to us veterans should not be allowed to disappear just when the last man standing goes down. This might be done by adding "arms" to the VHPA chapter (or similar measures) so that it carries on through history. So be it.

*Now I've said my piece, so go for it!*

*Regards,  
Don G. Fite, LTC USA (Ret)*

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# FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

For those readers who enjoy scanning the inside cover, you will note an addition regarding the submission of material to the Aviator. A similar statement will accompany the submission of any original article or photograph. For the most part, this is to ensure the archivists at Texas Tech University (who have been provided an endowment by the VHPA to preserve the legacy of the membership and the organization described later in this issue) that they can freely reproduce the material in subsequent formats and make those narratives available without copyright infringement. We will not be able to publish articles by authors who wish not to agree to the stipulations. This is important work and the acceptance of those stipulations will allow it to go forward with the inclusion of your personal memories.

I have been associated with the Aviator for two plus years. In the early days, assisting the late David Adams, I was impressed with the amount of work he had performed singlehandedly for those many years. With little advance notice those tasks became mine. We are all fortunate that Tom Hirschler, Editor, stepped up to a call for volunteers to help with the VHPA organization. We have worked together for about eighteen months. This has had a significant impact on my ability to continue the job even as I learn. Incidentally, it was at the Reunion in Reno that we met for the first time. Tom and I were able to sit over dinner with our wives Ruth and Carolyn respectively and enjoy a social evening after what must be a thousand emails and phone calls concerning the newsletter.

We work as a team, but owing to the 'admin' stuff, I have increasingly depended on Tom to oversee the selection, editing and placement of our members' submissions. That said, it may be obvious that to date, we have not published any issues that have followed a specific (pre-announced) theme. With the approaching Holidays, however, it is an appropriate time to request any stories, photos or anecdotes regarding either Thanksgiving or Christmas. We do not have an inventory of material on those topics. With your contributions we can create an issue themed around our holiday experiences overseas. I had an idea for a Christmas article, about celebrating my holiday in Taipei, *but because it had nothing at all to do with helicopters and other considerations, thought better of it.*

The Annual Reunion generates quite a few stories, all of



which are appropriate to both attendees and our readers. We make an effort to include as many as possible, while treating the event itself with a summary supported by pictures. Please accept our apologies in advance if your submission was not included or shortened due to space limitations. One notable reunion fact is the re-use of lanyards previously provided reduced this year's budget by \$1,000.00.

The VHPA published book *The Final Flight of Curious Yellow* was available in the vendor room and well received. Our limited number of copies sold out quickly. For those of you who have or intend to read the book in either print or electronic versions, we encourage you to take the time to post a review on Amazon's website. This work is unique within the large collection of books with helicopter warfare as a theme, due to its wide variety of both authors and activities. Your feedback will help potential customers appreciate this type of presentation. The VHPA Scholarship Fund receives all proceeds; so in this respect the book is educational in both content and intent.

The Taps section continues to expand for obvious reasons. We use photos (when provided) and an edited obituary for all members. Non-members' deaths are noted with a minimum of information consistent with our database or military service provided by the author of the notice. The editing of member entries is necessary to confine the length of the coverage and may not reflect all of the specifics contained in a typical funeral home/newspaper account. In addition, (again owing to numbers) we must establish a deadline to meet our publication goal. This may explain the mystery of seeing an entry for a death occurring on the last day of month, while another only a few days later is covered in a subsequent issue. The decision to add late arriving notices is flexible and depends on the overall workload and the amount of material that must be edited for a given issue.

Both Tom Hirschler and I appreciate the kind words in many of the emails we receive and from attendees at the reunions as well as the encouragement and support of the Executive Council. It is a distinct pleasure to help make membership in the VHPA a valuable part of your service.

Tom Kirk

*From the Editor: We apologize to Carl Bell for not crediting him as the author of the July/August article Convoy Escort Mission to Phnom Penh.*

## HOW TO GET YOUR REPRESENTATIVE'S ATTENTION

As young helicopter pilots we were told "write a letter to your congressman" to get something done, but that was a long, long time ago. If you want to see HR 4298: The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Memorial Act passed into law (placing the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial within Arlington National Cemetery), you have to use techniques that will get your congressman/woman's attention.

DO NOT write a letter and expect a positive outcome. Letters take up to five weeks to reach the office of your representative due to scanning delays, and once the letter arrives it will be opened by a staffmember who will likely place the note in the "miscellaneous" pile. The result will be a generic, "thank you for your interest in subject \_\_\_\_\_" letter, and it is likely your representative will never see the letter, let alone learn of your request for him/her to cosponsor HR 4298.

DO:

(1) Send an email explaining you are a constituent, a Vietnam Vet, and you want your representative to support veterans by cosponsoring HR 4298. NEXT,

(2) Telephone your representative's office and ask to speak to the



*Congressman Mark Amodei  
NV 2nd District introduced  
HR 4298 and spoke at  
the VHPA Annual Business  
Meeting*

staff person who deals with veteran issues, making sure to get the individual's name before explaining why the representative should support the bill (note: you may be sent to voicemail; if this happens, call again if no response happens within 24 hours). NEXT,

(3) Check back on the status within 72 hours. If nothing has happened, revert to "angry veteran mode" and ask: Why? This is an election year, and you want to know why your representative doesn't have time to deal with a simple, no-cost veteran issue!

That tactic will get their attention and get them moving on the issue. NEXT,

(4) If your representative signs on, thank him via email, letter or telephone call. If they refuse to cosponsor, voice your disappointment and tell them you and your fellow vets will remember this at voting time (this tactic may reverse a negative decision).

By Bob Hesselbein

## VHPA 2017 CALENDAR

### Available for Immediate Shipment!

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new VHPA 2017 Calendar, hot off the press and available for immediate shipment. This is the 24th calendar produced by the VHPA.

The goal of the VHPA calendar project is to refresh the memories of all those who flew and worked on helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era, and to record, preserve and display the events and activities that were important to veterans of that period.

Each month features photographs depicting the machines & people that flew over Vietnam, plus detailed captions about what is pictured. This VHPA Calendar also commemorates the 2,165 helicopter pilots who died or whose bodies were not returned (BNR) from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-1975).

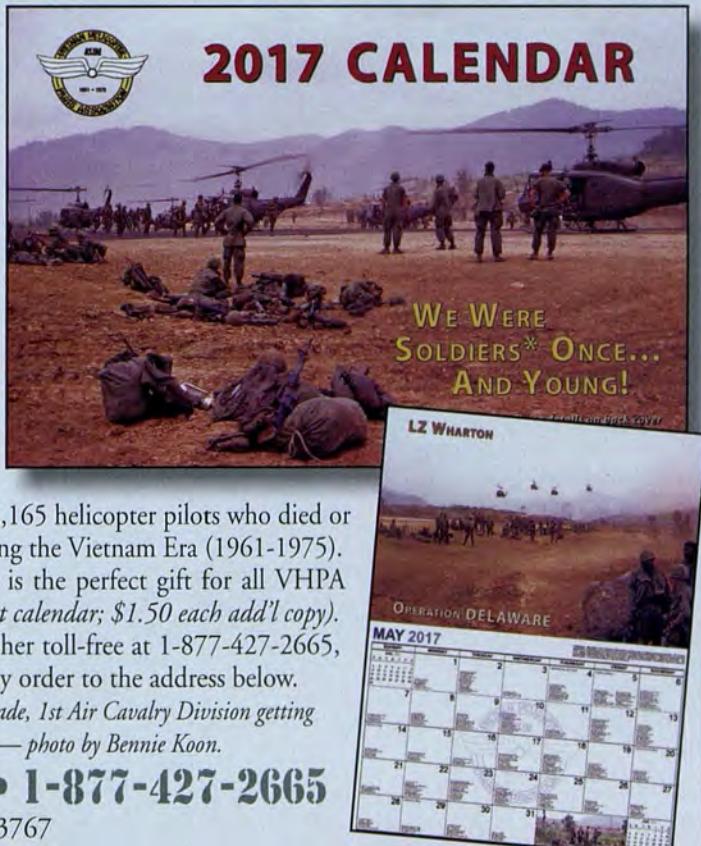
Printed in full-color, this 17x11-inch (BIG) wall calendar is the perfect gift for all VHPA members and their families. **Only \$14.95 - plus shipping (\$5 first calendar; \$1.50 each add'l copy).** Missouri residents add 6.225% sales tax. To order, call the publisher toll-free at 1-877-427-2665, visit online at [www.acclaimpress.com](http://www.acclaimpress.com), or send your check/money order to the address below.

*Pictured on the cover: Members of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 2nd Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division getting ready to leave LZ STUD for their part in Operation PEGASUS — photo by Bennie Koon.*



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# Site 85

By Robert Caron

Although long overdue, here is the story of my visit to Site 85 in early 1966. First, my apologies for the delay, I guess I have to fall back on the old, "No excuse, Sir!"

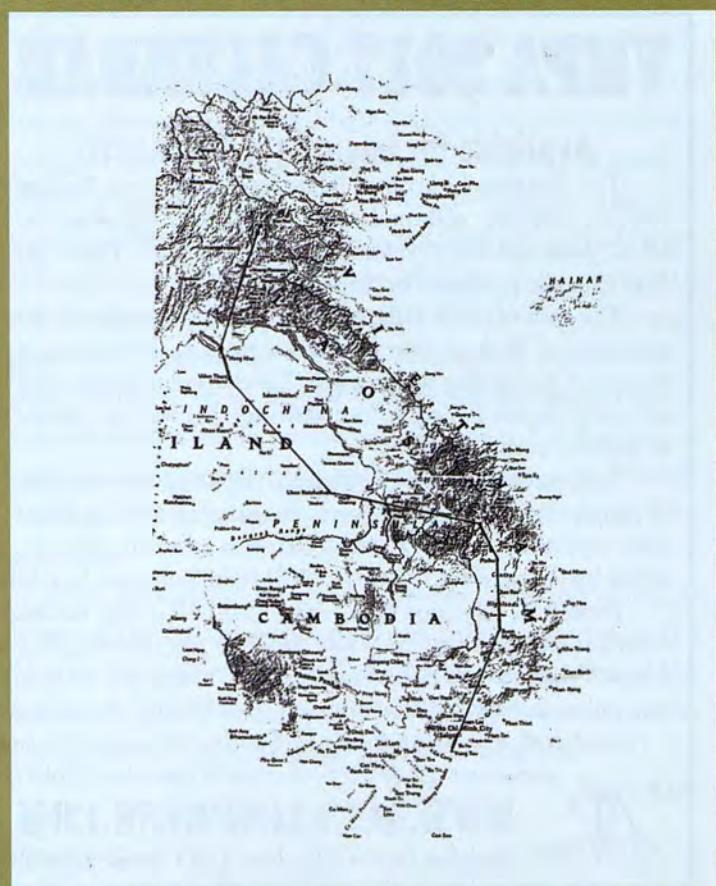
I arrived in Vietnam in November 1965. The CH-47 Chinooks came in late December by ship. We set up for missions - soon it seemed like we were supporting the world. In actuality though, we worked mostly in the Delta.

Then, one day this mission came down to go to Vientianne, Laos. The mission itself was unclear - something like, "...you'll get a more complete briefing on site." Our first thought was, "these guys must be crazy." Fly over an unknown country which holds unknown dangers: AAA guns, missiles, etc. Of course, we went and actually it all went quite well; logistics, communications were great. The scary part was flying over Laos. We had no idea what to do if one Chinook had a maintenance problem and had to land! Should we stay with it and try to fix it, should we wait for assistance, or should we just leave it and go on with the mission? Looking back this was the weakest part of the entire mission. Were there anti-aircraft guns at Attapu, Laos - indeed who owned Attapu? Later, when I flew with Air America, I learned it was controlled by the bad guys and had been for some time!

As you can see from the map, our route took us from Vung Tau, over Ban Me Thuot (famous for its hunting lodge where Teddy Roosevelt supposedly stayed), Pleiku, Dak To (a Special Forces camp near the Laos border where we refueled), Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand (where we refueled), Udon Thani - which we always referred to as Udon (where we again refueled and received more briefings), and then finally, to Vientiane, Laos. At Vientiane, we met our Air America escort, a Pilatus Porter which led us to Site 85 - the reason for our whole trip. This was the easiest part of the entire trip. We placed the TACAN (a navigational system which gives a pilot direction and distance from a known point) on the site and then moved fuel bladders around. We even had time for a photo showing me (you can get an idea of the height and steepness of the site from this photo - luckily I did not step back), and the Chinook moving supplies about. It is easy to see why the site was considered inaccessible. Unfortunately, like the Greeks at Thermopylae when fighting the Persians, the bad guys always find a way! Little did I realize at the time I would be back over there in 3 years flying H-34s for Air America - from nearby Plain d'Jars all the way south to Pakse and north to Luang Prabang.

Shortly after this we returned to Vung Tau, all without incident. All in all, it was a piece of cake. Our Chinooks came through in an outstanding manner.

I have talked to Richard Secord (he actually lives here in Ft Walton



Beach), MG Secord was responsible for the operation and safety of Site 85 and actually tried to get the ambassador to pull the personnel off Site 85 just days before it fell.

Now that I have put a lot of this in some perspective I am very disappointed that more was not made of our extraordinary mission in 1966. But as often is the case, successful missions don't get the same coverage as unsuccessful ones, e.g., the Desert One fiasco in 1980. I am sure the fact it was an ARMY mission had nothing to do with it !!!

The Conference at University of Texas at Dallas was a wonderful event. Had I known it was going to be that great, with the CIA involvement, the expanded discussion on Site 85, etc. I would have gone no matter. The truth is my wife and I were recovering from a very nasty bus accident and she was still on her back with fractures in her pelvis. Tim Castle's talk on Site 85 would have been, I believe, the perfect opportunity to expand on the Army's role in 1966. The chronological graph in the conference booklet suggests the TACAN was put in place in August but I'm sure we did it much earlier. I was back in Vung Tau in July involved in a nasty Chinook accident in which one of my good friends was killed. As I recall, we had returned from this particular mission a month or two before.

But I've gone on long enough. The Site 85 mission was indeed exciting but it is, as are the rest of us, history. It is so wonderful and gratifying that gentlemen like you are willing to take the time to preserve this part of our history and, yes, may I say, our heritage.

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**The Cub Inn** is a 5,000-square-foot log cabin that offers unique charm that blends our love of aviation with the great outdoors. Located in California's Sierra Nevada mountains just 25 miles from Yosemite National Park, our five guest rooms sleep either two or four people, and they all feature a private bath.

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# UPCOMING REUNIONS

## Army Aviation Reunion 7/1 BLACKHAWKS

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

Contact Fred Young ~ [REDACTED]

## 229 AHB REUNION

The pilots, crews, and members of A company 229th AHB are planning a reunion of those individuals associated with us from 1966 through 1968. The get together will be informal and centered around this year's Air Venture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin between **July 25th and the 28th**. Anyone interested can contact Chris Laskey at [REDACTED]

## BOX CAR / HERCULES REUNION

**Dates: 14-18 September 2016 (Arrive 14th depart 18th)**

Location: Double Tree by Hilton,

6000 Memorial Parkway SW, Huntsville, AL 35802

Reservation Phone Number: (256) 882-9400 (Direct) or 800-445-8667

King or Double Queen Rooms are \$94 per night (Plus Tax \$13.22)(King Rooms have a shower only while Doubles have a tub & shower). Extra days will be at the same rate. Specify "178th/132nd Reunion" when making reservations. The last day to register is 31 August 2016.

Hotel amenities include: Free Buffet Breakfast, Free Parking, Free Wi-Fi, and Free Airport Shuttle service.

We will be having our dinner on Thursday night the 15th at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. The 2015 food and drink menus are examples of what to expect. The Biergarten is open to the public, but they will reserve a table area for our group.

The CH-47 Program Manager's Office will provide a briefing for us on the latest information for the Chinook (date to be determined). They have also offered to set up a CH-47F static display for us to tour. The aircraft will be at Redstone Army Airfield. For us to gain access to the installation will require those that do not have a Military/DoD ID to be prescreened. This means that you and any other visitors provide the Reunion Host with the following information:

- Full Name with Middle Initial
- Social Security Number
- US Citizen (Yes/No)

Reunion Host: Monte McDonald

Phone: [REDACTED]

Visit the Huntsville/Madison County Visitors Bureau web site for

things to see and do in the area: [www.huntsville.org](http://www.huntsville.org)

NOTE: Please provide Name and Unit Affiliation of all attendees to Reunion Host, so name tags can be preprinted.

## VINH LONG OUTLAWS ASSOCIATION

The Vinh Long Outlaws Association will be holding its biennial reunion in Branson, Missouri **September 15-19, 2016**. The reunion is open to all former Outlaws, Mavericks, Bushwhackers, legacy units and support elements. Complete details can be found on the VLOA website [www.vinlongoutlaws.com](http://www.vinlongoutlaws.com) (Click: "Reunions") or contact Jim Donnelly, [jcdonnelly1@cox.net](mailto:jcdonnelly1@cox.net) for details and forms.

## Reunion for C company 227 ASHB 1 CAV

Water Buffalo and Ghostriders

**Date: 13-16 September 2016**

Location: DoubleTree Resort North Redington Beach, FL  
POC: Mike Rudd [REDACTED]

## 281st AHC REUNION

**October 6-8, 2016**

The 281st Assault Helicopter Company Association announces its 2016 Annual Reunion to be held in Fayetteville, North Carolina! On Friday morning at Ft. Bragg, there will be the dedication ceremony of the plaque recognizing the 281st AHC as the U.S. Army's first special operations helicopter company. The plaque is dedicated to all those who served in the 281st regardless of rank or job description. Bus transportation to and from the hotel and Ft. Bragg will be provided. Later Friday we have planned a fun filled evening with a buffet style dinner. Our Saturday evening awards banquet is always the highlight of the weekend. Don't forget the "Hospitality Room" that will be fully stocked with beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and providing lunches and late night socializing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There will be a book signing for "Above the Best" by Will McCollum and a famous guest speaker on Saturday night. We also have something special planned for the ladies on Saturday morning. All of this is covered by your registration fee of \$125/person.

The Doubletree Hotel has guaranteed us a special 281st room rate of \$99 per night which includes a free breakfast for two people per room, each morning. They will also provide shuttle service to and from the airport at no additional cost.

For reunion Info and registration forms visit: [281st.com](http://281st.com)

## THE 170th AHC REUNION AND MOMUMENT DEDICATION

**Location: Ft Rucker AL.**

Accommodations: Candlewood Suites, 203 Brabham Drive, enterprise AL. 334-347-0581

Rates: \$80/night on a first come first served basis. Book early  
Programs

**September 22nd** Welcome buffet at the hotel.

**September 23rd** Dedication Day, commencing at 10:00.

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

# UPCOMING REUNIONS

## FROM WOBBLY ONE to REAR ADMIRAL

The 281st Assault Helicopter Company will be gathering in Fayetteville, NC this October (see unit reunions page) where they will be recognized as the US Army's First Special Operations Aviation Company with the installation of a plaque in front of the US Army Special Operations Headquarters.

Many dignitaries will be present but one of the more intriguing names has to be that of Rear Admiral John E. (Ed) Boyington, a Life VHPA member.



The Admiral is, as far as anyone I talk to knows, the only person to enter the Army as a WOC (Classes 69-39 & 37), serve a tour in Vietnam flying UH-1C gunships as a WO1 (281st AHC, Wolf Pack 30), then attend Naval OCS, graduating in January 1973 and earning his Wings of Gold in December 1973. Along the way he served in numerous commands to include (and I'll just name a few) Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance force 7th Fleet, Commander, Iceland Defense Force, Commander, Mine Warfare Command, Commander of Naval Region south and Chief of Naval Air Training.

He was an instructor in the P-3 and a test and instructor pilot in the E-2, S-3, P-3, UH-1 and C-12 aircraft as well as NASA's QSRA and Tilt Rotor flight test programs. He has flown in combat in the Persian Gulf, Bosnia and Kosovo in addition to his tour in Vietnam. He's rated as a Navy jet, helicopter and prop aviator and has accumulated over 8500 hours in more than 90 different aircraft types. In his spare time he is a trustee with the National Museum of Naval Aviation. He currently serves as the President of L-3 Vertex Aerospace in Ridgeland, MS. I think it's safe to say the admiral has had a very unique military career and those of us who served in the 281st AHC are proud to call him one of our own and will welcome anyone who wants to attend the ceremony on October 7th at Fort Bragg, NC.

48th Assault Helicopter Company

48th Assault Helicopter Company

*Joe Kline Aviation Art*



## 10th Annual Blue Star Reunion

**November 9th – 13th, 2016**

Charleston, South Carolina

Holiday Inn, Charleston-Mt. Pleasant

250 Johnnie Dodds Blvd., Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Phone: 843-884-6000 Reservation Phone: 877-355-7693

Reunion Code: AHC

Reunion Room Rate: \$114 plus tax, includes breakfast each morning (Breakfast on Thursday through Sunday will be in our own private dining area).

The 48th Assault Helicopter Company and all of their attached and supporting units will hold their 10th Annual Reunion November 9th – 13th, 2016.

The 48th will establish a TOC on the ground floor, there will be complimentary on-site parking, business center, fitness room, full service restaurant and lounge, outdoor pool and complimentary wireless internet throughout the hotel. The guest rooms feature coffee maker with coffee, complimentary weekday paper, hair dryer, iron and full-size ironing board.

To make reservations call 877-355-7693 and use our Group Code, AHC. Make sure you identify yourself as a member of the 48th AHC to receive the group rate of \$114 plus tax. **MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY.** Rooms are limited but if we fill them all early enough, they will add more to our group block. Cancellations must be made 24 hours prior to your arrival date to avoid the first night charge.

If a handicapped accessible room is needed, please make sure you let them know your specific needs when you make your reservations.

*If you should have any questions or problems, please contact:*

Ben or Janet Gay at [REDACTED]

Carl Cortez [REDACTED]

Additional/updated reunion information and registration form on our website at: [www.48ahc.org](http://www.48ahc.org)

DON'T FORGET YOU CAN NOW JOIN, RENEW OR CORRECT YOUR PROFILE ONLINE.

See the Mar-Apr 2016 Aviator for an illustrated guide to these features.

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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

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

## Membership application/change of address

New application

Address change

Directory correction

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Add \$15 for printed Membership Directory \*\*  Add \$10 for Membership Directory on CD \*\*

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

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Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

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SERVICE BRANCH: \_\_\_\_\_

COMBAT FLIGHT HOURS: \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL SECURITY NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about each Vietnam unit:

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

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

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

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

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

# Legacy Endowment

Several years ago, the VHPA selected the Vietnam Center and Archives at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX as the official archives of the VHPA. Texas Tech was selected over military museums because it has a much more predictable financial future than military museums that are subject to significant government budgetary changes. Texas Tech is a conservative pro-military university. Their Vietnam Center and Archives are managed by Vietnam and other military veterans. Since that decision, thousands of documents, pictures, CDs, DVDs, calendars, directories, artifacts and four helicopters have been added to the VHPA Collection. More material is added weekly as members donate their personal collections.

The VHPA Executive Council (EC), realizing the Vietnam Center contains our legacy, has recently formalized and established an endowment at Texas Tech to ensure our collection continues to be available to the public in perpetuity. This endowment will fund part or all of a person at Texas Tech to manage the VHPA Collection forever. The EC goal is to achieve an initial \$250,000 within four years, primarily through member donations. It requires this level of funding to provide adequate interest (currently at 4.5%) to pay for a part-time dedicated person working exclusively on the VHPA Collection.

Your tax deductible donations can be made to the VHPA by mailing a check to VHPA Endowment, 2100 N Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050. To use a credit card, please call HQ at 800-505-VHPA (8472) during normal business hours. Those aged 70 1/2 or older can instruct your IRA custodian to transfer any amount up to \$100,000 per year directly to the VHPA Endowment. This would help satisfy your required minimum annual withdrawal and would not be in your taxable income.

By Gary Roush



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**Ned Crimmin**

**TSgt, USAF, Ret**

USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74

USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83

Tours of Duty:

1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

**VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS  
ASSOCIATION SATISFIED CLIENTS**

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

**KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT**

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

Good to  
see so many  
of you in  
Renol

## Vietnam Heli Operations

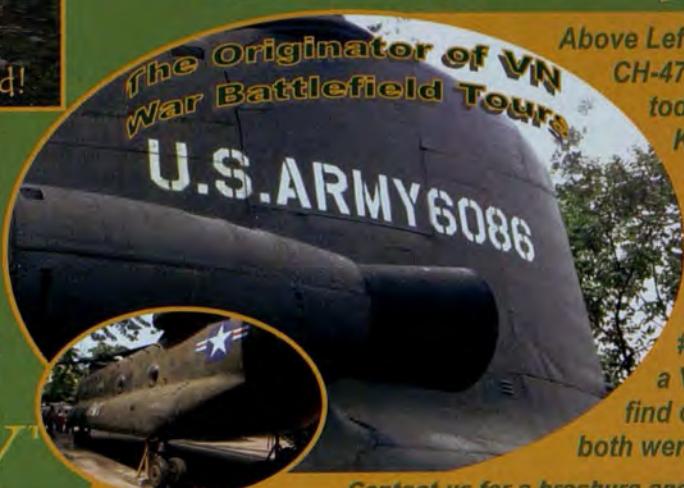
### "VHPA Rotorheads Return"

6 - 19 May & 19 Aug - 2 Sep 2017

Tour Historian: Bob Hesselbein, C/16th Cav

Tour Leader: John Powell, 1/9 Cav

Above Left: A  
CH-47 Chinook  
today at the  
Khe Sanh  
Combat  
Base. Left:  
CH-47 in  
Saigon has  
a bogus tail  
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a VHHPAer to  
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## ACE Book wins Bronze Medal IPPY Award



Photo credit: Rex Gooch

*May 10, 2016 -* Rex Gooch is a Bronze Medal Award winner in the 2016 Independent Publisher Book Awards (IPPY). Rex's book, ACE, The Story of Lt. Col. Ace Cozzalio, vividly describes Ace's heroic exploits while flying Army helicopters with Lighthorse Air Cavalry in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The annual IPPY Awards, with over 5,000 entrants, is the "World's Largest Book Awards Contest" honoring independent authors and publishers worldwide.

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www.vhpamuseum.org

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# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA.

Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (\*\*) ID new life members. Line 2, current city and state.

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

We welcome these 17 new Members to the VHPA!

All have joined our Association during the period from June 8, 2016 - July 15, 2016.

Ameigh Charles Josep \*\*  
Saint Peters Missouri  
Army  
67-3  
128 AHC in 67-68; 18 AVN in 70-70; 129 AHC in 71-71

Burt John C.  
Reno Nevada  
Army  
67-23 67-25  
HHC 4 INF DIV in 66-67; B/1/9  
CAV 1 CAV in 68-69

Clements Julian T  
Cornelia Georgia  
Army  
68-2

Conyers James D. 'JC' \*\*  
Kingwood Texas  
Army  
67-16  
178 ASHC in 68-69;  
1 RR in 71-72

Dantonio Anthony R. 'Tony'  
Hayden Lake Idaho  
Army  
69-8  
B/228 ASHB 1 CAV in 69-70

Easler Earl W. \*\*  
Bumpass Virginia  
Army  
69-3  
116 AHC in 69-70

Hayes Robert J \*\*  
Reno Nevada  
Army  
67-18  
20 ENG BDE in 67-68

Hites Robert D \*\*  
Yuma Arizona  
Army  
60-7FW  
118 AHC in 63-64;  
180 ASHC in 67

Irvin Stephen A. 'Steve'  
Grants Pass Oregon  
Army  
69-49  
D/101 AWC 101 ABN in 70;  
A/2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 70-71

Long Michael E.  
Gainesville Georgia  
Army  
70-25 70-21  
B/3/17 CAV in 71

Marsh Richard J \*\*  
Topeka Kansas  
Army  
68-523 68-43

Miller Allan H.  
Vacaville California  
Army  
67-13  
336 AHC in 71

Myers Henry J. 'Hank' \*\*  
Reno Nevada  
Army  
67-7  
116 AHC in 67-68

Rheinschmidt Tony R. \*\*  
Kennewick Washington  
Army  
67-9  
170 AHC in 67-68

Shields Michael R. 'Mike'  
Rio Vista California  
Army  
71-22  
201 CAC in 72;  
H/10 CAV in 72-73

Thompson Mitchell S. \*\*  
Moses Lake Washington  
Army  
69-49  
1 SIG BDE in 70-71

Walls James A. 'Jim' \*\*  
Louisville Kentucky  
Army  
70-16  
4/77 ARA in 71-72

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# VHPA Reunion 2016 ~ RENO NEVADA

The annual reunion was held at the Peppermill Resort and Casino. Because I did not interview anyone, the opinions of the venue are my own. The hotel and grounds were well maintained affording many dining choices and an attractive pool area. The staff was polite and attentive.

Mike Law and the HQ staff had prepared well and were kept quite busy for the duration. The local VHPA Chapter, California North, provided volunteers as well as bringing their Huey. This beautifully restored aircraft was on display in the main ballroom. Both attendees and the general public were able to view this part of history in comfort. The chapter provided members throughout the day to explain the aircraft and its uses and answer the more technical questions. The Old Dominion Chapter (last year's host chapter) contributed several additional volunteers to handle a variety of tasks. I'm sure I speak for all of the attendees in extending a thank you for their efforts to facilitate our enjoyment and provide support.

I have never thought it necessary to discuss all of the activities. For both those in attendance and for our members contemplating attending the reunion, a selection of photos tells the story as well. For the first time, all of the photos were provided by members or their guests. The professionals took care of the 'couples' shots.

## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Clyde Romero reported a functionally sound and financially healthy organization that does have some challenges ahead. The VHPA continues to upgrade the IT structure and capability. The organization is going forward with the legacy project, which is detailed elsewhere in this publication.

A quick glance at page two will reveal that Executive Council members have moved up one slot. The resultant vacancy, Junior Member at Large was filled by the election of Art Price.

Mike Sheuerman reported we have over 8,900 members, of which, 5,000 are life members. His committee continues to resolve incorrect addresses to assist in our outreach for additional members.

Congressman Amodei from Nevada's 2nd district, sponsor of HR 4298, discussed the Arlington National Cemetery monument progress and informed us that twelve co-sponsors have joined. See additional coverage elsewhere in this issue.

*The 2017 Reunion is scheduled for July 1st to 5th in Indianapolis, Indiana.*

## ON THE TOPIC OF NEW BUSINESS, THERE WAS A MOTION PASSED, DESCRIBED BELOW:

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



NAS Fallon



Ladies display their work.



Looping SLide Show of Prior VHPA Calendar Art



Art 'class' while the pilots attend the Annual Business Meeting.jpg



Parti Squires at information desk



Frey's Distillery Tour



Rustic Virginia City NV



Peppermill Resort a blend of classic and modern architecture



Taking a break in Virginia City



The Easy Way to tour Virginia City



Reception Desk Volunteers



Lake Tahoe Cruise



O Club



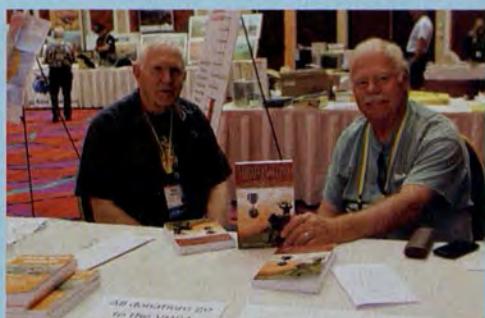
T-Shirt Central



Gambling is just one temptation at the Peppermill



Incoming President John Shafer Greeting members



The Aviator staff introducing the Final Flight of Curious Yellow



Quilts of Valor set up in the Vendor Room for the first time



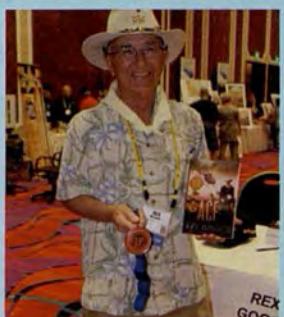
The spacious reception area at the Peppermill Resort



Vendor Room about to Open



Alaska Chapter Members Pose with Huey



Rex Gooch Displaying Publishing Award



The Huey in the Ballroom - Always drew a crowd

# IMPORTANT VHPA SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE AND INFORMATION

2016 has been a great year for VHPA Scholarships. The Reno Reunion registrations, Annual Business Meeting Cav hat passing, Golf tourney and other events provided over \$34,800 to our scholarship corpus at AAAA. Fifty-one descendants applied for our five \$3,000 VHPA scholarships (these applicants will also be considered for the 242 AAAA scholarships and grants). By the time you read this the scholarships for this year will have been awarded. We are hopeful VHPA will exceed the 32 awards our applicants received in 2015 totaling \$86,500.

Let's start thinking about 2017. Here are some steps the Scholarship Committee suggests you take in your application process.

- 1) Start early, don't procrastinate! January 2 is not too early.
- 2) Applicants are allowed two recommendations. Select these people ahead of time and ask for a copy of their submission.
- 3) Make sure the name of the VHPA sponsor is included.
- 4) Applications MUST be submitted and received NLT April 30. Request a conformation of receipt.

5) Sponsor must be dues current with VHPA or KIA in Vietnam while serving as a pilot of a helicopter.

6) Sponsor must be dues current with AAAA or applicant must be a dues current Associate member of AAAA.

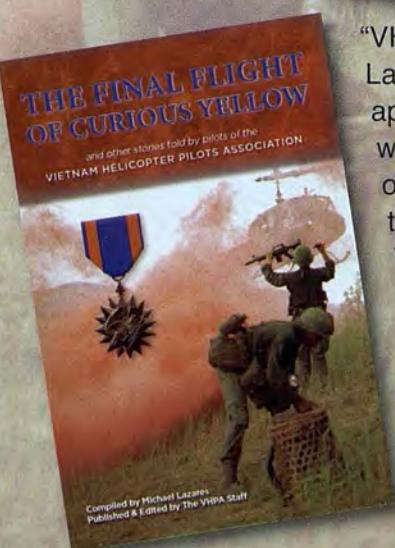
Guys, this is found money, our applicants are the best.

A comment and question came up recently concerning eligibility for our VHPA scholarship and the AAAA scholarships in general. Do you have to be ARMY to qualify as a sponsor? I'm a Marine and don't see donating to AAAA. Branch of Service means nothing in applying for these scholarships. Did you fly rotor craft in Vietnam? YES. Are you dues current with VHPA? YES. Are you or the applicant dues current with AAAA? YES. YOUR APPLICANT IS ELIGIBLE. APPLY!!!

Go to [vhpao.org](http://vhpao.org), scroll down to VHPA scholarships and follow the prompts. Feel free to call or email me with any questions.

Mike Sheuerman  
Fund Raising Chairman  
VHPA Scholarship Fund

## NOW AVAILABLE!!



"VHPA Member and author Michael Lazares, who passed away recently, approached the VHPA late in 2015 with an idea to publish a collection of stories which had been submitted to the VHPA and placed on the VHPA website. This would be something entirely new and extraordinary for the VHPA: publishing an anthology of 30 stories written by 28 VHPA members under our own copyright. This is an opportunity for the VHPA to tell the stories of the service and sacrifice of their members all

those years ago, maintain the legacy of our service, and use the profits to support the VHPA Scholarship Fund."

~ John L. Penny

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# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER  
Ben Treadway, President  
[REDACTED]

ALASKA CHAPTER  
Lynn Kile, President  
[REDACTED]

ARIZONA CHAPTER  
Bill Sorenson, President  
[REDACTED]

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH  
Ken Fritz  
[REDACTED]

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER  
Tom Mc Millen, President  
[REDACTED]

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER  
Ed Faught, President  
[REDACTED]

GEORGIA CHAPTER  
Bob Lanzotti, President  
[REDACTED]

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Victor Lent, President  
[REDACTED]

70  
Email: VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

MICHIGAN CHAPTER  
Richard Deer, President  
[REDACTED]

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER  
Don Abrams, President  
[REDACTED]

MONTANA CHAPTER  
Todd Brandoff, President  
[REDACTED]

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER  
Les Haas, President  
[REDACTED]

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER  
(currently inactive, seeking members)

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
Larry Pigg, President  
[REDACTED]

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER  
Pete Norman  
[REDACTED]

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
Tom Payne, President  
[REDACTED]

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER  
Don Agren, President  
[REDACTED]

www.vhpavirginia.org

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER  
Jim Miles, President  
[REDACTED]

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER  
John Wilkinson  
[REDACTED]

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER  
John P. Hargleroad, President  
[REDACTED]

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Sven Akesson, President  
[REDACTED]

VHPA OF FLORIDA  
Dr. Joe Ponds, President  
[REDACTED]

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER  
Dave Saunders  
[REDACTED]

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional  
Ken DeHoff - POC  
[REDACTED]

## Notice to all Members of the VHPA

For a limited time, liaison between the National HQ of the VHPA and the Independent Chapters has reverted to John Sorenson of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at [REDACTED]. Feel free to contact John concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## ALAMO CHAPTER

Neither our men nor our ladies met for lunch in July because of the national reunion in Reno. As of press time, future lunch meeting dates had not been set. Many of our members attended in Reno, including several for the first time ever at a VHPA reunion. This pleases us, and we certainly hope and expect they will want to be at future reunions. Some of our bank accounts are a little lighter because of the Peppermill Casino, but it was worth it. For the first time, the Alamo Chapter had its own two tables at the closing banquet. Again, we thank Vice President Jim Boykin and member Mike Law for arranging these tables. Some members chose to sit with their units, of course, and we have no problem with that. The executive council gave

us a preview of the schedule in Indianapolis next year. Let's shoot for three or more tables at that one.

Our chapter will meet at the Barn Door Restaurant in San Antonio in September, tentatively on Thursday the 22nd, for dinner and to hold elections for next year's officers. The exact date will be confirmed by email.

Our Christmas party is scheduled for the evening of Friday, December 9th, 2016, at the Army Residence Community (ARC) in San Antonio, beginning with cocktails at 1800.

Members should watch for e-mails and check our Chapter website [www.vhpala.org](http://www.vhpala.org) for details of future luncheons, the election meeting, and other scheduled events.

Chuck Oualline

## ALASKA CHAPTER

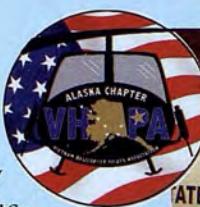
Another day in Paradise as the Alaska Chapter enjoys comradery and sunshine during events this summer in Alaska and Reno.

After a very wonderful Memorial Day event, the Halibut fishing trip was a total success. Great weather, calm seas, lots of fish and the company of a bunch of helicopter pilots made the trip a rousing success! Scouts out to find the fish, Guns to hammer and Chinooks to haul the big halibut out of the water. Everyone got involved and we look forward to the event again next year.

We had our best turnout to date for a Reunion. Big thank you to all who organized and setup the Reno Reunion as it was professionally and excellently done. The Alaska Chapter had a small but fun group of 8 members attend and added two new Chapter members during the reunion. Always a great place to meet friends and reflect on the common bond so many of us have. Many of us found classmates and others we had not seen for many years and had a great time sharing stories and updates at one of the Peppermill's fabulous restaurants. We also got to witness the wedding of Joe Riley at the reunion as he tied the knot with his Bride Deborah. You done good, Joe!

One very special event at the Reunion was the work of the Quilts of VHPA and Quilts of Valor. These hard-working women and their organization presented 8 quilts to our Vietnam Veterans. It is a very special activity and appreciated greatly by the recipients.

Never thought we could run on 6 hours sleep for so many days in a row anymore, but it was easy and fun .... if you have never been to a reunion you're cheating yourself out of a wonderful time. Again thanks to the VHPA crew who worked hard to put on a great show!



Alaska chapter members pose in Reno at the static display



Alaska chapter members Matt Kato, Jim Spraggins Cliff Brunsting are among recipients of Quilts of Valor.



Chapter Fishing Trip

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH (VHPA-CCN)

CCN has been very busy since our last report. On Memorial Day (30 May), we displayed our Huey at the "Corvettes and American Muscle Car Show" at the California Auto Museum in West Sacramento. Thanks to the California Auto Museum for sponsoring this annual event. There was a good turnout of Corvettes and other American muscle cars, as well as several vintage WWII jeeps and, of course, our Huey.

On 4 June, Huey 563 found its way to the Antelope Summer Fest in Antelope, CA. Thanks to Curt Knapp, Ken Lake, Mike Whitten, and Jim Stein for supporting the event. This was a display of vehicles at a park in Antelope from 1600 to 2000.

Things really got busy in June getting ready for the Reno Reunion. We scheduled 3 work days on 8, 14, and 15 to overhaul the Mobile Officers Club (MOC). Fortunately, it was not too hot! After 3 years of storage at Western Trucking School, it needed work! After major cleaning, replacing damaged window framing, getting the generator running, repairing the electrical and sound system, inventorying merchandise, and installation of many new pictures and memorabilia, we were almost ready for Reno. Ken Fritz arranged for the tires to be replaced on 24 June. The Huey tow truck also picked up new tires. A big hit to the "finance kitty"! Thanks to all who helped with the reclamation of the CCN MOC: Ken Fritz, Al Doucette, Ken Lake, Jim Barger, Jim Cunningham, Ed Morris, Dave Anderson, Curt Knapp, Mike Nord, Frank Kulhavey, and our newest member Mike Carr. WELCOME Mike! Sorry we missed pics for a few guys. Curt and Frank were on a Home Depot run for supplies.

Next was Huey Maintenance Day on 24 June at Ken Fritz's new farm in North Sacramento. This time it was HOT and outside in the sun! We managed to paint the rotor head and tail rotor assembly, detail the instrument panel, wax the trailer, add new weather striping to the doors, and a bunch of other small fixes. We even figured out how to mount the new M60s. They are not real, but sure look and feel like the real thing! Jim Stein, Ken Fritz (holding the M60), Mike Whitten, Dave Anderson, and Curt Knapp braved the hot sun and accomplished a lot. The Huey was parked in front of Ken Fritz's house. Thanks to Kendra Tires for donating 2 spare tires for the trailer.

### READY for Reno.

The big Reno Reunion event started at 0400 on 4 July as the MOC and Huey convoy headed out for Reno, NV. We

made our longest road trip with the Huey and both directions it came off smoothly. Thanks to Ken Fritz, Ken Lake, Curt Knapp, and Ed Morris for transporting the Huey and Mike Nord and his crew for transporting the MOC in convoy with the Huey both to and from the Reunion.

Many people asked



Huey 563 on Memorial Day. Jim Stein, Al Doucette, Jim Cunningham, Ken Fritz, Tom Inks, Ken Lake, Curt Knapp, Mike Whitten, and Dave Anderson. Ed Morris missed the picture opportunity.



On the Grass in Antelope.



The MOC Crew



Wanna Be Crew Chiefs



Exit from the ballroom - July 10th



how did we get the Huey into the ballroom. It wasn't easy! The opening was only 2 feet wider and 6 inches higher than the Huey on its trailer.

The CCN Huey and Mobile Officer's Club were hits at the Reno reunion thanks to volunteers Ken Lake, Ed Morris, Curt Knapp, Dave Anderson, and Mike Whitten who got in

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

the picture! Probably enjoying and helping at the MOC at the time were Ken Fritz, Marcia Fritz, Mike Nord, Jim Cunningham, Ed White, Tony Ennis, Jim Stein, Bud Martin, JJ Johnson, Leslie Lake, Russ Janus, Richard Waldo, Tony Ennis, Frank Kulhavy, and Mike and Donna Roulet.

Over 20 new or renewed CCN members signed up. Our appreciation to John Sorenson who thanked CCN for our reunion volunteers and Huey display. A good time was had by all! 'Till next year!

CCN just can't slow down! We are planning a BBQ at the Fritz farm on 6 Aug. We hope to have the Huey tow vehicle

wrapped to match the Huey color scheme and markings by the next event in the Nicolaus Labor Day parade on 5 Sep, followed by a static display at "Cruisin" the Pines" Car show in Grass Valley from 9-11 Sep, and another display at the Serrano Salute to Valor on 19 Sep in El Dorado.

Note: Lost & Found: Plastic bag with merchandise left at CCN Huey at Reno Reunion. Describe contents to Curt Knapp, [REDACTED].

Dave Anderson  
VHPA-CCN webmaster

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia VHPA Chapter rallied again at our home base, the Marietta Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo), on 23 July 2016. It's great to report that our



Georgia State Senator Mike Dugan on the left

member attendance for today's meeting set a record for 2016.

Our speaker for this meeting Georgia State Senator, Mike Dugan

(LTC Ret.) gave a great informative speech regarding his 20-year Army career in which he was deployed to 32 countries including Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. His superb presentation was followed by an engaging question/answer period that allowed soldiers of the past to dialogue on the topic of today's soldiering as well as a discussion regarding the current status of our armed forces.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 17 September 2016 at home base, LZ Romeo Romeo. Our guest speaker for this meeting will be Cliff Stern who served with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company during operation Lam Son 719, the largest US Army helicopter incursion of any war. Unfortunately, Lam Son 719 incurred the greatest losses in aviator and crew member casualties and numbers of aircraft damaged and destroyed. I was privileged to hear and see Cliff's power point presentation earlier this year and I must say, it is a polished documentary, professionally suitable for prime time TV.

Our Chapter nominee for the 2016 Quilts for Veterans was Bill McRae. Bill served as the GA Chapter president during period 2012 through 2014 and continues as a staunch supporting member. We are thrilled Bill McRae was named one of the quilt recipients. Bill was unable to attend VHPA's 33rd Annual Reunion in Reno, so his beautiful quilt, crafted by the talented Reunion Quilters, was mailed to Atlanta, arriving on 22 July and presented at our 23 July meeting. Bill, pictured on the left, is presented the quilt.

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



Bill McRae on the left is presented the quilt.



Bob Lanzotti, President

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

A contingent of Michigan chapter members participated in Lest We Forget at Benton Harbor. Vice President Dave James was the OIC and filed this report:



SITREP, 25 June 09:30 hrs: Dave James, Mark Benjamin and Mike Wyman were deployed to Benton Harbor Southwest Regional Airport. After establishing our command post next to Huey 369, we held our position in the face of the withering barrage of questions from the civilian population and other Vets. Never yielding and always out bloviating every other War Story we encountered. We mutually lauded each other's bravery at how extensively we embellished our tales.

17:00 hrs.: Operational changes proceeded for night securement of our gear and returned inside the wire for the night. During evening chow a surprise Escape and Evasion Exercise was enacted by Mark and Mike. Upon completion, Mark Benjamin generously rewarded all the participants.

26 June 09:00 hrs. Command post reestablished. Roger Blaha reported for duty increasing our combat effectiveness by 25%. At 09:45 Huey 369, who we were supporting, scrubbed their mission and returned to base, because of thunderstorms. Consequentially that also ended our mission. We decamped and each member was returned to standby duty. Communication was established with Jim Hunt who was to be deployed for afternoon duty. Jim was informed to continue his standby status. Although we only had two possible contacts, we aged aviators (mostly in denial) seem to be rejuvenated by the blade whop whops, the smell of kerosene, and stretching our credibility to the limit. Although success was intangible, I pronounce the mission was successfully accomplished.

Dave James Boomerang 20

Another Michigan Chapter Contingent participated in Operation LZ Michigan at the Wurtsmith Air Museum grounds in Oscoda.

*From Michigan Chapter VHPA member at large, Lee Luck, aka Captain Lucky.*

7/8/16

10:00 hrs Capt Lucky rendezvoused with chapter president Rich Deer and VHPA life member Ron DuBay (on detached assignment from Dubois, WY).

10:30 to 11:30 hrs after numerous obstacles which were overcome by the advance team, including cutting a padlock off the FBO access gate with bolt cutters, Huey 048 from the Wurtsmith Air Museum was moved to place of honor at LZ MI.

11:30 to 12:00 hrs CP set up with canopy, table, camo cover and chairs, displays and membership signup sheets. MI VHPA banner placed on port side tail boom of 048.



Lest We Forget Crew David James, Mark Benjamin, Roger Blaha, Mike Wyman



Operation LZ Michigan Crew Rich Deer, Glen Veno, Carol & Lee Luck, Mark Benjamin, Ron & Marcia Dubay, not pictured Jerry Wright

Lucky's OW Carol arrives with cold water, pop and brick oven pizza.

14:00 hrs MI Wall arrives with Motorcycle Escort

15:00 hrs Huey 803, (Tomahawk 11) arrives from Peru, IN

15:30 hrs Mark Benjamin arrives from Traverse City, MI.

16:00 hrs thunderstorm hits LZ MI, Huey 803 put in FBO hangar before storm.

17:30 to 20:30 hrs Lucky and wife joined by MI VHPA member Mark Benjamin attend opening ceremony and USO style show.

7/9/16

08:30 LZ MI resumes with following members present, Rich Deer, OW Terry and family, Lucky and OW Carol, Ron Debay and OW Marcia aka Shirley, Mark Benjamin, Glen Veno and new member Jerry Wright who stopped by later in the day to say hi. Mark set up US Coast Guard canopy to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Coast Guard aviation.

09:30 hrs Tomahawk 11 from the American Huey 369 Museum begins membership flights. Our CP was next to the staging area for Huey 803 and every time it took off and landed all hands had to stand to and grab a canopy pole to keep them from blowing away. The CP canopy was damaged in the storm and it had to be lashed to Huey 048's tail boom.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

11:15 hrs Capt Lucky flies left seat in Huey 803 with OW Carol and good friends John and Sandy Scanlon seated in troop compartment.

12:30 to 13:00 hrs Re-enactment of rescue of a pilot using Huey 803 and 0-2A

13:00 to 14:00 hrs Official Lapel Pinning Ceremony.

18:30 hrs CP shut down for the day. Rich Deer departs for home. Rich was our official photographer, thank you Rich.

19:00 to 20:30 hrs Bob Hope USO Show with Letters from Home America's Bombshell Duo.

21:00 to 22:00 hrs Candle Light Vigil.

7/10/16

09:00 hrs LZ MI resumes with Lucky and OW Carol, Ron Debay and OW Marcia and Mark Benjamin.

09:30 hrs Huey 803 resumes membership flights.

10:00 hrs Ron and Marcia depart for home

13:00 hrs Capt Lucky flies right seat in 0-2A USAF FAC fixed wing.

13:30 hrs Carol and Mark represent MI VHPA at the closing ceremony.

14:00 to 15:00 CP and Coast Guard canopy taken down and Huey 048 returned to museum hangar.

15:00 hrs Mark, Lucky and Carol depart for their homes.

Capt Lucky tried to say goodby to each member who attended by saying "have a safe trip home and report back when you get there."

*Thanks to you all who were able to attend this event.*

*Captain Lucky*

*Submitted by Rich Deer*

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

As usual, the North Alabama Chapter has kept ourselves out of trouble this summer by keeping very busy. We had a full schedule of exhibitions of our UH-1C - Buc 3.

On June 4th, we brought Buc 3 and our new project, a hulk of an OH-6A Cayuse, to the Huntsville Executive Airport where both aircraft are housed. The occasion was the 2016 Military Heritage Fly-in, hosted by our good friends and partners in Saving Our Flying Heritage (SOFH). Several thousand people got to experience these Vietnam Veterans.

Later in the month, the NAVHPA took Buc 3 to the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Redstone Arsenal, AL. Thousands of past, current and future Redstone soldiers and employees got to remember and reminisce.

Several of our members attended the National Reunion in July. But, while they were gone, several more towed Buc 3 to Fultondale, AL for display with the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall display. More thousands of veterans once again got to experience the UH-1. In the word of team leader and NAVHPA member Sam Maki, "We had plenty of folks stopping by to get in Buc-3. As always, they love the M-60. One of the gentlemen that really stuck out was the 94 year-old WWII veteran. He fought in the Pacific. He really like sitting in the Huey and, of course, had a lot of cameras taking his picture. If you haven't seen the Moving Wall, it is really nice. If it hadn't been so blooming hot, more folks would have stayed longer but the black top road was hot!!" Lest the readers think these events are all work, there was a group of young ladies



Exhibiting Buc 3 at Redstone Aresenal's 75th Anniversary.



NAVHPA members and some new admirers of Buc 3.

singing in the style of the Andrews Sisters who thought helicopters were "The cat's meow."

Our members enjoy the questions from, especially, the young people. We have collected some of their best questions below:  
"When you are flying



Showing Buc 3 to the kids makes all the work worthwhile.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

and someone gets shot, did you just throw them out of the Helicopter?"

When we show them the E6B and ask them what it is. They answer, "A compass." And "No Idea". We tell them "No it is a computer." With a puzzled look he replied, "We where is the Screen and Buttons?"

One youngster asked, "What kind of technologies did you have/use?" Our reply, "Well we call them a Pencil and Paper and a Paper MAP." Then we then show them the kneeboard. Modern children do not see these as technology.

We talk about the Sighting System that the Pilot of the C Model would use. "But in most cases we would use a

dead bug on the windshield or a more sophisticated method was a Grease Pencil 'X' on the windshield." Again, blank looks from the kids.

As many little boys look at the cockpit with big eyes they say, "Oh Buttons!"

But perhaps the question most asked by the 12 and under set is, "What button do you mash to make it go?"

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

## NORTHCAROLINA CHAPTER

June 1, a group of us were at the Grandover Resort and Convention Center in Greensboro for a Joe Galloway luncheon sponsored by the West Point Society. Joseph L. Galloway, most know, wrote "We were Soldiers Once...and Young", about the battle at LZ Xray, in the Ia Drang Valley.

NCVHPA went on a road trip to attend the Maryland Welcome Home Vietnam Vet event at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. The North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association would like to thank MPT and the Vets for having us in Timonium, MD on June 18-19, 2016. Six of our helicopters were brought together in Hillsborough, NC.

We "pulled pitch" at 9:00 am and headed out. Like all missions, nothing is smooth. Getting to Hillsborough our H Model had a blowout. Getting to Maryland our M Model had a blowout. The question I know you are asking is. "How many helicopter pilots does it take to change a tire?" The answer is five, or one if his wife helps. Brock Nicholson, while coming to assemble, had a blowout on the H Model trailer. Social-media reported a helicopter had gone into a ditch. Brock and Colleen got the tire changed and made it to Hillsborough, although it did take a while.

Mik Chuter was pulling the M Model through West Virginia when he had his blowout. Mik was second in the "chalk". The first Bird went on to Maryland; there was nothing he could do. Mik pulled off the Interstate and he, Terry Lanier, Ed Hughes, Jerry



At the Joe Galloway luncheon L to R Jerry and Barbara Seago, Brock and Colleen Nicholson, Jim and Joan Baker (standing), Ed and Claudia Hughes, Phil Keith and sons, Bronson and Brandon. Not pictured Doug Cooper.



Six of our helicopters at the Maryland Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran event.



tribute to 1017 veterans from Maryland killed in the Vietnam War. Past that was the Wall and us. Remember more than twice that number of helicopter pilots were killed in the war, twice again when you add the air crews lost.

We set up as normal; The Birds were there, and the people came. Many were Vietnam Helicopter Crew. All wanted to climb in the helicopters. Brock Nicholson showed the Governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan, how the controls of our H model Huey works. Brock had him flying in less than five minutes.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The road trip continued to Lewisburg PA, with stops in the Amish Country, a trip to the Harley-Davidson assembly plant in York PA. Men's bucket-lists should include visiting the Harley-Davidson, and the Corvette assembly plants. We have done both now.

Another addition to the Bucket-list is to fly a trainer helicopter.

Before we did the Lewisburg Independence Parade, we stopped at the Pocono Municipal Airport where Bill Mullens had arranged for NCVHPA to fly a Schweizer 300C. It is a new version of the TH-55 Osage. It was named after the Osage Native American tribe; student pilots nicknamed it the "Mattel Messerschmitt." I learned to fly in an old 1957 OH23 "Raven" but we all had a go at it. Jerry Seago, Brock Nicholson, Terry Lanier, and Larry Pigg each hovered, took off and flew, performed an autorotation, and landed. The IPs at Fort Wolters would have been proud of us.

The North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association presented our First Quilt of Valor, made by the women of NCVHPA to Mr. Bill "Moon" Mullen in Lewisburg, PA, in June 2016. The Quilt of Valor awarded to Bill, who many know as a past President of VHPA, was started in October 2015 at NCVHPA's participation in the Mum Festival in New Bern, NC. The day of piecing the quilt top at Claudia Hughes' home was directed by Colleen Nicholson, who finished the work on the top and bound the quilt for the presentation to "Moon". It was a genuine pleasure to have members of Moon's family, and his wife Maggie join NCVHPA for lunch and honor him for his service in Vietnam. We then participated in the Lewisburg Parade pulling five helicopters.

We quickly headed home after the parade. The five helicopters, the M Model Dust-Off went home after MD, traveling in perfect formation. It is a site to see the helicopters going down the Interstate. We went the long way to the events and returning home, avoiding the DC traffic and the I-95 route. A few hours after departing, and going



LZ3



The Governor of Maryland being shown how the H model Huey works.



Brock Nicholson and the daughter of Babe Ruth at the start of the Lewisburg parade.



Presenting Moon Mullen's quilt are Sandy Lawson, Barbara Seago, Maggie Mullen, Claudia Hughes and Colleen Nicholson.

into an Interstate rest area, Brock Nicholson pulling the H Model had a transmission failure. It failed right at the entrance of the rest area blocking everyone entering. We were able to clear a way for Jerry Seago to go around the helicopters and pull Brock and helicopter into the rest stop. Brock's truck had to be towed back to Lewisburg to have the transmission repaired. Brock's wife was transferred into another helicopter and the OH 58, and OH-6 continued home with Colleen. The H Model was towed back up the Interstate a few exits to the Army War College, at Carlisle, PA. The H model was parked under the protection of the School until Brock's truck was repaired and he could return and pick it up. We then returned to the rest area picked up the Charlie Gunship and Cobra and returned home. Sandy Lawson and Barbara Seago scouting the way. I take the time to share this with you to show how organized this group is. The unexpected is planned for and the out-of-the-ordinary becomes ordinary with the NCVHPA. Road trips are always interesting.

Jerry Seago took the Charlie Gunship to Valdese, NC, at the Waldensian Church for their July 4th Celebration, Brock and Colleen Nicholson, Larry Pigg, and Gloria Vandiver helped in the display.

Also, during the 4th of July weekend, Ed Hughes took the OH-6 to the Croaker Festival Parade in Oriental NC, and won the Most Unusual Float award. Ed also pulled the OH-6 in the Riverbend 4th of July Parade. NCVHPA has been busy this Quarter.

**Larry Pigg, President**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

In her honor the name of the Main Gate at Ft. Campbell has been changed to Freeman Gate. Retired Col. Bobby H. Freeman said in 55 years of marriage, he had never seen his wife Clarissa "T.C." Freeman speechless until 101st Airborne Division and Fort Campbell Commanding General Maj. Gen. Gary J. Volesky came to visit before he deployed for Iraq. Volesky told her of plans to rename Fort Campbell's main gate in her honor. "General Volesky came to our house last August and presented the plans to T.C. but we were sworn to secrecy because the rule is you can't name anything after a living person on the post," Freeman said. "She's not lost for words, but she was lost for words that day." Freeman said the day after T.C. died, Volesky called from Iraq to tell him he was welcome to tell anyone he wanted about the ceremony. Even T.C. had made the assumption that all this would be done after General Volesky got back from Iraq but when he called me, about 10 minutes later he called Scott Brower and told him giving Brower 14 days to get this done," Freeman said. Freeman said he had to beg off until Tuesday in order to get his chil-

dren and grandchildren back to the area for the ceremony. "It's a great honor to me and to my Family and T.C.," Freeman said. "T.C. did more for Soldiers and Fort Campbell the 30 years after I retired than I did when I was on active duty, so she deserved it."

Sadly Clarissa "TC" Freeman, 85 of Hopkinsville, KY died on Thursday, May 19, 2016.

Survivors include her husband Colonel (Retired) Bob Freeman US Army; her daughter Gil Roberts Chinigo (Michael), her sons: William Freeman (Pamela), and Robert Freeman; and her three grandchildren: Clytie Roberts Clage, Richard Freeman, and Sara Freeman.

Her accomplishments are too numerous to elaborate in this article but if you go to our website you can read about them;

The 2017 annual reunion is the 7-8 April. It will be in Indianapolis, IN, the hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn in Indianapolis and the banquet will be at the Indiana War Memorial. Check the website ([www.ohrivlz.org](http://www.ohrivlz.org)) for any new information.

By Robert Blair



Family of Clarissa TC Freeman at ceremony.

## OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association now has 88 members with almost 60 dues current. This summer there has been a meeting each month with various activities for not only the members, but also for the spouses and significant others. Because the Chapter encompasses the entire state of Oklahoma, the meetings are rotated between the Tulsa area on the odd numbered months and the Oklahoma City/Edmond area on the even numbered months. It is hoped this arrangement will encourage attendance by more members and prospective members who live state wide. The monthly meetings take place on the 4th Saturday of the month.

May 28, 2016

In May, the Chapter met in Sapulpa, OK at Freddie's



BBQ and Steak House where the restaurant happily provided a private room for about 25 members in attendance. After a short meeting, a presentation about the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells was discussed and

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

caps from the Museum were shown and sold out completely. In addition, President Tom Payne discussed the upcoming VHPA reunion in Reno and the request to contact the various Congressmen and Senators of Oklahoma to become co-sponsors of House Resolution HR 4298. Following the meeting, most of the group departed and drove 25 miles to Jones Memorial Airport in Bristow, OK where John Gaines had reported a company was buying surplus Hueys and Kiowas for rebuild and sale to law enforcement agencies as well as foreign countries. Thanks to John's previous contacts with the personnel at the facility, we were able to walk all through the hangar and the "hulks" outside the hangar. It was a very interesting place with lots of old memories and stories to be told by all.

## June 25, 2016

For the month of June, the Chapter met at Van's Pig Stand, a very interesting and historical place in the center of Shawnee, OK. The attendance was down a bit with only about 15 members attending. After a short meeting and a great big plate of pork and fries, many of the group departed and drove to St. Gregory's College on the SW side of Shawnee where they visited Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art and the special showing they had of military art. Not only was there military art, but many forms of Egyptian artifacts, and Middle East art and artifacts. It was a very interesting place on the beautiful campus of St Gregory's College. Many thanks to Sec/Treas. Rock Lyons for arranging for the places in Shawnee for the Chapter to attend.

## July 23, 2016

Back in the Tulsa area for the month of July, the Chapter again met at Freddie's BBQ and Steak for the meeting and lunch. At this meeting, the opening by President Tom Payne was held with a large US Flag that belonged to his father and had been flown over the United States Capitol back in the early 1970s. In addition Pres. Tom showed a "Bandit" flag from the 118th Assault Helicopter Company in Bien Hoa, Vietnam. The story about that flag was it had been stolen by several Australian radio technicians in 1964 from the 118th Thunderbird Lounge late one night and never returned until about 6 years ago. One of the Aussies had kept it in Australia for approximately 40 years. After searching the internet, he found Tom's email and told him about it and would be glad to return it! The flag is quite large about 3X4 feet. There was a small group who were able to attend the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa for a guided tour with one of the knowledgeable docents named Dick Clark! Dick Clark happened to be a Sigma Nu Fraternity brother with Oklahoma Chapter Member Gary Winsett at Oklahoma State University.

Finally, we would like to welcome to the Oklahoma Chapter the following 8 new members: Edward McKesson, Lawton OK; Dale Sullivan, Norman, OK; Mark Ison, Edmond, OK; Clarence Buxton, Ada, OK; Mike Brooks, Edmond, OK; Mike Eslick, Henryetta, OK; James Cooper Jr. Edmond, OK; Gregory Lamb, Pryor, OK.

Clear Left,

Tom Payne, President [Ka5hzd@att.net](mailto:Ka5hzd@att.net)

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

We didn't make the deadline for the July/August Issue of the

Aviator so I will do a quick recap. We held our April, May and June meetings at the American Legion Post #1. Because of spring snow, attendance at the April meeting was low. However, we made up for it at the May and June meeting with over 14 members present. Cliff Lawson also joined our membership. We had nominations in May for new chapter officers among our agenda items. Elections were conducted at the June meeting. Yours truly, Dale House, was elected President, Doug Neil-Vice President, Jim McNamee-Treasurer, Bill Bates-Secretary. We also created an Operations Officer position for our Museum, and Terry Olson volunteered and was selected for this position.

Among our summer activities: We hosted Honor Flight. The flight was a late arrival at Denver International Airport on May 2,



LtR Dale House, Bill Bates, Terry Olson, John Cunningham, George Mayl, and Rick Beaver at the Front Range Airport Hot Rods and War Birds Airshow.



John Cunningham is explaining to children visitors how to fly a Huey at the Longmont Air Expo.



the Museum set up at the 4th of July celebration in Golden, Colorado.



Members LtR George Mayl, Carl Cavalluzzi, Phil Lanphier, a Representative from the Denver USO, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Bill Robie, and kneeling on the right is Dale House

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

2016. Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, the event organizers, were joined by chapter members Terry Olson and Rick Beaver to welcome home the 123 Veterans of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam after their sojourn to Washington D.C. for tours and ceremonies. We had successful Museum exhibits at the Front Range Airport for the "Hot Rods and War Birds Airshow" on May 28, 2016. On June 25, 2016 we attended "Airport Expo" at the Longmont-Vance Brand Airport. On July 2, 2016 we had a Museum exhibit at Bandimere Raceway, and on July 4th, 2016 we attended the Golden Community 4th of July celebration. See the attached pictures for those events.

The following members participated in docent duties for those events: Terry Olson, Rick Beaver, Bill Bates, Dale and Candy House, John Cunningham, Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Doug Neil, Brian Wold, Walt Wise, Rick Overstake, Bill Robie, George Mayl, Al Harinck and Wife, Phil Lanphier, and Jim McNamee. We had a total of over 2500 guests who toured our Museum at those events.

## *Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:*

Future Museum Events are planned on August 13, 2016, at the Erie Airport for the Erie Air Fare, and on September 17th, 2016 as guests of the Broomfield Veterans Museum for "Broomfield Days" in Broomfield, CO. Weather permitting, we will attend the Veterans Day activities sponsored by the American Legion Hall in Longmont, CO on November 11, 2016, which will conclude our Museum schedule for 2016. I'll report on those activities in the November/December issue

of the Aviator.

We are creating a new web site and will make it more user friendly with more tabs to select additional features. Stay tuned for more information. Our current Web site is located at [www.vhparm.com](http://www.vhparm.com).

## Meeting Schedule and other Information:

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

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum; among these items are a chicken plate with the cloth holder our visitors can put on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. We are also looking for a Vietnam-era non-fireable AK-47. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: [RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com](mailto:RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com).

The Rocky Mountain Chapter held elections in June for the coming year. Elected were: Dale House, President; Doug Neil, Vice President; Jim McNamee, Treasurer; Bill Bates, Secretary.

## SO CAL CHAPTER

I now have SoCal caps like the one Mike Love wore at the DC National Memorial Day Concert. Thank you Tom Gaylean who donated most of the cost for the caps. I'll send them to you or wait until our next meeting on November 5th. The cost is \$10 plus \$8 box and shipping. 2 caps will fit in the box at no additional shipping charge. Let me know ASAP if you want one now. I also have 3 in tan color. Send me a check at your convenience. The few dollars we make will go to our chapter fund. My address is 26601 Brandon, Mission Viejo CA 92692.

SoCal Fisher House at the Long Beach VA is almost ready. Opening ceremony is scheduled for October 19. Some veteran families may be able to use it prior to official opening. It's a good feeling to see this beautiful 16 unit facility for veteran families to stay for free and know our chapter had a part in its completion.

Two of our members Ron Warner and Bob Piatt have been doing run ups on a CH-47 in Long Beach and have donated their pay of \$1500 to our chapter to be used for a future donation of their choice. Thank you both so much.

On Sunday, October 23 Our chapter will again have a information booth and share our space with Quad A at the Wings Wheels And Rotor Expo at Los Alamitos Army Airfield. Hopefully we'll be able to have a Army helicopter next to us.

On Saturday November 5, 11 am we'll have our annual business meeting again at the Elks in Newport Beach. A beautiful place for us to have a meeting with a great bar and on the water. I'll buy the first round.

**Sven Akesson**



Tenor Alfie Boe, Mike Love, and Gary Sinise at National Memorial Day Concert in DC.



Fisher House under construction.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The summer months have been a busy period, especially at the national level. Members of this chapter who attended reported that the 2016 Reunion was a great experience. The venue of The Peppermill Reno hotel was excellent, and the activities scheduled were thoroughly enjoyed.



2nd Quarter Meeting Attendees.

Local activities to this point this summer include the meeting held in St. Louis on June 11, and planning for the September meeting to be held at a location yet to be determined. The speaker will be John Clark, COL, USAF (Ret). He will be discussing his experiences as a P.O.W. in Vietnam.

The fourth quarter meeting will be November 5, 2016, at the Keeter Center at College of the Ozarks. Chapter members Bill Thompson and Len Rutledge participated in the Patriotic Education Travel Program to Vietnam in March 2016, sponsored by College of the Ozarks. They will give an informational presentation about the Education Travel Program and the tour.

Congratulations to VHPA South Missouri Chapter member and past president and Citizens Memorial Healthcare volunteer Jesse "Russ" Emory for being awarded the Veterans Service Award on July 20, 2016, by Missouri Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder at the healthcare center in Bolivar, MO. Russ was one of 34 Mis-

souri veterans from around the state to receive the 2016 award, which is given to veterans who provide exemplary volunteer service to their communities. Congratulations, Russ, for receipt of this well-deserved honor.

Thanks again to all the chapter members for their continuing support, and we look forward to seeing everyone in September.

John Wilkinson, President 2015-2017



Missouri Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder, Jane Emory, Russ Emory, Jean Morrow at award presentation.

## WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

The WSCVHPA enjoyed a large turnout at the reunion in support of newly installed VHPA President, John Shafer. The Chapter had an enviable turnout of 50 members and recruited a new member! The convention capped a very busy and successful year-to-date.

The general consensus was it was a well arranged convention, with a good site selection, well-coordinated activities and the most enjoyable and productive business meeting in recent memory.

The reunion also provided a great opportunity for attending members to reflect on the first half of the year and begin discussion of potential activities for the balance of the year. Our growing expertise in delivering and conducting static displays of our refurbished UH1D HUEY will be enhanced by further effort this year. We intend to provide continual educational information to the public by developing display boards to inform the public of answers to frequently asked questions using data and photographs.

On behalf of WSCVHPA members we would like to acknowledge and thank the entire VHPA staff for their hard work and year-round efforts in producing such an enjoyable and fruitful reunion. It was exceptionally well planned and executed.

Regards,  
Hal Thornton, Secretary, WSCVHPA

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**Brown, Charles T. Jr. USA**  
**LTC (Ret.) Flight Classes:**  
**55 FW/57 QC/56-11,**  
**RVN: 64-65 114 AHC/67**  
**A/25 AVN 25 INF/69**  
**USARV FLT DET**



Charles Brown passed away on June 19, 2016, at the Atria Senior Living Community in Bethlehem, PA. Born June 9, 1934, in Wilson Borough, he was the son of the late Charles T. and Mildred R. Hottenstein Brown. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of over 59 years, Lorraine V. Brown. They celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary on July 11, 2013. He was a loving son, brother, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Along with his wife, he was the owner and operator of Charlie Brown's Christmas Tree Farm and the Volendam Windmill Museum, both in Holland Township, NJ.

He was a 1952 graduate of Wilson High School, a 1970 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Omaha where he received a BA in Management.

He was an avid aviator who loved flying both helicopters and airplanes. He served for 22 years in the U.S. Army, retiring in 1975 as an Engineer Branch Officer. He was a Master Army Aviator with over 6000 hours of flight time in helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. He traveled all over the world and served overseas assignments in the Republic of Korea and France. He completed two combat tours in Vietnam. He was highly decorated during his military career, receiving multiple awards for service and heroism.

His awards include, but are not limited to the Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Soldier's Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Bronze Star (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), 41 Air Medals (one Valor Device) and the Army Commendation Medal. He loved the Army, serving the United States of America and most of all, he loved serving alongside other great American Servicemen.

His first civilian position after his military career was as Business Manager for the Northampton County Vocational Technical School. He then moved on to be a Human Resource Manager for Ecolaire Condenser in Easton, PA. He then worked briefly as the Business Manager for the Lehigh County Vocational Technical School. His final employment prior to full

retirement was with McGinley Mills in Phillipsburg, NJ, where he held the position of Vice President of Manufacturing.

Charles was an active member and officer of a number of clubs and organizations throughout his life. He was a member and former officer of St. Paul's III Lutheran Church, Palmer Township. He served as the President of the Lehigh Sportsmen's Association. He was a member of and served as a Director for the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association. He was a member of the Army Aviation Association of America, the Association of the United States Army, and The National Rifle Association.

He is survived by two sons, two sisters, four grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

**Colis, Gordon D. USA**  
**CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class:**  
**64-8W, RVN: 65-66 229**  
**AVN 1 CAV/ 69 - C/159**  
**AVN 101 ABN, Callsign:**  
**Playtex**



Gordon D. "Gordy" Coli passed away on July 7, 2016, in Reno, NV.

He was born January 6, 1938, in Valley City, ND, to Pete and Edith Myrtle (Tvedt) Colis. He graduated from Valley City College High in 1956. He was a great athlete and to this day still holds the record at Valley High for the most points scored in a basketball game.

He served in the Army for 29 years. A Master Aviator, he flew fixed and rotary-wing aircraft and was an Instrument Flight Examiner. His assignments included duties as: an observation helicopter pilot, a cargo helicopter pilot and a heavy lift helicopter pilot. One of his greatest achievements in the Army was being with the Executive Presidential Flight Detachment as a pilot who flew Army 1 for President Gerald Ford.

Chief Colis honorably served during Vietnam and earned the following awards for his service; Meritorious Unit Commendation, Master Army Aviator Badge, the Bronze Star Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Air Medal with 32 Oak Leaf Clusters, Presidential Unit Citation, Valorous Unit Award, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Vietnam Service Medal with 7 Service Stars, Humanitarian Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

and the Presidential Service Badge.

He married Zella Sue Thompson on June 19, 1997, in Las Vegas. He earned his Bachelors of Business from Cameron University, and at the time of his death he was the CEO and co-owner of A-OK Office Systems for the last 32 years. Gordy was a member of the Vietnam Veterans, the VFW and was a 32nd degree Mason.

Survivors include his wife, Sue; three daughters, a son, four sisters, one brother, three granddaughters and four grandsons. He was preceded in death by his parents a brother and a sister.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Vietnam Veterans of America, 1004 SW B Ave., Lawton 73501, or to a local food pantry of your choice.

Burial with full military honors was conducted at the Fort Sill National Cemetery.

**Chadwick, Donald J. USA**  
**Flight Class: 63-3, RVN: 63-64118 AML**



Donald J. Chadwick age 76 of Bloomington passed away July 2, 2016. He was preceded in death by parents Charles and Veronica Chadwick. He is survived by his loving wife of 54 years, Jane; two daughters, a son, a sister, and two brothers. He was a retired pilot for Northwest Airlines and an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War.

If desired, it is suggested donations should be directed to: The American Heart Association, American Cancer Society or the Paul Soderlind Scholarship Fund, c/o Tom Schellinger, P.O. Box 240928, Apple Valley, MN 55124.

**Charity, George O. USA**  
**MAJ (Ret.) Flight Classes:**  
**66-17/66-19**



George Oliver Charity III, 77, passed away on June 1, 2016 at Hospice El Paso Center for Compassionate Care. He was born in Charles City, VA on October 12, 1938, the only child of George Oliver Charity, Jr. and Audrey Bradby Charity.

George earned Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees from Virginia State College (now University), Petersburg, VA.

As a career military officer, he served in the United States Army for more than

# TAPS

twenty years, retiring in El Paso, TX in 1984. His service included two tours in Vietnam, during which time he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism while participating in aerial flight; the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement; and the Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight.

After retirement from the military, George taught briefly in the El Paso Independent School District before becoming project manager for a civilian contractor tasked with designing training materials for military technical courseware. Overlapping these endeavors, he spent almost 20 years teaching motorcycle safety for both the military and El Paso Community College.

A long-time, devoted member of the El Paso Five Points Lions Club, George epitomized the organization's motto: We Serve. He had the privilege of serving as the club's president and was the club's secretary/treasurer for many years.

His family, flying, motorcycles and photography were his passions. During his seventy-seven years he touched the lives of many who will carry fond memories.

George was preceded in death by his son, David Jemal Charity. He is survived by his devoted wife of 52 years, Laura Hendrick Charity; a daughter, a son and three grandchildren.

If desired, donations are suggested to: The Texas Lions Camp ([www.lionscamp.com](http://www.lionscamp.com)), the American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)), or to a charity of your choice.

**Conley, Samuel G. USA COL (Ret.)**  
**Flight Class: 69-47, RVN: 70-71 C/227**  
**AHB 1 CAV, Callsign: Ghostrider**

Samuel G. Conley Jr. went to be with the Lord on June 29, 2016. He had been a resident of Sierra Vista, AZ for the past 33 years. Sam was born at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC to Sam and Ellen Conley.

He graduated from the Augusta Military Academy at Fort Defiance, VA in 1947, then attended William and Mary College, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the University of Kansas. Sam was a Soldier from a long line of Soldiers, and entered the US Army in 1955 as a Second Lieutenant of Infantry. After assignments to Fort Carson, CO and Heidelberg,

Germany, he was selected to command the 611th Aircraft Maintenance Company at Cap Saint Jacques (Vung Tau) in the Republic of Vietnam from 1962 to 1963. Upon return, he became the Battalion Aircraft Maintenance Officer for the 101st Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. In 1966, he returned to the Republic of Vietnam, serving as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer for 147th Assault Support Helicopter Company at Cap Saint Jacques and the Aviation Plans Officer for Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam, at Long Binh. From 1968 to 1969 he served as the Aviation Plans Officer for the Department of Rotary Wing Aviation School, Fort Rucker, AL. He was next assigned to the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, KS, serving as the Division Aviation Officer for a year before assuming command of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry (Mechanized), known as the Black Lions, from 1970 to 1973. Great success in command was followed by a three-year assignment to the Pentagon as a Force Development Staff Officer, where he eventually became the Army Staff's key Action Officer responsible for producing the Program Objective Memorandum - the resource allocation document critical to all US Army funding.

Now known to all as the Army's premier Resource Guru, Sam was promoted to Colonel in 1976 and assigned as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Army Communications Command, at Fort Huachuca, AZ in 1979. The Army subsequently selected him as the Chief of the Manpower and Force Analysis Resource Management Directorate of the United States Army in Europe, where for three years he directed the changeover of the Army Divisions in Europe to the new Division 86 configuration, a colossal task involving innumerable manpower and force structure changes affecting every Army unit in Europe.

Sam returned to Fort Huachuca in 1983 hoping to resume his previous job as Army Communications Command Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development. When the Army Chief of Staff directed the Communications Command to radically transform itself into the all new Army Information Systems Command, Sam was immediately assigned to lead this effort. Following this assignment, and after more

than thirty years of service, he retired from the Army in 1985.

His awards include the Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, ten Air Medals, Master Army Aviator Badge, Department of the Army Staff Identification Badge, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and the Vietnam Service Medal with Silver Campaign Star for participation in the Vietnam Advisory Campaign, Vietnam Counteroffensive Phases II, III.

Sam was a life member of the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) and is a past president of both the Fort Riley and Fort Huachuca chapters.

Sam is survived by his loving wife Theresa of Sierra Vista; two daughters, three sons, nine grandchildren, and a great-grandson. Preceding him in death were his Mother Ellen Elizabeth (Lanham) Conley, his father, General Samuel G. Conley, Sr., his sister Alice Conley Merrill, and his uncle, General Charles Lanham.

Burial will be with his father, mother, and uncle, General Charles Lanham, in the Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, DC.

If desired, the family requests that you donate to either the Army Emergency Relief Fund ([www.aerhq.org/Donate](http://www.aerhq.org/Donate)), or to the Nancy J. Brua Animal Care Center at 6799 East Highway 90, Sierra Vista AZ.

**Davila, Manuel G. Flight Classes: 67-25/68-501, RVN: 68-69 192 AHC / 71 7/17 CAV / 72 142 TC CO / 72 73 AVN, Callsign: Tiger Shark 37**



Manuel Guerra Davila died June 24, 2016 at the age of 72. He was born in Kennedy, TX in December 1943, the second of four boys. Though his life was marked by careers in both the military and as a civilian, he doggedly pursued his first love of ranching in Karnes County. When working in Mexico City for SBC, he would return at every opportunity to tend to his ranch and his many beloved horses. As a young man, he attended and paid his own way to San Antonio College and St. Mary's University, only dropping out when he ran out of funds. He then volunteered for the draft, joining the U.S. Army in 1966. He did two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter

# TAPS

gunship pilot and was heavily involved in combat missions, twice being shot down. His last assignment in Vietnam was with the 192nd Assault Helicopter Company; he was later able to reconnect with this good group of men. Among his many decorations, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Air Medal. Not one to neglect his long-term career goals, he continued his education by working on correspondence courses during his "down time" between missions. He eventually earned his four-year degree while stationed at Fort Hood in Killeen.

When he left the military, he went to work for Southwestern Bell in San Antonio, where he was in management for 24 years. He worked in Austin, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, West Texas, Laredo and Mexico before finally retiring in 2000 to become a full-time rancher. He left behind: his father, Antonio Davila; his wife, Madelon Davila; his two beloved daughters, his stepson, four grandchildren, and two brothers.

He was buried in the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

**Douglas, Donald J. Flight Classes: 68-1/68 503, RVN: 68-69 117 AHC, Callsign: Warlord 15**

Donald J Douglas July 4, 1946 - May 3, 2015.

Donald John Douglas Jr. was the first child born on the 4th of July 1946 in Lakewood, CA, and except for his military service, he lived in California his whole life. He thought he had the greatest childhood, growing up with siblings and cousins and great aunts and uncles, when coastal California still was a collage of sleepy beach towns, and life in post WW2 America was prosperous and promising. He was looking forward to attending his 50th Reunion at Savanna High School in Anaheim next month.

During the Vietnam War he joined the Army, serving proudly as a helicopter pilot. Flying Cobra gunships was considered an honor, because these were usually the best pilots. As "Warlord 15" with the 117th Assault Helicopter Company, he qualified and flew several missions in Cobras, but shortly, their unit reorganized and he was assigned to a Huey UH-1B, (with Annie Fanny on the nose) and immediately knew he was called to be a Rescuer. Returning to the States, he trained other helicopter pilots facing service in Vietnam, and later flew with

the National Guard.

After the Army, he co-owned a recreational vehicle service and supply business with his father in Orange County, did international trade with the People's Republic of China, and owned a small fast food restaurant. But above all, he was called to serve God. First as an Elder, then as a Pastor, his heart was always inclined toward loving God's flock. His 35 plus years in Men's Ministry meant more to him than his Distinguished Flying Cross, and he was with his men when that big heart betrayed him.

He could fly anything with rotors or propellers (actually, he went gliding, and that craft had neither), drive anything he could fit those long legs into (he owned 5 fire trucks, but we wouldn't let him have a tank!), fix anything that was broken and teach anyone who would listen.

He loved to fly. Flying was pretty much his only passion, until he met and married Linda. On March 1, 1975, he said "I do" to not just a bride, but to three small children as well. Throughout the years, he considered raising and loving them his greatest joy and proudest achievement, and more recently thrilled at watching his six grandchildren grow, knowing they would be his legacy, and just enjoying being "Grandpa."

He leaves his wife of 40 years, Linda; two daughters, one son, six grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

He loved his wife, his family, his friends, his country and his Lord, and faithfully served them all. He was a man of character, of humility, of integrity: a truly good man. He was our hero. He was the best of us. He just left us far too soon.

**Drake, James M. II USA  
COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 71-10, RVN: 71-72 173  
AHC**

James Drake passed away on June 7, 2016. Jim attended Eastern Kentucky University where he enrolled in the Army ROTC program and was heavily involved in Pershing Rifles. He completed his education at EKU in 1969 as a Distinguished Military Graduate and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Army. He served proudly on active duty for nearly ten years. His service took him to Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Later, he served in various stateside duty stations including Fort Knox, Fort Sill, and

Fort Lewis. Jim discovered an opportunity to serve his nation as well as the Commonwealth and joined the Kentucky National Guard in 1978. He served in numerous assignments in both Field Artillery and Aviation branches.

His last assignment was on the Adjutant General's staff as the Director of Personnel. COL Drake retired on April 30, 1995, with more than 26 years of military service. His numerous awards and decorations included the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Master Army Aviator Badge, Air Assault Badge, Ranger Tab and Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Jim loved music. In particular, he enjoyed brass bands and American March music. He was quite an accomplished tuba player.

He is survived by his wife of 33 years, Ruth Eaton Drake; two sons, two daughters, six grandchildren, and two brothers, COL Drake will be interred at Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff, KY, at a time to be determined.

**Fisher, Wayne L. Flight  
Class: 70-42, RVN: 71 -  
C/7/1 CAV-72 3/17 CAV,  
Callsign: Comanche 5**

Wayne Fisher Sr. 68, of Slidell, LA, passed away on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, in Slidell. He was a native of Charleston, SC and a resident of Slidell since 1981.



After graduating from The Citadel in South Carolina, Wayne served in the US Army during his tours in Vietnam. In civilian life he volunteered as a fireman and served with the St. Tammany and Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Offices. While he was a distinguished pilot with over 18,000 hours of flying time, Wayne's true passion was serving Jesus Christ through his local church. He recognized he was not promised tomorrow and chose to spend as much time as possible sharing with others the news about salvation through Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

He is survived by his wife Kim; a daughter, three sons, and four grandchildren. Donations, if desired, are suggested to Haven of Hope Africa in care of Ireland Outreach International, Box 1772 Waterloo IA 50705-1772.

Burial was conducted in the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery.

# TAPS

**Fitzgerald, Edward J. USA  
Flight Class: 66-12, RVN:  
498 MED CO**

Edward Joseph FitzGerald's physical life ended on June 15, 2016 after a short but arduous battle with cancer. He was surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and brother allowing him to pass peacefully and to continue on in his spiritual journey. Ed Jr. was born on May 3, 1943 in Jackson Heights, NY to Edward and Dorothy (DeChiara) FitzGerald. He lived on Long Island, graduating from Chaminade High School and continuing his education at Providence College. He was accepted into the first ROTC Aviation program and became a skilled helicopter pilot. He served over four years in the Army Medical Service as a Medevac pilot.

During the Vietnam War, Ed flew hundreds of rescue missions, logging thousands of flying hours and saving countless lives, all while risking his own. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, (military decoration for heroism on aerial duty.) Upon discharge, Ed and his family moved to California, endured the 1971 San Fernando earthquake, and then relocated to central Connecticut. He was employed by AETNA Life and Casualty Insurance Company in Hartford, while continuing to fly helicopters with the CT Army National Guard. After retirement, Ed worked part-time jobs in Rhode Island and Georgia.

Ed's quick sense of humor and smile were contagious. He was an avid reader, very competitive card player, quick with the English language, and a lifetime New York Yankees fan. Ed was a truly humble, kind, generous man who loved to laugh, held us when we cried and reached out to assist anyone in times of need. He was the calm in a storm or crisis, and a man of great patience. We were all truly blessed to have had Ed in our lives, and to have been a part of his life.

He is survived by his wife Jacqueline; former spouse Elizabeth Kopko, three daughters, three sons, nine grandchildren, and a brother.

He was interred in the Veterans Cemetery in Exeter, RI. Charitable donations may be made to:  
The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign PO.Box 303 - Prince Station, New York NY 10012-0006  
Web: [wwwvn-agentorange.org/index.html](http://wwwvn-agentorange.org/index.html)



or St. Joseph's Catholic School - Baltic 10 School Hill Rd, Baltic CT 06330.

**Frierson, Donald M. USA  
COL (Ret.) Flight Class:  
66-4, RVN: D/1/10 CAV  
4 INF - C/16 CAV 13  
CAB, Callsigns: Shamrock  
26 / Dark Horse 6**

Donald M. Frierson passed away in his home on Sunday February 7, 2016.



He was born in New Orleans, LA, was raised and schooled in Alabama, was stationed in numerous places as a military man, and retired to his home in Coden, AL. Don graduated from the University of Alabama in 1961 with a BS degree in political science and in 1972 with a Master's degree in history and political science. He was an avid Tide fan and celebrated this year with Alabama as National Champion and producer of a Heisman winner. Colonel Frierson served in the United States Army as an infantry officer in Korea, an aviator and commander in Vietnam, an exchange officer in Ottawa, Canada, an aviation division commander and a battalion commander at Fort Rucker, AL, and retired as a regional recruiting commander at Ft. Gillem, GA. For his achievements throughout his career, Colonel Frierson was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Korea Defense Service, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal/60, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry/60, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation (2 OLC), Republic of Vietnam Service (2), Air Medal (24) w "V", Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal (2 OLC), Silver Star, Master Army Aviation Badge, Commendation Medal Joint Services, and Canadian Forces Pilot Badge.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Beverly Atkins Frierson; his two daughters, a son, and three grandsons.

**Graham Ralph W. USA (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-19, RVN: 69-70 195 AHC, Callsign: Thunder Chicken 23**

Ralph William Graham, 67 of Bumpus Mills, TN passed away on Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at his residence. He was born July 23, 1948 in Indiana, son of the late Keith and Dorothy Porter Graham. Mr. Graham retired after 23 years in the U.S. Army as a

helicopter test pilot, a photographer, and worked for Lockheed Martin as a maintenance test pilot.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death his brother, Roger Graham. Survivors include his wife, Christine Hughes Graham, Bumpus Mills, TN; one, son, two daughters, eight grandchildren, and a brother.

Memorial contributions may be made by donating to cancer research at [www.gifts.duke.edu/dci](http://www.gifts.duke.edu/dci).

**Hewlett, George P. USA MAJ (Ret), Flight Classes: 64-3FW/  
65-1QB. RVN: 66-67 281  
AHC, 67 A/9 AVN 9  
INF, 72-73 F/9 CAV 1  
CAV, Callsigns: Mardi  
Gras / Saber 6**



George P. Hewlett passed away February 3, 2016 in The Villages, FL, with his loving wife of 55 years, Barbara, at his side. George was born October 26, 1939 in Philadelphia, PA. He was raised in Frankfort, PA and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1957. Upon graduation, he attended Penn State University for two years before joining the Army.

He joined the Army in 1960 and was a paratrooper with the 82nd ABN DIV for two and one-half years before applying for Officer Candidate School. He was accepted to OCS in January 1963 where he graduated and was commissioned in June of 1963 as an Armor Officer. Upon graduation from OCS he went to the Armor Officer Basic Course and then on to Flight school at Fort Wolters TX and Fort Rucker, AL. He attended his Armor Advance Course at Fort Knox in 1969 to 1970.

His first assignment out of Flight School was in Germany as a troop commander in the 3rd ID. He then went on to his first tour in Vietnam. From 1967 to 1969 he had various flight assignments at Hunter Army Airfield. From 1970 to 1971 he attended the University of Tampa for his degree completion.

In March 1972, he went back to Vietnam on his second tour. George commanded during the Battle of An Loc where the troop first encountered SA-7 heat seeking missiles. The troop lost its first Cobra and crew to an SA-7 in April and had two more Cobras shot down with SA-7s later that year.

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year. During George's tenure as the troop commander he developed a reputation for never leaving one of his men on the ground. He flew Command and Control on an almost daily basis to ensure his air crews would be rescued if shot down. He had the opportunity to rescue at least a dozen crews during his 12 months of command. Upon his return to CONUS, George rounded out his career with FORSCOM Headquarters at Fort McPherson, GA and Recruiting Command in the Atlanta area.

George's awards during his two tours in Vietnam include the Distinguished Flying Cross with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and 52 Air Medals, several with V device. He will always be remembered by his troops for his heroic actions to rescue his air crews when they had been shot down by enemy fire.

After retirement from the Army in 1980, George became a general manager for Eckert Drug stores for many years and thirteen years with the United States Post Office. He finally retired in 1999 in the Atlanta area and in 2004 moved to The Villages, FL where he and his lovely wife enjoyed golf and many other activities offered there. George is survived by his wife of 55 years, Barbara; his son, daughter, and grandson.

**Isenburg, Donald E. USA (Ret.) Flight Classes: 68-1/68-503, RVN: 68-69 175 AHC, 69-70 20 ENG BDE, Callsigns: Outlaw 15 / Castle**



Donald E. Isenberg, 67, of rural Charlottesville, died unexpectedly, Monday, June 13, 2016 at Hancock Regional Hospital. He was born September 14, 1948 in Greencastle to the late Roy and Bernedine (Hubbard) Isenberg.

He was a retired ironworker, Local 22, Indianapolis and retiree of the Indiana National Guard after 20 years of service. He was a decorated combat Veteran earning a Bronze Star and 51 combat air medals.

He was raised and lived his entire life on a farm and was a member of the Gideons International where he served as Camp Chaplain for Hancock County. He

attended Brown's Chapel Wesleyan Church. He read and studied the Bible, enjoyed spending time with his family, friends, neighbors and visiting friends in nursing homes. In his retirement, he restored his grandfather's John Deere, 1936 "B" tractor.

Survivors include his wife of 39 years, Bonita (Dailey) Isenberg; three daughters, two brothers, and a sister Roxie

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a daughter, Anna and a brother, Kenneth.

Memorial contributions may be directed to Gideons International, PO Box 140800, Nashville, TN 37214-0800, Mays Community Academy, PO Box 188, Lewisville, IN 47352 or a charity of the donor's choice.

**Note: We were informed of Donald's passing by a retired Air Force pilot who was rescued by him in 1968 in IV Corps. Ed**

**Keller, Floyd H. USMC LTC (Ret.), RVN: 62 VMO-2, 67-69 HMM-262, Callsign: Tiger Leader**

Floyd H. Keller, a decorated Marine pilot, enthusiastic Shriner, loving husband, Dad and Grandpa passed away July 24, 2016. He was 80 years old.

Floyd was born September 23, 1935 in Punxsutawney, PA to the late Hestor B. and Guiyah Keller. He spent his early years with his brothers, Harold and Bob, and sister, Helen, on their dairy farm. He graduated from Punxsutawney High School, class of 1952.

After high school he attended Penn State University for two years, then joined the Naval Cadet Program. Upon graduation in 1957 he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps and designated a Marine Aviator.

Floyd married his high school classmate Velma (Babe) Harl in October 1959. They happily shared 53 years of marriage together before her death.

During his Marine Corps career, he served as helicopter pilot for four tours in Vietnam. After Vietnam he served at various squadrons throughout the U.S., eventually joining the White

House Support Squadron HMX-1 where he served as Presidential Command Pilot for five years during the terms of Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter.

In the course of his 20-year career with the Marine Corps, Floyd received many decorations and awards including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Bronze Star, and 24 Strike Flight Mission Awards. He was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star for his actions under fire.

In 1977, Floyd and his family settled in Grand Junction, where he became involved in many projects and activities. He was an active member of the United Methodist Church, holding many committee posts. He was a Masonic member of Scottish Rite, Shriners and Jesters of #136 Denver, CO where he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Shriners Hospital for Children and served as the Circus Chair and with the Scooter Patrol. His time spent with his Jester brothers held a special place in his life.

Floyd had a wonderful, mischievous sense of humor which he shared often with his friends and family. He loved listening to Dave Brubeck Jazz and enjoyed dancing to the music with his wife Babe. Floyd was first and always an officer and a gentleman.

He is survived by his two daughters; and five grandchildren, one great-grandson and a brother.

His wish was that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to Shriners Hospital for Children, 1275 E. Virginia ST Salt Lake City, UT 84103 or to Hope West 3090B N. 12th ST Grand Junction, CO 81506.

**Lent, Paul E. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 68-21/68-29, RVN: 69-70 176 AHC, 71-72 ACT 11ACR, 72 D/229 AHB, 72-73 F/9 CAV, Callsigns: Musket 37 / Red 9 / Smiling Tiger 39 / Flashing Saber 26**



Paul Lent passed away May 16, 2016 at his home in Adkins, TX. Paul was born January 16, 1947 in Cooperstown, NY. He grew up in Richfield Springs, NY. He graduated from Richfield Springs High School in 1965 where he excelled in football and

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other sports. He went on to Oswego University for a couple of years, was a member of the Delta Kappa Kappa fraternity, the swim team and private flying club. His desire to fly overcame him and he decided to join the Army and apply for flight school.

He joined the Army in September 1967 during the height of Vietnam and was accepted for Warrant Officer Candidate School to become an Army aviator. Upon graduation, he received an AH-1G Cobra transition in route to Vietnam. He spent the next two and a half years flying Cobras. During his extended tour he was awarded a direct commission to 1LT as an Armor Officer and promoted to Captain before his return to CONUS.

Paul's military education began with flight school in 1968 at Fort Wolters, TX and Ft Rucker, AL with a transition into Cobra helicopters at Hunter Army Airfield. He is also a graduate of the Armor Officer Advance Course and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS. His civilian education includes a Bachelor of Science degree from Troy State University in 1975, a Master Science and System Management from the University of Southern California in 1980, and a Master of Arts degree in Management Information Systems in 1988 from Webster University. Paul retired after 22 years in the Army serving in various command and staff positions throughout the Continental United States, Alaska, and Southeast Asia. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross w/ 3OLC, the Bronze Star w/ 2OLC, the Meritorious Service Medal w/ 2OLC, the Air Medal w/ 77 OLC, 5 w/ V Device, and the Army Commendation Medal w/ 3OLC.

After retirement in 1990, Paul began his civilian career with Veco, Incorporated in Prudhoe Bay, AK where he dealt with oil field materiel management. From 1991 – 1993 he worked as Director for Spectrum Management Group and MIS Operations and Business in San Antonio, TX. From 1993 to 1994 he was the Manager for Business Development for Dakota Technologies Group in San Antonio, TX. In 1994 he began his overseas assignments with Vinnell/Arabia Corporation in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia until 2004. In 2005, he worked as Manager and then Director with CSA/ISD in Kuwait until 2008. He was

accompanied by his wife Rosemarie throughout his military and civilian career.

Paul is survived by his lovely wife of 43 years Rosemarie; three sons and grandchildren.

**Miller, Ron USA MAJ (Ret.)** Flight Class: 60-9 RVN: 66 162 AHC, 66 116 AHC, 68 1 CAV DIV, 68 120 AHC, 72-73 1 AVN BDE, Call-sign: Copperhead 16

Ron Miller, 78, of Jonesboro, departed this life on Tuesday, June 28, 2016, at St. Bernards Medical Center in Jonesboro. He was born January 20, 1938, in West Ridge, AR.

Ron graduated from Mississippi County High School in 1955 and Arkansas State College in 1959 with a Bachelor's degree in Social Science and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

He became a highly accomplished military pilot, flying a Huey Helicopter Gunship during three tours in Vietnam. His lengthy list of military achievements during his 24-year career includes two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars and 21 Air Medals.

Ron was a Master Aviator, and rated in multi-engine aircraft including the Beechcraft Baron, the King Air and Queen Air.

Ron retired in Atlanta, GA, and shortly thereafter the dedication of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) was scheduled to be dedicated at 11:00 a.m. on November 14, 1982. Having served three years in combat, Ron knew he had to be at the Wall's dedication to honor his many friends who had lost their lives during that war. On November 14th, almost 300 Vietnam Veterans from Atlanta, Georgia, joined the many thousands at the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial - it was an incredible program which began the national reconciliation between the American people and those who served there.

Shortly thereafter, President Ronald Reagan appointed Ron as the Executive Director of the Georgia Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program, Inc., a very successful state program that placed over 3000 veterans in full-time career positions and captured over \$100 million in SBA Direct

and bank-guaranteed loans.

During the next 13 years, Ron and his team earned many awards and trophies for their outstanding work with veterans and their families. President George H.W. Bush awarded Ron and his team with President Bush's Thousand Points of Light Award at Disney World Headquarters.

In 1986, Ron contacted Bob Hope and convinced him to perform a special show at the historic Fox Theater in Atlanta. The "Salute to Bob Hope" was standing room only and at the end of the performance, Ron Miller read a telegram to Mr. Hope from President Reagan, who thanked him for his decades of service to our great country.

In 2002, Home Box Office, Inc. selected Mr. Miller to be the Master of Ceremonies for the world premiere of the HBO movie, "Path to War" in Atlanta. Later that year, it won the Golden Globe Award in Los Angeles.

In 1993, Ron was selected as Associate Producer of the Vietnam POW documentary, "Beyond Courage-Surviving Vietnam as a POW." The documentary took six former POWs back to the prison camps in North Vietnam. This is the only production company to film in the infamous Hanoi Hilton POW Camp prior to it being torn down. Ron dedicated his life to assisting veterans at the local, state and national levels. He established a scholarship program for selected freshmen cadets at Arkansas State University who may need financial support.

Ron has been very active with the National League of POW-MIA Families of Southeast Asia and has visited with the Recovery Headquarters in Hawaii and Vietnam. He was active with the League for several decades and had served as the National Veteran Advisor for the League. Ron had friends who are still Missing in Action.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Albert and Lula Miller; four brothers and a sister. Survivors include one brother, two sisters, and a large extended family.

Ron was buried in the Garden State Cemetery in Etowah with full Military Honors. The family asks that any donations be given to the Beck Pride Center, P.O. Box 910, State University, AR 72467.



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**Olney Roger P USA Flight Class: 68-4, RVN: 68-69 242 ASHC, Callsign: Muleskinner 3**

Roger Peck Olney, 71, of Lenexa, KS passed away

June 23, 2016 surrounded by his family, after a brief and courageous fight with cancer as a result of Agent Orange. Roger was born July 29, 1944 graduated from Edison HS in Elmira Heights, NY, Class of 62. He was awarded the Boy Scout's highest award of Eagle Scout. He graduated from Alfred University ROTC program, winning the Distinguished Service Award. He was a helicopter pilot in the US Army, flying many missions in Vietnam. After the military, he worked for Michelin retiring as Midwest Regional Sales Manager. Roger was preceded in death by his parents and a sister.

Roger is survived by his wife of 49 years, Patricia Cassidy Olney, two sons, a daughter, four grandchildren, and a brother.

If desired, contributions can be made to the any veterans association in Roger's name.

**Sloan, Charles W. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 60-6Q, RVN: 66-6711 ACR, 68-69 79 TC CO, 69 HHC/1 AVN BDE**

Charles "Chuck" Winfield Sloan died: on July 5, 2016. He was born on November 12, 1933 in Marion, IN, the fourth child of Norman and Mary Sloan. He grew up on a farm with his two brothers and four sisters. Chuck graduated from Tipton High School in Tipton, IN, where he fell in love with his future wife of 61 years, Jeanette. Chuck received his bachelor's degree from Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, where he also played basketball for his brother Norm. He received his master's degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN.

Upon graduation from college, Chuck entered his career as an officer in the United States Army with his wife Jeanette by his side. He began his military career in 1957 in the Infantry. He soon transferred to the Transportation Corps and attended flight school where he later became a test pilot for both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft. Chuck valiantly defended the honor of our great nation and the principles of our democratic



freedom during his two tours of duty in the Vietnam War. His personal acts of bravery in a hostile environment ultimately earned him over 20 medals. Saving both American capital and American lives, he was a true American hero.

Chuck and Jeanette moved 23 times during their 20-year Army tour. Their three children were all born Army "brats." Chuck completed his military career in 1977 as Fort Bragg's Chief Transportation Officer at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After his Army retirement, Chuck held notable positions as a District Manager for Kerr Drug Stores in Raleigh, NC and as the Fleet Manager for the City of Rocky Mount, NC.

Chuck was preceded in death by his father, Norman; his mother, Mary; his brothers, Norman and Marvin; and his sisters, Vivian Lineberry and Twanda Negley. Chuck is survived by his wife, Jeanette; his two sons, his daughter, four grandchildren, and two sisters. Chuck was the very definition of a family man. He was dearly loved, and will be missed by all.

**Strand, Kenneth L. USA Flight Class: 69-21**

Kenneth Lee Strand "Ken, Kenny and Kenneth," was called to his heavenly home on Friday, July 1, 2016, on his wife's and son Greg's birthdays at a local care facility in Great Falls, MT. Ken had "fought the good fight, he had finished the race, he had kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7), as he battled Parkinson's Disease, Type II Diabetes, and Neuropathy due to his extensive exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam as an Army Helicopter Pilot.

Ken was born on December 11, 1947 to Gorden Albert and Irma Mae (Lowell) Strand in Denver, CO. His family moved to Great Falls, MT in 1957, and he resided in Great Falls the majority of his life. Ken graduated from C. M. Russell High School in 1967 and was drafted into the military on April 1, 1968 when he was told by the Draft Board that this most assuredly was not an April Fools' joke. Ken fell in love with his wife after being drafted, and he married Patricia "Pat" A. Morris on August 9, 1969, in Great Falls, MT, and they were blessed with three children.

Ken retired from Benefits Healthcare as a Network Administrator in 2009 due to



health issues. He also was a retired Policeman and Detective with the Great Falls Police Department and had owned and operated Big City Electronics with his partner, Roland Leitheiser. His military education and training included Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Aviator Course at Hunter Army Airfield, GA, AH-1G Trans and Gunnery, Air Traffic Control School at Kessler AFB, MS, WORWAC (Primary) at Fort Wolters, TX, WORWAC (Advanced) Hunter AAF, GA, Code of Conduct, Mil Justice, and CBR. Ken also was an air traffic controller, a helicopter pilot, a Fixed Wing Instructor Pilot, taught mountain flying courses, and was a licensed test pilot. He served in the Army and Army Air National Guard in Helena as a helicopter pilot. While in the service, Ken was awarded many decorations, medals, badges, and commendations including the National Defense Service Medal, Army Aviator Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal with 45 Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal with V Device with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Civic Actions Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Marksman (Pistol .45 Cal), Expert (Rifle M-14), Expert (Rifle M-16), GCMLD (1st Award), and NDSM. On one of Ken's missions in Vietnam, he single-handedly saved a whole troop and received a plaque from the troop that said, "Thank you for saving our a\*\*." Ken also attended MSU and majored in Electrical Engineering. Following his education at MSU, he attended the Novell Computer School and became a Novell Network Certified Engineer.

Ken's favorite Bible verse was John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Ken was one of the "good guys" and was always there to help others, had a great heart, a beautiful smile, was generous in teaching others computer skills, carpentry, mechanical work, and even helping a friend to learn to throw the discus when he was still in school. Using his skills, he built two homes for his family in Great Falls and a home for his sister in Palmer, AK, with logs from Montana.

Ken is survived by his loving wife of nearly 47 years, Pat; two sons, four grandchildren and three sisters. He was preceded in death by his daughter Lisa Sue Strand, his parents, five uncles, and two aunts.

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Swank, Willard L. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Classes: 71/21 - 71/27, RVN: 71-72 147 ASHC, Callsign: Hill Climber 33



Will Swank 72, formerly of Mechanicsburg, OH, passed away from his 6 year battle with cancer, Friday, June 17, 2016 in his residence surrounded by his loving family, in Charleston, SC.

Will was born August 30, 1943 in Mechanicsburg, the son of Paul Aaron Swank and Kathryn (Broderick) Swank. He attended Mechanicsburg High School and received his Bachelor's Degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Will proudly served in the US Army for 28 years and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer. He served in Vietnam being highly decorated including the Air Medal for Heroism and two Bronze Stars (one for valor). He was also the recipient of a Purple Heart.

Following retirement, he enjoyed flying helicopter tours in Hawaii, piloted a DC-4 Carvair for Hawaii Pacific Air and lastly flying inter-island routes with Mahalo Air. Eventually, he joined the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Hawaii. He then finished his career at FAA Headquarters in Washington, DC. He was instrumental in developing guidance for runway safety among other projects that keep the flying public out of harm's way.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his daughter, Diana Houchin; and his siblings, Diane Swank and Darwyn Swank.

He was buried in the Arlington National Cemetery.

Reinl, Ralph R. USA Flight Class: 67-19, RVN: 68 D/1/10 CAV 4 INF, 70-71 5 AVN DET, Callsign: Gambler 2



Ralph R. Reinl Jr. (Rex), 68, passed away Tuesday, June 28, 2016 in Panama City, FL. Rex was raised in Schenectady, NY and attended Linton High School. After graduating, he served two terms in Vietnam as an Army Helicopter Pilot. He left as a decorated Chief Warrant Officer, and continued to serve in the Alabama National Guard where he advanced to the rank of Captain. Rex continued his education at Florida Gulf State College where he earned a Bachelor's Degree. He loved sailing and living in Florida.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Dorothy Reinl, and his sister. He is survived by three sisters and a brother. For those wishing, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society in his memory.

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

Armstrong, Michael R. USAF data).

LTC (Ret.) RVN: 67-68 20 SOS, Callsign: Green Hornet died on June 2, 2016.

Barrett, Robin M. Jr. USA LTC (Ret.) died on June 15, 2016 (no other data).

Bromley, Paul D. USA Flight Class: 69-47, RVN: 70-72 C/227 AHB 1 CAV, Callsign: Ghost rider died on June 11th, 2016.

Burge, Robert P. USA RVN: 65 1/9 CAV died on June 4, 2016 (no other data).

Mayes, Leonard F. USA Flight Class: 67-15/67-17 died on July 26, 2016.

Butler, Francis W. USN CDR (Ret.) died on July 15, 2016 (no other data).

Melvin, Robert A. III died on June 15, 2016 (no other data).

Benet, Peter E. USMC MAJ (Ret.) died on July 24, 2016 (no other data).

Werenczuk, Thor M. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 71-45 died on July 9, 2016 (no other data).

DuChene, Edward A. USAF MAJ (Ret.) died on June 10, 2016 (no other data).

West, Thomas C. USA LTC (Ret.) RVN: 52-63 57 TC, 63 120 AHC died on May 31, 2016.

Fouts, Joseph C. USAF LTC (Ret.) died on January 5, 2016 (no other data).

Sayrizi, Donald M. USA Flight Classes: 67-25/67-503 died on May 29, 2016 (no other data).

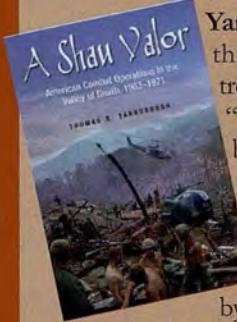
Hill, Ray J. USA COL (Ret.) died on June 23, 2106 (no other data).

Seale, William R. USA CW3 (Ret.) Flight Class: 66-11 died on July 27, 2016 (no other

Hobbs, Harry V. USA died on July 19, 2016 (no other

# BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



**A Shau Valor** by Colonel Thomas R. Yarborough, USAF, is a riveting narrative of the nine-year struggle of US and ARVN troops to secure what became known as the "Valley of Death," where America's costliest battles with the NVA took place, including Hamburger Hill. Beginning in 1963 repeated insertions of Special Forces teams and secret reconnaissance missions continued through 1967. This strategy was followed by use of US Marine and US Army forces in

a recurring deployment and withdrawal effort which evolved into a piecemeal approach that came to be known as Westmorland's "war of attrition."

Colonel Yarborough has done an excellent job presenting the

combat in the A Shau, emphasizing the courage and sacrifices made by the helicopter crews and US forces engaged there. His research includes the multiple citations of recognized valor awarded to those who fought in the A Shau. Failures of MACV leadership to build and employ a long range workable strategy in the A Shau are candidly discussed. This is an important book for all serious readers of Vietnam US military history.

Colonel Yarborough served as an Air Force pilot for 28 years and flew two combat tours in Vietnam as a FAC, some of it over the A Shau. A former professor and department chair at Indiana University, he now lives in West Springfield, Virginia. He is also the author of *Da Nang Diary*.

*A Shau Valor* (336 pages with photos, \$23.16 hardcover, Kindle \$9.99) by Thomas R. Yarborough, ISBN: 978-1612003542 is available from Amazon or other book suppliers.



**Out of His Time: A Memoir of Harvey C. Addison** by Kathleen Addison Peet is the story of her husband who lost his life in a tragic three aircraft, weather related, mid-air collision shortly after beginning his tour of duty with the 240th AHC, 1st Aviation Brigade. Twelve air crew from the 240th and seventeen members of the Royal Army Thai Volunteer Brigade died. Harvey had only been "in country" for a month and a half.

Like so many other loved ones of those who died in Vietnam, Kathleen was soon faced with a knock at the door to inform her of her loss. A bride of only six months

she grieved and moved on with her life but kept the memories of Harvey.

In 2015 she went to Kansas to attend Harvey's 50th high school reunion and connect with his friends and relatives. It was a healing experience for Kathleen. She was also encouraged by a friend, J.A. Jance, a bestselling author, to write this book of remembrance. As long as we live we remember those we served with who died. I encourage you to read this book.

*Out of His Time: A Memoir of Harvey C. Addison* (156 pages with photographs, \$19.95) by Kathleen Addison Peet, ISBN: 978-1612003542 is available from Amazon or other book suppliers.



**Tragedy at Chu Lai** by David Venditti chronicles the death of his cousin, WO Nicholas (Nicky) Venditti, who arrived in RVN July 3, 1969 and died July 15, 1969 just days after reporting to the American Division at Chu Lai. In 1994, David, who was working as a newspaper writer and editor in Allentown, PA set out to create a permanent record of Nicky's service and sacrifice for family and friends. A friend of Nicky's suggested it might take two years. It would in fact require two decades to learn the truth.

On July 10, 1969 a training session about the use of hand grenades at LZ Bayonet near Chu Lai turned tragic when to get his students' attention the instructor threw a "dummy" grenade into the audience. It wasn't a dummy. WO Nicholas L. Venditti and one of his best friends, WO Wilbur J. "Billy" Vachon III, were severely injured and died of their wounds. WO Gerald A. "Tony" Viall and WO Tomas Sled were injured, and SFC Timothy

T. Williams died immediately. About 10 enlisted men, including the instructor, were injured.

The author traveled to Chu Lai in Vietnam and deep into the labyrinth of the various archives of the US war in Vietnam. His journey of discovery incurs many side trips and dead ends, but eventually he identifies the NCO instructor who threw the fateful "dud." In-depth interviews with the former instructor bring all the pieces together. This is an extremely well written and documented book that reveals the tragic truth.

David Venditti used many resources to document this book. You can contact him at [cdvend57@verizon.net](mailto:cdvend57@verizon.net)

*Tragedy at Chu Lai, Reconstructing a Deadly Grenade Accident in a U.S. Army Classroom in Vietnam, July 10, 1969* (212 pages with photos, paperback \$29.95, Kindle \$19.99) by David Venditti, ISBN: 978-1476664316 is available from Amazon, [www.mcfarlandbooks.com](http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com), or other book suppliers.

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Vietnam Center Archive

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Lubbock, TX 79409-1041

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