



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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**VHPA Aviator Newsletter:**  
**Aviator@VHPA.org**

**VHPA WebSite:**  
**VHPA.org**

**VHPA Headquarters and Headquarter Staff contact Information**

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

**E-Mail:**  
**HQ@VHPA.org**

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

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# From the President of the VHPA

~ MIKE SHEUERMAN ~

VHPA Members, I'm back! I promise this will be my final time as President, and then it's only Membership Chairman and Scholarship Fund Raising after that. John Shafer has done a great job as the leader over the last year and is leaving our Association in a particularly strong position. Looking at some old photos of my year at Camp Hollaway, I came across a picture of Mike Kieren and me on stage at the O Club singing "Jeremiah Was a Bull Frog." There, in the background, was John, wearing his famous CAV hat with the feather, dancing in the chorus line.

This coming year will see some outstanding accomplishments for VHPA. Because of Bob "BEANER" Hesselbein's strong leadership and perseverance we will see the PILOT and CREW MEMBER's Memorial installed and dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery. Our VHPA scholarships will be increased from five to seven thanks to the efforts of Tom Payne, Scholarship Chairman. He hopes to have ten by 2020. We will start endowing a permanent VHPA Curator's Assistant Position at the National Vietnam Archives located at Texas



Tech University under the guidance of Gary Roush and Mike Law, the VHPA GURU'S. The plan is to fully fund this by 2022. HQ, with Sherry Rodgers in charge, will continue its strong effort to recruit new members, get the old non-current members to rejoin, update our operating systems and keep our Association running smoothly. Tom Kirk and Tom Hirschler will continue putting out the best military association publication around. Our Finance Committee under Bob Smith will safeguard our funds and help make them grow. Let's hope I don't get in the way and screw anything up.

As your President, I'm very excited about the Reunion in Atlanta in 2018. There will be much more on that in the coming issues. I look forward to this coming year and being your President. If you have any questions, suggestions, feel free to contact me at [president@vhpa.org](mailto:president@vhpa.org) ; any complaints or bitching, feel free to contact the incoming Junior Member at Large.

Thanks,

Mike Sheuerman  
Panther 15, 5/71-4/72  
361st PINK PANTHERS

## FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

Well, one more reunion has come & gone. We hope that everyone attending had a great time! If you ordered a reunion t-shirt but did not attend, we will be mailing your order to you as soon as we get back to HQ and get things unpacked.

If you did not attend this year, 2018 will be July 3-7 in Atlanta, GA. We have already begun planning some great things so mark your calendars to attend!

The 1994-2016 Calendar CD is available for the cost of \$8. If you would like to purchase one, call HQ to place your order.

Don't forget - the deadline to order your 2017 directories that will be mailed out in October is fast approaching!

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

PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF REMAILING ITEMS! If you move, PLEASE go on line to <https://directoryvhpa.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 you know of anyone that served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and they are not a member of VHPA, give us a call and we will check to see if they are in our database. We would love to send them membership information and a copy of the newsletter for their review. And of course, we would love for them to become a member!

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

Sherry Rodgers, VHPA Office Manager

# AVIATOR MONUMENT UPDATE

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument Project moves towards completion. Although the greatest challenge is complete—gaining authorization for the monument by the Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries—a great deal of final steps must be accomplished before the monument is placed and dedicated. As this copy of the AVIATOR goes to press, a number of different activities are ongoing.

**Approval by the CFA:** The proposal package for submission to the United States Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) is being constructed (note: the CFA reviews all authorized monuments in the greater Washington, DC area for aesthetic and quality of design). During June, a proposal comprised of a justification narrative, the monument design, site survey maps and images, will be prepared, reviewed by Arlington National Cemetery management, and then sent to the CFA for consideration. The CFA will then review the proposal in July.

**Design changes:** Some modification to the monument's design are incorporated within the CFA proposal. During informal discussions, CFA staffmembers made a number of observations and pointed out something the VHPA had not considered in the original design: 150 years from now, a visitor viewing the monument may not recognize the nose-on view of a UH-1. For those of us keenly familiar with every angle of a Huey, that seems impossible, but it is likely true. The revised design now displays a side profile of a UH-1—something that should be recognizable to cemetery visitors for centuries to come.

Additional design modifications moved the numeric (1961-1975) to a position directly below the aircraft design, a change that brings the design to the common standard use in other monuments. As well, the five branch seals are repositioned from the "face" to the front base of the stone, now elevated from four to eight inches. Importantly, none of these changes alter the language or symbolism found on the granite stone.

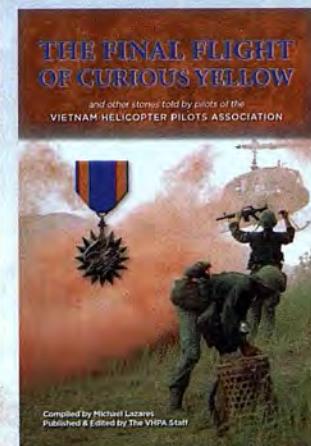
**Site preparation planning:** Once the design and site are approved by the CFA, construction of the monument will begin. The estimated construction time for the stone is less than three months. Site preparation will require the contracting and installation of a concrete footer by a local contractor (depth to be determined by ANC engineers), the soil and sod to smooth the surface, and scheduling the

work to not interfere with scheduled cemetery events.

**Spring 2018 dedication:** The VHPA Legacy Committee volunteers continue to plan and act to complete the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument. It is the committee's goal to complete the tasks in time to arrange a meaningful dedication around Memorial Day, 2018. At this time, the goal seems within reach. Organizing a dedication ceremony within Arlington National Cemetery will take a great deal of planning and coordinating to create a memorial service such as the August 28, 2015 event; once the monument work nears completion a date will be determined by the VHPA Executive Committee.

For over three years the VHPA membership and others have worked to make the goal of a meaningful monument within Arlington National Cemetery possible. We will continue to keep you informed as the mission moves towards completion.

**Bob Hesselbein, Chairman VHPA Legacy Committee**



"VHPA Member and author Michael Lazares, who passed away last year, 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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**We suggest buying your paperback at createspace, the profit for the scholarship fund is greater, and it's the same price.**

Roy Mark, the author of  
**FIXIN' TO DIE RAG**  
 Proudly presents:

**LIVE BY CHANCE  
 LOVE BY CHOICE  
 KILL BY PROFESSION**

The follow-on book to his excellent Fixin' To Die Rag again focuses on the men and times of Charlie Company of the 1st Cavalry Division's 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion during the Vietnam War. However, where Fixin' To Die Rag mainly covered ten bad days between March and September 1970, Live by Chance, Love by Choice, Kill by Profession steps back and widens its focus.

Vietnam War and the Cambodian Incursion

Drug Wars in Panama and Colombia

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**"Live by Chance, Love by Choice, Kill by Profession** is truly fascinating reading. Especially captivating are the passages that describe some of the terrifying misfortunes attendant to any war...the close calls, the physical wounds, the mental anguish, the deaths of good people. This book is Roy Mark at his very best."

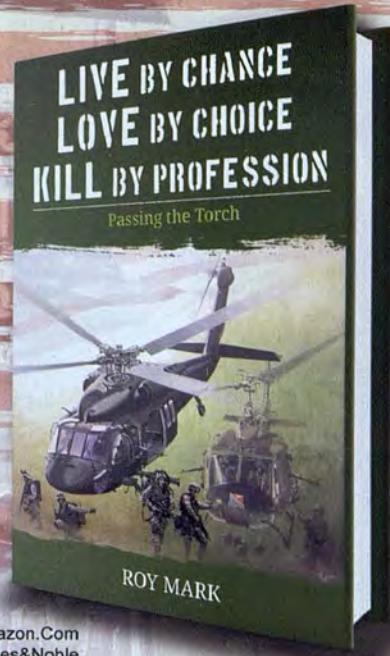
— Scott B. Smith, Major General (Retired) U.S. Army

*Live by Chance, Love by Choice, Kill by Profession* is available in paperback and e-book format at Amazon.Com, Barnes&Noble, and other bookstores.

*Live by Chance, Love by Choice, Kill by Profession*

by Roy Mark

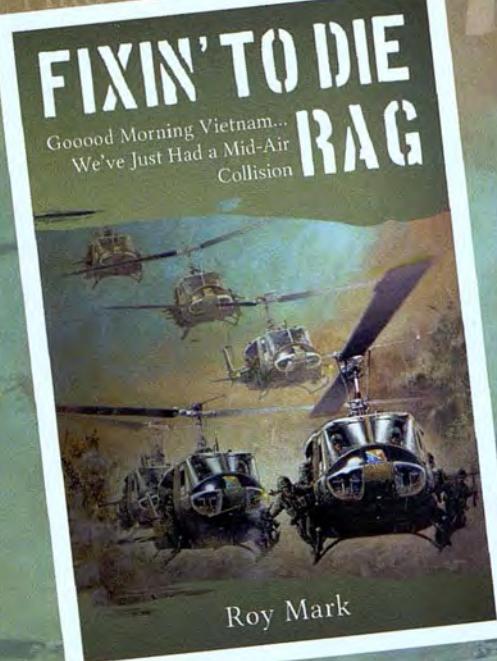
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## **Fixin' To Die Rag**

*Fixin' To Die Rag* is the true story of Charlie Company of the First Cavalry Division's 229th Assault Aviation Battalion during 1970. It was a tough year; Charlie Company lost men to the enemy, to accidents and to bad weather.

The last radio transmissions of two aircraft commanders broadcast the horrors of doomed men.

Flying at night in a brutal thunderstorm, the Slick commander of 66-16985 made a last radio transmission:

*"Get off the Controls... Get off the Controls!"*

Flying in clear skies, the aircraft commander of 68-16123 transmitted on guard and announced the doom of eight men:

*"Gooood Morning Vietnam...  
 We've Just Had a Mid-Air Collision."*

*Fixin' To Die Rag* is available at Amazon.Com, Barnes&Noble, and other online and "brick & mortar" bookstores. It's available in paperback and e-book format.

*Fixin' To Die Rag*

by Roy Mark

ISBN: 9781484135105

Cover Art: Joe Kline ([www.joeklineart.com](http://www.joeklineart.com))  
 Foreword: Roger C. Baker, Major, U.S. Army, Retired  
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# Vietnam Pilots Unite with Huey



John and Larry seated in Huey



Mark and John Ulsh, Karen and Larry Ayres with Jason Schier of Helicopter Specialties.

The Green County Veterans Memorial Park continues its work with their Vietnam Huey helicopter.

Karen Ayres inquired about the history on this 513 Huey through the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) magazine. Her husband Larry serves as president of Green County Veterans Memorial Park in Monroe and is a member of VHPA.

The report Karen received included a listing of crew members, which led her to finding John Ulsh of South Carolina. This particular 513 helicopter happened to be the same one flown by Ulsh during his time in service in 1966.

Since January the Ayres were in contact with John Ulsh, updating him on the work of GCVMP with the Huey's restoration. John's interest peaked and made plans to travel from his home in SC, to Wisconsin to sit in the Huey one last time before its final resting place in the park. John was accompanied by his son Mark and finally met Ayres and the Huey in the helicopter's current storage unit, Helicopter Specialties, Inc. of Janesville.

John Ulsh shared the story that when he left Vietnam he left behind his 513 Huey which received devastating fire from the enemy and no longer able to fly. He was shocked to learn his Huey not only survived and was now in devoted hands in Wisconsin! He would have never imagined this Huey would have become the memorial dream Ayres and the GCVMP have held for ten years to the honor the veterans in this park.

John reminisced over war stories as he sat with Larry

inside the Huey after decades of separation from his familiar friend. John and his son Mark stayed with the Ayres for the weekend with hours of conversation about what they shared in common with the Huey, Vietnam and their families. A real emotional connection between the two was remarkable and with feeling that they were now brothers.

The heroes' legacy lives on in that both veteran pilots have sons who coincidentally attended flight school at Ft. Rucker in Alabama and both served in Iraq as Blackhawk helicopter pilots.

Stories shared between the two depicted a picture of the lives saved in war by this Huey, the rescues and defensive fire performed by the helicopter.

It was obvious 513 was much more than a vehicle to these two men; it was an old friend.

And the Green County Veterans Memorial Park Committee hopes that upon the installation of this Huey it will be making the same healing connections with other veterans.

With weather and time constraints permitting, the GCVMP is planning on installing the Huey into the park for a dedication on November 6th, 2017 at 1:30 in honor of Veterans Day. The GCVMP is located on the corner of County N and Hwy. 81 in Pleasant View Park, Monroe. For more information go to [www.greencountyveterans.org](http://www.greencountyveterans.org) or visit them on Facebook.

*By Barbara Miller, GCVMP Media Assistant*



John Ulsh and Larry Ayres

# Letters to the Editor

## To the Editors of the Aviator, Gentlemen:

Nice job on the May/June issue of the *Aviator*! I particularly enjoyed the Bikini Blue article! Thanks for the opportunity! On a side note, the article was seen by the 170th's second CO in Vietnam, and he is now getting ready to contact his old comrades, and will be visiting Huey 823 this summer. Fantastic!

Kind Regards,  
Jim Haga, President, Liberty War Bird Association  
[www.facebook.com/libertywarbird](http://www.facebook.com/libertywarbird)  
<http://libertywarbirds.com>

## To the Editor of the Aviator

Our recent Class Blast 2017 is now in the rear-view mirror. Whew! The classmates of WOC Flight Classes 66-23/67-1 assembled in Kansas City (27-30 April) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their graduation from flight school at Ft Rucker in 1967.

Of the 309 total classmates who started with class 66-23 and graduated with that class, and the other portion of the class, after a delay at Fort Wolters, who graduated as 67-1, 90 pilots turned out in Kansas City, with a total of 167 pilots, family and friends to relive the "old times" and re-greet those guys who were... "In the other building."

Six of our classmates died at Fort Wolters and Fort Rucker during training, 13 were killed in Vietnam and 64 other classmates have passed after their tours of service.

Four widows of our classmates were welcomed, along with the nephew of a fallen classmate whose aircraft was shot down in 1968 and the crew not recovered until 2014. After 46 years, he was buried, along with his crew, at Arlington National Cemetery.

The only organized functions at the Reunion were: a Ladies Luncheon, entertained by a "pick-pocket magician," the Ladies had a wonderful time; a Farewell Dinner where the Missing Man Ceremony was presented, along with the reading of those classmates who had passed. We had a guest speaker...the original Company Commander of 3rd WOC, class of "Blue Hats". Merle Mulvaney (then a Captain) recalled some interesting stories and events and thought we had all done... "A great job".

Of special note was the singing of our National Anthem by Amber Opheim, daughter of Glen Opheim. She is an accomplished opera singer who flew in from Bern, Switzerland, to sing our Anthem. She sang it as it should be sung.

In preparation for this Reunion, I gathered some award and decoration information from my classmates to prepare a news release for the local Kansas City media. I included what military and civilian flight time our classmates had/have, and years of military service. Of the 215 classmates I am in contact with, 48 responded with staggering data: We have one POW who spent 62 months in captivity,

others received: one-Distinguished Service Cross, four-Silver Stars, 50 Distinguished Flying Crosses, three-Soldiers Medals, 30-Bronze Stars, 17-Purple Hearts, 1039 Air Medals, 44-of those with 'V' devices. Our guys were shot down 59 times (one lucky soul-nine times), have a total of 48,245 combat flight hours and 125,025 hours of military flight time. We went on to amass 188,400 hours of civilian flight time with 625 years of military service to our Country. Not a bad record for just 23% of our classmates. Wonder what type of numbers we'd have if the remaining 77% sent in their information?

It was an amazing gathering of amazing men and women. A big thank you goes out to my wife Sandy, and to all the classmates, families and friends who attended and to all who helped me in putting on this "once in a lifetime" Reunion.

With deepest regard and respect for all rotary wing aviators and to my classmates in particular,

Tom Pearcy

## To the Editor of the Aviator Generals Have Accidents Too

A past article in the VHPA Magazine prompted this memory.

I had a similar incident, but in my story it was the General who ended up on the ground. Another Captain and I had flown up to Chicago and picked up a General and flew him to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO for some meeting.

We were in a T-42 and I was in the right seat. When we got to Flight Operations, the other pilot swung the aircraft around so the right side was facing the waiting officers and killed the right engine. I popped the door, hopped out and folded the seat down so the General could get out. I went down the wing to get his hat and brief case and was standing there. As he got out, his trailing foot caught the seat belt and he ended up falling down the wing. He managed to stay on the part you walk on so didn't damage the wing, but his medals flew off and he was quite disheveled. I picked up his medals, and as I asked if he was injured and handed him his hat and briefcase, he smiled at me and said something along the lines of "pretty poor way for a General Officer to depart an aircraft wasn't it Captain?" He was smiling and turned to meet his reception party, who by the way were all standing at attention and saluting while all this transpired.

As good Army Aviators, we dutifully awaited his return, and when he did, he walked up to me and as I saluted him and prepared to take his hat and briefcase, he again smiled and said, "I'll try not to embarrass you again when I get back in."

Fortunately, the trip back to Chicago was uneventful and he was very gracious to us both when we got him back home.

Jerry Mellick, LTC (Ret)

# Job Well Done, Candidate

"I'd like to know who they were," Bob Crissman recently told me. "By the time I landed and walked over to their aircraft, they had jumped on the bus with the other candidates and headed back to Ft. Wolters. I never did find out their names."

Fifty-two years ago, in July 1965, flight instructor LT Bob Crissman was thumping through the clear morning air in an OH-23 Hiller, five minutes from Stage Field 2. The students, now with 20 or more flight hours, were flying two to an aircraft. Some were practicing take offs and landings in the stage field pattern; others were flying in and out of the various off-field training sites marked with different-colored old car tires.

All sounded well to LT Crissman as he approached the stage field, then the normal conversations between the tower and aircraft were suddenly broken by a raised voice. "Stage Field 2, Hiller 4376, we have an emergency."

"Hiller 4367, Stage Field 2," a calm voice responded from the tower, "what's your emergency?"

"I've lost throttle control," the excited voice replied. "I'm north of the field, passing through 2,000 feet. I can't control my throttle and we are continuing to climb."

LT Crissman was approaching from the north so he squeezed his radio switch, "Stage Field 2 this is Hiller 4066. I'm in the vicinity, let's see what I can do to assist him."

The tower immediately recognized Hiller 4066 as an instructor and gave Crissman clearance to handle the situation.

"Hiller 4367, this is 4066," Crissman said over the radio. "Where are you and what is your altitude?"

"I'm north of the stage field, and now passing through 2,500 feet," the excited student said.

Crissman banked slightly to the right and immediately saw a Hiller much higher than the students would normally be flying in that vicinity.

"Okay, Hiller 4367, I see you," Crissman said. "You're fine, so stay calm. First thing I want you to do is switch over to the secondary channel so it's just us two."

"Hiller 4367, roger, switching to channel two."

Crissman switched channels and immediately heard from the student. "Hiller 4367, on channel two," the

nervous student said.

"Okay, 4367, this is 4066," Crissman said. "I want you to start tight, left-hand 360 degree turns."

"4637, roger, left-hand turns, 360 degrees."

Crissman knew a left turn in a helicopter requires more power to maintain altitude, and therefore it would stop or reduce their rate of climb.

"4637, I want you to keep that turn," Crissman said. "I'm going to come up in formation and talk you back to the airfield, roger that?"

The student acknowledged he understood, and Crissman came into a loose formation with the students. By monitoring his own airspeed and manifold pressure, Crissman had a good idea of the students' aircraft's operating status.

When several more left turns brought the two Hillers down to a normal operating altitude for the students, Crissman decided it was time to fly directly back to the stage field. Crissman also knew while the students had been instructed to fly the Hiller at no more than 50 knots, the Hiller's true Vne (velocity to never exceed) was closer to 80 knots.

"4637, now I want you to head directly back to the stage field at 70 knots. Roger that?" Crissman said.

"4066, this is 4637, 70 knots, roger."

As they flew toward the field, Crissman noticed they were now flying at 500 feet AGL, (above ground level) and he keyed his mike, "4637, reduce your airspeed slowly until you are in level flight."

The student quickly adjusted into level flight, and Crissman observed they were flying under 70 knots in level flight.

"Are you cleared for solo autorotations?" Crissman asked.

The student immediately replied, "No," in a tone that clearly meant I do not want to autorotate.

"How about a solo running landing?" Crissman said.

After a few moments of radio silence—the two students probably discussing their options- the reply was a simple, "Yes."

LT Crissman switched over to the Stage Field 2 frequency and obtained clearance for a straight in approach. He then switched back to the students' frequency. "Okay, 4637, we are cleared for a straight-in

running landing. Increase your speed back to 70 knots and bring her in. I'm still behind you and will talk you down."

The student was losing altitude at 70 knots, but as they crossed the runway threshold, it was clear to Crissman they were not going to be low enough to make a landing.

"4637, go around. Slow it down to level flight."

The students' aircraft slowed and Crissman, still in formation with the student and monitoring his aircraft's instruments, saw they were barely flying at 40 knots, yet not gaining altitude.

Oh, no, LT Crissman thought, their throttle must be slowly working back down. And without throttle control, the student couldn't increase power to gain altitude.

LT Crissman keyed his radio, "4637, make a right turn pattern. Keep it close to the field and slow enough to maintain altitude. Roger?"

As LT Crissman continued to fly in formation with the students, he began to fear the student pilot might not be able to maintain altitude and he might have to talk the student down into an off-field landing...an off-field running landing...without throttle control.

The student immediately began a right-hand turn into his crosswind leg. By the time the student had flown the downwind and base legs, and then onto a short final, he was flying under 30 knots to maintain a safe altitude.

"Increase your speed," Crissman said as they crossed the threshold, "you need to get lower." Crissman knew since the throttle was backing off on its own, there was no chance this time for another go around.

"Get down to at least ten feet," Crissman said.

Without answering, the student increased his speed, which quickly reduced his altitude as he crossed the threshold.

LT Crissman, knowing he didn't want the pilot on the controls to reach over for the magnetos, keyed his radio switch and said, "I'm going to count down from three and I want the passenger to turn off the magnetos." Then without waiting for a reply, as runway was running out, Crissman said, "Three, two, one, mags off!"

The nose of the Hiller swung slightly to the left when the power to the rotor system was abruptly stopped, the student corrected, and the helicopter settled onto the runway. As it slid, it turned slightly to the right, coming to a stop while still on the runway. Excel-

lent landing considering the circumstances, Crissman thought.

LT Crissman made an abbreviated go around, landed, and parked as instructed by the tower. A quick check of the students' aircraft found no damage, but on a closer look it was obvious the safety nut on the throttle cable had come off, disconnecting the cable.

While maintenance crews and other instructors inspected the Hiller, the students quietly slipped aboard the bus with the other students and headed back to Ft. Wolters. In their excitement, or maybe relief, they had quickly left without signing off in the logbook.

For the rest of his career, Crissman never failed to check the safety nut on the throttle cable. And he has always wondered, who were those guys?

"Old memories like this is why we go to the VHPA reunions," Bob Crissman said. "I'd like to meet them, shake their hands, and tell them: Job well done."

*By Robert 'Russell' Jones, class 68-503, 196 LIB AVN, 1968; A/123 Americal, 1969*

*Bob Crissman, class 63-4, 120 AVN, 1963-64; B/9 AVN 9 INF, 1967-68; 5 AVN DET, 1971-72*

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Richard Yood, MAS  
Vietnam  
67 - 68 & 70 - 71  
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# MY REUNION WITH COBRA 589

I stood on the asphalt ramp looking at the skinny, black helicopter with a brazen yellow stripe running lengthwise and up the vertical fin, and U.S. ARMY in large white letters on the tail boom. Aft of the cockpit canopy, large access doors splayed open revealing the transmission and turbine engine with their mounting braces, accessories, fluid lines, and wires, like arteries, veins, nerves, bones, and organs otherwise hidden beneath the skin of something that breathed. Water dripped onto the engine deck and out through small tubes protruding from the belly, forming a lake on the asphalt below, then spilling into a nearby metal grate. Coming out of a scheduled maintenance session, ship number 589 was being given a shower to be ready for its next flight. Although forty-eight years old, from a hundred feet away this Cobra looked nearly brand new. I walked toward the dripping bird a few steps, stopped, and looked. I had last flown 589 forty-six years before when it was assigned to A Troop, 3/17 Air Cav, the Silver Spurs.

This helicopter gunship, originally known as the AH-1G Cobra, was also a wounded veteran of Vietnam. A much modified version of the early UH-1 Huey helicopter, its fuselage was three feet wide with a crew of two and a variety of armaments that could be selected depending on the target, or reconfigured with other weapons systems between missions. For a helicopter, it was fast. The redline on the airspeed indicator was 190 knots, or nearly 220 mph [ $\approx 350$  km/h]; its original maximum weight was 9,500 pounds (4,309 kg). Physically, it was not well protected, since there was only a small armor shield adjacent to one of the engine components known as a Fuel Control Unit, and armor panels around the two crewmember seats. Its early design employed a heavier, more bullet-resistant canopy determined to be too heavy, so AH-1G production models had a lighter-weight plexiglass canopy. In train-

ing, we were told the force of the 190-knot wind against the canopy was the limiting factor for airspeed. Its speed and slim fuselage presented a more difficult target for enemy gunners than the slower, wider Hueys.

Here, in January of 2015 on an asphalt airport ramp in GA, I was looking at my past. I spent twelve months from mid-October '68 to mid-October '69 flying Cobra gunships in Vietnam in an area within sixty miles of Saigon. Through much of mid-1969, I

flew as Spur 38. I moved closer and looked up at the red, white, and blue crest on the doghouse, the high fairing above and behind the canopy, that read "SKY SOLDIERS DEMONSTRATION TEAM – A TRIBUTE TO PATRIOTS." Beneath the shiny black paint, I could see the small dents, patches, and imperfections flying machines of any purpose always accumulate as they go through life. It was obvious this one had been modified in various ways: the canopy had become more angular, the engine exhaust

was longer, the tail rotor had been moved from the left side to the right, and the main rotor blades had a tapered leading edge near the tips.

The serial number 67-15589 was painted on the tail; behind the pilot's left elbow was confirmation this really was ship 589, now masquerading as an F-model Cobra.

Most areas over which I flew in Vietnam were flat and often wet. We were regarded as "flat-landers" by those who regularly flew in more hilly areas north and east, but on occasion we were sent on missions to those rolling, forested areas. I viewed this silent old machine being prepared for its next flight while memories burst into my thoughts like a patched-together movie: my first morning as aircraft commander when, after a fast recon by my wingman, my "confirmed VC" target for which we had clearance to fire turned out to be a group of U.S. infantry cut off from their main force during a firefight the previous night; my last mission (even though I



Maintenance stand-down, Di An, Vietnam, 1969 serial number and exact date unknown. George Sayles (standing) with Denny Caldwell. (Author's photo)

was no longer on flight duty, ready to return home) where the Spurs scrambled in response to one of our ships being shot down; the vision of another Cobra gunship that crashed at high speed into a muddy riverbank, its fragments scattered about and its fluids fouling the water; launching rockets into the night at an unseen village supposedly full of VC; other images were like soiled and torn photos, pieces missing. Decades later, memories continue to stir my heart, a few of them with total clarity while others thankfully have become foggy with time.

The last time I knew anything of 589, it had suffered a major accident at the Bear Cat air base east of Saigon. Refueled and re-armed to its maximum allowable weight, its engine apparently suffered a compressor stall and failed during takeoff, one of the most vulnerable phases of flight for any helicopter, especially when at such a heavy weight in hot temperatures. In the final seconds of 589's descent, a truck driver unaware of the helicopter's emergency drove into the pilot's planned touchdown spot, forcing the pilot to perform a last-second avoidance maneuver. The helicopter landed hard, its main rotor blades flexing downward so much they chopped off the tail boom. The pilot was relatively unhurt; the copilot in the front seat suffered serious back injuries, and the remains of 589 were sent away. Those of us operating these heavily burdened ships in difficult conditions knew we would probably have done no better: hot weather, heavy, slow, climbing to avoid obstacles, and following the engine failure, in autorotation about to flare, having to make a last-second change of plans. I never forgot the event and one recommendation coming out of the review of the accident: the pilot should receive additional training for engine failures under similar conditions.

In the winter of 2014-15 an email circulated among the Silver Spurs about one of our former gunships still flying in GA, performing flight demonstrations throughout the southeastern United States and available for rides. My wife and I were planning a January road trip from New Hampshire to Virginia and then the Amtrak Auto Train to FL. Central GA seemed a little off course for this trip; maybe another time if we were in the area perhaps we could stop by and I could look at the old bird. I set the idea on the back burner. The essence of this journey was to escape winter and decompress from several months of my wife Deborah's professional stress, not to drag her off to another aviation-related venture. I owed her some respite from chasing off to another airport. My flying career ensured she would have seven addresses in the first eight years of our marriage- remarkably, with little complaint from her. The truth is, she's still almost as crazy about flying machines as I am, and wanted to see this Vietnam-era Cobra.

So off we went to stay in a house in FL owned by dear friends who offered their home to us while they were away on vacation. While enjoying the relaxation and re-tuning our lives, we talked about going up to GA and seeing that Cobra. I sent emails and made a couple of phone calls to AAHF and we decided to go up and at least stop by and see old 589.

I called and let them know when we would be arriving.

When a vehicle drives onto an airport ramp, parks, a stranger gets out and walks toward an aircraft, someone associated with the facility usually notices, promptly presents himself to the stranger and doesn't allow anyone to proceed very far unaccompanied. On this occasion, I could see that people were watching us from inside the open hangar. But since we were expected, it seemed they were allowing me a slow approach and an undisturbed re-acquaintance with the old helicopter as I viewed it for the first time in over four decades. I walked, stopped, walked, stopped, a few times until I finally was ready to be close. It was no longer painted in various shades of flat olive drab, but sparkled in glossy black with brilliant yellow and white trim. As I walked closer, a volunteer mechanic approached from the hangar and greeted me. We introduced ourselves briefly, but I was still allowed the courtesy of saying hello to 589 myself for a few minutes before we had much conversation.

Eventually I met several other volunteers from the organization who came out to greet us. Allowed to sit in the back seat of the cockpit (the pilot's station) I spent several minutes simply looking, reflecting, and finding differences in the cockpit layout, for this ship had been through extensive rebuilding after its accident, returned to service, and received more modifications in later years. Up close, it became evident this was a very "experienced" cockpit with numerous instruments and controls installed, a result of changes in equipment and missions since I



Lt. Col John Woodward, U.S. Army (ret.) and author with 67-15589.  
Photo by Deborah A. Sampson, used with permission.

flew it in 1969. I concluded perhaps the only part of the original cockpit remaining might be the battered cork-covered throttle grip at the end of the collective pitch lever on the pilot's left side.

Soon, I met LTC John Woodward (U.S. Army, Ret.) with whom I would fly after the maintenance, paperwork, and cleaning was complete. He explained a few of the changes in weapons systems that had occurred in the interim, briefed me on current tactics and maneuvers forbidden in my day, and provided a general overview of major design changes, most of which are welcome improvements over the first production version I knew as the AH-1G.

On this day in central GA, it was a nice morning to fly, with very light southwest wind, mid-level to high broken clouds, temperature about 60°F (15°C). After being allowed to occupy the rear seat from where I had last flown this aircraft, I relinquished "my" seat to let the handling crew tow the ship away from the hangar to a nearby taxiway for starting. With 589 placed in position on its skids and ground handling wheels removed, I climbed into the front cockpit (a long-forgotten skill), strapped in and scanned the front cockpit. I found a few familiar instruments and switches, and that strange sideward cyclic I never really mastered. We performed an intercom check, and LTC Woodward vocally ran the before start checklist, with my front seat responses hopefully close to being appropriate. Printed checklists are mandatory here, there is no rush; he was very methodical and professional.

There is not much that will stir an old helicopter pilot's soul more than engine start: the starter motor engages, igniters snap as the turbine spins up, the rotor system begins to rotate as the engine lights off and sends hot exhaust billowing into the air. It is nearly magic, as so much of aviation is. The engine and rotor system soon stabilized at flight idle while the ship rocked gently on its skids as John completed the after-start checklist. Following more engine runup and systems checks, we were ready to fly. John checked to the local weather and traffic, and we paused for a moment to allow a small corporate jet to depart. When he was satisfied all was well, he picked 589 up to a textbook three-foot hover and hover-taxied toward the mile-long runway for departure.

Many readers who flew in the front seat of a Cobra might recall a unique feeling experienced in that seat as pedal turns were made; at such a distance forward from the center of gravity, it always felt to me like a strange, sideways "stiffness" that I haven't sensed in other

helicopters, or even from a Cobra's back seat. But today this oddity was a welcome memory.

So, how does one perform a takeoff in an AH-1F Cobra with its fine, upgraded engine producing 1800 horsepower, unburdened by the weight of armament and ammunition at a three-foot hover on a cool day with thousands of feet of paved runway in front of its nose? For those familiar, it doesn't take much imagination, and that is exactly what we did: nose low, accelerating almost a mile down the runway with a nice cyclic climb at the far end, nearly as fast as the recently-departed corporate jet. Awesome!

We climbed and departed the pattern straight out to the southwest. John re-acquainted me with maneuvers the Cobra used to do,

and provided an in-flight description of new tactics and moves we did not use in the 1960s. Since Vietnam, of course, the missions and challenges changed, and therefore the weapons, tactics, and training changed in response. Rolling in and diving in a simulated rocket-run toward the swamp was exciting, as was the pullup and breakaway. It was a fantastic, fulfilling ride. Federal Aviation Administration specifications under which the AAHF operates do not allow passengers to fly in the back seat, even if the "passenger" is a veteran and previously qualified to fly the Cobra. But the ride in the front seat

and my experience with AAHF that day was simply a thrill. Our time was limited, however, and we had to

return and land to avoid overflying our allotted time.

Deb and I were also introduced to the AAHF organization and its mission of connecting people and veterans to Army Aviation and its history. Organized in 1997, the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and Flying Museum, Inc. operates and maintains a small but growing fleet of aircraft from several chapters: Legacy Chapter at Henry County Airport (KHMP), Hampton, GA; Wiregrass Chapter at Headland Municipal Airport (0J6), near Dothan, AL; Arizona chapter at Falcon Field (KFFZ), Mesa, AZ; and Gateway Chapter at Creve Coeur Airport (1H0), near St. Louis, MO.

Veterans of all vintages, both before and after Vietnam, are involved in this project since, of course, the U.S. Army has had a very long association with aviation. A unique feature of this organization is it is a "flying museum" that not only flies its aircraft to various locations throughout the country to perform demonstrations for spectators, but allows people to fly IN the machines. The AAHF provides a rare opportunity for veterans to become



67-15589 in 1969. The repair estimate in 1969 was \$102,682.00.

Photo used with permission from the owner of the photo, who wishes to remain anonymous.

re-acquainted with aircraft types they rode in, maintained, or even flew decades ago. Veterans' relatives and friends learn what it was like to fly in a helicopter and know first-hand the many vibrations, the symphony of noises, odors, and visual effects from liftoff to a hover, then takeoff and climb, turns, approach and landing.

The AAHF has received I.R.S. approval as a 501 (c)(3) public educational foundation. AAHF relies heavily on volunteers who bring their talents and experience to support their work; the foundation receives no financial support from the federal government or any of the military branches, and is funded by private donations (people like you and me), with some corporate donations. Fund raising is always an uphill battle for any not-for-profit organization, and anything connected with aviation is expensive, especially when trying to keep a fleet of vintage turbine helicopters in the air. AAHF is grateful for all financial donations, which are tax-deductible.

Many veterans return from war with anguish and disappointment; AAHF members with whom I talked were sensitive to the fact that each of us must take our own path to resolve our individual experiences with war in the best way we can't enable us to move on. It is clear to me the mission of AAHF is to honor ALL veterans, regardless of whether they were involved in aviation or not: young and old, combatants and non-combatants, those who either willingly or not-so-willingly, have been in harm's way in service to the United States. All are regarded as patriots regardless of political leanings or military experience.

Several months after my flight, ship 589 was transferred to the newly-created Arizona Chapter. But even though the ship has moved farther away from me, memories continue to surface. [Alert: War Story coming...] Not long ago while considering my last flight in Vietnam, I realized the pilot I flew with on that day was the same pilot who had experienced the engine failure in 589 a few months prior. Although he was an experienced aircraft commander (and I was no longer being scheduled to fly missions since I was to DROS in two days), we found ourselves running to the same ship to launch and provide cover for one of our aircraft that had been shot down. He voluntarily deferred his status and allowed me to fly as aircraft commander, and he took the front (gunner/bullet stopper) seat. Once on scene, there was not much we could do, as I recall.

The women and men at the AAHF are great folks; all volunteers except for a handful of dedicated staff, they are doing a fine job of acquiring and maintaining a fleet of vintage aircraft including various models of the Bell UH-1H Huey, the AH-1F Cobra, and a Cessna O-1D Bird Dog. Everyone who visits the traveling aircraft or the museum is welcome, and of course veterans of all vintages will be warmly received. Please visit their website [www.armyav.org](http://www.armyav.org) for more information on AAHF, its mission, and their schedule of appearances; they really get around. Any of you Vietnam-era Silver Spur gunship drivers who visit 589 will probably find something



Not 589, but related: Crew Chief John Pepper's ship #584 washed & shined, Di An, 1969.

"White Winged Warrior" was painted in memory of WO1 Walt Koslosky. Those charged with maintaining uniformity prevailed, and the name was soon removed. (Author's photo).

you touched a long time ago. Whatever your response, it is Okay, the AAHF volunteers get it; they honor you and have you covered, even 50 years later.

**A NOTE OF THANKS:** Thank you Fred Edwards, Mike Holland, Rick Welch, John Woodward, and Melody Schultz for helping to clarify information about the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) in various conversations since I flew 589 in 2015. To other members who greeted us that day but whose names I've lost, I will always be grateful for their warm welcome.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY:** Denny Caldwell is a historian, pilot, and writer. Born and raised in southeastern Michigan, he was an Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam, flew powerline patrol, has flown charter, corporate, and flew for several companies and airlines (some of them twice) before retiring as a Boeing 737 captain from Continental Airlines in 2006. He is a ground and flight instructor and lives in NH with his wife Deborah.



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**The Cub Inn**

# UPCOMING REUNIONS

92nd Assault Helicopter Company 50th Anniversary Reunion  
Stallions and Sidekicks. Dong Ba Thin, RVN, 1967-1971

**When: August 24-26, 2017**

Where: [REDACTED]

Contact Bob: [REDACTED] for information on reunion agenda and activities.

20th Aerial Artillery Association Reunion  
**Dates: September 13th to September 17th, 2017**  
Location: Williamsburg, VA at the Embassy Suites  
Details: visit [araassociation.com](http://araassociation.com)  
From: Dave Borgeson, President, ARA Association

173rd Assault Helicopter Company (Robin Hoods)  
Who: All members of the Robin Hood organization and those that supported 1966-197

**When: October 2-5, 2017**

Where: The Lodges at Gettysburg PA/ Reservations: [REDACTED]  
Mention you are with the Robin Hood Reunion

Contact: [REDACTED] for additional information

The USAF Helicopter Pilot Association  
"A Capital Adventure"  
**When: Washington, DC Oct 4-8, 2017**

Where: [REDACTED]  
For information: Call Gray Line Gatherings Plus at [REDACTED]

281st Assault Helicopter Company Annual Reunion  
The U.S. Army's First Special Operations Helicopter Company  
**When: 12-15 October 2017**

Where: Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport

For Reservations:  
<https://aws.passkey.com/event/16117454/owner/10336/home>  
Contact: Bain Black [REDACTED]  
Website: <http://www.281st.com/>

13th Biennial Reunion for the 57th AHC, 615th TC, and 822nd SIG  
**When: October 16 to 20**

Where: New Orleans Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas NV  
Contact Joe Sottile: [REDACTED]

or Stan Steenbock: [REDACTED]  
More details available on [57thahc.com](http://57thahc.com)

Announcing the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight (EMUS / TAIPANS).

The event, at this stage, will be over **Sunday 15th, Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th October 2017**. The 15th and 16th October are the two dates the first contingent left Australia for Vietnam.

Location: Nowra, New South Wales Australia.  
Details: at <http://www.135ahc.net/ranhfy/> (click on reunions), or contact [REDACTED]

Point of Contact: Australian, John Macartney, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (backup contact).

## Virginia Veterans

I had the distinct pleasure of meeting a number of you as I addressed some of your membership at the monthly meeting of the Old Dominion Chapter of Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association (VHPA) at Legend's Brewery.

My purpose for meeting with you was to extend an invitation to the Vietnam War Era Veterans Picnic. The Kiwanis Club of Chester, VA is hosting a picnic on **Wednesday, October 4, 2017** at Chesterfield County Fairgrounds from 4 to 8 pm (1600 to 2000 hours for those still on the 24-hour clock). This is for all our local men and women who were in the US Armed Forces at the time of the Vietnam War (1965 to 1975), irrespective of whether or not you served in country. Please join us so we might recognize and celebrate your contributions to our country. We would like to belatedly give you the recognition you deserved, but never received during that tumultuous time.

If you are interested and attending, please provide the following information so we may prepare an appropriate welcoming for you and your spouse. Your full name, nick name, spouse's name, service branch, rate/rank when you left RVN (or served in US during the war, telephone number, email address and complete

residence address. Email your response to [REDACTED], Subject: RVN War Vets. This will allow us to keep you up to date on any changes that may occur between now and October 4, 2017.

Thank you for helping us, and thank you for your service to our great nation,

Joe Hillier, Chairman

## 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company reunion.

**When: October 5-8, 2017**

Where: Nashville, TN at the Four Points by Sheraton, in Brentwood TN  
Reservations and Registration information are on the 179th unit website  
<http://www.179thash.org/>

Contact: [REDACTED]

## Marine Heavy Hauler Reunion

Where: Laughlin NV

**When: October 24 through 26, 2017**

POC: Mike Amtower [REDACTED]

This is Mike Amtower; I'm heading up the planning and co-ordination of this year's Gathering. We are setting up the 6th biennial Heavy Haulers Gathering in Laughlin, NV at the Colorado Belle on October 24, 25 & 26, 2017. Let's make this one the biggest and best Gathering we have had to date. It has been nearly 50 years now, (my how time flies!) since the original 463 folks first left SE Asia. This would involve ALL Heavy Hauler folks from both HMH-462 & HMH-463. Actually, it involves ANY and ALL folks that have ever driven or laid hands on a CH-53 from all eras and any other squadron, Including HMH-362, The Ugly Angels. We will make every attempt to arrange for another Color Guard from Miramar for this event. All Marines and friends of Marines are welcome, also family members of Marines. Consider contacting your local Marine Corps League and American Legion organizations.

Two dinners on Wed (10/25) and Thurs. (10/26) will be held at \$40 per person each night. We are also requesting a \$15 surcharge to help fund the hospitality suite. This charge is only per each squadron attendee, not their guest.

I have reserved a block of 50 rooms at the Colorado Belle at \$25/night and a block of 10 rooms at the Edgewater at \$27/night. The link to the Colorado Belle/Edgewater is: Colorado Belle/ Edgewater (800) 677-4837. When talking to them, specify the Heavy Hauler name as a code phrase to get the above room rates. We hope to see a bunch of you there! S/F!

Please make your checks out to me for the dinners and the hospitality suite. Or, for anyone that absolutely cannot attend and would like to send a donation for the Color Guard costs or to the Semper Fi Fund.

## 187th Assault Helicopter Co. Reunion

**When: November 8-12, 2017**

Where: Orleans Hotel/ Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada

Who: All unit members and support personnel

Contact: See <http://www.187thahc.net/> for information or contact John Wilson @ [REDACTED]

## Hello Black Cats.

Next Reunion and Membership Fees, Shirts and Hats in the PX. Please join the 213th Black Cats Alumni Association. The Membership Fee is \$15 Yearly; \$100 for Lifetime Membership Fee. Please send check to George Haley, 10 Trinas Path Plymouth, MA 02360 emgrh@Verison.Net Make check out to the, Black Cat Alumni Association. Thank You for joining Reunion location 2019: We are considering the mid-west or in the east. Philadelphia is at the top of the list.

Please email the location you would like and why to, Foster Sexton Black Cat President at [REDACTED]

We currently have some nice shirts and hats in the PX. Please E-mail Sam Parrish for the remaining stock on hand [REDACTED]

Submitted by Mike Brown

# HANDS OFF!

Just another day at a place far away and a long time ago doing what we all loved to do. Best guess it was early 1970. We were a 170th AHC UH-1 slick flying out of the Bikini Beach, Camp Holloway, Pleiku. We had drawn one of our regular favorite missions working for the Special Forces out of Kontum. We never knew what kind of day it would be, but the hope was we would be able to enjoy their mess hall in Kontum. I was in my normal spot right seat as PP. I do not remember who was left seat as AC except he was as all the ACs I flew with, the - best. It was an easy morning mostly moving locals with the SF from one place to another or to and from SF HQ. This load we had a small number of folks on board, but one was the focus of this story. She was a young lady with a genetic back ground that had to have included a good bit of French DNA – she was a sight to behold and topless

which in this area was not that unusual. She sat with her back to the center console, her husband and others on the floor. It was to be a short flight with what I hoped would include time for lunch at the end. The AC kept looking over his shoulder at our passenger, he took his right hand glove off and said "you got it." I just knew what was coming and over inter com said "don't do it." I told crew chief and door gunner to have rifles ready. As you might have guessed, the AC did it, he placed his right hand in a place on the young lady he should not have. The husband pulled out his knife, the crew chief put the barrel of his rifle on the husband's neck and I flew on to Kontum, very thankful for a light load as it was red line all the way. Upon landing, the AC made a rapid exit stage left, crew chief helped the husband and wife to off load, I was very thankful nothing happened that required a report. I never got lunch at the SF mess hall, just another day in the life of a Slick pilot!

Carl A. Garske, M01380

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## PURPLE HEART VETERANS HELP PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF YOUR SERVICE

Colin P. Cahoon, former Army helicopter pilot and author of the critically acclaimed historical fiction thriller, The Man with the Black Box, is soliciting personal stories for a book project dedicated to Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crew Members who received Purple Hearts in combat during their service in Vietnam. The book will feature the Purple Heart events and life stories of between 12 and 15 individual servicemen meeting the above criteria.

Please visit [www.colincahoon.com/purpleheart](http://www.colincahoon.com/purpleheart)

for more details about having your story memorialized as part of this project.

U.S. Paratrooper  
Cobra Gunship Pilot  
Vietnam Veteran  
Special Forces

When The Going Gets  
Tough, The Tough Get  
Going.



**Harold Goldman;**  
soldier, paratrooper and aviator  
shares his memories of  
Vietnam and beyond.  
His many successes  
were possible with the  
'Drive on Spirit' ~  
He adopted this mantra as a  
seventeen-year old soldier  
and it helped to guide his actions  
for the rest of his life.

*The memoir is in short story form  
and is available at Amazon in both  
paperback and kindle formats.*

## Repeat: A Love Story for the Ages

Reviewed by: VHPA member Dr. Edward Zielinski



Have you ever loved so deeply that your heart soars in the presence of your lover and ached equally at their absence? Have you ever loved a band of brothers such that you would place yourself in harms way without a thought? If so, read this book. Then, pass it to your spouse so they may understand what is in your soul. Repeat affirms these feelings. If you have not, then Repeat will confirm that for which all are seeking. Repeat brings the emotions of losing a loved one to the forefront so realistically, I quietly wept for them.

Have you ever thought, "If I knew then what I know now...?" Or looked at your life's choices and thought 'I wish I could do that over again'. This novel explores that wish as a reality and illuminates the joys and pitfalls of having that wish come true.

In Repeat, Paul and Angelina are awarded the opportunity for both. Repeat is a love story that is about both the love for another and the love for a band of brothers. This

deeply passionate love drives the story as they live their redo of adulthood.

Repeat begins quickly and charges forward for the entire novel. The short chapters give pause to think and many a stopping point for the reader. But I didn't want to stop reading. The writing is picturesque and emotionally charged. While reading, I was forced to be in touch with my wildly romantic side as well as my Viet Nam warrior side. From the beginning of flight school, the author was so correct in his descriptions, I had to remind myself I was reading fiction not an autobiography.

From Ft Polk basic training to Wolters, to Rucker to Viet Nam Repeat perfectly chronicled the path of a Warrant Officer Candidate through the gauntlet of becoming a Combat Aviator. The Viet Nam scenarios were very close to my own. Also, the post-war PTSD, trip to The Wall, reunions at the reunions, described how two people in love should have dealt with these inevitable, highly charged emotions.

*And in the end, I won't say. Read Repeat. It ends well!*

REPEAT, 542 pages, PRICE\$, by A. J. Kohler. ISBN 978-0-9941289-0-4 (paperback), 978-0-9941417-8-1 (hardcover), 978-0-994141419-0-3 (ePub) 978-0-994141419-1-0 ((Kindle). Available from Amazon, Kindle, and other book suppliers. Other books: No Third Choice, No Other Choice and Ripped in Two.

# ANZAC DAY at FORT RUCKER

Anzac Day was observed at Ft. Rucker AL on April 25 2017. Many may already know, the 135 AHC 'EMUs' was a fully integrated Australian Navy/US Army company.

Commander Colin Brightling represented the Australian Navy Representative. He is posted to the Australian Embassy, Washington DC.

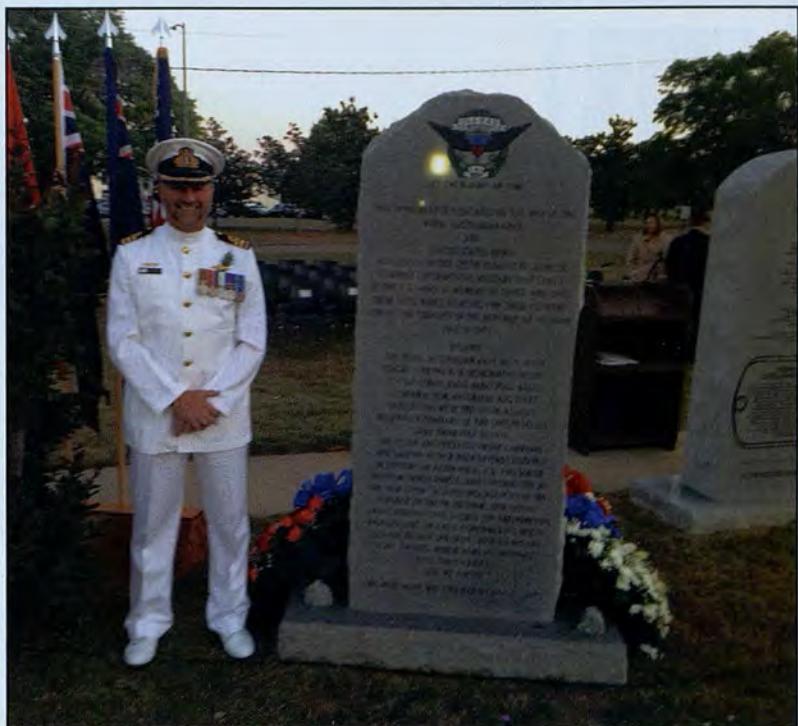
Other attendees who laid wreaths:

- Major General William Gayler, U.S Army Senior Representative.
- Brigadier Scott Benbow, Australian Army Representative.
- LTC (Ret.) Fred Dunaway, former CO, 135th AHC (EMU).
- William and Kaitlin, children of Col. Mellor, on behalf of future generations.

The Anzac Day Address was delivered by LTC Brenton Mellor, Australian Army, of Fort Rucker. Able Australian Seaman James Shaw and US Army John Crowley, former members of the 135th AHC (EMU) called the "Roll of Honor":

The Attendees numbered approximately 120 including the Post band.

*Submitted by LTC (Ret.) Fred Dunaway*



Commander Colin Brightling, Australian Navy Representative,  
Australian Embassy, Washington DC.

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**PACHYDERM**  
and the **RAT**



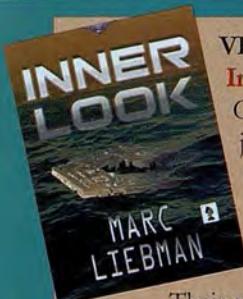
Flying with the "Big Boys" in Vietnam  
**HARRY R. NEVLING**

**PACHYDERM AND THE RAT~**

This is the tale of what it was like flying with the “big boys” in Vietnam. Many people are familiar with different tales of flying with the Huey, the most common helicopter of the “Helicopter War”. The Chinook was roughly four times the size of the huey and had over four times the lifting capacity. It was a workhorse and flew virtually every type of mission there. It tells of the heroics in the air and the insanity on the ground.

# BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



VHPA life member Marc Liebman has written **Inner Look**, another Josh Haman adventure. The CIA has double agents leaking to the Russians. Project Inner Look is instituted to weed out any and all traitors. Haman, a Navy helicopter pilot, and Navy SEAL Marty Cabot are assigned to the mission.

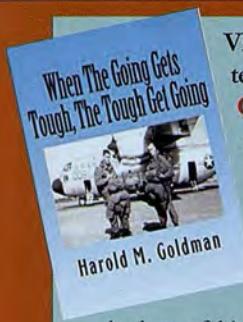
Cabot and Haman soon find the intelligence leaks go much higher up than they imagined.

Their pursuits place them in deadly situations and take them to Argentina and Uruguay. Things turn very personal when they learn there is a price on their heads. What follows is a cat and mouse

game with Haman and Cabot being pursued by KGB agents and hired guns whose only goal is to eliminate them.

As usual, Liebman spins an engaging and riveting page turner his readers will find hard to put down. He is a master of character development-a key to good fiction. I highly recommend *Inner Look*. Hopefully Liebman has more Josh Haman books swirling around in his imagination.

**Inner Look** (394 pages, \$22.50 paperback, \$6.50 Kindle) by Marc Liebman, ISBN 978-1942756866 is available by order from your local book store, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or other book suppliers.



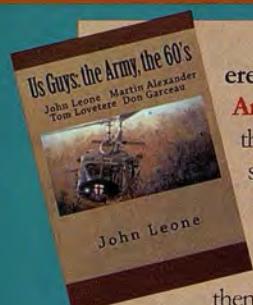
VHPA Life Member Harold Goldman has written **When the Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going**, a memoir of his life and service in Vietnam with the 361st AVN in 1967 and the 52nd CAB in 1970. Joining the Army in 1957 at the age of 17, to escape his dysfunctional family, Goldman entered jump school at Ft. Bragg with the 82nd Airborne Division. He was then sent to Germany with the 504th Airborne where he met

the love of his life. She spoke no English and he spoke no German. Love conquers all.

Goldman impressed his Sergeant Major and battalion CO and was sent to OCS, then on to Fort Wolters and Ft. Rucker for training in Hueys. His next assignment was Vietnam where he served as a platoon leader with the 361st AVN also known as the "Pink Panthers". Following his first Vietnam tour he was transitioned to fixed wing aircraft at Hunter AAF, Savannah, Georgia and assigned a second Vietnam tour.

Upon arrival back in Vietnam however, he was promptly checked out in a Cobra! Goldman provides an excellent narrative taking the reader into his life serving his country and his post-Vietnam life back in the real world. You will all like his story. Prepare to enjoy a very wonderful read.

**When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going** (66 pages, \$4.95 Kindle, \$13.95 paperback) with photos by Harold M. Goldman, ISBN: 978-1544841731 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.



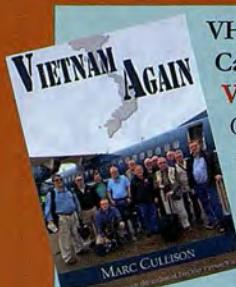
John Leone, Martin Alexander, Tom Lovetere and Don Garceau have written **Us Guys: the Army, the 60's**, a sort of scrapbook about their time in the U. S. Army in the turbulent 60's. It was a time of sock hops in the high school gym, girls, and cruising the neighborhood with the top down. For young men, the draft lottery and Vietnam war loomed over their futures. The "Guys" first met at Ft. Rucker

then some went on to Fort Dix and others to Ft. Bragg to help start an assault helicopter company. Shortly thereafter they all headed for Vietnam.

The idea for this book came about at a reunion gathering in 2015 where many old stories were again shared. The authors recognized their stories could be lost so they set to work. Each tells their story in their own unique way.

They are correct. The stories will fade and be lost if not put into print. I am pleased to see Vietnam veterans continuing to write memoirs and stories of their service. I highly recommend this book.

**Us Guys: the Army, the 60s** (138 pages, \$6.99 Kindle, \$26.77 paperback) by John Leone, ISBN: 978-1530792184 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.



VHPA member Cullison who served with 7/17th Cav and the 129th AHC in Vietnam has written **Vietnam Again**.

Like most Vietnam war veterans, Cullison had left that part of his life behind and moved on. A phone call from Tom Baca who had served with the 118th AHC changed that. Baca who has been back to Vietnam four times since the war wanted to make one more trip. The word spread and 12 Vietnam vets were soon packing for the trip.

They arrived in Hanoi somewhat worse for wear following eighteen hours en route with a stopover in South Korea. Their guide Dinh Ngoc Truc, an NVA veteran presented them with T-shirts sporting a likeness of the Vietnamese flag and they were soon calling themselves the "VC Platoon." After a visit to the Imperial Palace of

Vietnam they headed south. Crossing the former DMZ they visited the much-repaired Citadel at Hue. Heading further south toward Ho Chi Minh City the journey became very personal to the "VC Platoon" as they passed through areas where they had served all those years ago. Cullison is introspective about his travel experience and describes many changes and modernizations that have happened in Vietnam over the years since the war. He and the group were welcome throughout the country and he was impressed by the gracious reception and hospitality of the Vietnamese people. I highly recommend this book.

**Vietnam Again** (244 pages, \$3.99 Kindle, \$11.95 paperback) by Marc Cullison, ISBN: 978-09908465 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.

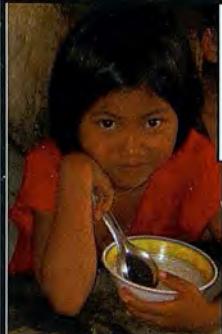
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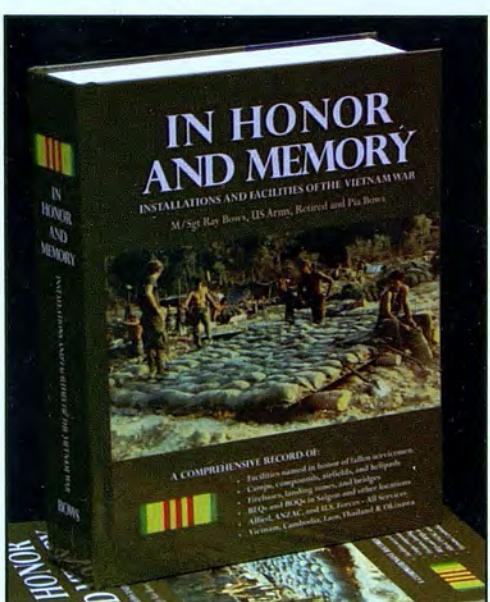
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# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

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.

12 members who have joined in the period of April 4th to May 22nd, 2017.

Buzbee Jack A. 'Jack' \*\*  
De Soto Illinois  
Air Force

Head John B  
Kansas City Missouri  
Army  
68-15  
92 AHC in 68-69

Long Robert E. \*\*  
Dover Ohio  
Coast Guard  
37 ARRS in 72; 40 ARRS in 72-  
73

McElwee William A. \*\*  
Savannah Georgia  
Army  
68-19 68-33  
C/3/17 CAV in 69

Raschke Phillip E. 'Phil' \*\*  
Lakewood Washington  
Army  
65-7  
A/1/9 CAV in 65-66; 121 AHC in  
66; C/3/17 CAV in 67-68; OH-6A  
NETT in 68

Ritter Michael A.  
Madison Wisconsin  
Army  
71-37  
F/1/9 CAV 1 CAV

Robertson Orbie G.  
Redding California  
Air Force  
Apr 57  
217 SQDN VNAF in 67-68;  
AFAT-7 in 67-68

Sigmon Powell F. \*\*  
Newton North Carolina  
Army  
64-2W  
121 AHC in 64-65

Starr Rex E. \*\*  
Stilwell Oklahoma  
Army  
67-16  
82 MED DET in 68-69

Taylor Samuel 'Sam'  
Hopkinsville Kentucky  
Army  
67-13  
147 ASHC in 68; 205 ASHC in  
68-69

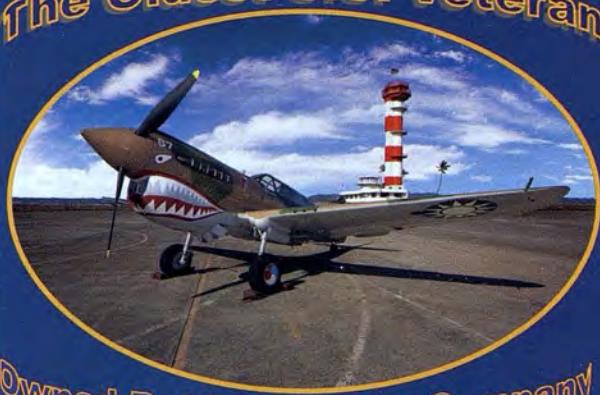
Thomas David E.  
Honolulu Hawaii  
Army  
70-8  
HHC 199 INF BDE in 70; B/229  
AHB 1 CAV in 70-71

Kurz John B  
Fallsington Pennsylvania  
Army  
67-1 66-23  
B/229 AHB 1 CAV in 68

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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

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- John Shafer	- James Tinney
- John Penny	- Bill Medsker
- Lenny Julian	- Pete Rzeminski
- Terry Opdahl	- James Oden
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KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

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## An Nhut Tan

So, why does An Nhut Tan stick in my memory? It's because of a single mission on a hazy Delta night. March 18, 1968 was my 14th day in a row of flying. In the 13 preceding days, I had logged 81.8 hours in 15 different aircraft. A typical day began with an early wake up and no breakfast. A can of C-rations during a mid-morning hot refueling "refueled" the pilot. More Cs in the early afternoon during a maintenance check would keep me going till dinner back at the club at Tiger Towers, my BOQ. This day began no differently. Our mission sheet called for support of the 9th Infantry Division from the base at Dong Tam just west of My Tho to several of their field sites. My flight records indicated 23 landings during the 8.4 hours I logged on my first aircraft of the day.

I made aircraft commander (AC) four months earlier and had accumulated nearly 800 flight hours in Vietnam. That day I was flying with a less experienced aviator, former Special Forces Trooper WO1 Samuel Taylor. On his third tour in Vietnam, Sam spent one of his previous tours as an enlisted man without sleeping under a roof his entire tour.

During the afternoon, we began to experience problems with the FM radio we used to communicate with our supported unit. We also used it to get artillery advisories during every flight. With only a couple of loads to go, the FM died completely. Determined

to finish the mission, I got one of the men from the supported unit to ride in the jump seat with his PRC-25 backpack FM radio. With it, I could push the hand set up under the ear cup of my helmet and communicate with the contacts at either end and with Dong Tam Artillery. I advised 147th Operations we would be unable to complete our last two sorties, and recommended they launch the standby aircraft to accomplish this mission.

Near supper time and back at Operations I asked who had taken the An Nhut Tan mission. I was told it may not have to be flown today, and the standby crew had been released. The duty officer was awaiting a call from the 222nd Aviation Battalion to confirm the mission would not have to go, and asked us to stay around a few minutes.

Over an hour passed before the call came from the 222nd. One of the two sorties had been declared "combat essential" and had to be flown that evening. The sun had gone down and the twilight glow faded from the sky. SP5 Dugger, flight engineer of our replacement aircraft, Hillclimber 074 was waiting for us; by the time the preflight was finished, the runup completed, and the takeoff from runway 36 was made, it was very dark.

There were no clouds in the sky, but I don't recall seeing any stars. I was surprised at how the haze seemed to have thickened.

Flying west with the South China Sea to our left and front, and the Rung Sat marsh land to our right, there was nothing visible outside the cockpit but darkness. I quickly realized this would be much more challenging than a routine night resupply mission. I began to regret my decision to fly it. I called Paris Control, advised them of my route of flight, that we were in instrument meteorological conditions, and requested flight following and aircraft advisories. Paris would be very helpful tonight. I was having to fly on instruments, using vectors from Paris Control to get to Tan Tru. A call to Tan An Artillery produced an advisory of "artillery in all quadrants to 5,000 feet." I advised Paris of my destination altitude and climbed to 6,000 feet before crossing the coastline.

When we contacted Tan Tru, they seemed ill-prepared to receive us and had to drive a Jeep down to the pad. Paddy control advised we were over Tan Tru and we began to orbit. My turns were to the left so I could look down through the haze to see the landing site. From 6,000-feet we could dimly see lights on the ground a few degrees from vertical. I could distinguish no pad lights. One thing I could distinguish was an unusually high number of tracers from the area below being fired generally in our direction, but at a comfortable 6,000 feet I didn't give them much thought. Our contact confirmed he had lights on the pad. Paris Control called to advise we had

drifted from our destination and gave a new vector. Over the site, I still could see no pad lights. I requested a fire be built near the pad; a fire makes an excellent marker for aircraft at night. The person on the radio said he had nothing with which to build a fire. By this time, I had been circling on instruments over his location for about 15 minutes. During this time, Sam had been talking to Paris Control on the UHF and our operations on the VHF. We had to change frequencies on the FM occasionally to talk to Tan An Artillery. We were so busy with radios, trying to keep over the area, trying to see pad lights, trying to fly the aircraft on instruments, and trying to ignore the tracers, I had Dugger stand in the companion way to change frequencies as Sam or I requested. Due to the tracer fire, we had the cockpit lights as dim as possible and the overhead console lights off. Dugger used his flashlight equipped with the red lens filter to operate the radio frequency selectors. He was doing a super job in a very demanding situation.

My patience was worn thin, I responded by telling the ground

contact to get a fire built even if he had to set the jeep on fire. Very soon, I saw a fire begin to flicker though the haze below. I also saw the tracer fire seemed to intensify. Tan An Arty gave us clearance through a thin slice of airspace over Tan Tru through which we could make our approach. Our combat-essential load was a water trailer and about 500 pounds of ammunition on a piggy back sling. There was no detectable ground fire when we were close to the pad, but during the approach and climb back to 6,000 feet, it was intense; none seemed to be coming near us. The VC couldn't see us, so they were shooting at a sound in the sky. I had never seen this much ground fire.

Back at 6,000 feet I felt more comfortable. A pair of gunships to escort us into An Nhut Tan was on the way. Once again, Tan Tru Arty gave us a thin clear slice of airspace to approach An Nhut Tan.

The contact on the ground there had been monitoring the FM frequency and heard my request for a fire at Tan Tru. He had a nice fire burning near the pad, but the gunships had not arrived. The apparently aimless ground fire continued. I tried to fly the Chinook on instruments with a sling load as smoothly as I could to avoid inducing higher levels of unwanted attitude changes. It meant ignoring the rhythmic motions naturally induced by the load, and it added another level of complexity and challenge to a tired, hungry, aggravated aviator. After another 20-minutes circling on instruments over the flickering fire far below, the gunships finally arrived, reconned the area, and

advised of heavy ground fire. Sam advised the gunships while I told the contact we were coming in. Almost immediately, a ground flare lit up the pad area. I put the thrust lever down and expedited my descent. Early in the approach I asked that the ground flare be extinguished, and momentarily it went out. Up to this time, things had been working out for us considering the extreme circumstances, but I had played my last good card.

With Dugger's help with the radios, we were an efficient team, but waiting until the flight home before letting Sam fly was my second mistake of the evening. The approach I was executing was a big 180-degree descending turn to the left; it works great when made from our normal operating altitude of 3,500 feet. About 60 degrees through the approach, I realized I had misjudged the altitude and the approach. I suppose it was the combination of fatigue, hunger, and stress, but I was about to blow the approach. Doing so would unnecessarily put my crew and the gunships in more danger. I tried to ignore the ground fire because the load had to be delivered.



The 2004 photo is of the author of An Nhut Tan, Frank Grose, and Sam Taylor in a CH-47D at Ft Campbell. The Chinook is the same aircraft as the one they flew in the story.

Attempting to salvage the approach I pulled the airspeed back to 40 knots and kicked the aircraft out of trim. 074 responded beautifully with a descent rate around 2,000 feet per minute. Sam wouldn't have known to do this, and I'm not sure I would have allowed him to do such an aggressive maneuver on a dark, hazy night; He couldn't, but I could! If I had let him fly, he probably would not have made such a serious misjudgment which resulted in the need for this maneuver. As I rolled onto my approach heading, the altimeter was winding through 1,500 feet, I announced I was bringing in the power and increasing my airspeed to 70 knots to complete the approach normally. I had a good approach angle; the altitude-losing technique had worked out well. I was looking forward to getting this load on the ground because we were now quite vulnerable to ground fire even with our exterior lights out.

Then it happened! Right by the pad, into my dark-adapted eyes came the dazzling white light of another flare. Less than half a mile out and approaching a thousand feet, in this critical phase of trying to salvage my approach, I was blinded momentarily. I squinted at the reflections off the buildings to the right and yelled on the radio to get the flare extinguished. We were now close to the sources of all those tracers, and I had an approach to complete. I thought everything was going okay and I would be able to complete the approach, when Sam said, "Pull the nose up, Max." and I felt him get on the controls. I looked back at the instrument panel and remember seeing four instruments all spelling DEATH. My altimeter was winding through 300 feet, my nose was 20 degrees below the horizon, my airspeed was going through 100 knots, and I had 800 pounds of torque (almost full power) pulled in.

Together, Sam and I were pulling back on the stick; still very much trying to fly the aircraft out of what I knew beyond doubt was an unrecoverable situation. Somehow, time seemed to slow down. I knew I was about to die; I recall thinking, "So this is how it ends" in much the same way as you would when you turn to the last page of a good book. There was no fear; just acceptance of what was about to happen.

Yes, I was about to die. I was flying 074 and its crew of five into the ground in a power dive at over 100 knots. We were pulling back on the cyclic to get the nose up, but I knew it was hopeless. If we lucked out and the aircraft didn't hit the ground, there was still the sling load hanging nearly 40 feet below the aircraft. And then there was that dead tree just beyond the pad, the only tree of that height anywhere around. Under normal circumstances it posed no real hazard; we just flew around it. But, the circumstances that night were not normal. What a shame it would be to somehow keep the aircraft and load from hitting the ground only to hit that stupid tree and die. Whichever way, the results would be the same. It seemed so sure, so inevitable, I don't even remember having any hope we would make it.

The next thing I knew, the lighted pad, the buildings to the right, and that blinding flare flashed beneath the aircraft. We were low; very low, but the load hadn't hit the ground. A second later I knew we had somehow missed the tree and were ALIVE! Then another crisis manifested itself: the dazzling flare was gone, and so was my night vision. Vertigo! After miraculously recovering the air-

craft from an unusual attitude at low altitude, I was going to lose control because of blindness and vertigo. No Chinook pilot worth his salt will deliberately drop a sling load unless it was immediately endangering his aircraft or crew. I knew it was the load or us, it had to go. Sam had armed the cargo hook with the overhead switch during our approach. Once the cargo hook release is pushed, it takes a couple of seconds before the hook opens enough to let the load drop off. I didn't know if I had that much time, but I had to try. An emergency hook release switch on the overhead console would release the load immediately, but I had my hands full of Chinook and there wasn't time to ask Sam to do it. Almost immediately, far faster than the usual delay, I felt a comforting jolt as the load dropped away. About this time, I could begin to see again. We weren't rolling at all, rather, we were in a slight left turn with the nose up and climbing like a homesick angel. The vertigo was gone! I was in control again. I remember starting to breathe again. I guess I had been holding my breath from the time I realized we were in trouble. It felt good. I relaxed a little and eased my grip on the stick. I was thankful for a fast hook. I didn't know what to say. I had almost killed my crew. I keyed the intercom and said, "I'm sure glad that was a fast hook." Dugger replied, "You didn't punch it off. A tracer round hit the sling and broke it. I was going to save the doughnut for a souvenir, but the hook opened and it fell off." For the last several seconds I had not even been concerned with the ground fire all around us, but I thanked God for that lucky round. The gunship lead advised me to slow my climb rate; they couldn't stay with me. I thanked them graciously and told them I wouldn't be needing them any more tonight. A couple of minutes later, I was back at 6,000 feet, flying in the dark hazy sky, and reflecting on what had almost happened down there. We were lucky to be alive and we knew it. It was indescribably unnerving. How had we pulled it out? Why were we not dead? Others had died in similar incidents. Why not us?

Several minutes had passed when the left gunner yelled, "Sir, there's a search light down there looking for us!" At that time the cockpit was illuminated momentarily by a powerful search light. I had not seen nor heard of the VC ever using one and I knew the Americans didn't have such a light! I racked the aircraft around in a tight climbing turn to the right hoping to avoid being acquired by the light. I had no idea what would be coming up after us if it found us. Fear gripped me again as I waited. Then the gunner announced it was searching the sky far behind us. To this day, I still don't know who or what was looking for us. There were still frequent orange streaks from tracers being fired into the air almost everywhere we looked.

I don't recall how long it took to get back north to the Tan An area, or even how we got there. I found a town I was sure was Tan An. I remembered the airfield was to the west of the city so I began to look for perimeter lights which marked all U.S. installations. I saw some near the west edge of town and began to descend. By this time, I was circling over the perimeter at 300 feet trying to make out a runway. I keyed the radio and called Tan An and asked if they had the runway lights on. Just then Dugger yelled, "Look out!" and pointed out the windshield. I had been circling to the left looking intently down to try to find a runway. When I looked up, I was staring at a

microwave tower just down from the top! It was just a couple of seconds in front of me. I jerked the cyclic to the right and sucked in an armload of pitch, narrowly missing the tower! Tan An requested our position. I told them I was over the compound with the microwave tower, and I had just almost hit it. The tower told me to look to the west about three miles; there was a fire burning on the northwest corner of the perimeter. I rogered the fire, but saw no other lights. The tower said they were under ground attack and had all the lights off, so I asked them to get me some lights out there and I would help them fight when I got on the ground.

Most flights in Vietnam had been relatively routine; no ground fire, nothing unusual, but tonight, it seemed the deck was stacked against us. What else could possibly go wrong? Swapping bullets with a few VC before we topped off the aircraft and flew home didn't seem like such a bad deal. I informed the crew to get the weapons ready and prepare for a firefight. Our two gunners would dismount their M-60 machine guns, and Dugger would use his M-79 grenade launcher. He, Sam, and I had 45 caliber pistols, plus I had my M-2 carbine. We were ready.

Someone from the tower or Ops reacted quickly and drove a Jeep out onto the runway and pointed the lights my way. I could see the lights as the Jeep drove out. With all lights out, I made the approach short of the Jeep and was directed by the tower to the hot refueling point. Much to my surprise, I saw no evidence of enemy activity. I saw no point in looking for trouble, so I hovered to orient the tail toward where the enemy was reported to be and the left side toward the fuel point. I told the chief to allow only one person off the aircraft and to refuel only the left tank as quickly as possible. I kept the normal operating RPM of 230 so there would be no delay if we had to make a quick departure. Sam and I sat in silence during the few minutes it took to refuel. It was a welcome break to try to collect our wits and think about the trip home. Dugger announced, "Ramp up. Ready in the rear."

I advised the tower I was ready for takeoff, and was cleared for immediate takeoff from present position. With a word of thanks to the Tan An folks, we were soon in a rapid, 2,000 feet per minute climb back to 6,000 feet. Now back to Tan An Artillery:

"Tan An Arty, this is Hillclimber 074 from Tan An to Vung Tau; Artillery advisory."

"Hillclimber 074, this is Tan An. Be advised we have artillery from Tan An in all quadrants to 5,000 feet."

"Roger, Tan An, we are climbing through 4,000 now. We shall be clear in just a moment."

Suddenly, I heard a noise and felt a slight shudder in the airframe like someone had dropped a tool box or an ammo box in the rear. In spite of the 120-130 decibel range of noise in the cockpit, the wind and rotor noise, the helmet, and ear plugs, I could hear and feel anything out of the ordinary. A dropped tool in the back could be heard, as could a bullet passing through the airframe. It got my attention, but it didn't cause me alarm. I enquired of Dugger what was going on. He said he didn't know. No one had dropped anything. We leveled off at 6,000. And yes, I was still on the controls. The ADF needle was pointing the way home to Vung Tau. I could still see an abnormally high number of tracers when I looked down, but they

didn't concern me now. We requested flight following and aircraft advisories from Paris Control. We advised Hillclimber Operations that we were on the way home... We relaxed.

Something then began to happen to me which I still can't explain. I could not hold heading and altitude! I was conscious of the problem and tried to fly right, but I just could not. I told Sam to take the aircraft and take us home if he could; because I couldn't. I am not sure if I could have flown well enough to get us home and on the ground or not. It seemed impossible at the time. I was glad I had Sam who took the controls and flew us back to Vung Tau without incident.

Back at Operations, a small crowd had gathered around the radio. I was the only Hillclimber out, so the duty officer changed frequencies as I did to monitor as much of what was going on as he could. I knew from early in the mission that it would be unusual, so I kept Ops informed as things developed. Sam made the approach and taxied to the parking spot. Together we executed the shutdown procedure.

On the dash 13 of the aircraft log book, I entered "Flt #1 okay." Back in Ops, I filled out a dropped load report and the mission sheet. There was a place to mark if you had taken fire and the number of rounds; I entered "greater than 1,000," because I had no idea how many. That was probably an extreme underestimate and based only on the tracers we saw.

From then on, Sam had earned my complete confidence and respect. He had saved our lives more than once that night. SP5 Dugger had also proven himself that night, and saved our lives.

On the way to the aircraft the next morning, Dugger intercepted me and asked me to come and look at 074. Just behind the right-hand forward landing gear, very close to the right-hand fuel tank, there was a scraped dent just about the radius of a 105mm artillery shell. Dugger assured me it wasn't there yesterday before the flight. Apparently, the unidentified bump we felt as we climbed out from Tan An was an artillery round hitting the aircraft! At that altitude it would have been almost at its maximum altitude. With our rapid rate of climb, the contact was not hard enough to break the skin of the aircraft. Our paths crossed at near 90 degrees with just a "kiss." Fortunately for us, it was not the kiss of death. I realized that not twice, but three times, we were just inches or seconds from death that night, not before nor since that night have I knowingly been so close!

Although many years have passed since that night, the memory of it is still vivid in my mind. It is a reminder to me that God kept me alive for a purpose.

MAJ (Ret) Frank "Max" Grose

#### An Nhut Tan.... The Rest of the Story

By: LT Gene Richardson, Company B,  
2nd BN of the 60th Infantry 67-68....

I remember reading your version of the incident at An Nhut Tan (ANT). My view was from the ground as the CO of the fire support base. I have a few things to add to the story. Tan An was our Brigade HQ, Tan Tru was our BN HQ and An Nhut Tan was our only permanent outpost always manned by at least a full Infantry Platoon. We were not Special Forces but more like "special targets"

when we pulled duty at ANT.

An Nhut Tan was right next to an area we called the Bowling Alley. Every grunt in the Brigade has a few good stories of heavy VC contact in the Bowling Alley/ An Nhut Tan area as it was the major route for the VC from Saigon to their strongholds in the Delta. Hot LZs were not uncommon anywhere within two miles of ANT.

I was the one who ordered the emergency resupply of H2O, ammo etc., as we had been in contact since the night before when one of our squads triggered an ambush with claymores followed by several hours of sporadic exchanges as the patrol tried to make their way back to ANT. We finally got everybody back about 1600 after using a lot of ARTY and gunship support to protect our flanks. We were all exhausted and getting low on ammo and learned our water tank had taken a near direct hit by the VC as they were trying to knock out our 81mms. We had plenty of rain water from the village but it had to be treated heavily and still could make you sick.

The ammo was more critical and we did get some on a Medevac ship after you risked your life for us. I remember the tracers being aimed at your ship and thinking you were a very large slow-moving target. When you dropped the water we thought you had crashed and I immediately ordered a patrol to assemble to try to locate your crew. That was our search light we used from our radar tower to observe the river and the Bowling Alley. We did not like to turn it on because it just gave Charlie something more to shoot at.

There was a lot of discussion on the ground about your ship going

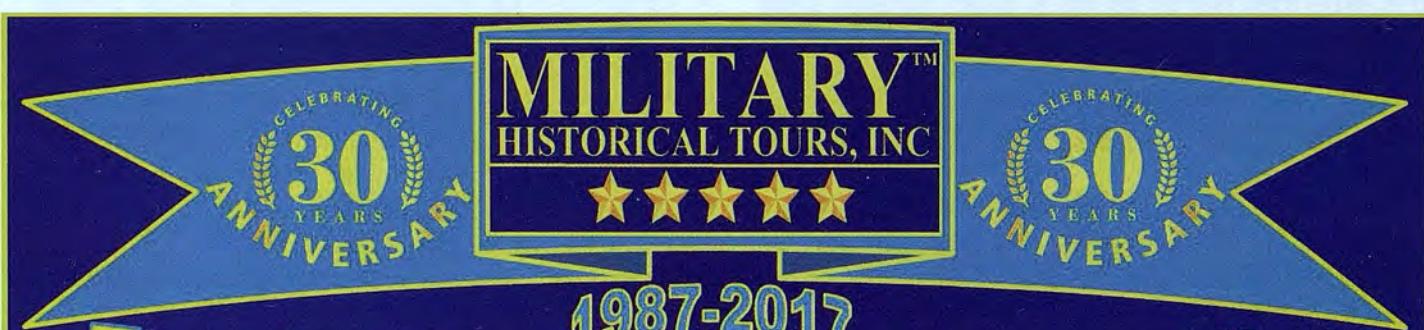
down and maybe there were two ships and only one down. Tan An quickly assured us there were no ships down, but we would not get any resupply until first light. I ordered all patrols and LPs back inside the wire and we stayed on full alert the rest of the night. We had Puff on station all night because the VC had stopped shooting and were probably out looking for a downed chopper. Thanks for the effort to help us and I am soooooo glad you made it out.

We had another company walk in from Tan Tru the next day to replace us because the VC were using wheel mounted antiaircraft guns and we were having trouble getting air support the next morning. We could only get a few slicks and no gunships because of a big operation near the Ben Luc bridge to our west.

Sorry about those blinding flares but the VC had breached our wire at ANT just a few weeks before and we had just reinforced the wire with extra flares and claymores. Thanks for telling your story and now you have a different viewpoint.

#### Editor's Note:

Some time ago, Sam Taylor was reported to the VHPA as killed in a 1972 helicopter crash in Korea. The VHPA was recently notified this was not the case. In an attempt to make up for the error, Sam has been given a free one-year membership.



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ALAMO CHAPTER  
James Boykin, President  
[REDACTED]

ALASKA CHAPTER  
Lynn Kile, President  
12243 W Skyline Dr  
Eagle River, AK 99577  
Phone: 907-696-5453  
Email: llkile@aol.com

ARIZONA CHAPTER  
Bill Sorenson, President  
[REDACTED]

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH  
Ken Fritz  
[REDACTED]

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

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER  
Donald Ancelin  
[REDACTED]

GEORGIA CHAPTER  
Bob Lanzotti, President  
[REDACTED]

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Victor Lent, President  
[REDACTED]

Email: VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

MICHIGAN CHAPTER  
[REDACTED]

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER  
Don Abrams, President  
[REDACTED]

MONTANA CHAPTER  
Todd Brandoff, President  
Box 790, Lolo, MT 59847  
(406) 273-2511  
Email: tbrandoff@hotmail.com

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER  
Marshall Eubanks, President  
[REDACTED]

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER  
(currently inactive, seeking members)

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
Ed Hughes  
[REDACTED]

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER  
Pete Norman  
[REDACTED]

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
Tom Payne, President  
[REDACTED]

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER  
Don Agren, President  
[REDACTED]

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SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER  
Jim Miles, President  
[REDACTED]

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER  
John Wilkinson  
[REDACTED]

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER  
Dale E House, President  
[REDACTED]

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Sven Akesson, President  
[REDACTED]

UTAH CHAPTER  
Doug Drury, 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 Sorensen of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at [REDACTED] or via E-Mail 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

Our ladies and gentlemen have continued the practice of meeting monthly for lunch at different local restaurants. The pilots met for lunch on April 11th at 54th Grill and Bar in The Rim shopping center. The ladies met on April 21st, San Jacinto Day (when Texas gained independence from Mexico in 1836), at the historic Guenther House in downtown San Antonio. We broke tradition in May because of the pending outing to Fredericksburg, TX, and met as couples for lunch on May 10th at Gennaro's Trattoria located in Startzville, near Canyon Lake.

Our Chapter met for a quarterly meeting at the Barn Door restaurant on June 20th. Our guest speaker was Joyce Earnest, who represents Honor Flight San Antonio, an organization which transports veterans to Washington, D.C., free of charge, to visit memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifice. She told us Vietnam veterans are eligible for the trips, and presented details and answered questions. Some of our members submitted applications to be considered for such a trip.

We are considering a group trip to the Lucky Eagle Casino near Eagle Pass, TX, sometime this fall. This is the only casino in Texas, located on a Kickapoo American Indian reservation near the Mexican border. Members are urged to watch for emails and to check our website [www.vhp-alamo.org](http://www.vhp-alamo.org) for details of this and other scheduled events.

By Chuck Oualline

## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER



The 30th Reunion held in Indianapolis on 7-9 April was a complete success. Everything started on Friday with a visit to the Dallara INDY Car Experience with about half of the group participating in the tour, while the other half of the group participated in the tour where they were able to ride-along in a two-seated, street-legal INDY Car. Friday evening closed

out with pizza and a movie with a screening of KET TV's documentary on Vietnam through the remembrances of veterans.

On Saturday, some of the group went to the INDY 500 Museum and others went to the Extreme Weather 3D movie at the IMAX Theater.

The reunion was capped off with our banquet and guest speaker at the Indiana War Memorial. Built during the depression, the museum was constructed of various varieties of stone and marble from around the world. One can only describe the building as amazing. Fittingly, the museum has a Cobra that flew in Vietnam as a part of their impressive facility honoring all our veterans across the history of our Nation.

Our guest speaker was MG Richard Chegar. He spoke of the very first battle of the Vietnam War. This epic battle took place on the 8th of November 1965. For those who had not seen the video "The 8th of November" go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZpdBvB0hek>. MG Richard Chegar's presentation was one of the best dinner speeches we have had in 30 years.

It was a wonderful presentation that brought the battle of the 173rd Airborne Brigade to life, and fittingly one of the chapter members pre-

sent was in that very battle in 1965.

The chapter will meet again next year in Frankfort, KY, hope to see you all then.

By Bob Blair

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER



As I sit down to compose this report, the Memorial Day weekend is approaching. Depending on the source used, there are several patriotic holidays listed, but I consider Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans' Day to be of primary importance. Memorial Day is an especially somber day, as most of us who served in a combat theater know. We all know someone who gave that "last full measure of devotion," as President Lincoln stated it. It is up to us to remind those around us this is not just a long weekend of picnics and parties, but a time of remembrance of those who have fallen in all wars; a time of reflection on the cost of freedom.

On page 26 of the May/June 2017 issue of *The VHPA Aviator* is an article about the acquisition and refurbishing of UH-1C 65-09510 by the Vietnam Memorial Museum in Branson. Geoff Gardisky is a volunteer at the museum and was tasked with the task of cleaning up and repainting the helicopter preparatory to putting it on display at the museum. The aircraft was dedicated on Saturday, May 27, 2017. Four members of the chapter attended the dedication of the aircraft, John Sorensen, Russ Emory, Ron Clifton, and Vern Austin.

The second quarter meeting of VHPA, South Missouri Chapter, will be held at Uncle Buck's Conservatory, 1935 S. Campbell, in Springfield, MO, on June 10. Uncle Buck's is located at the south end of the Bass Pro store. The meeting will begin at 11:00.

The third quarter meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2017, at 11:00 at the Hy-Vee Club Room, 405 E. Nifong Boulevard, Columbia, MO. This meeting will include the election of officers. The meal at this meeting will be provided by the chapter.

The fourth quarter meeting will, once again, be held in the Silver Dollar City Parlor of the Keeter Center, College of the Ozarks, near Branson, MO, on November 11, 2017. It is being scheduled in conjunction with the Veterans Day celebration and parade to be held in Branson. Several members will be participating in the parade, which is just prior to the chapter meeting.

As a repeat of an earlier mention, for the benefit of those members who live near the historic Route 66 between Chicago and Los Angeles, Dick Elgin, VHPASMO Vice-President has called attention to an activity later in the year. The Military Vehicle Preservation Association has several activities during the year throughout the country. This year they are presenting the MVPA Route 66, 2017 Convoy, which will follow the old Route 66 from Chicago, IL, to Santa Monica, CA. This will run through the state of Missouri from St. Louis to the Oklahoma state line near Joplin. It will be in Branson, MO, for two days. For anyone interested, the detailed information on the convoy can be found at this link: <http://www.mvpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Rt-66-info.pdf>.

*Have a great summer.*

By John Wilkinson, President 2015 VHPA South Missouri Chapter

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter of the VHPA met on May 18th, 2017 at the Minnesota Historical Society's Workshop in St. Paul. Jerry Chapman and others gave a short presentation of their Year of 1968 exhibit at the Historical Society. The exhibit includes a UH-1 Huey that was cut into many parts. This can be reassembled in about four to five hours. The reason for cutting the Huey into parts is so it can fit through a commercial size door for an indoor exhibit. The working crew at the Historical Society did a beautiful job and it was hard to see where they made the cuts.

The Upper Midwest Chapter is a small, active chapter located in the Twin Cities, including eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. We meet six times a year, on the third Thursday of the odd months. We have a Facebook account ([facebook.com/UMCVHPA](https://facebook.com/UMCVHPA)) and the current activities will be listed on that site.

One of our chapter members is Jim Crigler. Jim has taken on a fund-raising project to honor Gold Star Families by canoeing solo

the length of the Mississippi River. He began this 2250-mile adventure on April 22, 2017 at the headwaters of the Mississippi. This is further explained in the May/June 2017 edition of the VHPA *Aviator*, page seven.

On July 20, we will have a dinner cruise on the St. Croix River. This is an annual event that has been popular in the past. New attendees are welcome, but contact a Chapter member for more details.

We have access to a flyable Huey from one of our members and a 'trailer-able' Huey through a partnership with the VVA. Both are used at airshows and veterans' events. As an example, both were at the Nealsville, Wisconsin Veterans' event and veterans were given rides in the Huey.

Any Vietnam Helicopter pilot or VHPA member in the Twin Cities area will be warmly welcomed at any of our meetings. Check us out on our website, call Richard Anderson at 763-441-5847, or Bert Leach at 952-593-0821.

Submitted by Dick Anderson and Bert Leach

## ALASKA CHAPTER

I can't wait to see all the wonderful Chapter Ceremonies from the Memorial Day weekend. For our Chapter, it was our third year to attend the Byers Lake Veteran's Memorial, an intimate and wonderful time for sharing. It starts

with breakfast before the 130 mile trip North of Anchorage to the McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge where we got a great overnight rate, and began our planned activities. Before dinner, we started the process of recording our oral histories, hosted by Brad Schmitz, a volunteer for the Library of Congress Veteran's History Project. We had a very nice welcome letter from Karen Lloyd of the Veteran's History Project which will be shared with our members.

She invited us to Washington DC for a private tour and to donate our interviews in person, a very nice invitation. Joe Riley, Garland Dobson, and Ken Cowles got us started and set the standard for the rest of us who will record at other events. As usual, food is always a center of attraction and dinner is always a special time of sharing. We received a personal letter of appreciation from our Governor, and it was read at the dinner event.



Ken Cowles relating his oral history



Group picture with Alaska Governor Bill Walker



Bob Wigen & Roger Pfiefer placing our wreath



Senator Murkowski and Interior Secretary Zinke placing a wreath



Picnic



Group Dinner



As Jesus tells us, there is no greater love than a man lay down his life for another. The Sunday Memorial is an intimate and special for time for us as we remember our friends and fellow soldiers who had given the ultimate sacrifice. After a roaring entrance by Rolling Thunder (about 150 motorcycles), and the Blackhawk landing with some of the dignitaries, Roger Pfiefer and Bob Wigen placed our wreath in remembrance to our fellow airmen.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Short, but wonderfully appropriate sentiments from US Interior Department Secretary Ryan Zinke, US Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Alaska Governor Bill Walker, among others were included in the ceremony. This event is usually void of media and attended by soldiers, their families, and others with sincere memories of those who have fallen. However, this time we were blessed by dignitaries who showed a genuine care and connection to military members. For sure, this is a very special place.

Following the Remembrance, we gathered for a mini, but needed picnic. We had to let the parking lot clear out a bit and were not in

a hurry to head home as we really had a wonderful time together. Besides, who can pass up hot dogs and hamburgers! So we now get ready for the Midnight Sun Baseball game, Halibut fishing and our summer picnic. Hopefully, some members will make the Indy Reunion, and we will be looking forward to more quality time together this summer.

There is pride in knowing we flew. Thanks for all you guys do producing a great magazine!

By Lynn Kyle, President

## FLORIDA CHAPTER

After participating in the helicopter-only AMERICAN HEROES AIRSHOW held in Oviedo, Florida in March, the VHPAF was non-stop for the next five weeks. First stop, April 4th-8th was the annual SUN 'n FUN airshow whose mis-

sion is to preserve and enhance the future of flight through world-class events, inspiring and educating people of all ages. Since its inception in 1974 it has grown into the second largest event of its kind in the world and is Florida's largest annual convention. This event which is held at Lakeland Linder Regional Airport in Lakeland, FL, elevates the airport to the 'busiest in the world' for one week based on the enormous amount of aircraft movements. We supported the event with our LOACH static display, Memorabilia Tent, and Sales Tent.

Next stop, April 12th-15th, was Wallace Brooks Park, located on the shoreline of the Lake Tsala Apopka chain near central downtown Inverness, FL. It was absolutely a gorgeous place to host the Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall. Thousands turned out to pay their respects to 'Some that gave all.' The Citrus County Sheriff's Office provided a motorcycle escort for the Wall as hundreds of Bikers escorted the Wall for some 15-20 miles from the city of Crystal River to the city of Inverness. As usual, we supported the event with our LOACH on static display along with a Sales Tent. We also gained several new members!

The next leg of our State-wide journey was April 27th-29th in Eustis, FL. Usually we participate in the annual celebration parade of GeorgeFest, the second oldest festival celebrating George Washington's Birthday in the nation and the longest running festival of any kind in Florida. The parade is held annually in Eustis during the month of February. However, this year the city wanted to bring the Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall to town and thought it would be more appropriate if the VHPAF supported this event rather than



Our "kiddie-ride" helicopter was a big hit among kids and parents alike at the SUN 'n FUN airshow in Lakeland, FL.



The VHPAF Sales Tent manned by Tom Rountree and Gary Harrell in Eustis, FL



The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall on display at the beautiful Wallace Brooks Park in Inverness, FL.



The VHPAF LOACH static display and Sales Tent at Wallace Brooks Park in Inverness, FL.

the Georgefest Parade. Once again, we participated with our LOACH and Sales Tent. We also picked up about six new members!

The final leg of this whirlwind tour, May 2nd-6th, was in support of the 30th Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. It's one of the largest All Veterans Reunions in the State. The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard (County), FL organization owns one of the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Walls. Their Wall is a 3/5 scale of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC, stands six feet tall at the center and covers almost 300 feet from end to end. This Traveling Memorial stands as a reminder of the great sacrifices made during the Vietnam War. It was made for the purpose of helping heal and rekindle friendships and to allow people the opportunity to visit loved ones in their home town who otherwise may not be able to make the trip to Washington. We have supported this event for more than twenty years. This year we showed up with our LOACH static display, 'kiddie-ride' helicopter, Sales Tent, and COBRA (AH-1G) which flew in and landed to the



The COBRA (AH-1G) on static display in Melbourne, FL.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

delight of all. Of course, it was a big hit among all the attendees, especially the Vietnam veterans. Upon its departure, the Cobra made several low-level passes over the area as part of its aerial 'exhibition' and 'saluted' the Wall as it left the Event. We received very positive comments and numerous words of gratitude for our service from both veterans and non-veterans while registering more new VHPAF members! By the way, one of the local VFWs oper-

ated a 'mess hall' which served outstanding food at a nominal price. For example, breakfast was only \$6.00 for all-you-can-eat eggs, sausage, ham, hash-brown potatoes, grits, gravy, biscuits, toast and jelly! Whew!

Until next time, remember to never fly with anyone that is braver than you are!

Dr. Joe Ponds, President



## GEORGIA CHAPTER

On May 20, 2017, the Georgia VHPA Chapter conducted its bi-monthly breakfast meeting at its home base, the Marietta Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo).

Our guest speaker for this meeting was Colonel John Thompson who is currently on terminal retirement leave after serving twenty-nine years and eight months on active duty. The name Thompson is becoming a legacy in the annals of Army Aviation. John's father flew CH-21s and UH-1s in Vietnam. He was killed while flying a UH-1B gunship during his second Vietnam tour in August of 1967. John was assigned to several air cavalry units during his career and wore the cavalry hat that was shipped home with his dad's personal effects in 1967. Today, John's son is assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division and is flying UH-60 Black Hawks. Colonel Thompson is a combat veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm plus multiple deployments in support of Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. His distinguished career included serving eight years with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, culminating in command of Knight Stalkers Regiment during 2010-2012.

Colonel Thompson's presentation took our chapter members on an actual rescue mission in Afghanistan using two MH-47s. This power point/video chronicle of the mission vividly displayed for our members the tactical and technical advancements made in the deployment of Army aviation since our era. All of us Vietnam veterans would agree Army Aviation today ain't what it used to be!

We've come a long way Baby!

There was considerable discussion regarding the 2018 Reunion scheduled for Atlanta. Members were briefed on the 18 April meeting of principal VHPA annual reunion organizers conducted at the downtown Marriott Marquis Hotel.

Our next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2017. Our guest speaker for this meeting will be CPT Melvin (USA Ret.) Mel served 21 years in the Army, retiring in 1976. He was a rifle company commander in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star. During his early years in the Army his speed was noticed on the football field and he was encouraged to try out for the US Olympics. He won the gold medal in the 4x100m relay during the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico. During this same period, Mel set world records in the 50, 60, and 70 yard dashes. Interestingly, Mel didn't run track until the age of 25. After Mel's military career, he became head track coach at the US Military Academy.

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

By Bob Lanzotti, President



Colonel Thompson

## HAWAII CHAPTER

Welcome Home 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration

In Hawaii, we were honored to salute our Vietnam Veterans. During a week of Welcome Home events and celebrations, 3,000 visitors were embraced in true Aloha style. Many travelled from Australia, New Zealand, Korea, and Taiwan; 300 made the trip from Vietnam. From symposiums and speeches to dinners, receptions, concerts, and parades, the recognition brought closure for many.

A Welcome Home Concert at the Waikiki

Shell launched the week-long events into high gear, setting the celebratory mood. Ann-Margret, the Swedish-American actress and divine star to many Vietnam Veterans, was on hand to present Colonel William S. Reeder, Jr., USA (Ret.), with a special American



300 Arrived from Vietnam

Award. A former Cobra pilot, Colonel Reeder endured a year of captivity as the last American combat POW of the Vietnam War.

Ann-Margret, herself, was honored at the Welcome Home Banquet, held at the Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor, for her immeasurable contributions in support of the troops during the Vietnam tours. Entertainer Tony Orlando also wowed the 600

guests. Not to be forgotten was a heart-felt tribute to Bob Hope's legacy. Major General James T. Jackson, USA (Ret.) opened the emotionally-charged evening, and Keynote Speaker, Major General Patrick Brady, USA (Ret.), a former Dustoff pilot and Medal of

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Museum Executive Director Kenneth DeHoff & Emcee David Price Recognize Ann-Margret's Long Years of Treasured Support



American Award to Colonel W. Reede



Major General James T. Jackson



Pacific Aviation Museum, Hangar 37



Major General Patrick Brady (Ret)



From left: CAPT H. Nguyen (USN), MG P. Brady (USA, Ret), CAPT J. Hickerson (USN, Ret), and COL W. Reeder (USA, Ret)



Cobra & Huey in the Waikiki Parade with the Reeders & DeHoffs



GEN David Bramlett, USA (Ret) at Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific



Presenting the Floral Wreath at Punchbowl (Museum Exec Director Ken DeHoff, center)

honor recipient, was showered with a long standing ovation. At an earlier reception, the Pacific Marine Corps Band brought back the sounds of the Vietnam era.

The waves of memories and emotions continued to surge during the next few days. We hosted the Vietnam Symposium with guest speakers Navy Captain Huan Nguyen, who lost his entire family during the Vietnam War and rebuilt his life in the U.S., Major General Patrick Brady, Colonel William Reeder, and Captain James Hickerson, USN (Ret.) who survived 5 years as a POW. The experiences shared with the audience were invaluable, stirring, and powerful.

Several of our aircraft took center stage as part of the Wel-



F-105 Thunderchief, led by Exec Dir Kenneth DeHoff (left) & Kahu Kordell Kekoa (right, center)

come Home events:

The Republic F-105 Thunderchief was dedicated in honor of Medal of Honor recipient USAF Colonel Leo K. Thorsness and Electronic Warfare Officer Captain Harold E. Johnson. Our Bell AH-1 Cobra and UH-1 Huey were the two stars during the Welcome Home Parade down Waikiki's Kalakaua Avenue, evoking memories and drawing applause.

General David Bramlett, USA (Ret.) concluded the week with a keynote address on Memorial Day at Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. It was a day to be remembered for all the military families who have seen sacrifice for the nation, up close and personal.

By Ken DeHoff

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER



The Michigan Chapter's spring meeting was held on May 6 at the Log Jam Restaurant in Grand Ledge. Fourteen members and four spouses attended with several new members. Many traveled long distances to attend.

As we gathered the new members were welcomed and blended in with the group.

The wives found each other and fended off the old helicopter pilots. Not really, I think we behaved ourselves quite well. The socializing included embellished war stories and individual updates. In spite of unexpected outside crowds and short staff, the



F-105 Thunderchief, led by Exec Dir Kenneth DeHoff (left) & Kahu Kordell Kekoa (right, center)

Log Jam again provided excellent service and fine food.

Following the luncheon the business meeting covered a number of topics. It was noted that there continue to be vacancies for the chapter offices of secretary and treasurer. Anyone interested is requested to contact the president for immediate inauguration.

Rich Deer gave a summary of his presentation at the USS Silversides Museum in Muskegon on March 6th. He was invited to speak as president of the chapter to discuss the role of helicopters in the Vietnam War. There were several Michigan chapter

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

members in attendance as well. He noted the museum as an excellent facility and encouraged everyone to visit it when in the area.

Possible chapter activities for 2017 look slim this year. Past events are not being conducted this time around and the flying Hueys from American Huey 369 and Army Aviation Heritage Foundation are not scheduled in Michigan this year. Several Vietnam Memorial "Moving Wall" organizations are conducting events in the state.

The "Wall That Heals" conducted by the Viet Vets Memorial Fund and sponsored by PBS station WGVU is scheduled September 21-24 in Grand Rapids. Roger Blaha had advised us of this event.

Vice President Dave James will be heading up our participation at the Maple Grove airport near Fowlerville again this year. Sunday, September 10th is the expected date of the Fly-In and Veterans Memorial to be conducted there. Any interested members are requested to contact Dave for details.

A couple of events are scheduled at the American Huey 369 facility in Peru, Indiana. July 4th is the VHPA reunion event. Tim Delong noted that a bus will transport VHPA members from Indy to Peru that day. Another Peru, IN event is on August 12 & 13 with the 11th Annual Gathering of Veterans and Patriots.

Thunder over Michigan is scheduled for September 2-4 in Ypsilanti. We've found it's not financially feasible for us to participate as a chapter but group attendance may be an option. VP Dave James will receive inquiries on that.

Dave also advised Mason Aviation Days will be held in August and will announce the date later. He also will put out alerts concerning the EAA Airventure Oshkosh in Wisconsin July 24-30 for those interested in going.

Rich Deer noted that some of the other chapters have regular monthly or quarterly social gatherings. Since our membership is scattered, he encourages members to find a place in their area where they could have a regular get-together. He often joins a regular monthly gathering of another veterans group at a Cracker Barrel draws from 4 – 18 people each time. All that's needed is for a member to find such a place and let him know the date and time and he'll spread the word. Mark Benjamin has since advised he will be doing just that in the Traverse City area. Once the details are completed it will be announced to everyone with hopes those in the area will join him.

By the VHPA Reunion Morning Report, there are 16 VHPA members from Michigan registered to attend the reunion. 11 of them are Michigan chapter members as well. Rich requested they get photos of chapter members for publication with our activities.

Under other activities, Gary Copp noted the recent announcement of a compromise by the VHPA and the Army resulting in a monument to Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crewmembers being approved for placement at Arlington National Cemetery. He suggested our chapter make a donation in support of this project. As president of the chapter, Rich advised he would contact

VHPA to see what the protocol is for making such contributions. Since the meeting a procedure has been explained for making donations through the chapter or individually on the VHPA website. The collection through the chapter will be presented at the Annual Business Meeting during the reunion in Indianapolis. Emails have been sent out to all members with the details.

Glen Veno was not able to make this chapter meeting but has proposed members create "Brag Boards" to highlight their aviation careers. Information he provided was presented to the members present and a copy sent to all members.

Rich Deer gave the treasurers report with \$573.21 as the current balance. (Dues received at the end of the meeting and other transactions now make the balance \$883.21.) Rich advised that as we age, there are challenges with keeping the chapter going. In the event he is unable to continue and no one else picks up the flag, any remaining funds will be donated to the VHPA.

Tim Delong noted that legacy issues such as this are a concern with the VHPA. Gary Copp advised of his involvement with Honor Flights to Washington, D.C. Originally started for WWII veterans, it has expanded to include Korean and Vietnam veterans as well. He added that for any who want information on Honor Flight go to [midmichiganhonorflight.com](http://midmichiganhonorflight.com)

A Michigan chapter membership roster was presented by Rich. He also provided a map showing how the membership is scattered around the state. He advised of ten new members since last year's spring meeting. Four of them were present at the meeting – Bob Matlis, Jerry Wright, Gary Copp, and Bob Wilhelm – our first member from Indiana. Gary was on the roster a few years back but his name slipped through the cracks on a transition.

Rich advised this brought our total of members and interested parties to 77 including VHPA chapter liaison John Sorensen. But he also found we had lost two. One did not have a usable email address and no info to update and the other had passed away in April. Information on that one was sent to the VHPA *Aviator* for the Taps listing.

He advised that he adds names of anyone contacting him asking to be included on the email listing for VHPA-Michigan activities. A note to that effect has been included in submissions to the VHPA *Aviator* and that's resulted in most of the new additions.

Various items were brought in by the members present for viewing and discussion. Several Vietnam War era maps (plus a magnifying glass- YES!), CH-54 photos, a TH-55 model, and a UH-1 rosewood model provided by Lee Luck (I remembered to bring it this time Lee).

After close of business, a group photo was taken and socializing continued.

Our guest speaker had canceled due to a commitment in Montreal. VP Dave James brought in a Bob Hoover video and a big screen TV to watch it. Unfortunately our time slot at the Log Jam expired before it finished but it was enjoyed by those who stayed.

By Submitted by Rich Deer, President

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

During the last few months NAVHPA was hard at work again.

Mid-march is the annual Vietnam Veterans Welcome home celebration in Huntsville. The chapter and Buccaneer 3 (Buc 3), our UH-1C gunship were again front and center at the observance. The mayors of Huntsville and Madison, AL were in attendance. They both toured Buc 3 and were amazed at the state of preservation of the old girl. (Alas, time has not been so kind to some of our members. Then again, some of them were not very good looking in their youth!)

As a service to the community, the NAVHPA helped serve a sit-down Easter dinner on Good Friday to some of the less fortunate in our community at the Downtown Rescue Mission. A three-course menu was served by volunteers from the community. All the food and preparation was donated by several organizations including the NAVHPA. We hoped to make the Easter season a little brighter for some people experiencing hard times. And we think we did.

In April, the chapter served our regular 3rd Thursday lunch at the Downtown Rescue mission. We were pleased to give back by serving perhaps 100 people a nutritious lunch including more than a dozen children and babies. It seems that the member's spouses always "get" to serve the meal and the members are "stuck" with drinks and deserts. No one is sure just why that happens. (Our members are not complaining.)

April 27th found the NAVHPA on Redstone Arsenal supporting the garrison's "Protection Day" activities. This was an all-day show featuring activities on the post like fire prevention, medical care, working



A composite view of Redstone Protection Days. Kids, dog and guns. Can it get any better?



A bunch of old Calvarymen (and a woman) at the 2017 Vietnam Veterans Welcome home in Huntsville

dog demonstrations and Explosive Ordnance Disposal. Buc 3 was an overwhelming hit. We had lines to get aboard that were 20 folks deep on both sides of the helicopter each day. For about an hour, one of the working dogs apparently decided to get out of the sun. She seemed content to lay in the cargo compartment. The kids were enthralled. Almost as much as they were with the reproduction M-60s. It seems like there is some Rambo hiding in many 8-14-year-olds.

The chapter continues to meet at the Schnitzel Ranch on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 PM (1830). Stop in when you get a chance.

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

## NORTH CAROLINA

The NCVHPA started April in Walstonburg, NC for their "Proud to be an American" day activities. The crowd enjoyed the UH-1 "Medevac" and OH-6 "Scout" that were manned by Jerry Seago, Sam McLamb, Brock Nicholson, Jerry Phelps, Phil Keith, and Ed Hughes. We all enjoyed hearing the guest speakers Joe Galloway and Congressman Walter Jones.



Joe Defanzo, Jerry Seago, Ed Hughes and Doug Miller at the Washington, D.C. Memorial Day Parade.

May 4 thru 8 we took four helicopters to McIntire AFB in Columbia, SC for an air show. The Cobra, the UH-1M, the

UH-1H and the OH-6 were on display three very windy and cool days. We had great crowds. On this trip, Larry Pigg, Walt Emery and Jim Breznay joined the usual suspects. Pat Breznay kindly provided us lunch each day, the food was great.

Wings over Wayne at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, NC occurred on May 20 and 21. The UH-1H, UH-1M, UH-1C and the OH-58 made this trip. Jerry Seago, Brock Nicholson, Sam McLamb, Phil Keith, Terry Lanier and Ed Hughes got cooked in the bright North Carolina sun.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

On May 27 and 28 Brock Nicholson, Terry Lanier, Larry Pigg and Bob Inglis participated in the Memorial Day Parade in Myrtle Beach, SC with the UH-1H and OH-58. On the 28th, Jerry Seago and Ed Hughes headed north to Washington, DC for their Memorial Day Parade with the UH-1C and the OH-6 in tow. We were joined by Joe Defanzo and Doug Miller. Note: This time we did not get lost.

The NCVHPA is working with the National Archives to display three helicopters at the opening of a 15-month display on Vietnam. The helicopters will be set up on the Constitution Street side of the Archives, the aircraft will be on display the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th.

We encourage everyone to visit the display as we strive to bring honor and recognition to all our brothers and sisters who served in Vietnam.

## Future activities:

June 24th, - The July 4th Parade and Town Celebration, Lewisburg, PA.

July 1st, 2nd and 3rd, - 4th of July Celebration in Spencer, NC.

August 1st, - National Night Out, New Bern, NC.

Oct 14th and 15th - The Mum Fest, New Bern, NC.

Nov 9th thru the 13th - The National Archives, Washington, DC.

By Ed Hughes, "Hornet 24", President

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

Recent chapter meetings were held at the American Legion Post #1 on April 19 and May 17 respectively, with a great turnout at both meetings. We decided to try holding the meeting on Wednesday with the American Legion hosting lunch. It has turned out fabulous with Mike Stone cooking up a wonderful lunch and Jen McKeown providing table and drink service. We are getting 15 to 20 members at each of our meetings. Chapter Officer nominations occurred at the May meeting with elections scheduled for the June meeting.

We recently became a Commemorative Partner to the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Program. Our goal is to ensure each of our members are honored for their service and recognized with a commemorative lapel pin and commemorative certificate. Chapter members Terry Olson and Doug Neil attended ceremonies as guests of Congressman Ed Perlmutter, 7th Congressional District, in a pinning ceremony at the Red Rocks Community College. Congressmen Ed Perlmutter's office is a Commemorative partner and is seeking out Vietnam Veterans to be recognized for their service as part of the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Celebrations being held across the country.

We gained another new member this past month, Wendell Jesmer (see photo). Wendell served with the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company, "The Robin Hoods", 11th Aviation Battalion, from 1969 to 1970. He was stationed at Lai Khe in the Sherwood Forest. While in country he flew over 1,000 hours and earned 42 Air Medals, along with a Distinguished Flying Cross and a Purple Heart. Welcome Aboard and Welcome Home!

The Rocky Mountain Chapter once again assisted the Honor Flight Welcome Home reception at the Denver International Airport



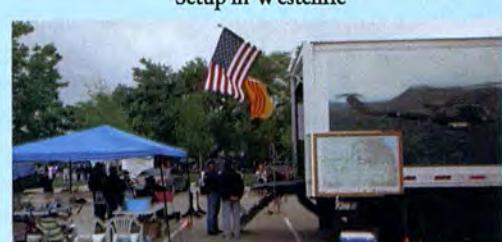
John Mitchell greets Korean Vet



Setup in Westcliffe



POW Artifacts



Setup in Ft. Collins



Honor Flight Refreshments



WestCliff Amish girl

where a total of 123 veterans representing three different eras of conflict. Among them were 11 WWII Veterans, 35 Korea Veterans, and 77 Vietnam Veterans. Carl Cavalluzzi and his wife Barbara, Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Cliff Lawson, John Mitchell, and Terry Olson were on hand to welcome the Veterans home from ceremonies in Washington DC.

Renovations are completed for the Helicopter War Museum, but it will always be a work in progress. Bill Bates and Rick Beaver have made a majority of the improvements. One of the newest exhibits is a

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

POW artifact shadow box belonging to Bob White. The artifacts represent all of his belongings, mostly handmade, while in captivity as a POW from November 15, 1969 through April 1, 1973.

The Chapter was invited to attend Armed Forces Appreciation and Family Day sponsored by "Outdoor Buddies" and "Painted View Ranch" in Westcliffe, CO. Westcliffe lies in the shadow of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range. Both the Helicopter Ministry's "Mike" Model gun ship and the Helicopter War Museum were on display. Greeting visitors were Bill McPherson, Ken Overturf and their crew of "Helicopter Ministry", and the docents of the Helicopter War Museum, Jim McNamee, Ben Prieb, Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Eric Brettschneider, and Doug Neil. A young Amish girl was greeted by Bill Bates, who was explaining the Chinook and Cobra gun ship's role in the War. You may appreciate the contradictory nature of that conversation.

We attended Memorial Day activities in Ft Collins at Veterans Memorial Plaza. The focus of this year's event was the 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War. The "Traveling Wall" was on display as well as our Vietnam Helicopter War Museum and Bill McPherson's "Mike" Model gun ship, with Ken Overturf and other crew members. The Vietnam veterans were recognized in several pinning ceremonies in conjunction with the 50th Commemoration. Docents for the museum were Terry Olson, John Mitchell, Stan Cass, Gregg Mann, Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Dale and Candy House, Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Doug Neil, Walt Wise, and Bill Robie. Several members conducted the "Reading of the Names" from the wall in Memoria for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our Country. The museum was very active with over 2,500 visitors over the two day event. The line into the museum remained 20

visitors deep throughout the event. We extend many thanks to the docents who performed yeomen duty.

## *Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:*

Chapter member Cliff Lawson, a Denver area photographer, continues to provide portraits of our members. We are hoping more members take advantage of this opportunity. The next chapter meetings are scheduled for June 20 and August 18. We are planning events for the Helicopter War Museum in Greeley, CO for the annual "Greeley Stampede" in June, Bandimere Speed Way, and the City of Golden, CO for Fourth of July celebrations, as well as attending an Air Fair in Erie, Colorado in August. We will report on those events in the next issue.

## *Meeting Schedule and other Information:*

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

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. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: [RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com](mailto:RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com)

By Dale House, President



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# TAPS

**Anderson, John H. USA**  
LTC (Ret.) Flight Class:  
55-F, RVN: 63 93 TC  
CO, 63 121 AHC, 67 205  
ASHC, 67-68 HHC/12  
CAG, Callsigns: Tiger  
5/Geronimo 5/Blackjack  
3/Tiger 6.



John H. Anderson of Ozark passed away Saturday, July 19, 2014, at Baptist Hospital South in Montgomery, AL, as a result of complications from surgery. He was 84 years of age.

John was born in Brooklyn, NY, to the late Alexander P. and Elizabeth M. Anderson on October 3, 1929. After graduating from James Madison High School, he went to work at the International Air Transport Association. It was there he met the love of his life, Mary Kraus. After being drafted into the Army and rising to the rank of Second Lieutenant, he and Mary were wed at Fort Hamilton, NY, in 1952. Together they enjoyed his assignments at Fort Lewis, WA; Gary Air Force Base, TX; Camp Rucker, AL; Mainz, Germany; Fort Bliss, TX; Fort Rucker, AL; Fort Sill, OK; Omaha, NE; and Fort Leavenworth, KS. John also had one combat tour in Korea and two combat tours in Vietnam. Eventually, John and Mary settled in Ozark, AL.

Some of his numerous decorations from his Army service include: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Valor, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and National Defense Service Medal and he attained the Master Army Aviator Badge.

Following his retirement from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel, John was hired, along with 1st Sergeant Mel Fairchild, to establish the Daleville High School Junior ROTC program in 1971. As Senior Army Instructor, John served as the rifle team coach and led his teams to numerous local, regional, and national championships. His participation resulted in many of his students acquiring college scholarships as well as many appointments to Military Service Academies. John retired from Daleville High School in 1992.

John was active in many Army and civic organizations during his life, to include serving as President of the Fort Rucker Chapter of The Retired Officers' Association. In his post-retirement years, he also served as the Senior Information Officer for the shooting competitions at the 1996 Summer Olympics held in Atlanta, Georgia.

John was pre-deceased by Mary, his loving

wife of 61 years. He is survived by one daughter; two sons, two granddaughters, and three step-grandsons.

Suggested memorial donations are: Daleville High School JROTC Rifle team (<http://goo.gl/hWrXO>) the Wounded Warrior Project ([www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org)), or USA Shooting ([www.usashooting.org](http://www.usashooting.org)).

Burial will take place at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery.

**Bradner, William L. USA COL (Ret.)**  
Flight Class: 53-A, RVN: 66-67 334  
AHC, 67 118 AHC, 71-72 164 CAG,  
Callsign: Thunderbird 6.

William Louis Bradner of Winter Springs, FL died on April 17, 2017. He was the son of Harry R. and Beatrice Wonderly Bradner. Bill was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars who served as an aerial Field Artillery Forward Observer in Tongduchon, Korea, two tours as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in the Battle of Soui Tre, Vietnam when he repeatedly flew his damaged aircraft into enemy fire to rescue wounded comrades. He is survived by two sons; one daughter, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 58 years, Marilyn (married 1951); children, Martin and Alison and brothers, H Robert, Richard, James and David.

Burial: All Faiths Memorial Park Casselberry, Seminole County FL.

**Brandoff, Todd USA Flight Class: 67-18, RVN: 67 118 AHC.**

Todd Alan Brandoff, 74, of Lolo, passed away in comfortable peace and without pain with his family and many friends near him on Saturday, March 25, 2017, at St. Patrick Hospital of bladder cancer.

Todd was born August 14, 1942, in Freeport, NY, to Carl and Adeline Brandoff. By the age of 16, he started his own small business doing salvage diving off Long Island. He graduated from Baldwin High School in 1960. He graduated from the University of Montana with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1966. He also completed the UM Army ROTC program and was a member of the skydiving club. Todd worked as a Lolo Hotshot firefighter during that time and later as a fire lookout in Eagle, AK. He later gradu-

ated from Pacific Lutheran University in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in education.

On June 10, 1967, he married Kerry Lynn Hartwig, in Dallas, TX. He graduated from helicopter school at Fort Wolters in Texas and Fort Rucker in Alabama. While flying out of Bien Hoa, he was severely wounded when his helicopter was shot down. He received the Purple Heart. After a lengthy recuperation, he completed his Army service as a company commander at Fort Lewis, WA.

Todd and Kerry moved to Missoula in 1971. Todd worked as a sawyer with his own portable sawmill. He served as director of Lolo Sewer and Water. He served on the boards of Missoula International UM Friendship Program and of the Good Food Store. One of his proudest achievements was being an advisor to the Missoula Refugee Assistance Corporation. A big priority in his life was his devotion to his Christian faith by serving in his church as greeter, usher and as a nursery helper.

In 1988, Todd was part of a group of Vietnam veterans who visited Soviet veterans who had been in Afghanistan. The group's mission was to exchange information to help transition back to civilian life. In 1991, he was asked to be a member of the Gulf Peace Team which went to Baghdad, Iraq. He saw these trips and his work with foreign students as citizen diplomacy to help bring different peoples together.

Todd and Kerry loved to travel and made numerous trips to Canada, Hawaii, the Caribbean, Kazakhstan and the UK. They also shared interests in hosting international students. He belonged to the Western Montana Military Officers Association. Todd especially enjoyed collecting fluorescent rocks, loved art, and loved classic cars.

Survivors include his wife, Kerry, Lolo; and his sister.

Memorials donated in Todd's name can be sent to: Partners Hospice, 2687 Palmer Street, Suite B, Missoula, 59808. His widow, Kerry, asks that if the pilot of his aircraft the day he was wounded reads this would he please contact her at the email below. That pilot saved Todd's life.

Burial: With Military Honors in Western Montana Veterans' State Cemetery Missoula MT.

Note: Todd's widow asks that the pilot or anyone familiar with the pilot who medevaced Todd on the day in 1967 he was shot down @ [REDACTED] Ed.

# TAPS

**Campbell, Roger W. USA**  
**Flight Classes: 69-35/69-33, RVN: 70-71 B/3/17**  
**CAV, Callsign: Stogie 38.**

Roger W. Campbell passed from this life to meet his Lord and Savior on Friday, April 28, 2017. He was born April 22, 1944 in McAlester, OK. He was the son of the late Charles W. Campbell and Jimmie Lou Moran.



He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mary Kathryn Campbell; two sons, a brother, one granddaughter, and three grandsons.

Roger retired from the U.S. Army in 1986 after 23 years of service. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star. He was a life member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association.

From 1986-1992 he flew for Air Photographics, in Martinsburg. From 1992-2010 he was Assistant Commissioner Dept. of Labor for the State of Maryland (MOSH). He was a member and elder of the Gerrardstown Presbyterian Church and a former Master Gardener.

**Cates, Norman F. USA**  
**Flight Class: 53-A, RVN: 64-65 68 AHC, 67-68 HHC/1 AVN BDE, Callsigns: Dragon 34/Hawk 6.**



Norman F. Cates, 89, of Ocala, passed away on Monday, May 1, 2017. Norman was born in 1927 in Durham, NC to Eugene and Josephine Cates and has lived in Ocala for the last 42 years. He was a WWII Navy veteran, and a US Army veteran of Korea and Vietnam. He was an Army fixed wing and helicopter pilot who loved flying. He was a certified aircraft crash investigator; he also enjoyed writing and raising his family. Norman was a member and a deacon at Oak Griner Baptist Church. Survivors include his wife of 64 years, Eloise Cates of Ocala; four children, 15 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

Burial: Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.

**Davis, Robert S. USA, MAJ, Flight classes: 68-16/68-26, RVN: 68-69 129 AHC, 72-73 180 ASHC, Call Sign: Bulldog 14.**



Robert (Bob) Davis passed

on August 10, 1998 (age 53) while kayaking on the Ocoee River in GA. He experienced a brain aneurism while practicing rolling the kayak. His boating partners were doctors and they could not save him at that point.

Bob is survived by his second wife Mrs. Gayla (Bonner) Davis of Waynesboro, MS. He is also survived by his mother (at the time) Mrs. Robbie C. Davis. He was preceded in death by his father Maj. Jack Davis.

Bob was a PHI pilot flying from the Biloxi MS area at the time of his death. He had spent many years with PHI and loved his job and the Mississippi Gulf coast area and offshore flying.

He was a well-qualified Army Aviator and served two tours in Viet Nam. He flew Hueys during the first tour and CH-47s in the second. Bob spent almost three years as an instrument instructor pilot (IP) at Fort Rucker between tours. After his last tour in RVN he was assigned to Fort Carson, CO. He chose to leave active duty from there and return to his home of Waynesboro, MS. From there he continued his service to his country in the Mississippi National Guard. Bob was a long time member of the VHPA.

His awards and decorations include the Senior Army Aviators badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Metal (w/24 awards), Bronze Star, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and several more awards.

Bob was a member of the First Baptist Church of Waynesboro MS. He was a faithful and beloved member of his faith and loved his family his friends and community. Bob was interred in the Whitehouse Cemetery in Wayne County, MS.

The submission is this late, as my wife and I just found out about Bob's passing and that he was not mentioned in the VHPA (TAPS) section at the time. Bob was a very, very close friend and I am so sorry that I let life and work issues make us lose track of people important in our life. Bob and I were IPs together at FT Rucker in the Instrument Flight Div. Thanks to Gayla for providing so many missing details.

**Diveley, Edward L. USA Flight Class: 70-19, RVN: 70-71 334 AHC, 71-75 HHT 1/11 ACR, 75 498 MED CO, Callsign: Peacemaker 47.**

Edward "Ed" L. Diveley Jr. 68, of Columbia, went to be with his beloved wife Allison, Tuesday, May 16, 2017. He was born in New Orleans on January 22, 1949; the son of the late Wilma Huxford Diveley. Ed was a CW3

Senior Aviator in the U.S. Army. He served in Vietnam, West Germany, and flew Medevac missions in Columbia. After his military service, he worked for Jeff Hunt Machinery Co., owned Diveley Aviation and served as a corporate pilot for several organizations. Ed returned to the University of South Carolina to conclude his undergraduate studies and began a second career as a Registered Nurse. He worked in the ER at Palmetto Health, Richland. His love for veterans led him to Dorn VA Medical Center, where he worked until his retirement. Ed is survived by his son; a step-daughter, and his chosen brother, Billy Chapman.

Burial: Elmwood Cemetery.

**Doyen, Joseph P. USA Flight Class: 69-14, RVN: 69-70 361 AWC, Callsign: Panther 22.**

Died on August 24, 2016. No obituary provided.

**Farris, Donald F. USA Flight Classes: 68-19/68-33, RVN: 69-70 A/123 AVN 23 INF, Callsign: Pelican 227.**



Donald Farris, beloved husband of Bette Farris, and two brothers died on August 16, 2017.

**Fink, Alan J. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Classes: 67-21/67-19, RVN: 68-69 195 AHC, Callsign: Ghost Rider 21.**



On 22 May, Captain Alan James "Al" Fink unexpectedly passed away at his home in Lodi, CA at the age of 72. He was born 13 March 1945 in Bethesda, MD, the son of Talmage (Bud) and Berniece Fink.

Al was involved in aviation all his life. His father taught him to fly at an early age; Al earned his fixed wing license before having a driver's license. While attending Montgomery Junior College in Rockville, MD, he worked for a contractor building and paving runways for the new Dulles International Airport.

Following a family tradition of military service, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Candidate program in 1967. After basic training, he graduated from helicopter flight school at Ft. Rucker, Alabama as a Green Hat, Class 67-21.

Wearing his newly earned flight wings and WO1 bars, Al arrived in Vietnam in January

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1968 where he flew in III Corps. His awards include numerous Air Medals and two awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following his active duty, Al continued flying helicopters as an Army reservist and member of the 343rd Medical Detachment (medevac) at Hamilton Field, California.

As a civilian, Al flew an air ambulance from San Carlos, CA while also instructing in both fixed wing and helicopters. He eventually moved to Denver where he served as an instructor pilot for United Airlines. United also hired Al as a 737 co-pilot. Progressing in flight hours and aircraft types, Captain Fink retired from UAL after 32 years of service and one of last captains regularly flying the Boeing 747 over the arduous Pacific route.

Retirement found Al busier than ever. His talent in restoring classic, Century wooden boats brought many awards as he also served as a president of the Century Boat Club. Other memberships included the Retired United Pilots Association (RUPA), the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) and active participation in the California Chapter North (CCN) of VHPA. He participated with the Quiet Birdmen-Sacramento Hangar which was started in 1921 by a distinguished group of WWI pilots. During the last several years, Al was a pylon judge at the Reno National Championship Air Races.

Al Fink is survived by his former wife, Linda; two sons, four grandchildren and two sisters.

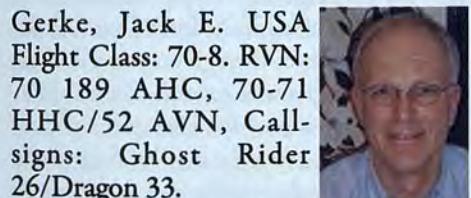
Burial: Cherokee Memorial Park Lodi, CA.

**Gerke, Jack E. USA**  
**Flight Class: 70-8. RVN: 70 189 AHC, 70-71 HHC/52 AVN, Call-signs: Ghost Rider 26/Dragon 33.**

Jack Gerke died on March 19, 2017.

In his hometown, Girard, OH, Jack was called "the all-American boy."

Jack was a 1968 graduate of the USMA at West Point. The rigors of Ranger School and the fascination of flight school followed. A member of the Corps of Engineers, his assignment at Camp Drum was fortuitous because while there he began dating Mary-Ellen Hosper of Rochester. Jack served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Stateside, he was assigned to Fort Knox, KY, as a company commander. Jack and Mary-Ellen married in 1971 and spent a decade in the Bluegrass State.



Back in civilian life, Jack accepted an engineering position with Ford in Louisville. Jack became involved in local politics and was elected to the town council of Keeneland and as Mayor of Hickory Hill. He also enrolled in the Masters of Environmental Science program at U of L. As a home owner, he was truly a "Jack of all trades," excelling at carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work. He was slow, but he was a perfectionist.

A job change brought the family to Rochester in 1980, where Jack's engineering career continued at Rochester Products/Delphi for over 30 years. Many called him "their best boss ever." As a manager, Jack was an outstanding mentor, promoting each employee's strengths. He earned a Masters in Science from RIT where he was elected to Tau Beta Pi, honorary engineering society.

He will be forever missed and cherished by his wife Mary-Ellen. After 45 years of marriage they came to finish each other's sentences and read each other's minds, but fortunately did not come to look like each other.

Jack's counsel will forever guide his two daughters and a son. He is also survived by his sister.

To honor Jack, consider a donation to the Wilmot Cancer Center designated for pancreatic cancer research.

**Hayes, Thomas G. USA**  
**Flight Class: 67-20, RVN: 67-68 ACT 11 ACR, 72 1 BDE 1 CAV, F/9 CAV 1 CAV, Call-signs: Thunder Horse 12/White 6.**

Thomas Hayes died in early April. We were notified by his wife, but no obituary was provided or located.

**Hearron, Aussie S. USA**  
**Flight Classes: 68-10/68-14, RVN: 68 C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 68-69 HHC/11 CAG 1 CAV.**

Aussie Sanford "Sandy" Hearron, of Brandon, passed away April 28, 2017 after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife, Ann Shipman Hearron; a sister, two stepsons. He was predeceased by his parents, Aussie Barron and Lorraine Thompson Hearron, and a daughter, Sherry Christina "Christee" Hearron.

A native of Meridian, Sandy graduated from Meridian High School and Mississippi State University. He served his country during the

Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot and concluded his service at the rank of captain. During his time serving, he was assigned the privilege of escorting visiting dignitaries.

Sandy worked in his family's real estate business before joining Continental Management and Development Company and later, the Mattiace Company in Jackson. Sandy was also the coordinator for Junior Miss of Mississippi for many years. An adventurous traveler and outdoorsman, Sandy enjoyed flying, fishing, scuba diving, and woodworking.

If desired, please make memorials to the American Cancer Society.

**Helms, Johnny L. USA MAJ (Ret.)**  
**Flight Class: 69-46, RVN: 70-71 D/3/5 CAV, Callsign: Crusader 38.**

Johnny Lamar Helms, age 71, of Thomason, died Thursday, March 30, 2017 at his residence.

Mr. Helms was born on December 14, 1945, in Upson County, to the late Henry Aldean Helms and the late Marion Gertrude Dean Helms. He was formerly employed with Keadle Lumber Company where he worked in sales. Mr. Helms was a retired Major with the U.S. Army having served 21 years. He was a member of Fellowship Baptist Church where he served as a Sunday School Teacher.

Survivors include his wife Mrs. Sylvia Helms of Thomaston Ga; two daughters, two sons, four brothers, four sisters eight, grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Donations can be made to Fellowship Baptist Church at 3133 Crest Highway Thomason Ga. 30286.

Burial: Upson Memorial Gardens.

**Hubbs, Arden P. USA**  
**Flight Class: 70-32, RVN: 71 117 AHC.**

Arden Hubbs, 71, died April 1, 2017 after losing a battle from a long illness. He leaves behind his wife, Marty; a son a daughter, three grandchildren, one brother and two sisters.

Perry was a veteran of the Vietnam War where he was a helicopter pilot in the gun platoon, a special ops division supporting SEALS units in Cambodia. Perry was awarded several medals including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart. Perry received his BS degree in Iowa and an MBA from Indiana. He also graduated from the Command and General Staff College, U.S.



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Army and was a professor at USF for 20 years.

Suggested donations: Veterans Foundation,

[REDACTED] a cause he was so proud to be involved with, helping homeless and disadvantaged veterans.

**Johnson, David L. USA**  
Flight Class (unk).  
RVN: 65-66 227 AVN  
1 CAV, 69-70 227  
AVN 1 CAV, 69-70  
HHC 11 CAB CAV,  
Callsign: Skipper.



The Honorable David L. Johnson, artist, scholar and soldier, died after a brief illness on April 15, 2017. David was born in Lima, OH to Helen and Frank Johnson on May 7, 1933. He married Sharon Lee Wren in 1954. David was preceded in death by his beautiful rabble-rousing wife Sharon, and his beloved brother Daniel "Danny". He is survived by his two daughters, one son, and six grandchildren. He was loved by many great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

David graduated from Lima Central High School and then attended Ringling School of Arts in Sarasota. After a year in Sarasota he was drafted into the U.S. Army. He determined to make this a career and enrolled in Officers Candidate School with a focus on Engineering. He attended aviation school and was a certified aviator in fixed wing and helicopter of which the Huey was a great love. David earned his BGE at the University of Omaha in Military Science, and an MBA in data processing from George Washington University. He attended The US Army War College in 1972-73. He achieved numerous other military certifications in his lifetime. David served two tours in Vietnam where he was part of the first air-mobile division. He was a Major during his first tour and then during the second tour he was a Lt. Colonel and a battalion commander. He flew over 2,800 combat hours. As a result of his time in-country and exposure to Agent Orange, he ultimately suffered from Parkinson disease for many years.

David was humble in his achievements, but his family is proud of his bravery and unwavering honor. Among the many medals awarded to David are four Legions of Merit, four Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Bronze Stars and 43 Air Medals with Valor. He was stationed at the Pentagon from 1973-76 in the Office of the Comptroller. After retirement in

1976, he earned his law degree from The Ohio State University. He was with the prosecuting attorney's office from 1978-88 and then was elected as Judge in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas from 1988 until his retirement in 2004. David was a Freemason (York-0563) and member of The Grand Lodge of Ohio, F&AM, and a member of the VFW. The Johnson family enjoyed being stationed overseas and in many states in the U.S.A. With his wife he traveled to Spain and Portugal, his favorite foreign countries. One was always surprised to find out what music would be playing when you walked into the Johnson home, flamenco, Celtic, or Opera. Great food and good music! David will be remembered by family, friends and colleagues as an exceptional human being.

Suggested donations: Parkinson Foundation, Wounded Warrior Project or to the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Burial: Unknown

**Magill, Donald R. USA**  
Flight Classes: 66-23/67-1, RVN: 67-68  
B/3/17 CAV, 68 B/7/1 CAV, 68 173 AHC,  
Callsigns: Dutchmaster / Stogie / Robin Hoods.

The Honorable Donald Ray "Dutch" Magill, 72, of Maine, NY, died peacefully surrounded by his family at Wilson Hospital on April 6, 2017. He was predeceased by his parents, Edgar C. and Helen Magill, his brothers Albert and Edgar Jr., and daughter Theresa Pedraza Morris.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 20 years, Patricia (Coughlin) Magill, who meant the world to him. He is additionally survived by his two daughters, three sons, five grandchildren and a brother.

Dutch graduated from Hollidaysburg High School, PA followed by Penn State University, with a degree in Computer Science. He was a retired helicopter pilot from the U.S. Army, serving in Vietnam and earning two Purple Hearts along with numerous other commendations. Additionally, he served in the Civil Air Patrol and the National Guard. He was very proud of his service in the military, and had a fierce love for his country.

He had a 40-year career with IBM, and was sworn in for his 31st year as the Town of Maine Justice in January 2017. He served as

president of the NY State Magistrate's Association and received the NY State Magistrate of the Year Award. He was also the author of "Magill's Manuals", a set of books used in courts throughout New York State.

Dutch was very involved with many organizations, including the Maine Masonic Lodge, the Kalurah Shrine, and Scottish Rite. He was a member of the Royal Arch Masons, Cryptic Masons, K.Y.C.H., Red Cross of Constantine, Amaranth, the Royal Order of Jesters, the Order of DeMolay, as well as many others. In his works for these organizations he was a 33rd Degree member of Scottish Rite, served as a Master of the Maine Masonic Lodge and as Potentate of the Kalurah Shrine. He was extremely proud to have served on the Board of Governors for the Springfield, MA Shriner's Hospital for Children, and was also an Emeritus member of that same Board, along with many other achievements.

Suggested donations: Springfield Shriner's Hospital for Children, 516 Carew St. Springfield, MA 01104.

Burial: Town of Maine Cemetery.

**Malone, Albert W. USA, COL (Ret.)**  
RVN: 62 MAAG, 68-69 199 AVN, Callsign: Angry Rifle 22.



Albert Malone passed away on April 4, 2017 in Birmingham, AL. He was born March 27, 1931, in Carthage, MO to parents John Wesley Gordon Malone & Mildred Louise Kimball Malone. Wesley then grew up in the Oklahoma City area and attended Central State College, which is now the University of Central Oklahoma, where he met his future wife, Stella Fay Crowder, on the tennis courts. Al and Stella were married on Christmas Eve in 1950. Al later went on to graduate from Oklahoma City University with his Bachelor of Science degree in business. Wesley began a long and distinguished career in the Army when he joined the Oklahoma National Guard 45th Infantry Division in August 1950, as it was being called to active duty and shipping off to Korea. Al, as he was addressed in the Army, returned from one tour in Korea to attend Officers' Candidate School, where he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant. Al served two tours in Vietnam - the second of which he was the commanding officer of the 5/12th Battalion of the 199th Light Infantry

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Brigade. Many of the men who served with Al in Vietnam remained some of his closest friends until today. Al went on to attend the Army Command and General Staff school and achieved the rank of colonel before his retirement from the Army. Al was decorated with the Vietnam Service Medal with four stars, the Bronze Star with 1st oak leaf cluster, the Legion of Merit with 1st oak leaf cluster, and many other awards, honors, and medals. Al and Stella retired from the Army in 1976 and settled in Birmingham, AL. He worked for 11 years at Alabama Power. Upon retirement, Al enjoyed his hobbies of golf and SCCA racing. Al passed away peacefully at St. Martin's of the Pines Hospice Care early Tuesday morning, April 4, 2017. He leaves to mourn him his wife and three daughters. He also leaves five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Lt. Col. Richard Lee Malone; nieces and nephews; and two loving little rescue dogs. He was preceded in death by his parents; and one brother, Jean Thomas Malone, who was a Navy pilot.

**McArthur, John D. USA**  
**Flight Classes: 68-12/68-18, RVN: 68-69 61 AHC, Callsigns: Lucky 16/Star Blazer 6.**



John Douglas McArthur passed away at his home in Coronado on July 14, 2016 at 11:30 p.m. after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

He was born on January 3, 1942 in San Diego to LTC Arthur and Marjorie McArthur. He attended Serra High School in San Mateo graduating in 1959. John went on to San Diego State, graduating in 1965 with a BS in Business Marketing. He was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and his involvement continued for a number of years as the House Corporation manager after his return to San Diego.

Upon leaving college he joined the US Army and was commissioned as a second lieutenant June 1966. He graduated Army Helicopter flight school, Fort Wolters Texas, August 1968. He served a year in Vietnam from Sept 1968-Sept 1969. He returned to Texas as a captain and flight instructor and went on to the California Army National Guard in 1971. He earned

distinction with a National Defense Service medal, Army Aviator Badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Bronze Star, Air Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters.

His career included Bell Helicopter International in Iran from 1975-1979, Aramco in Houston and 20 years with Hughes Space and Communication in Fullerton, CA, and final years as a Business manager with Northrup Grumman when he returned to San Diego.

Returning to Coronado in 2000, John took up sailing again; enjoying many "beer can" races on his boat "Tabasco." In retirement John was a docent on the USS Midway Museum and an active member with Sacred Heart Church in Coronado as a Eucharistic minister, a member of the Knights of Columbus, American Legion and a lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

John is survived by wife, Jayne, of 47 years; two brothers, two sisters and numerous nieces, nephews and godchildren.

He is preceded in death by daughter Mary Katherine (Kelley) McArthur, nephew LTJG Kyle McArthur and brother Richard McArthur of Boise

**Macie, Melville E. USA Flight Classes: 66-15/66-13, RVN: 66-67 1 SIG BDE/70 244 ASC, Callsign: Boom Boom 8.**



Melville Macie passed on September 11, 2014. Mel was the son of Edward and Margaret Macie, born in Troy NY on April 4, 1938.

He served in the United States Army for more than 30-years. He retired in 1975 and returned to service in 1990 to serve in the Gulf War. He next retired in 1999.

Mel also owned and operated a garden center and landscape company. He was a certified chimney sweep and licensed as an irrigation specialist.

He is remembered as having great love and devotion for family, his knowledge, and his readiness to help those in need.

Mel is survived by his wife of 57-years; three sons, two daughters, ten grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. He is also survived by a brother.

**Burial: Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery Killeen, TX.**

**Miller, Roger F. USA CW2 (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-11, RVN: 69 176 AHC, 71-72 163 GS 101 ABN, Callsigns: Minuteman 44/Woodstock.**

Roger Franklin Miller, age 80 was called to a higher headquarters on April 7, 2017 in Las Cruces. He was born April 13, 1936. His parents were Collin and Lura Margaret Miller. He was raised by his mother and stepfather after his dad died in a freak accident when Roger was four.

At age 16, after being raised and educated in Denison, IA, Roger set out to join the Army in 1952. In 1959, he arrived at White Sands Missile Range, where he worked on Electronic Warfare Research and Development. After WSMR, other tours included, Korea, Aleutian Islands, bomb testing on Marshall Islands plus others. After attaining rank of E-7, Roger decided to go to flight school. Two tours of Vietnam followed flying Huey Helicopters. Retiring in 1973 with 21 years in the Army, he continued to fly helicopters. He worked for PHI in Saudi Arabia, Gulf of Mexico and Northern NM. In 1978, he flew the helicopter in the movie Convoy filmed in NM, which he was very proud of.

Roger's dedication to Veterans of all ages was amazing. He served as Post Commander of VFW 6917 for eight years. He was also a District Commander, and held State offices and National Appointments. He also supported the community of Las Cruces on the Veterans Day Parade Com six years, Honor Flight Supporter, Run for the Wall meal coordinator for nine years, ROTC, Boy Scouts and Youth and School Sports teams plus many more. His proudest day was when he was Grand Marshall in Las Cruces Veterans Day Parade this Past November.

Those left to mourn his passing are his wife Beth; three sons, two daughters a step-daughter and a sister, as well as numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, son Michael, sisters and brother.

Roger was a great husband, father, friend and veteran. He will truly be missed by many.

Suggested donations: VFW Post 6917 and Auxiliary.

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**Murray, John J. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 67-3, RVN: 67-68 101 ABN DIV, 68 163 AVN 101 ABN.**



John Joseph Murray passed away on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at the age of 70. A native of Spring Lake NJ, he proudly flew the UH-1 "Huey" helicopter for the United States Army for over 26 years. He was a veteran of Vietnam where he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He answered his country's call again when he served in Desert Storm. Retiring from Ft. Bliss, John and Cindy decided to call El Paso home. He was a devoted husband, father, brother, Papa John, mentor, and friend who will be greatly missed. He was an avid story teller who united friends and family alike - he loved to make everyone laugh. His infamous tales earned him the nickname of "Storyteller" in Boy Scout Troop 164 where he impacted the lives of young and old. John's "One Liners" known as "Murrayisms" will live on forever. He is survived by his loving wife of 40 years LTC (Ret.) Cynthia Lynn Murray; one daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, and his loving sister Maureen Schmeltz. Visitation was to be Thursday, March 30, 2017 from 5:00PM to 7:00PM at Sunset Funeral Home-West. Funeral Service to be held Friday, March 31, 2017 at 12:00PM at Peace Lutheran Church, 1699 Belvidere. Interment to follow at Ft. Bliss National Cemetery at 2:00PM, with Full Military Honors. Services entrusted to Sunset Funeral Home-West, 480 N. Resler Dr. Please visit our online registry at [www.sunsetfuneralhomes.net](http://www.sunsetfuneralhomes.net)

**Phillips, Donald W. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 55-F, RVN: 67 176 AHC, Callsign: Minuteman.**



Donald Warren Phillips age 92 of Gainesville, GA, died February 9, 2017 after a long battle with cancer. He was born on March 26, 1924 in Sunbury, Pennsylvania.

Don married his wife in 1944 and recently celebrated 73 years of marriage to his best friend June last month.

Raised in Sunbury, PA, he aspired to be a pilot. He was inducted into the Army Air Corps and became a cadet in 1943 and was subsequently transferred into the US Air Force in 1945. He was transferred again to the US Army in 1946 and served nearly 27 continu-

ous years in service to our country. He was a charter member of AAAA joining in the early 1950s.

He was certified for rotor aircraft (helicopter) in 1955 and was awarded the Army Master Aviator designation in 1963. Eventually he was certified to fly most US Army fixed wing and rotor aircraft. In 1961, he graduated the United States Army War College and in 1963, he graduated from the US Army Command and General Staff College.

Don served during 3 wars, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He also served in Germany, Japan and Korea in peace time as well as stateside. On August 12, 1965, he was cited for service by the President of the Republic of Korea for personally saving over one thousand civilian Koreans during a tragic flood and received numerous heartfelt letters of appreciation from the citizens of the new, free Korea. In 1967, he assumed command of the 176th Aviation Company in a forward position in Vietnam.

Among his many awards and citations, there are: the Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service; the Air Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Achievement in Ground Operations against Hostile Forces.

After retirement from the US Army, he and his wife traveled the United States, Mexico and Canada in a travel trailer for four years after which they decided to settle in Venice, FL. When total retirement didn't sit very well with Don, he and his wife became real estate brokers and owned Azure Realty in Venice, FL. After many years, the real estate company was sold and they moved to Gainesville, GA to be close to the other family members.

He is survived by his wife Betty June; two sons, three grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his oldest son Richard Lee (Rick) who was interred in 2004 at Arlington National Cemetery.

Burial: With full Military Honors ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery will be scheduled at a later date.

**Shaughnessy, Thomas J. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 54-H/63-1QC, RVN: 66-67 D/1/10 CAV 4 INF, 69 ACTIV, 70 214 CAB, Callsigns: Shamrock/Cougar.**



Thomas J. Shaughnessy, 88, of Salinas, passed away Friday, April 14, 2017.

He was born June 16, 1928, in Milwaukee, WI.

Thomas was a member of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. He served in Korea, two tours in Vietnam and a tour in Australia.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Ann Kathleen Shaughnessy.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret Shaughnessy; two daughters, one son, eight grandchildren; and five great grandchildren.

Burial: conducted with Military Honors in the San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery Santa Nella, CA.

**Shields, Roger J. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 54-E, RVN: 66 178 ASHC, 66-67 12 CAG, Callsign: Boxcar 6.**



Roger James Shields passed away January 17, 2017, in Springfield MO at the temporary home of his caregiver. Born April 7, 1931, in Newton, MA, to William and Helen Shields, he was raised in Lexington and graduated from Lexington HS. Roger entered Boston College in the pre-med program and while there joined ROTC. After two years, he quit and joined the US Army. He was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, Field Artillery, after basic training at Ft. Chaffee AR, advanced training, Fixed Wing Flight Training and Officer Candidate School studying artillery spotting and fire direction. After being designated Army Aviator in 1954, he was assigned as a Gunnery Instructor with the U.S. Army Aviation School. During his career, he held numerous command positions. Under his leadership the 56th Artillery brigade at Fort Banks, MA flew in excess of 3,000 accident-free hours.

In 1964, he graduated from the University of Omaha with a BGE and was assigned to Fort Richardson AK, where he commanded a light (Shawnee CH21) cargo helicopter company. In 1965, while stationed in Alaska, he served as Commanding Officer, 80th Transportation Company, 19th Aviation Battalion, establishing a first-rate pilot and helicopter instrument operations. During that same tour, he flew NASA Astronauts to volcanic fields of The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, Mt. Katmai, where lava samples could be studied and compared to the moon's surface. As commander of the 178 Assault Support Helicopter Company Chinook (CH-47) following four sorties from the LZ, Roger's aircraft received four hits

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resulting in the loss of one engine. Although it was loaded to full capacity, the aircraft was returned to the loading zone on one engine without further damage. Despite the fact the loading zone was under hostile fire, Roger elected to remain with the aircraft until sufficient maintenance was affected. Roger was assigned to the Pentagon as Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. His next assignment was as Chief Technical Assistant Field Team, Imperial Iranian Aviation Training Center, Isfahan, Iran, 1973-1975 followed by Chief of Staff, Resource Manager for the 13 western states of Headquarters 6th U.S. Army, Presidio of San Francisco CA, where he retired as a Full Colonel in 1977. Shortly after, Roger was offered and accepted a position as Chief of Staff, Training Division, at Bell Helicopter International in Isfahan, Iran. As the Shah's government began to fall, bombings occurred every night. The Medical Clinic was bombed and moved to a hotel suite; however, fearing for their lives, the Medical Director and American nurses resigned. Roger was asked to assume additional duties as the Director of Personnel Support, the major task being to effect the evacuation of the American women and children from Isfahan of all but the most key employees. After this was done successfully, in January 1979, Roger and two busloads of the remaining employees escaped from Isfahan to Teheran where they caught the last plane out of Iran.

In 1983, Roger's post graduate education was completed at George Mason University, Fairfax VA, with a degree in the first graduating class of Conflict Management. Roger was a member of United States Field Artillery Association; Commonwealth Club of Norfolk VA, Citizen of the Year; The Veterans of Foreign Wars; Army Aviation Association of America; Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Tampa FL; Order of Daedalians, Tampa, FL; The Boxcars (Chinook-47); South Missouri Chapter of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association; Military Officers Association of America, St. Petersburg Chapter with over 500 members. Positions held were Vice President, 1999; and President, 2000-2002; During Roger's tenure as president, the chapter was recognized and awarded as among the few Five-Star Chapters, first time in the chapter's history. Roger also took on the responsibility as editor of the Officers Call newsletter including the legislative

update earning the chapter their first Five-Star award for outstanding newsletter; was named Distinguished Person of the Year; Area Vice President; was presented Award of Excellence; Budget and Finance Florida Council of Chapters; Ozark Empire Military Officers Association of America. Among Roger's numerous medals and awards are: Legion of Merit; Bronze Star medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal (5th Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/60 Device; Vietnam Cross of Gallantry W/ Palm, Master Aviator Badge; General Staff Identification Badge; and, Imperial Iranian Army Aviation Wings. Roger is survived by his beloved wife Carolyn; two sons, ten grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son William. He was lovingly cared for at his home in Nixa, MO by his wife, dear and caring friends, neighbors, and Hospice.

Suggested donations: The Salvation Army, 1707 West Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, MO.

Burial: With full Military Honors at Missouri Veterans Cemetery.

**Simmons, Robert L. USMC  
COL (Ret.), RVN: 65-66  
MAG-16.**

Colonel Robert Lyster Simmons, USMC (Ret.), formerly of Arlington, VA, passed away Friday, May 5, 2017 in Austin, TX. He was born March 13, 1922, in Highland Park, IL to the late Lyster Francis and Laura Porter Simmons.

He leaves behind a daughter, a son, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 68 years, Gloria Marcella VanDeventer Simmons, his son, Brook Simmons, and sister Lela Simmons Bell.

As a boy, Bob bred and raced pigeons. It seemed he was destined to fly himself. So much so that he once sleepwalked to the stairs and jumped off. He represented Missouri during the first National Boy Scout Jamboree in DC and played the trombone in the band without knowing how to read music. In the 6th grade, he met a cute girl he nicknamed "Shortie Bottoms". "I liked her shape," he said. In his rebuilt and colorfully painted 1927 Chevy convertible named Measles, they went on many dates during high school. At long last, Bob flew his Marine

plane to NYC because Shortie wanted a Tiffany-setting on her wedding ring.

He served in the Marine Corps during WWII as a photo pilot in the South Pacific. He continued as a photo pilot in Korea photographing the initial overrun of the Chosin Reservoir. After serving in Korea, he began to work with helicopters and continued to do so into Vietnam. He retired from the Corps after 32 years having been stationed during the non-war years in North Carolina, Virginia, Hawaii, Japan, California, Kansas and Okinawa.

After settling in Arlington, Bob joined the First Christian Church in Falls Church (Disciples of Christ) where he found a second family. At the church, he served as deacon, leader, and pillar of the church's community. He was a loving father, a natural leader, and a kind man.

A celebration of his life was to be held at his church on Saturday, May 13, 2017, at 2:00 PM. Burial to be in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to [REDACTED]

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery.

**Smith, Howard E. USA  
Flight Class: 69-19, RVN:  
69-70 68 AHC, 70 118  
AHC, Callsigns: Mustang  
55/Bandit 55.**

Howard E. Smith of Lakeland died in his home of heart failure Monday, May 8, 2017 at the age of 66. Howard was born May 19, 1950, in Wellsboro, PA.

He is survived by his loving wife of 43 years Pam; a son, a daughter, a granddaughter, and two brothers.

After retirement, Howard went full old school Vietnam Helicopter Pilot. As Memorabilia curator of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida, Howard kept Vietnam alive. The Lakeland Sun 'n Fun was Howard's last event which was time well spent with his fellow Vietnam Vets and great friends. Howard would not have had it any other way.

Howard was a loving Husband, Father, Grand-pa and Brother. There will be no service per Howard's request.

Suggested donations: the charity of your choice.



# TAPS

**Sorges, Dennis M. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Classes: 69-37/69-35, RVN: 70 D/3/5 CAV, 70 HHT/7/1 CAV, Callsign: Longknife 25.**



Dennis Michael Sorges passed away peacefully on April 13, 2017. Amber and Mark Irwin, Ms. Barbara Sorges, and Father James Dowd attended him. Dennis is survived by two daughters, two stepsons, four sisters, a brother, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Dennis Sorges entered the Army as a private on January 16th, 1968 after completing two years of community college majoring in pre-engineering. In his Huey Helicopter, Dennis flew hundreds of flights into combat environments; inserting and extracting soldiers and Marines, Dennis saved many men at great peril to himself and his crew. He received the Bronze Star, Air Medal with combat "V" and three Oak Leaf Clusters, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and National Defense Medal for this service to his country.

In April 1972, CW2 Sorges entered the Army Active Reserves where he attained the rank of CW4. Dennis entered California Polytechnic University, Pomona and completed his engineering degree. While attending college, he worked at McDonald's in Riverside at night and attended school during the day setting an example of education and work for his daughters that is reflected today. In 1974, he was hired at the Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, California.

Dennis Sorges, civil servant, quickly showed his leadership value by earning a Michelson Laboratory Award in 1976 for program management leading a group of peer and senior engineers. Dennis showed his leadership throughout his career leading the Aircraft Survivability Branch, the Ordnance Test and Evaluation Division, and Pacific Ranges and Facilities Special Projects Manager for Test and Evaluation Plan Development for the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning Aircraft. He was awarded a second Michelson Laboratory Award for leadership and praise by managers and co-workers, both government and government-contractors. Dennis retired from China Lake as Deputy Head, Pacific Ranges Instrumentation Division Supervisory Aerospace Engineer.

Dennis loved to golf, go to Las Vegas with friends, and fly. He was an active member of the Longknives, a group of Vietnam-era helicopter pilots, and greatly enjoyed his yearly get-together with them. Dennis loved to read as well, counting 'The Lord of the Rings' among his favorite books, a love he passed on to his family. "Well, here at last, dear friends, on the shores of the Sea comes the end of our fellowship in Middle-earth. Go in peace! I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil."

**Swearingen, Edward O. USA Flight Classes: 68-41/68-23, RVN: 69-70 A/4 AVN 4 INF, Callsign Blackjack 38.**



Edward O. "Skip" Swearingen of Lafayette, LA passed away on May 20, 2017. He was 71 years old. Skip was a native of Chicago who worked for the automobile industry after high school and decided that entering the Army flight program was infinitely better than stamping out car fenders. Skip served as a Warrant Officer in Vietnam. Afterwards he went to Ft. Bragg and was assigned to the 82nd Abn.

Following his discharge, Skip went to work as a commercial pilot in Canada. After surviving a weather-related near death experience, Skip traveled to the Gulf Coast and was hired by Air Logistics, Inc in March of 1974. Skip worked for Air Logistics for more than 30 years before losing his medical and giving up flying altogether. He was well respected by his fellow aviators, his customers, and local people who came to know him. Skip worked for a medical laboratory for a short while until he retired for good. His last years were spent enjoying the company of friends and family, and he would phone all of his friends on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Independence Day, and Christmas. Once a year he would attend a gathering of current and former Air Logistics personnel in North Louisiana that came to be known as The Shootout, but was really just a three-day camp out...sitting around the camp fire and telling flying stories.

Skip Swearingen was very enthusiastic about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association in the early years. His first Reunion was the Second Reunion in Houston. At each reunion that he attended, when the band

played "I Heard It through the Grapevine", Skip could be seen doing the California Raisin Dance with Kenny Bunn, much to the delight of all. He enjoyed just sitting at the bar with his friends, wearing a garrison cap with an airborne patch on it, and recalling the times when we were all eight ft. tall and bulletproof.

Skip is survived by his wife Sandra; a daughter, a granddaughter and one each brother and sister.

Burial: Skip was cremated according to his wishes and a memorial service was held on June 3 in Lafayette, LA.

**Teal, Robert P. Sr. USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Classes: 68-4/68-503, RVN: 68-69 118 AHC/69-70 120 AHC, Callsign: Razorback 6.**



Robert P. Teal Sr., 76, of Longwood, FL passed away on January 31, 2017. He was born to Paul and Mary Teal on January 18, 1941 in Mayflower, AR. Affectionately known as "Bob", he proudly served his country for over 20 years; a true American hero. He was preceded in passing by his father Paul Teal; his sister Patricia Teal and sister in law, Beverly Teal. Bob is survived by his wife, Sandra Teal; one daughter, two sons, his mother, a brother and a sister and three grandchildren.

**Wilkerson, William M. USA Flight Class: 64-6W, RVN: 65-66 118 AHC, Callsign: Thunderbird.**



William Wilkerson Jr. died in Ann Arbor, MI on April 4, 2017. He was born on November 7, 1944, in Chatham, Ontario and was raised by his parents William and Eileen in the Chicago area. In 1962, he joined the United States Army to pursue his life-long dream of becoming an aviator. In 1965, William was deployed to Vietnam. In 1966, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism in war. After returning to the United States, he met his future wife, Catherine, while finishing his term of military service as a flight instructor at Fort Rucker. They married in 1967. Both entered medical school in the early 1970s and became practicing physicians. William practiced medicine in Col-

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Colorado, Montana, and finally in Michigan, where he worked as an Associate Clinical Professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of Michigan for over twenty years.

His death was a result of complications related to multiple myeloma, a disease he contracted due to exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, joining the tens of thousands of other victims of Agent Orange, both U.S. service members and countless Vietnamese soldiers and civilians. He is survived by his wife; sister; three chil-

dren and four grandchildren.

Suggested donations: The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign:

[REDACTED] or consider giving blood.

**Willer, Larry E. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Class: 65-1, RVN: 65-66 114 AHC, 67-68 A/101 AVN 101 ABN.**

Larry E. Willer, Sr., 78, passed away April 10, 2017.



A native of Iowa, he resided on the Peninsula for over 40 years. He joined the Navy and then enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he attended flight school and then was deployed to Vietnam for two tours. He served in the military for a total of 26 years. He retired with numerous medals.

Larry was an active member of the Denbigh Lions Club.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Linda "Kimberly" Armenta. He is survived by his wife Merle B. Willer; one son, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

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.

**Atwood, Raymond A. USA** Flight Class: 68-25 died April 2, 2017 (no other data).

**Britt, James R. USA** Flight Class: 67-13 died on March 29, 2017 (no other data).

**Dubov, Bruce J. USA LTC (Ret.)**, RVN: 66 117 AHC died on April 22, 2017 (no other data).

**Ezzell, Alvin D. USA CW3 (Ret.)** Flight Class: 51-A died on May 17, 2017 (no other data).

**Fambrough, John A. USA LTC (Ret.)** died on April 27, 2015 (no other data).

**Henson, Chester A. USA** Flight Classes: 68-516/68-28, RVN: 68-69 71 AHC died on March 26, 2017.

**Jones, Robert B USA LTC (Ret.)** RVN: Flight Class: 65-66 174 AHC died on May 17, 2017.

**Kermit, Warren A. USMC LTC (Ret.)** died 01/10/2017 (no other data).

**Knapp, William R. USAF MAJ (Ret.)** RVN: 21 SOS (dates unk.), Callsign: Dust Devil, died on March 10, 2017.

**Mcginness, Wesley SS. USA** died on May 1, 2017 (no other data).

**Nelson, Robert O. USAF** died on May 14, 2017 (no other data).

**O'Connor, James USA MAJ (Ret.)** died on October 26, 2009 (no other data).

**Petrovich, Ronald C. USA** Flight Classes: 70-47/70-43 died on May 10, 2017 (no other data).

**Watkins, Randall A. USA CW5 (Ret.)** Flight Class: 71-3 died on March 23, 2017 (no other data).

**Wolfe, Alfred J. USA LTC (Ret.)** died on April 14, 2017 (no other data).

**Yaskovic, Robert A. USMC LTC (Ret.)** died February 28, 2017 (no other data).

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VIETNAM CENTER ARCHIVE  
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PO BOX 41041  
LUBBOCK TX 79409-1041

*Brian and Marilyn Paine*  
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