



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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

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# From the President of the VHPA

~ JOHN SHAFER ~



John Shafer Camp  
Holloway 1971



on display for fifteen months.

The 61st AHC Group is working with the Army Aviation Museum Foundation at FT. Rucker to promote their paver brick program (for more information go to the 61st AHC website, [www.61ahc.org](http://www.61ahc.org).)

Tell your stories and share your pictures with the rest of the VHPA by sending them to The VHPA Aviator and or get involved with the Witness to War Foundation at [www.witnesstowar.org](http://www.witnesstowar.org).

If you have ever thought of running for the Executive Council of the VHPA, do it, it will be worthwhile. New blood is always good. I have been and still am enjoying being on the Executive Council.

The last time I had volunteered before I volunteered to be a member of the Executive Council was in October 1970 when I volunteered to fly Scouts with B Troop 7th/17th Air Cav. It is my Honor and Privilege to be a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and it has been my Honor and Privilege to have been the President of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, THANK YOU for allowing me the opportunity.

I want to thank the Membership, the Executive Council: Vice-President Mike Sheuerman, Past President Clyde Romero, Senior Member John Sorensen, Midterm Member Art Jacobs, Junior Member Art Price, Secretary/Treasurer John Powell, VHPA legal advisor Mike Poindexter, all of the National Committee Chairmen and Committee Assistants, the Aviator editors, and the HQ staff, for their support,

John Shafer,

Scalphunter 18, B Troop 7th/17th Air Cav

The VHPA owes a great deal of thanks to Bob Hesselbein and all the volunteers of the Legacy Committee, as well as the members who contacted their Senators and Representatives for their hard work regarding the placement of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crew Member Monument in Arlington National Cemetery, it keeps getting closer and closer to being completed.

I hope to see you at the Reunion in Indianapolis and we all have a good time.

There are some upcoming events during the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War such as:

the Ken Burns and Lynn Novicks 18-hour documentary "The Vietnam War" documentary to be aired on PBS in September.

The National Archives Museum in Washington DC, "Remembering Vietnam", on Veterans Day this year, November 10, 2017, the Museum is having a major exhibit of original records, photos, graphics, maps, personal interviews, and interactive audio-visual elements, to Honor those who served in Vietnam by telling the story of the war and its legacy. It will be

## FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

Time is running out!!! If you plan to attend R2017, please go on line and get registered! We hope to see you in Indy!

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 to order your 2017 directories that will be mailed out in October.

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

PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF REMAILING ITEMS! If you move, PLEASE go on line to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under "Other Services" will

be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information. 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

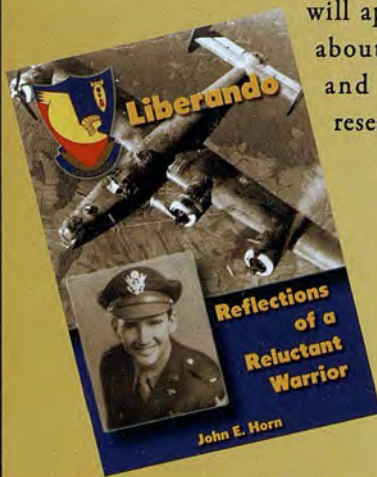
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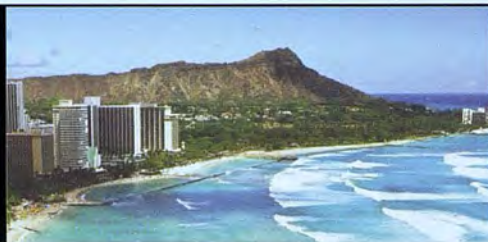
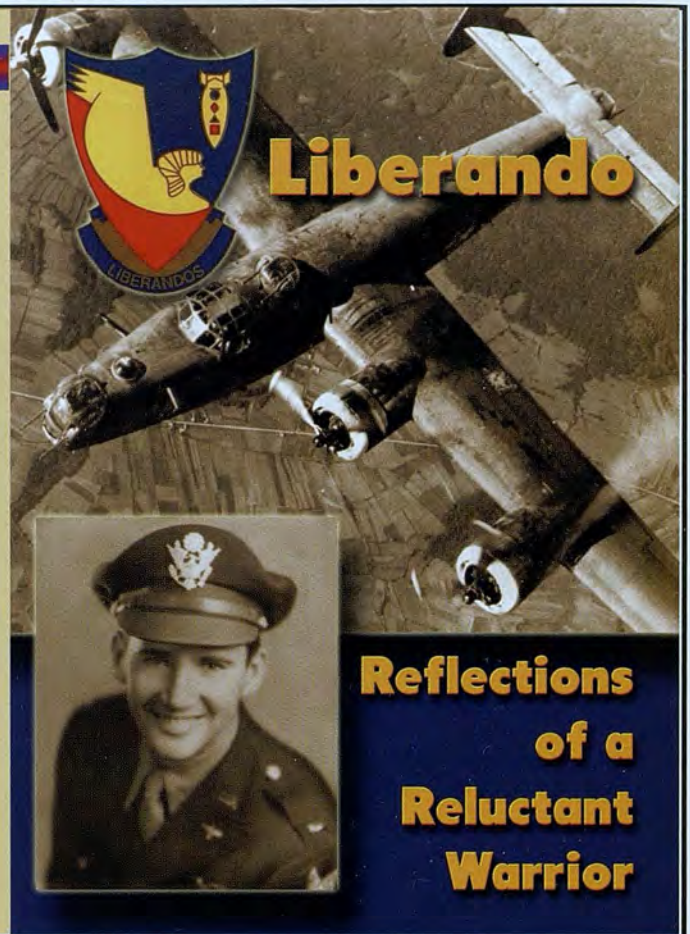
SEE REVIEW IN THIS ISSUE

## Reflections of a Reluctant Warrior by John E. Horn

Read the latest WW II thriller written by VHPA member John Horn (Robin Hood 3, 173d AHC, RVN 1969-1970). *Liberando* is the compelling story of his father's exploits as a B-24 pilot. This book is part love story, part history and part combat thriller. Anyone who has flown in combat will relate, your wife will relate and historians will appreciate new information about WW II airfields in Italy and the book's meticulous research.



*Liberando: Reflections of a Reluctant Warrior* (180 pages paperback with photos) by John E. Horn. ISBN: 0781576385623 Merriam Press. Available at Amazon and Barnes & Nobel.



### The State of Hawaii

Invites you to the

### Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

#### Schedule of Events

- 23 May 2017 (Tuesday): Aloha Reception-Registration
- 24 May 2017 (Wednesday): Hawaii Night (A Taste of Hawaii) Concert- Local Entertainment and Ethnic Foods
- 25 May 2017 (Thursday): POW/MIA/MOH and Gold Star Family Night at the Pacific Aviation Museum
- 26 May 2017 (Friday): Commemorative Movie: "Ride The Thunder" a true Vietnam War story about the destruction of the Dong Ha Bridge in 1972
- 27 May 2017 (Saturday): Waikiki Parade - Welcome Home Parade
- 28 May 2017 (Sunday): Military Unit Day
- 29 May, 2017 (Monday): A combined City, State, National Memorial Day Ceremony at the National Memorial of the Pacific in Punchbowl

Register to attend at: <http://www.vietnam50years.org/>

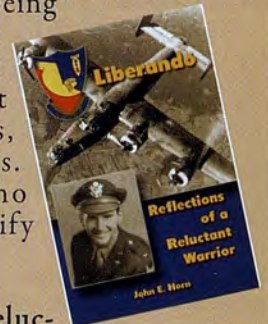


Reviewed by Ed Zielinski, contributing editor.  
*Reflections of a Reluctant Warrior* by John E. Horn

This is a well-documented work of historical fiction. The primary sources are the author's father's, John H. Horn, stories and logbooks, his flight engineers mission summaries and the historical documents of the 376th bomb group.

The book leaps into the B-24 mission "that made veterans of us." This story is gripping right down to the holes and shreds of metal found on post flight inspection. A biographical section follows introducing the reader to the man and the pilot. Like so many he loved to fly. Being in combat was secondary.

The remainder of the book chronicles life on the flight line, missions, flak, fighters, and interactions with Italians. A good read that anyone who has flown combat could identify with.



*Liberando: Reflections of a Reluctant Warrior* (180 pages paperback with photos) by John E. Horn. ISBN: 0781576385623 Merriam Press. Available at Amazon and Barnes & Nobel.



**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**

**Iraqi Freedom**

*"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.

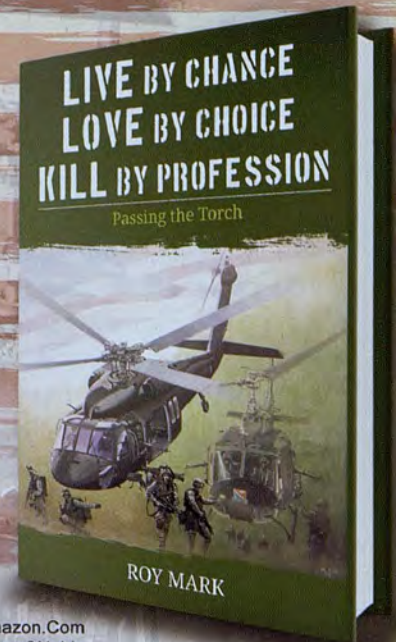
**Live by Chance, Love by Choice, Kill by Profession**

by Roy Mark

ISBN: 978-1534947597

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Ask for *Live by Chance, Love by Choice, Kill by Profession* by name  
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Amazon.Com  
Barnes&Noble  
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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**

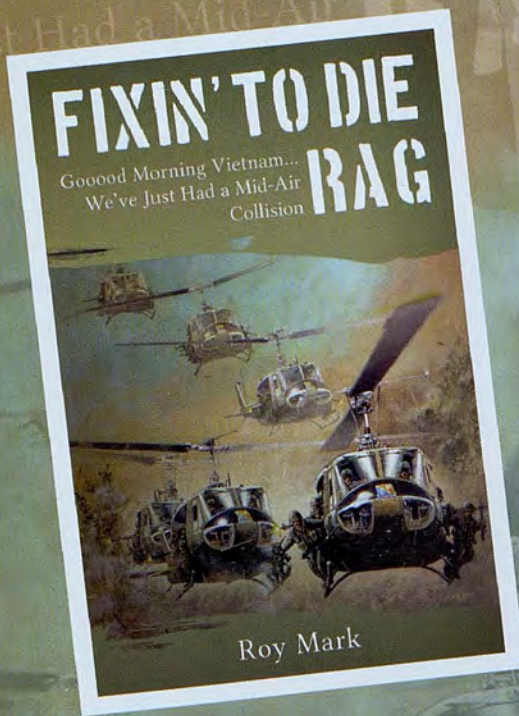
by Roy Mark

ISBN: 9781484135105

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# AVIATOR MONUMENT REPORT

On March 13, 2017, the VHPA Executive Council unanimously voted to accept the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) proposal to place a suitably-sized commemorative monument beside the memorial tree dedicated August 28, 2015. The monument incorporates the art and language found in the original Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument design.

The breakthrough came about utilizing the VHPA Legacy Committee's two-prong strategy of generating congressional legislation while still maintaining limited dialogue with ANC staff. At the time of the Secretary of the Army's 2015 denial of a monument within ANC, legislation appeared the only path to achieving the memorial goal.

Congressional activity commenced when Representative Mark Amodei introduced H.R. 4298 on December 18, 2015, and Senators Sullivan and Baldwin introduced and cosponsored S. 3447 on September 28, 2016. Introducing these bills meant little, however, unless other legislators were convinced to support the legislation.

The VHPA Legacy Committee undertook the effort to generate nationwide support. Besides encouraging VHPA members to contact their legislators, Committee members reached out to Vietnam Veterans, veteran organizations, Gold Star Families and others in the effort to create support on Capitol Hill. Through emails, letters and social media, legislators got the message and signed onto the legislation. A September, 2016 hearing before the House Veterans Affairs Military Personnel Subcommittee garnered media attention which led to magazine, newspaper and television reports. A late November "Congressional Hall Walk" by dedicated volunteers from across the nation, meeting with legislators and their staff, completed the year's effort.

Although the combined efforts led to H.R.4298 being unanimously passed by the House of Representatives on December 7, 2016, the Senate version did not reach the floor in time for a vote before the 114th Congress concluded in mid-December. This incomplete outcome meant reintroducing new legislation in the 115th Congress, and renewing the effort in 2017.

On February 6, 2017, The Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act (H.R.877 & S.315) was introduced in both the Senate and House of Representatives and greeted with enthusiasm. Sharing identical language, the bill specifically stated the Secretary of The Army could remove the memorial tree to place the monument. This revised language would prove critical to negotiations with ANC management.

While the VHPA Legacy Committee prepared another two-day, "Congressional Hall Walk" on February 28th and March 1st, ANC staff requested to meet with VHPA Legacy Committee leadership to discuss the proposed monument and the future of the memorial tree. On February 27, Legacy Committee members Bob Hesselbein and

Carl McNair met with Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera, Executive Director, Army National Military Cemeteries, and Cemetery Superintendent Katharine Kelley.

The discussion quickly moved to seeking a solution to place a suitable monument within ANC that would preserve the living tree memorial while maximizing limited grave space. The two-hour meeting concluded with a tentative proposal for the placement of a sizeable monument that achieved the goals of all concerned.

The VHPA Legacy Committee carefully considered all possible options before concluding the ANC-proposed commemorative monument was the very best solution. Factors in the decision-making process included:

**Location.** The revised Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument will stand in a prestigious location (note: the proposed monument detailed in H.R.877-S.315 does not specifically define where the tribute would be placed). ANC is a large cemetery (current size: 624 acres); it is possible ANC would keep the memorial tree and place the monument in a remote location within the cemetery. The commemorative monument will be placed between the red maple tree dedicated by the VHPA on August 28, 2015 and

the sidewalk bordering Memorial Drive. This particular drive is used by thousands of visitors to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Memorial Amphitheater, and the Challenger and Columbia Shuttle Memorials, to name but a few. This ideal location will maximize public awareness of the Vietnam War and the important and dangerous role performed by helicopter pilots and crewmembers.

**Time.** Completing the approval process in a timely manner will eliminate what would likely be another two to three years of bureaucratic processing. The idea of a lasting memorial monument honoring our fallen comrades in ANC was first considered almost three years ago in April 2014; the current legislative process could add another two years to the timeline. If legislation is passed, it is probable ANC would spend another 12-18 months determining and surveying a suitable placement location.

The mission is almost complete. The VHPA is convinced the important goal of placing a suitable stone tribute to the many thousands who died operating rotary-wing aircraft in the "Helicopter War" of Vietnam will be achieved and expedited by accepting the proposal of the Executive Director.

The final steps require the monument design to be approved by the United States Commission of Fine Arts (USCFA), produced, installed, and dedicated. Once approved, the monument will be constructed by the Vermont Granite Company and delivered to Washington, DC for placement, hopefully before the end of 2017. The final step in this monument adventure will be planning and executing the dedication ceremony in 2018.

**Bob Hesselbein, Chairman Legacy Committee**





# Letters to the Editor

**Hi Tom:**

I read with interest John Dexheimer's letter to you that appeared on page 24 of the January/February, 2017 issue of The VHPA Aviator highlighting John Steinbeck's view of Vietnam helicopter pilots as outlined on page 23 of STEINBECK in VIETNAM.

As a helicopter pilot (MOS 7335) assigned to Marine Observation Squadron Two (VM0-2), based at Marble Mountain Airfield along the coast of the South China Sea and just to the east of the DaNang runway, I was surprised to be assigned to fly John Steinbeck for a couple of days. This was during his visit to I Corps in late 1966. As I recall, thinking back 50 years, I picked him up at the III MAF Headquarters helicopter pad each morning located on the DaNang River. This was always a challenging landing while blinded by the sun rising out of the South China Sea and dropping into a tiny LZ surrounded by a high chain link fence; that had cost the squadron a couple of tail rotor incidents.

He was always accompanied by a couple of senior Marine officers and sat in the left seat and the briefing I got from the Squadron Ops. Officer was "Keep Steinbeck alive! "Once airborne, he always had a lot of questions mainly about the Vietnamese peasants, how the war impacted their lives and the Marines fighting on the ground against North Vietnamese

forces. He tended, it seemed to me, to pay little attention to the steady stream of war related stats coming over the intercom from the escorting officers in the back.

I particularly recall one flight that originated from Dong Ha airfield located just south of the DMZ. We proceeded west-bound following old French Route Colonial 9 to the border of Laos near the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei and passed over the village of Cam Lo, the Rock Pile, and Khe Sanh. For some reason I recall, he was particularly interested in the circumstances surrounding the destroyed Saigon-Hanoi railroad bridge that passes over the Cau Viet River just west of Dong Ha.

I made several low passes over the span telling him that the southern section of the bridge had been knocked out by the Viet Minh during the First Indochina War with French forces.

The flights included several stops enroute. One of those stops was at LZ Eagle located in the highlands west of Dong Ha, and about six miles south of the DMZ. As I recall, LZ Eagle sported a US Army 175 mm gun capable of firing into North Vietnam but I never witnessed this monster in action. Perhaps other members may have had the opportunity to give John Steinbeck a tour of their areas and could provide additional stories regarding "Steinbeck in Vietnam".

Dick Hendrie

## VHPA Aviators, your support is needed!!

On April 22, 2017 VHPA life member Jim Crigler will be putting his Solo Canoe into the headwaters of the Mississippi River for a 2250 mile river journey to New Orleans, LA.

**He's taking on this AUDACIOUS Mission for 2 reasons:**

1) To start a movement in America to get normal citizens to seek out Gold Star Families in their communities and

THANK THEM! It seems like the average citizen does not even know what a Gold Star Family is. I want to change all that. They don't have to do much but they do need to do something. A card, a letter, an email. Just a small "thank you" will do.

2) I'm raising money for a 501c3 Charitable Organization that gives back to our veterans and to our Gold Star Families. American Huey 369 is in need of per-

manent facilities to continue their great work and I intend to help get it done. We are raising 2.5 million to build the facility called the National

American Huey History Museum in Peru Indiana.

How can you help?

**1. DONATE!** Any amount is helpful. Go to [www.missionofhonor.org](http://www.missionofhonor.org) and click the "donate" button. If you do not use the internet you can mail a check to the address below. Make check out to "American Huey 369"

**2. SPREAD THE WORD!** Let your friends and family and social media know about this mission

**3. BUY THE BOOK!** I'm told it's a decent read. Proceeds of the book sale thru July 4th will be donated to American Huey 369.

You can buy the book at  
[www.missionofhonor.org](http://www.missionofhonor.org)

### Mississippi Gold Star Paddle



Honoring Our Gold Star Families  
[www.missionofhonor.org](http://www.missionofhonor.org)

Jim Crigler

Vietnam Veteran - Pilot - Author - Paddler  
American Huey 369 (501c3)

Winona, MN 55987

*Any help you can give is appreciated!*



# Army Aviation Heritage Foundation

## Participates in the Funeral for LTG Hal Moore

On Thursday, February 16, and Friday, February 17, two helicopter crews from the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) Sky Soldiers were honored to be asked to provide a flyover for Lieutenant General Harold Moore's funeral at Ft. Benning.

We sent one Huey to Ft. Benning Thursday and they participated in the practice funeral and then on Friday another aircraft flew to Ft. Benning, and together they conducted the flyover.

LTG Moore passed away last Friday, February 10 and the family had a Mass for him on February 17, in Auburn, AL where he had been living. It was followed by a procession to Fort Benning, GA, where Mr. Joe Galloway, who was the partner of the General in the book "We Were Soldiers - Once and Young", offered a very stirring and heartfelt eulogy.

The book depicted the battle in November 1965 where the 1/7th fought a much superior force of NVA at LZ X-ray. That book was made into a movie by the same name in which Mel Gibson played then LTC Hal Moore. At the beginning of the eulogy, Mr. Galloway asked that all of the soldiers who fought in the



LTG Hal Moore



Battle of the Ia Drang Valley with the General to please stand up. There was quite a large number who did so. Impressive given that the battle was over 50-years ago.

After the eulogy at the memorial in the Infantry Museum, everyone moved to the Ft Benning Cemetery for the General's interment. There was a 15-gun salute with howitzers, which is the number that's appropriate for someone of his rank.

That was followed by a Three Round Volley from rifles (many people mistakenly believe this is a 21 Gun Salute, but it is not). At the appropriate time, an honor guard of Cavalry soldiers acting as pall bearers moved the General from the hearse to a position in front of the family. A Catholic Priest conducted an appropriate service and then the honor guard raised the flag above the General's casket while Taps was played. At the completion of the playing of Taps, you could begin to hear the distinctive sound of two Hueys coming to the location. As is always the case, the direction of the sound is difficult to determine, but soon in the distance, two AAHF Sky Soldiers Hueys in perfect trail formation flew over the cemetery.





Our two aircraft were manned by a full crew of Vietnam veterans. The pilots were Jack McCormick, Jim Brennan, Ron Disney and Cliff McK-eithen. The crew chiefs were George Meeker, and Donny Brown. Other crew members were: William Farwig, Glenn Carr and Rodrigo Pacheco. Additionally, we were fortunate to have member Elena DePree who is from Ft. Benning on site to take pictures.

I can assure you that had I been able to afford a a walk-up airplane ticket to Atlanta, when I found out we were going to conduct this mission, I would've been down there scrounging a ride in one of the Hueys, and if that hadn't been possible, I would've just driven over to Ft. Benning and



**Fly by formation**

been impressive. I guess all soldiers, aviation and otherwise, have always related to the heroism and sacrifices of the 1/7th Cav from the battle in which LTG Moore led his troops.

attended the funeral in person with my US Army Retired Senior NCO Son.

I can't imagine anybody, who was involved with the army in the last 50 years, doesn't know who LTG Moore was or many of the other participants of the battle of the Ia Drang Valley and LZ X-ray.

The outpouring of positive comments from all my Army Aviation friends from other than the AAHF has

**By Jerry Mellick  
Legacy 9  
AAHF Sky Soldiers**

*Here are numerous links of both stills and video gleaned from Ft. Benning POI, individuals and news outlets.*

*The first link is a set of pictures taken by me off the streaming video, but mostly by Elena DePree, and some I've taken from the Ft. Benning Public Affairs office or Facebook.*

<http://smg.photobucket.com/user/armyav/slideshow/2017/LTG%20MOORE%20FUNERAL?sort=2>

[www.fortbenningphotos.com/Ceremonies-and-Events/Historic-or-Significant-Events/2017-02-17-Funeral-Service-for-Retired-Army-Lt-Gen-Harold/i-qpsSLTT](http://www.fortbenningphotos.com/Ceremonies-and-Events/Historic-or-Significant-Events/2017-02-17-Funeral-Service-for-Retired-Army-Lt-Gen-Harold/i-qpsSLTT)

[www.kxxv.com/clip/13111688/graveside-ceremony-for-famed-vietnam-vet-hal-moore](http://www.kxxv.com/clip/13111688/graveside-ceremony-for-famed-vietnam-vet-hal-moore)

[www.kxxv.com/story/34492640/watch-live-memorial-service-underway-for-famed-vietnam-vet-hal-moore](http://www.kxxv.com/story/34492640/watch-live-memorial-service-underway-for-famed-vietnam-vet-hal-moore)



# A VIETNAM ANTHEM

"Ours was not to reason why." Regardless of one's beliefs about the value or viability of the Vietnam conflict, it appears in retrospect that our Vietnamese enemy posed no threat to America, no imminent confrontation to our borders, our culture or way of life. Yet, when called to serve, we responded. To my mind that simple fact gives our participation more gravitas, more value. I take nothing from our fathers and grandfathers; their contribution to America's security was immense, and we owe them much. But by going off to South Asia we heard a wholly different call, a call to respond based on blind faith. Vietnam gave me the right to make that statement when others cannot. If you're a Vietnam vet reading this, hold your head a bit higher, because Vietnam service gave something to you as well: A stamped and sacred membership in an elite, relatively small fraternity of men (and some women) who, like Tennyson's 600 at Gallipoli, responded when it was advisable not to. We may have grumbled and bitched and sunk inside our sullen selves; we may have pissed and moaned about the military, the freaking awful chow, the feckless leadership and seemingly hopeless mire we were immersed in, but by god we stuck it out and made the best of a bad situation. And thank you for doing it, by the way. As Tennyson wrote, "Ours was not to reason why." So, we didn't; we still don't; and good for us. That said I also happen to believe the highest form of patriotism is protest. So why did we not protest the war in Vietnam? Why did we not shout from the rooftops that the war was wrong, a quagmire, and not worthy of our great nation? Well...perhaps, given the gift of keen hindsight, I suppose it would have been the better course. The loss of blood and treasure, on both sides, was enormous. I'd remind readers that we were kids, barely old enough to drive a car, or down a beer when we shipped off to war. We were also offspring of WW-2 vets who'd shown us the socially accepted way to respond to such circumstances. I'll leave it at that. After Vietnam, we were gob-smacked as a people, disillusioned about our direction, our leadership and our collective judgment. We'd once considered ourselves invincible. The war in Vietnam showed us we aren't. Despite our position as the most powerful military machine ever devised and fielded across the vast reach of history, despite our technically sophisticated weaponry, state-of-the art aircraft, artillery, ammunition and armament, despite all that, a rag-tag army of ill-fed, illiterate, puny little stone-age gooks kicked our ass to the curb in Vietnam and we still, fifty-years later, shake our heads about it and wonder what happened? Then we ask ourselves another question: what did it mean? I'll attempt to answer that question-for myself.

There's still a tremendous amount of controversy about the war, a lot of polarization, even half a century later when Vietnam has, at long last, become the name of a country again and not just a short-hand word for war. After all these years there's still a spate of discussion, discourse, argument and study, and a lot of effort from vets like

me to make sense of that damnable conflict. As I write this anthem to Vietnam, the war in which I served all those years ago, my one-year tour rapidly fades to a smaller and smaller portion of my life. That period is now technically one-sixty-eighth of my span of years on earth. After my next trip around the sun it will become one-sixty-ninth. When I returned home from Vietnam, on March 17, 1971, my year at war was one-twentieth of my life. Math was never my strong suit. Indeed, math phobia likely contributed to my drafting in December 1968, as my college grades sagged below draft-board acceptable levels, partly because of my math challenges. But simple math tells me now that my Vietnam experience ebbs in memory as a function of years. It does not, however, fade as a function of my character and values; it seems to increase my portion of those things.

'I knew nothing'

My year of combat aviation in Vietnam grows, inexplicably, ever more vital in the way it affects my life, and how I live it. Or perhaps I'm just now reaping the benefits of that long-ago disruption, the year that sowed so much confusion, doubt and change in my life. When I arrived in Vietnam on a sultry March afternoon all those years ago, stepping off the plane to the exotic and vaguely threatening sights spread out before me, I smelled the distinctive odor of overheated jungle, a salty sea breeze and the choking stench of burning human shit. I was twenty years old that day, fresh out of flight school, still pissing stateside water. I knew nothing. I only thought I knew enough to get my young ass through the next twelve months. For answers, I mostly listened to fellow pilots in the club at night, enlisted men whose three completed months in-country qualified them as savvy combat veterans, and many so-called REMFs who made it up as they went along because they hadn't a clue themselves. Here's a war story I'll share that illustrates my point, that Vietnam gave me powerful lessons in how to live, and how not to. This one came early. In fact, I'd yet to arrive in my company when this happened. Here's how it went down.

Jon was from Colorado. He'd come in country with me, a fellow helicopter pilot. Our first night at Camp Eagle, fresh from charm school up the road at Camp Evans, Jon and I found ourselves in a bunker during a rocket attack. As 122s rained down on the midsection of Camp Eagle, Jon and I shared the bunker with a civilian fellow, a tech rep from Boeing Vertol, manufacturer of the CH-47 Chinook. The civilian guy was in Vietnam advising maintenance personnel on the engineering, construction and upkeep, the care and feeding of the Chinook. Even in my youthful ignorance I sensed the man knew what the hell he was talking about, that he knew the CH-47 helicopter inside and out, down to its last PC link, torque gauge, rotor blade and rivet.

Jon failed to grasp this important piece of data. For one reason or another, he became engaged in a war of words with the Boeing



fellow over the comparative performance specs of the 'Hook' Vs the Bell AH-1 Cobra gunship. Jon would not let it go: The Cobra could, Jon claimed, "...outfly, outperform, and outclass the Chinook every day of the week and twice on weekends." Never mind that each helicopter had its own distinctive role to play, and that each had its strengths and weaknesses. Never mind that Jon had been out of freaking flight school for three weeks and didn't know his ass from a claymore mine. Why he pursued his juvenile, and quite embarrassing discussion, becoming quite heated in his defense of the Cobra, was a mystery to me even then. The Boeing rep finally shook his head and retreated to a corner of the bunker. I eased further away from Jon as well, hoping he didn't end up posted with me in the Comancheros. (He did, but his ludicrous opinionating and boasting earned him a ticket out of the company in short order. Poor, hapless Jon checked in and out of several companies during his year in Vietnam). That night at Camp Eagle, as rockets rained down around me, I huddled in the bunker hearing the distinctive poomp, poomp sound of incoming. But I heard an early message about what to do and not do as well: Pay attention; listen more than you speak; seek out experts, don't dismiss them. It's a message that has relevance to me even now.

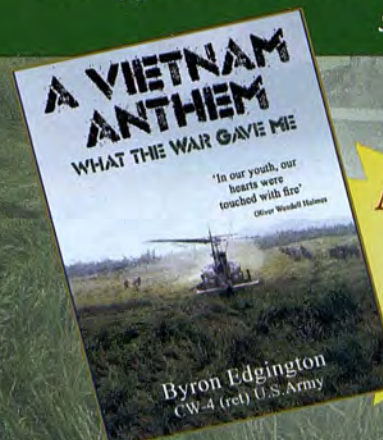
Three thousand years ago, a wise old Greek named Aeschylus

said the first casualty of war is truth. I soon realized that knowing and heeding the ancient philosopher's 'truth' was essential to navigating the war in Vietnam. Regardless of whom I asked, listened to or relied upon, durable answers changed, amended and evaporated like the fickle salt sea breeze that greeted me as I stepped off the airplane. As a new guy in Vietnam, an oddly comforting phrase soon found purchase in my mind: 'Don't mean nothin.' I quickly learned that colleagues shared my confusion concerning the dearth of solid, durable data. We were on our own in Vietnam, and we sensed it even then.

For this reason, I believe, we've started our own narrative about our experience there. As we go bald and old, and our body parts no longer function as they should, and as our focus turns elsewhere, various moldy and long-hidden war stories emerge and bubble up in our consciousness. When they do, we feel compelled to put them down, to record them for a posterity that's quickly coming. We're beginning to see the value, and the need for kids, and increasingly grandkids, to know what happened to us way back in the twentieth century when we were young. We envision them reading our tales, imagining what we did and where, and we want to make sure they hear and read those stories right. Like our ancient forebears did to protect their valued tales, we want to record our stories told around the collective campfire so they don't vanish like upward sparks in the consuming night. As human beings, we feel the need to tell our story. This is a legitimate urge. And it gets more urgent with every passing year.

*The above article is taken from the beginning of a novel by the same author. It is reviewed in our Book Review section by John Penny within this issue.~ Ed.*

**Go to: [Amazon.com/books](https://www.amazon.com/books) and type *A Vietnam Anthem* in the search option.**



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**CW4 (Ret.) Byron Edgington served with A/101/ AVN 101 ABN IN 1970 TO 1971**

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USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83

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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      |
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| - Lenny Julian | - Pete Rzeminski    |
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## PRESS RELEASE

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society Hosts Biennial Convention  
*Heroic women DFC recipients to be recognized at convention event*

San Diego, December 1:

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society will host its' biennial convention in Dallas, TX on September 24<sup>th</sup> thru 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The theme of the convention will be "*Heroic Women of the DFC*" and appropriate honors will be rendered for their achievements at the gala. A robust series of activities are planned and further details may be found at [www.dfcsociety.org](http://www.dfcsociety.org)

ABBREVIATED: *The Distinguished Flying Cross Society, 2017 Convention, Dallas, TX, September 24<sup>th</sup> thru 28<sup>th</sup>, POC: Bruce Huffman, POC: [REDACTED] POC: [REDACTED]*

"The Distinguished Flying Cross Society", is a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of California and qualified as a 501 (c) (19) organization under the Internal Revenue Code. The Distinguished Flying Cross Society is founded on fraternity and fellowship among military flyers, past and present - of all five United States armed services and of all ranks who have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

## Moon Landing

The following vignette was authored by NAVHPA member Rob Glasier, (COL, Ret.). His recollection reflects the coming 48th anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing on the moon.

"I had one of my 'longest days' as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam the day of the First Moon Landing. The day started at '0-Dark-30' (well before dawn) that morning; mostly single ship combat operations in triple canopy jungle - the most exhausting and tense type of operations. Got back well after dark that night, helped the crew put the ship to 'bed'. I literally staggered back to the Officers' area with 'my PP of the day' (Peter Pilot - Co-Pilot), still wearing my chicken plate...too tired to bother to take it off...and carrying my helmet bag. As we got near our little O-Club room in our hooch area, a couple guys came running out yelling, 'They're about to land on

the Moon!!!' I remember my PP and I staring at each other, with a WTF look on our faces. The Apollo mission was NOT on our radar screen that day. But, we stumbled into the club. We had a little TV mounted over our bar, and everyone was glued to that grainy little black and white screen.

I remember standing there, stinking to high heaven, wearing my .38 Pistol and chicken plate, and still holding my helmet bag as Neil Armstrong stepped out of the Lander, climbed down the steps, jumped to the ground, and said his words. Everybody started yelling and screaming. I was just numb, staring at that little screen. All I could think of was, "What a crazy world. I am in the middle of a vicious jungle war in the middle of 'nowhere on Earth', and here we are walking on the Moon at the same time". I watched a while, then grabbed a beer and shuffled off to my hooch room, still shaking my head; yet also, REAL PROUD to have been an American that night."

*By Rob Glasier*



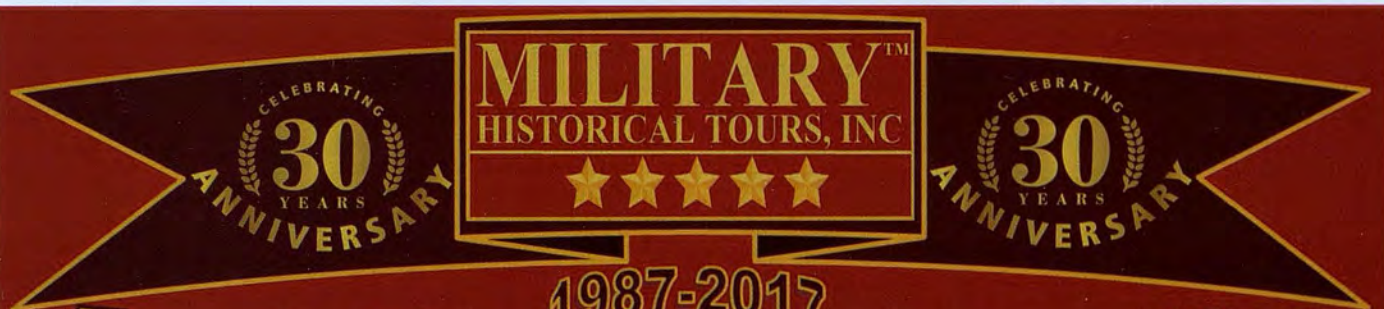
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(life member VHPA and CHPA)  
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# UPCOMING REUNIONS

## 205th Geronimo's Reunion 2017

**Dates: August 9th to August 13 - 2017**

Location: Marine Memorial Club, San Francisco, CA

Who: All members and family from Ft. Sill, to Vietnam, to Ft. Benning, and Germany Contact: Gary Alexander [REDACTED]

## 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

## 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  
2799 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202

For Reservations:

<https://aws.passkey.com/event/16117454/owner/10336/home>

Contact: Bain Black [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.281st.com/>

## The USAF Helicopter Pilot Association "A Capital Adventure"

**When: Washington, DC Oct 4-8, 2017**

Where: The Hilton Washington Dulles Airport Hotel, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon, VA 2017.

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

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

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/ranhfv/> (click on reunions), or contact [REDACTED]

Point of Contact: Australian, John Macartney, [REDACTED] Old Bar, NSW 2430, (02) 6557 4165, or [REDACTED]

USA: Fred Dunaway [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 that 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: Stan Neckerman, [REDACTED] or Tom Messenger, [REDACTED]

## Marine Heavy Hauler Reunion

Where: Laughlin NV

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

POC: Mike Amtower 1658 Knoll Ridge Circle Corinth, TX 76210-1907

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.

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# An Update on the 34th Reunion of the VHPA

By Mike Law, Chairman of the VHPA Reunion Committee

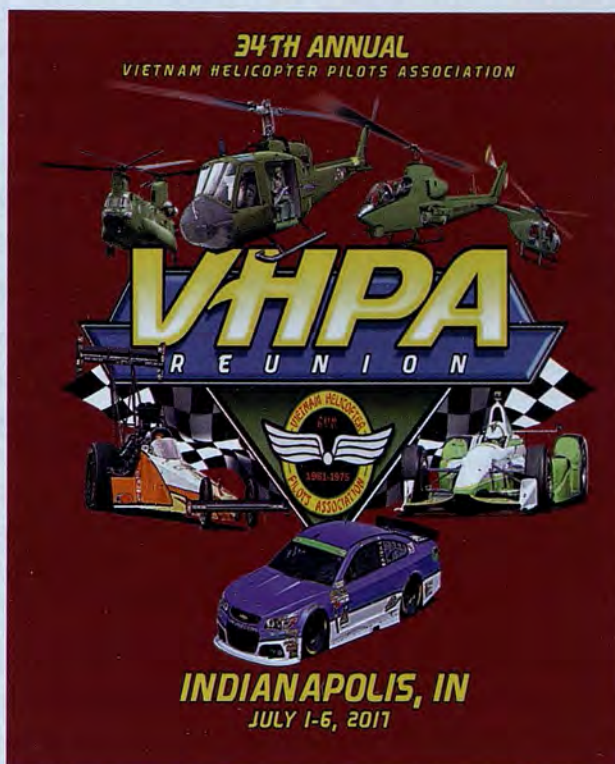
Speaking for the VHPA Executive Council, the Headquarters Staff, and the entire Reunion Committee – I cordially invite you to attend the VHPA's 34th Annual Reunion in Indianapolis from Saturday, July 1st through Thursday, July 6th 2017 at the JW Marriott hotel. We have a wonderful Reunion planned for you, your family, and your friends! The Jan/Feb issue of *The Aviator* devoted 15 pages to the Reunion. The leadership team determined years ago there is little value in reprinting the same information in issues after "the big one" in Jan/Feb. This will be the last issue prior to the Reunion, so here are some brief ideas for your consideration.

**First, THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE REUNION!** Please review the

Morning Report on [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) to see all who have registered to date. While many external events are sold out, there is still much to do and enjoy inside the hotel. One final plea - if you know you are going to attend, please register online or by calling HQ 800-505-8472. It is so much easier on the staff and on you if you pre-register as opposed to walking up to the HQ desk in the hotel.

**Second, Status of the Reunion Events:**

■ **Historic Dayton Tours** – Even though the advanced ticket sales do NOT warrant this Tour having a dedicated bus, rather than cancel this tour - we will share buses with the Aviation Trail Tour to and from Dayton. Current plans have the Historic Dayton Tour bus leave the JW Marriott EARLY (7:30 am) with folks going to the National Museum of the Air Force to make a full bus. After picking up the Historic Dayton Tour Guide in Dayton, the bus proceeds to the first Historic Dayton destination – Carillon Historical Park. There the guide and the Historic Dayton Tour folk depart the bus as originally planned. The bus immediately continues to the Air Force Museum, drops those people and returns to the Carillon Historical Park to be ready for the bus tours scheduled after lunch. Once all the bus tours are finished for the Historic Dayton Tour, the bus will return to the Air Force Museum to take everyone back to Indy. This extra leg (Carillon to Air Force Museum) will shorten the originally planned Historic Dayton Tour about 30 minutes. Anyone feeling slighted by this change can cancel the Historic Dayton Tour and receive a refund so long as they do it prior to the Official Cancellation



tion Date (OCD) of Friday, 16 June 2017.

■ **Aviation Trail Tours** – These Tours proved to be VERY POPULAR indeed!! So much so that the two buses allocated for the Air Force Museum and Aviation Trail are full. Rather than "cap" these tours at two buses, we decided to "share" the buses allocated for the Historic Dayton Tours (mentioned above). This technique allows us to keep selling Air Force Museum tickets up to the capacity of the bus. There is however a risk - while we will have enough bus seats for those wishing to go to the Air Force Museum, we WILL NOT have those extra seats available for the Aviator Trail bus stops for those on the "shared" bus. Those on the two "dedicated" Aviation Trail buses –

no problem - all is as originally planned. Warning! The Reunion staff will be screening Aviation Trail Tour ticket holders looking for those who ONLY WISH to visit the Air Force Museum and they will be placed on the "shared" bus. Please call Mike Law if you are concerned about this scenario.

■ **Aviation Trail Tour Stops** – Originally these Tours planned to stop at the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive and Aviation Trail Visitor Center. However, we learned to do the Wright-Dunbar stop "correctly" (with a reasonable amount of time); we'd have to cut the stay at the Air Force Museum by at least one hour - not an acceptable option. We are substituting the Wright Brothers Interpretive Center stop for the **Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center** stop for two reasons. First, the bus travel time to the Wright Brother Interpretive Center is MUCH shorter than to the **Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center** - this allows more time to be in the Air Force Museum. Second, there is a respectable "overlap" of tourist information in the Wright Brother Interpretive Center that is also in the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center. Thus even though the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center is superior, the Wright Brother Interpretive Center and its adjacent Dayton Aviation Heritage Park is "pretty good" by itself!! As mentioned above, anyone feeling slighted by this change in Interpretive Centers can cancel the Aviation Trail Tour and receive a refund so long as they do it prior to the Official Cancellation Date (OCD) of Friday, 16 June 2017.




■ **The “Day with the Hueys” – the 4th of July visit to The American Huey Museum in Peru, IN** – Good news here! The museum’s newly restored; flyable UH-1B gunship 049 arrived home under her own power on Sunday, 26 February 2017! For the last couple of years it had always been the “hope” that 049 would join with UH-1Hs 369 and 803 plus Peter Bales’ Bandit 026 OH-6A for the “Day with the Hueys” - well, that hope is now a reality.

**Third,** As with most every Reunion, something WONDERFUL presents itself after the detailed planning and budget is approved in November. This year we’ve added something truly SPECIAL - a multi-day collection of history presentations open to all attendees that is completely FREE! This event is called **RIDE AT A GALLOP**. It is like a traditional VHPA mini-reunion “on steroids” but is open to all attendees versus just those from the unit! Starting Sunday, July 2nd at 1pm in the JW Marriott Grand Ballroom various former members and friends of the 1/9th Air Cav (the Bullwhip Squadron) of the 1st Air Cavalry Division will give an organized series of presentations using the same audio visual equipment rented for the Breakfast presentations as well as the Annual Business Meeting. These presentations are scheduled for three hours on both July 2nd and July 3rd. Currently we have speakers for the July 4th session. It is possible even more speakers will come forward for one final session on July 5th prior to the Closing Banquet. Details are on [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) ~ look for RIDE AT A GALLOP or call Mike Law [REDACTED]


**Fourth,** Please schedule your oral and visual history. **Witness To War** – At zero cost to you, save 90 minutes of your time - your oral and visual history will be recorded for your family and for the Library of Congress and to be included in the VHPA’s Legacy at The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech. Image your ten-year old grandchild attending your funeral and saying to his parents (one of which is your own child!), “I never knew that about Grandpa! What did he do in Vietnam?”

Gentlemen FIX THAT AT THIS REUNION! Sign up for your interview NOW by calling Mike Law [REDACTED] or Martin Madert [REDACTED]. We have 48 interview slots = 8 per day from Sunday the 2nd through Friday the 7th.

**Fifth,** Please look to [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) for all your Reunion needs! This VHPA Reunion follows our pattern of having literally a “hundred moving parts.” As GREAT as The Aviator is [and it is GREAT!!], there is no way we can communicate details and status to you with printed media. Please, please use [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org), then the Reunion Information page. For example, just below the Reunion logo see the



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**‘Everything you need to know about the 2017 Indianapolis reunion.’** line. The underlined and bolded “Everything you need to know” is a link. Double clicking on it lets you see the entire document.

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



## Additional Volunteer Category for the VHPA Annual Reunion

The Aviator team needs some help getting photos from Indy Reunion events. In almost every instance, a smart phone will yield output suitable for the Aviator. If you own and use a digital camera, there is the opportunity for more creative results.

The Reunion Committee added two "Aviator Photographer" shifts per day to the Volunteer Schedule posted on [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org). Click on the Reunion Information page, then about four lines below the Reunion logo see the line starting with "We need Volunteers!" At the end of that line, click on the Volunteer Schedule link. The words are printed with a red font and are underlined – this denotes a link.

Briefly, "the plan" is for Tom Kirk to coordinate with each volunteer to cover specific events during their shift. Then you send the pictures to [REDACTED] that evening if possible. In some cases multiple messages may be required if the file size of the pictures is large. In selecting your choices, be aware we need to fill a magazine centerfold as opposed to a wedding album!

To volunteer, complete the Volunteer Form and get it to HQ.

*Thanks in advance, Mike Law, Tom Kirk.*



Full color. 22" x 28" , limited edition print of Huey gunships. Standard version as shown, \$80.00 ea. **Customized** version with markings of your choice, optional armament and B or C Model \$125.00 including postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

See my other available prints, and watch for new ones, at [www.joeklineart.com](http://www.joeklineart.com).



Joe Kline Aviation Art



[www.joeklineart.com](http://www.joeklineart.com)

## QUILTER'S SHOW AND TELL

At this year's Reunion in Indianapolis, the quilters are fortunate to present eight quilts to our veterans. I wish to thank Bonnie Moe for her donation of four of the quilts and everyone else who contributed their time and blocks as this would not be possible without the talent of many hands.

If you are a quilter or someone interested in Quilts for our Veterans, please stop and view a few of the quilts in the Vendor's Room July 1st and 2nd. Everyone is invited to attend the presentation July 3rd and meet the recipients of their quilts with the Quilter's Show and Tell following the presentation of completed projects, those in progress, as well as, blocks for next year's quilts.

Since last year's reunion, I have received packages with blocks from several quilters who will not be able to attend this year's reunion. Their blocks will be displayed at the reunion and shall be included in next year's quilts.

For those who wish to participate in providing blocks or quilts for veterans, the requirements for the blocks are the same as last year:

1. Please prewash all fabrics including batiks, as some of the dark blues and reds are over-dyed and may bleed.

2. Color scheme: red, white and blue, you may use two or all three colors.

3. The blocks must be 12 1/2" x 12 1/2" unfinished. Please use 1/4" seams in your assembly.

4. Block design is of your choice, there are many blocks to choose from, Rail Fence, nine-patch, Grandmother's Flower Garden, Appliqué block, Robbing Peter to Pay Paul, Orange Peel, Bow Tie, just to name a few. They may be simple or as complex as you like.

5. Make one or more blocks as you wish, we will construct as many quilts as possible from the donated blocks and any blocks left over will be saved for the following year.

6. Please print your name and state on a slip of paper and pin to the back of your blocks.

7. Please bring your block(s) to the 2017 VHPA Reunion for your Show and Tell.

If you are unable to attend you may send the block(s) to Kathleen Sherfey, [REDACTED] Shawnee, KS 66216.

If you have any questions you can reach me by using the address above, or call [REDACTED] Subject: VHPA Quilter.

By Kathleen Sherfey



**OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**Updated 31 MAR 2017**

**Due to publication lead times, the status of tour availability may have changed in the interim  
Please consult our website at: [www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org) for the latest details and to register for the reunion.**

Time	Event
<b>Friday, June 30</b>	
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	O'Club Open
<b>Saturday, July 1</b>	
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
9:00 am - 12:30 pm	HQ Registration Desk
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
1:30 pm - 5:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
7:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Early Bird Gathering
8:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Early Bird Entertainment - "The Chilly Winds"
<b>Sunday, July 2</b>	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
7:30 am - 9:00 am	"How the VHPA Works" Breakfast
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Aviation Trail #1
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Historic Dayton Tour #1
8:00 am - 11:00 am	HQ Registration Desk
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 8:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
10:00 am - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Lucas Oil Stadium Tour
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:45 pm - 9:00 pm	Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #1
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	1st Time Attendee Reception
7:30 pm - 11:00 pm	Welcome Reception
8:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Entertainment - "Wayne Young & The New Legends"
<b>Monday, July 3</b>	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	"Helicopter Medal of Honor Tribute" Breakfast
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Aviation Trail #2
7:30 am - 6:00 pm	Historic Dayton Tour #2
8:00 am - 11:00 am	HQ Registration Desk
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk & Pre-registration
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	T-shirt Pick Up



# VHPA 2017 Reunion ~ Indianapolis, Indiana ~ July 1st - July 6th

Time	Event
8:30 am - 12:30 pm	Dallara Indy Car Factory #1
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
9:30 am - 5:00 pm	Golf Outing - Brickyard Golf Course
10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Writers Workshop
10:00 am - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Dallara Indy Car Factory #2
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Quilters Show & Tell
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Mind Tripping #1
5:45 pm - 9:00 pm	Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #2
6:45 pm - 10:00 pm	Ballgame #1

## **Tuesday, July 4**

7:30 am - 9:00 am	"Your Personal Legacy" Breakfast
7:30 am - 5:30 pm	American Huey Museum
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
10:00 am - 6:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Banquet Seating
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Mind Tripping #2
5:45 pm - 10:00 pm	Ballgame #2 w/Fireworks

## **Wednesday, July 5**

7:30 am - 8:45 am	Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker Dave Hansen
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Memorial Service
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting
10:30 am - 12:30 pm	Spouse/Guest Event - "The Dinner Detectives"
12:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Indy City Shuttle
12:30 pm - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Mini-Reunions / TOCs
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:00 pm - 5:45 pm	Studio Photos
5:45 pm - 10:30 pm	Closing Banquet w/Entertainment - "Butch Kaufman's Uptown Band"

## **REUNION CONTINUING EVENTS**

Unit Mini-Reunions and Unit TOC's are scheduled daily at various times - See posted schedule.



# VHPA 2017 Reunion ~ Indianapolis, Indiana ~ July 1st - July 6th

## VHPA'S 34th Annual Reunion Registration Form ~ Indianapolis, IN ~ July 1-6, 2017

For information and to register online: [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) or mail completed form to:  
VHPA Headquarters, 2100 North Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050

Toll Free: (800) 505-VHPA (8472)  
Email: [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org) Fax: (817) 200-7309

Member name:		Member No:	
Address:	Telephone:	Wheelchair? <input type="checkbox"/> yes	
City:	State:	Zip:	
Email address:	Phone:		
Spouse name:	City:	Wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	Wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	Wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	Wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Guest name:	City:	Wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes

EVENT	DATE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
Registration through 4/30/2017 *			\$30 EA	
Registration for under age 21			\$15 EA	
Registration 5/1/2017 and after *			\$40 EA	
Indy City Shuttle	July 1-5		\$20 EA	
Early Bird Gathering	July 1		NC EA	
KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast	July 2		\$15 EA	
"How the VHPA Works" Breakfast	July 2		\$15 EA	
Aviation Trail #1	July 2		\$46 EA	
Historic Dayton Tour #1	July 2		\$56 EA	
Lucas Oil Stadium Tour	July 2		\$8 EA	
Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #1	July 2	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	\$43 EA	
1st Time Attendee Reception	July 2		NC EA	
Welcome Reception	July 2		NC EA	
"Helicopter Medal of Honor Tribute" Breakfast	July 3		\$15 EA	
Aviation Trail #2	July 3		\$46 EA	
Historic Dayton Tour #2	July 3		\$56 EA	
Dallara Indy Car Factory #1	July 3	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	\$45 EA	
Golf Outing - Brickyard Golf Course	July 3		\$150 EA	
Writers Workshop	July 3		NC EA	
Dallara Indy Car Factory #2	July 3	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	\$45 EA	
Quilters Show & Tell	July 3		NC EA	
Mind Tripping #1	July 3		\$10 EA	
Indy Motor Speedway Twilight Tour #2	July 3	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	\$43 EA	
Ballgame #1	July 3		\$25 EA	
"Your Personal Legacy" Breakfast	July 4		\$15 EA	
American Huey Museum w/transportation	July 4		\$118 EA	
American Huey Museum w/o transportation	July 4		\$84 EA	
Mind Tripping #2	July 4		\$10 EA	
Ballgame #2 w/Fireworks	July 4	<b>SOLD OUT</b>	\$30 EA	
Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker Dave Hansen	July 5		\$15 EA	
Memorial Service	July 5		NC EA	
Spouse/Guest Event - "The Dinner Detectives"	July 5		\$57 EA	
Closing Banquet - Adult	July 5		\$70 EA	
Closing Banquet - Child	July 5		\$16 EA	
Non-Registered Adult Guest at Banquet	July 5		\$80 EA	

Pre-Ordered T-Shirts				
Small			\$18 EA	
Medium			\$18 EA	
Large			\$18 EA	
X-Large			\$18 EA	
XX-Large			\$19 EA	
XXX-Large			\$20 EA	

Voluntary Contributions				
Gold Star Sponsorship **			\$15 EA	
Membership Fund **			\$10 EA	
Reunion Sponsorship **			\$10 EA	
Scholarship Fund **			\$10 EA	
National American Huey Museum **			\$10 EA	
Army Aviation Heritage Foundation **			\$10 EA	
Vietnam Archives **			\$10 EA	

Refund Guarantee Total	(From Side Bar)	\$	
VHPA Dues (if not dues current) ** 1 year @ \$36 or 3 years @ \$99		\$36/\$99	
Life Membership (Call HQ for exact amount) **			
2017 CD Directory Fee **		\$10 EA	
2017 Paper Directory Fee **		\$15 EA	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			

### Registration Form Revised 31 MAR 2017

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

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

### REFUND GUARANTEE FEE

10% of Total Events \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CANCELLATION DATE TO RECEIVE A REFUND WITHOUT HAVING PURCHASED THE REFUND GUARANTEE IS**

**CLOSE OF BUSINESS, CST  
FRIDAY, 16 JUNE 2017**

### Banquet Meal

\_\_\_\_\_ Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken  
\_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Special \*  
\* If Special meal is selected, please call HQ to provide special dietary info  
Banquet Seating Preference  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

MC/Visa # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYMENT

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

### Notes:

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

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

The policy has changed - you can no longer pre-order up to 5 years of directories. We are now only taking pre-orders for 2017 directories.



# Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO), Vietnam

FVSO helps support 850 Montagnard children living at 7 orphanage sites in the Kontum and Pleiku area. Founded in 2005 by servicemen who served in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, we are a small organization and are proud that 100% of your donations go to the children and their caregivers.

FVSO Board members pay for all of the administrative expenses and any on-site visits. Our mission is to provide for basic needs (food, medicine, clothing and shelter) & education.



It takes \$12 per month to provide adequate nutrition for one child and \$80 per year to send a child to school (covering primary & secondary). Operated by the Catholic Sisters of the Miraculous Medal.



FVSO is a non-profit and all donations are tax deductible  
For more information or to make a contribution, please see our contact info below. **THANK-YOU** for helping!

FVSO P.O. Box 9322-C, Auburn, Ca 95604-9322

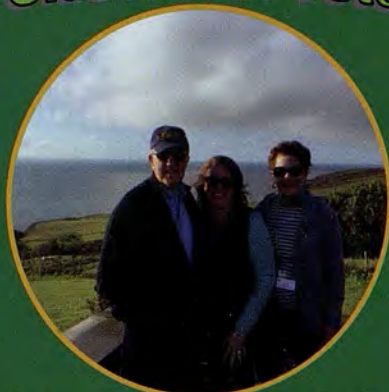
Web: [www.FriendsofVSO.org](http://www.FriendsofVSO.org)  
Email: [info@FriendsofVSO.org](mailto:info@FriendsofVSO.org)



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**DUBLIN—BELFAST—DERRY—SOUTH COUNTIES  
—GIANT'S CAUSEWAY—LIMERICK—KILLARNEY**

**13 — 27 SEPTEMBER**



## From the Editor

The March/April issue featured the North Carolina Chapter's participation in President Trump's Inaugural Parade. Coincidentally, this issue has five articles about the in-progress status of five UH-1 restorations. They relate what's happening in Bronson, MO; Peru, IN; Lititz, PA; Monroe, WI; and Hampton, GA. Other restorations are happening around the U.S. Aviator Managing Editor Tom Kirk and I take this opportunity to honor all those who spend so many hours contributing to the telling of the stories of Vietnam helicopter aircrews. With this in mind, we dedicate this issue of the Aviator to them. Also in this issue is one VHPA member's Vietnam remembrance of Apollo 11's landing on the moon. If you have a Vietnam story to tell about your day of the Apollo landing, please send it by the end of May to [Aviator@VHPA.org](mailto:Aviator@VHPA.org).

Tom Hirschler, Editor

# Bikini Blue and Huey 823

*(VHPA members Jim Haga, Pete Bohn, Don Beatty, and Russ Mowry are also members of Liberty War Bird Association)*

The 170th Assault Helicopter Company, The Bikinis, arrived in the Republic of Vietnam in December 1965 and served until March of 1971, earning two Presidential Unit Citations, the Valorous Unit Award, five awards of the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and the Civic Action Honor Medal, First Class. During their Tour of Duty, fifty seven (57) Bikinis lost their lives and are now memorialized on the Wall.

The Liberty War Bird Association is restoring to flight condition UH-1H, SN 66-16823 (Huey 823) which flew 1,300 hours in Vietnam from 1968-1970 with the 170th.

While in country, Russ Mowry, Bikini 17, used his artistic talents to paint the nose art on the 170th's ships. So,



Original Nose Art for the 170th.

Photo Courtesy: <http://www.flyarmyair.com/photopage170.htm>



Russ Mowry restoring Huey 823's nose art.

Photo Courtesy Liberty War Birds

when Ron Sanders, a Crew Chief in the 170th, told Russ about Liberty War Birds and the Bikini ship being restored to flight condition, it took very little convincing before Russ agreed to recreate the nose art for 823! As fate would have it, Russ had actually flown 823 in Vietnam and later sent the paperwork to prove it! Russ and Ron can't wait to fly one more mission in 823 and neither can we.

Come along as we imagine cranking up with a load of vets on board: 'CLEAR!' Igniters click, the turbine starts to whine and the smell of exhaust wafts through the open doors... As the blades begin to turn, faster now, the familiar thump reverberates in your chest... Huey 823 is gently rocking, getting light on her skids... A little pitch pull and





Huey 823 restored cockpit.  
Photo Courtesy Liberty War Birds



New tail boom for Huey 823.  
Photo Courtesy Liberty War Birds



Ron Sanders  
Photo Courtesy Ron Sanders

she's free of the ground, nose dipping down, picking up airspeed and altitude to clear the tree line and begin our mission.

The Vietnam Vets on board are lost in their own memories of the heat, the humidity, the smell, the fear, the relief, the beauty, the boredom, the intensity, the camaraderie that was Vietnam. They might be remembering stories they never told, perhaps their flight will release those stories; we know that can help with PTSD.

The Huey was so important to the troops in Vietnam that it has become the touchstone, the common element all Vietnam Vets share. As that touchstone, when vets see, hear, or touch Huey 823, it can be an emotional event. Liberty War Bird Association has hosted many vets in their hangar and all have attested to that.

Every Saturday vets come by one at a time or in small groups to find out if it's true there is a Huey in the hangar. We see them come in, maybe touch the aircraft or maybe stand away from it for a few minutes. We can see the emotions flicker across their faces.

We know from what we have already seen that Huey 823 is a powerful healing force for Vietnam Vets. Just sitting in the hangar, it has brought closure to many of them. Imagine how many we can help when we can fly to them, and they can fly with us for one more mission. Many of our volunteers have had the opportunity to listen to stories of long buried trauma. While it is often difficult, it is a positive experience. Whether tears and emotions flow or a simple quiet reverence is experienced, all thank us.

Our mission is to Educate, Honor, and Restore. We want to help and honor all veterans, but especially Vietnam Vets. And you can help! We have the passion, the talent, and the tools - all we need is your donation to get Huey 823 flying again!

All donations made to Liberty War Bird Association go directly to the restoration of Huey 823. We are a 501(c)(3) Public Charity organization. Consider donating today to preserve our Legacy! Visit us at: <http://libertywarbirds.com/huey-823.html>

By Jim Haga, President, Liberty War Bird Association



# SKY SOLDIERS:

the Army Aviation Heritage  
Foundation and flying Museum  
(AAHF)

Widely known as the “Sky Soldiers”, the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and flying Museum (AAHF) was founded by retired Army Major General Morris Brady and his son Mike Brady in 1997 to bring the story of Army aviation to the American public. At the time, many were familiar with the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds, but few realized in Vietnam, there were more Army assets flying than in all other services combined. The Sky Soldiers’ original fleet included an AH-1 “G” model Cobra, known for its extensive use in the Vietnam War, as well as an OH-6 Loach, two iconic UH-1 Hueys, and many other flying assets. The AAHF soon established itself as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and to this day relies on volunteers to help preserve and fly these aircraft, as well as provide numerous static displays and conduct hangar tours to individuals and groups throughout the year.

In 2002, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) granted approval to the foundation to give rides in the UH-1 Hueys, and in 2010 the AH-1 Cobra, giving one of the most unique experiences in the world to individuals at air shows. From 2007 to 2008 the Sky Soldiers participated with the US Army Recruiting Command as the Army’s

official Demonstration Team. Since 2002, over 40,000 passengers have flown with the AAHF—giving what some have said is the “ride of their life.”

Beginning in 2016, the AAHF began a project to restore an AH-1F to its original AH-1G series. Known as the Cobra 295 project (Cobra tail number 66-15295), was the 50th AH-1G made under the first contract of 110 Cobras in March 1966. With the goal of restoring Cobra 295 into a flyable and certified aircraft by the end of 2017, several volunteers have dedicated hours of “sweat equity” at Legacy hangar in Hampton, GA, and continue to welcome able-bodied workers to contribute time and treasure to this effort. The Foundation’s goal is to provide rides in Cobra 295 and in the UH-1H Huey during the 2018 VHPA Convention in Atlanta. Donations to support “Project 295” are graciously accepted on our website or mailed directly to our hangar at 506 Speedway Boulevard, Hampton, GA 30228.

Today the Sky Soldier’s volunteers continue to maintain its aircraft and fly at air shows using Cobras, Hueys and military reenactors. Many of the reenactors are veterans and longtime members of the foundation. Let’s keep alive and honor the memories of the men and woman who served this great country in its time of need, and help us inform and educate the public on what happened so many years ago, but above all else Keep Them Flying.

LTC (Ret) Joe Emerson, Crusader 29/Hillclimber 35  
LTC (Ret) Jerry Mellick, Red Hat 5/Sustainer 3





# FULL CIRCLE

U.S. Army UH-1D Medevac helicopter named "Old Reliable" came full circle the weekend of August 13, 2016. Old Reliable served as a Medevac aircraft in Vietnam from September 1965 to September 1967. I flew the aircraft until it was replaced with a much needed (and) more powerful UH-1H model in September 1967. At the request of the crew chief, Ronnie Trogdon, I painted Donald Duck on the battery box cover and named her "Old Reliable". Sadly, SP4 Trogdon was killed by enemy fire during a Medevac mission on June 19, 1967. I finished my tour with the 1st Cavalry Division (AM), 15th Medical Battalion, Air Ambulance Platoon in November of that year.

John Walker and his American Huey "369" crew hosted their 10th annual gathering of veterans and patriots at the Montgomery Aviation (FBO) Grissom Aeroplex in Peru, IN August 13-14, 2016. This was a special weekend for ten Medevac crewmembers and seven family members to once again pay tribute to a beloved and reliable old friend, UH-1 Helicopter # 63-08803 (803).

John accidentally discovered 803 deteriorating alongside a remote hangar and became her proud owner in 2005; she was restored to flight status by July 2009 and was added to a growing fleet of restored Vietnam-era Huey helicopters.

Medevac crewmembers have been attending the annual Grissom Aeroplex gathering for a mini-reunion since learning "Old Reliable" was proudly flying again. I was fortunate to have John Walker discover my existence a few years back and to invite me to fly 803. John also asked if I could recreate the nose cover painting since it had been destroyed in Vietnam. I gladly accepted the challenge and John sent a nose cover to my home in Olympia, WA. I sent the nose cover back to John which led up to this special gathering of Medevac crewmembers and friends to dedicate my recreated painting of Donald Duck being placed back on "Old Reliable."

What really made this a very special weekend was the attendance of SP4 Trogdon's six family members for the dedication. Then, as a surprise to the family, they all were seated in "Old Reliable" and I had the honor and privilege to give them a flight; this was 49 years after my



Trogdon's memorial inside 803



"Old Reliable" at LZ Uplift in 1967



Larry Hatch "Mercy 11" flying 803



MAJ Larry Hatch, US Army (Ret) & Ronnie's 87 year old Brother Norman Trogdon

having painted the original art work on 803. What a thrill for both me and the family to fly on the very helicopter their family member crewed. Family members in attendance were Norman and Eddie Trogdon, Tomas and Amy Wikman, and Alan and Sam Watson. Who would have thought this forty-nine-year saga would be reality? "Old Reliable" certainly has come full circle.



# An Old Friend

Little did I realize when I got a strange phone call one night from Branson, MO that I was going to meet an old friend. The person calling was a guy named Geoff Gardisky who said, "I have an old friend of yours from Vietnam!" Well, I couldn't imagine who he was talking about, but I soon learned he was not talking about a person; he was talking about a helicopter. Geoff is a volunteer who had accepted the job of cleaning-up and painting a Vietnam era UH-1C, Serial No. 65-09510, the Veterans' Memorial Museum in Branson, MO ([www.veteransmemorialbranson.com](http://www.veteransmemorialbranson.com)) had acquired.

They planned to put it on display outside the museum along with their WWII P-51 Mustang. If you have been to Branson, MO you would surely have seen the museum on Hwy 76 which is the main drag for the multitude of theaters in Branson.

Geoff said this helicopter had been in the 118th AHC Thunderbirds from August 1966-October 1968. Wow, I said, that UH-1C had been a gunship when I was in the Thunderbirds from August 1966-August 1967. I was in the 3rd Platoon Bandits about 9 months of that year and had flown her as a Fire Team Leader, "Bandit 32". He said that was right and the reason he was calling me was he had looked at the Gold Book records and the serial number had indicated it had been in the 118th for two years before being returned to the US for repairs and upgrading. Then it had been sent back to Vietnam to serve for another year or so with the 71st AHC. Rattlers and Firebirds. Geoff found me while searching the internet for the 118th; he found my web site and my name and email as the web master. ([www.118ahc.org](http://www.118ahc.org)). This was getting interesting!!

Now, I was very interested and went to my Thunderbird web site where I have a page about the histories of most of the helicopters that had flown in the Thunderbirds. There is also a copy of the Gold Book on the site which lists all the incidents for each aircraft as well as all the units it had been assigned to. Wow! This old friend had really been busy and had some amazing incidents. 65-09510 had listed 16 incidents which were primarily small arms hits over the 1,681 hours it was in the 118th AHC. Each time she was repaired in the 118th and returned to service. More importantly, no one was listed as having been wounded or killed during the 1,681 hours of flight time







Geoff Gardisky with Tom Payne

over the two years plus while in the 118th. The Gold Book also showed that while in the 71st AHC, 65-09510 was flown 955 hours over a period of 17 months and no loss of life was listed there either. What a true War Bird she was! After Vietnam and back in the US, my old friend had served in the US 6th Army from February 1973 to December 1975 when she was apparently retired from service.

Geoff Gardisky and his helpers have done a fantastic job laboring to dress up and make 65-09510 as "pretty and original" as possible using photos from my 118th AHC Thunderbird web site as examples. She has been completely painted, including the strips on the tail and main rotors, new webbing for the crew chief and gunner seats as well as the pilot and co-pilot seats. All unit logos are freshly painted to appear as they originally were for the Bandits. Even the logos, insignias and tail numbers have been freshly painted...appearing just as they were 50 years before. The cockpit is complete except it has one instrument hole and that is the clock. Efforts are being made to locate one. The biggest items needed to truly make the old gal look original are the armament pylons for each side, plus the ammo feed chutes to the fake M-60s. If you know of or

can give any help in this area, it would be appreciated.

The planned dedication for the UH-1C, Branson Bandit 2, is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Saturday May 27th and yours truly has been invited to take part in that event. All who served in the 118th Thunderbirds are very welcome, for sure! If ever you can visit Branson, MO, the home of the largest Veteran's Day and Week-long Veterans' Celebration in the entire United States, please look up the old gal! She will impress you and make you want to strap on the original safety

belt/harness and yell "CLEAR"!!

**Tom Payne, Bandit 32**  
**118th AHC Thunderbirds**  
**August 1966-August 1967**

## New Exhibit at the Pentagon



Log on the Vietnam War Commemoration link below (Vietnam War Commemoration Sitrep) and click on Issue # 11 in the thumb nail view for the full story,

[www.vietnamwar50th.com/media\\_center/vwc\\_sitrep/](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/media_center/vwc_sitrep/)



# Helping a Helicopter

by Barbara Miller

The Huey Helicopter for the Green County Veterans Memorial Park continues to find friends who offer to help. Helicopter Specialties, Inc., in Janesville WI is working to restore the Huey back to the days of service in the Vietnam War. Jason Shrier, General Manager/ Director of Maintenance at HSI and resident of Brodhead, is in charge of the project. He and Larry Ayres, President of Green County Veterans Memorial Park and Vietnam helicopter pilot, work in close communication with all the details in this restoration project.

Helicopter Specialties, Inc., is a FAA certified repair station for 24 various helicopter models. A team of airframe technicians perform maintenance, inspections, structural repairs and custom design painting, they have received numerous awards and certificates since its founding in 1999. They are centrally located at the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport in Janesville.

The Green County Veterans Memorial Park is an active group of men and women who have worked tirelessly to create and maintain the county-wide veteran's memorial that honors and pays tribute to all Green County men and women who have served and continue to serve in the military. They have spent 10 years trying to acquire a Huey Helicopter for placement in the park which is built and maintained strictly by monetary gifts. In December of 2015, a Huey that saw active duty in Vietnam was acquired by the group and placed in temporary storage. The helicopter needs restoration and a permanent mounting stand for display in the park located at the corner of Hwy 81 and County N, Monroe, WI. Contributions can be sent to Green County Veterans Memorial Park, c/o Community Fund of Southwest Wisconsin, P.O. Box 733, Monroe, WI 53566. For more information on the Huey visit the Green County Veterans Memorial Park Facebook page, GoFundMe.com search "Home for a Helicopter, Monroe, WI", or [www.greencountyveterans.org](http://www.greencountyveterans.org).



Technician Team in Spray Booth with the Huey  
Left to right - Truman Worachek, Mitch Crandall, Rick Theis, Jon Fletcher, as the Technician Team of Helicopter Specialties, Inc., along with Jason Shrier, General Manager/ Director of Maintenance, and Karen and Larry Ayres of Brodhead and Green County Veterans Memorial Park.



Larry and Karen Ayres discuss the details of the cowling with the Technician Team at Helicopter Specialties, Jon Fletcher, Jason Shrier, and Rick Theis. The cowling is a part of the turbine engine cover.



Window replacement



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

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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

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Information about each Vietnam unit:

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

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

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

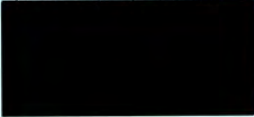
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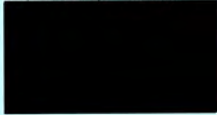


# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

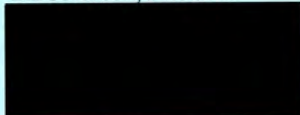
ALAMO CHAPTER  
James Boykin, President



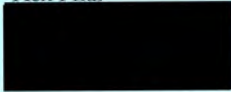
ALASKA CHAPTER  
Lynn Kile, President



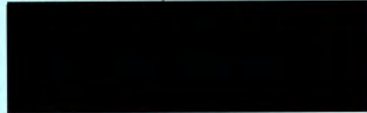
ARIZONA CHAPTER  
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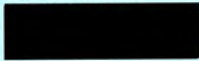
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH  
Ken Fritz



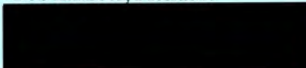
CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER  
Tom Mc Millen, President



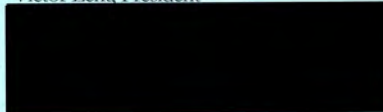
FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER  
Donald Ancelin



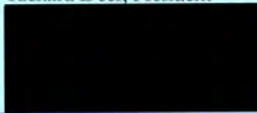
GEORGIA CHAPTER  
Bob Lanzotti, President



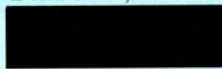
LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Victor Lent, President



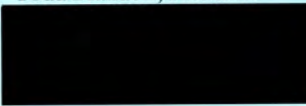
MICHIGAN CHAPTER  
Richard Deer, President



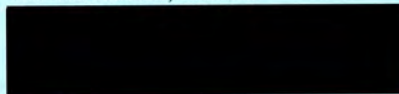
UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER  
Don Abrams, President



MONTANA CHAPTER  
Todd Brandoff, President

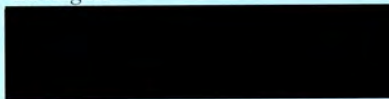


NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER  
Marshall Eubanks, President

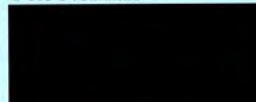


NEW JERSEY CHAPTER  
(currently inactive, seeking members)

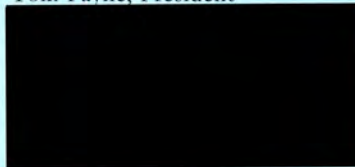
NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
Ed Hughes



OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER  
Pete Norman



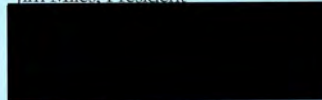
OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
Tom Payne, President



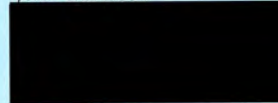
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER  
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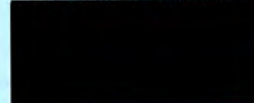
SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER  
Jim Miles, President



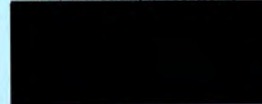
SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER  
John Wilkinson



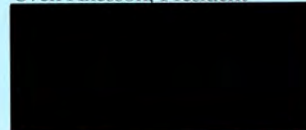
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER  
Dale E House, President



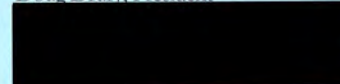
SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter  
Larry Russell, President



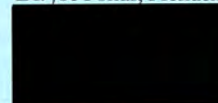
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Sven Akesson, President



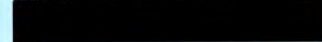
UTAH CHAPTER  
Doug Drury, President



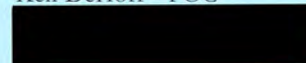
VHPA OF FLORIDA  
Dr. Joe Ponds, President



WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER  
Dave Saunders



HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional  
Ken DeHoff - POC



## Notice to all Members of the VHPA

For a limited time, liaison between the National HQ of the VHPA and the Independent Chapters has reverted to John Sorensen of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ or via E-Mail at: \_\_\_\_\_ 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



Alamo Chapter ladies enjoyed lunch at McAllister's Deli on February 10th and at Chuy's on March 10th. Chapter members met for lunch at Applebee's Grill and Bar in the Vineyard Shopping Center on February 16th and at Red Lobster on Highway 281 on March 14th.

April 17th and 18th, our chapter sponsored a visit by the Witness to War Foundation, who conducted interviews of 16 of our members. This non-profit foundation is dedicated to capturing stories of combat experiences from individuals through filmed interviews. Mr. Martin Madert conducted these interviews that will be provided to the Library of Congress Veterans History Project and to the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University. Martin has conducted dozens of interviews at the last five VHPA annual reunions at various locations around the country. We have now provided this opportunity to VHPA members in the San Antonio area, and especially to those who are unable to attend annual reunions.

Chapter members and their ladies had great fun in Fredericksburg, TX, on May 12th and 13th. Most of us stayed at the Hangar Hotel, which is found, strangely enough, at the Gillespie County Airport. It looks like a hangar but is decorated like a 1940s hotel, and has a bar, The Officers Club, decorated in the same motif. We closed that place both nights. On Saturday afternoon, we attended a live show by Larry Gatlin, country and gospel singing star, at the downtown Rockbox Theater. Afterward, we walked down the street for dinner at the very interesting Buffalo Nickel Bar and Grill.

Members should watch for e-mails and check our Chapter website [www.vhpa-alamo.org](http://www.vhpa-alamo.org) for scheduled events and details.

**By Chuck Oualline**

## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER



The Thirtieth Reunion of the Ohio River Chapter will be starting on April 7th in Indianapolis, IN. This will be before this article is published.

There are a number of activities planned for the weekend starting on Friday the 7th at the Dallara INDYCAR museum and garage tour. The total area of the Dallara facility is 105,000 square feet. With the opportunity to racing using the simulator and compete against others in the group for the top 5 fastest times of the day.

In the evening there will dinner and movie with pizza and a movie about Vietnam Vets. On Saturday morning, we will go to the Indy 500 Museum only. The track tour is NOT available as Chevy has rented the remainder of

the facility for the day. Cost is \$10 for adults and we will NOT collect for this tour in advance. Saturday afternoon we are going to the IMAX theater to see the new National Geographic movie "Extreme Weather 3D".

Our Business Meeting will be held at the hotel Hospitality Room at 1500.

The Indiana War Memorial is open all day to our group. If you wish to go early, you may tour the museum and stay for dinner. The museum display areas will close when we start our dinner at 1900.

The schedule for dinner is:

1800 - 1855 Cocktails at the Indiana War Memorial

1900 - Dinner at the Indiana War Memorial

Guest speaker will be is MG Charles Chegar

Do not forget your Champagne Glasses for the Missing Man Toast.

Sunday Breakfast and depart for home.

Look forward to seeing everyone for another reunion.

**By Robert Blair**

## UTAH CHAPTER

The Utah Chapter of the VHPA is in its second year and will hold its bi-annual business meeting and get together on June 3rd at the VFW hall in Salt Lake City. As we're still getting our 'ducks' in a row, several future events are in the planning. We are planning on being present at the 3rd annual Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association's "Ride to Zero" fundraising event that helps raise funds for the University of Utah's Veterans department that promotes programs to prevent the rise in Veterans suicide. We're hoping our presence and exhibit will encourage all veterans to seek assistance for PTSD related causes. We're also encouraging all Vietnam veterans to take advantage of the Veteran's Administration's "Agent Orange" screening program for Vietnam vets which offers a free medical and collection of data for their program of developing a better understanding and a data base for Agent Orange and the aftermath it has caused.

We are also exploring avenues of interest to be invited to various educational forums to relate our experiences in Vietnam and answer queries about the Vietnam War. We have also invited to our June meeting the son of a VNAF helicopter pilot who was unable to retreat from Vietnam in 75 and spent 15 years in prison under the communist regime before being released and finally making it to the US where he passed away a few years ago. The VNAF helicopter pilot received an Army commendation medal for his service to US forces and we would like to recognize him to his son through our chapter.

**By Doug Drury, President**



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## ALASKA CHAPTER



The Iditarod Dog race signals the beginning of spring, well usually. Still a bit cold, about 2 degrees today, but the sun is shining and our chapter is ready for a full schedule of events this year!

We did have a very nice gathering in February during the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous, a 2-week winter festival. Can't ever go wrong with margaritas, nachos, and a good turnout of 24 folks. Just a nice way to spend a sunny afternoon at subzero temperatures, watching the dogs run and members giving "the PERPETUAL Bird" to our President in full anticipation of him serving the next 50 years! Ha! The Chapter is still growing!

We are a lively bunch, but what else would you expect



Tim Kavanaugh and Terry Vraniak presenting the BIRD!

from group of "old helicopter pilots", who still think we can hover! Maybe we can! A crazy wonderful bunch of guys anyway. There is so much pride in knowing that we flew!

Next up is the Memorial Day event, followed by the Midnight Sun Baseball game and gathering in Fairbanks June 21st. We need to come up with an OH-6 body for parade and other events. If anyone knows where one might be found, please contact us.

Until the next gathering

Lynn Kile  
Nomad 23



## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER



February brought new changes to the chapter. Our Huey tow vehicle was "wrapped" and now has the same US Army color scheme as our Huey. Looks great and much cheaper than a new paint job!!

California weather this year has brought us plenty of rain and our first event of the year on 20 FEB was rained out. We then found out our sponsor (Western Truck School) had lost their lease on their open storage area and we lost our free storage for our Huey, storage trailer, and MOCs. Deja vu - Exactly a year ago, we lost our covered storage when Western Truck lost their lease on the building they had occupied for 30 years.

On 26 MAR, the chapter met at the Western Truck School open storage facility in West Sacramento to prepare for the base relocation. A chapter meeting was held and a few decisions made. For the small cost of a shelving

extension, Ken Fritz volunteered to store the spare Huey parts and CCN merchandise in his new barn. Ken also let us know he had arranged indoor storage for the Huey in a friend's hay barn (6 miles from LZ Fritz) for 2 months. We agreed the original MOC will be scrapped. Lastly, the new MOC will be temporarily stored at the new Western Truck School yard at a discounted storage rate (Thanks Sean). The new MOC is in terrible shape after this past winter rain. Water leaks damaged the interior and left mold on the ceiling and walls. As a result, it probably won't make it to Indy.

Special thanks go to Mike and Sean Nord of Western Trucking School for their support over the years. Without their enthusiasm, our chapter would likely have failed. To remain viable, we need to help Mike Nord make some decisions regarding scrapping or renovating the new MOC. We also need a long term indoor storage solution for the Huey. Stay tuned for further updates.



Huey Tow Vehicle with new skin



Emptying the Spare Parts Trailer



Spare Parts



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Huey's new Temporary Home

Movement of the material and clean up was then accomplished by Dave Anderson, Jim Cunningham, Al Doucette, Ken Fritz, Curt Knapp, Ken Lake, Ed Morris, Tom Schaub, Jim Stein, and Frank Kulhavy.

After much heavy lifting (C model rotor head weighs a lot!), the group went for Pizza. Curt Knapp celebrated his 71st birthday. Somehow, he always gets special mentions in our report.



Pizza Break - (L-R) Dave Anderson, Ken Fritz, Tom Schaub, Curt Knapp (Birthday boy), Jim Stein, Jim Cunningham, Al Doucette, Ed Morris. Ken Lake and Frank Kulhavy not shown.



Stacking the Chapter Stuff

On 27 MAR, Jim Cunningham, Ken Fritz,

and Curt Knapp moved the spare parts to LZ Fritz and the Huey to Shidel's hay barn.

We are looking forward to a busy 2017, with 6 events already booked, starting the end of April.

For more pictures and information, please check our website: [www.vhpacn.org](http://www.vhpacn.org).

Dave Anderson, VHPA-CCN webmaster

## FLORIDA CHAPTER

On March 25, 2017, the VHPAF had the privilege of participating in the helicopter-only AMERICAN HEROES AIRSHOW held in Oviedo, FL. It was an exciting display of aviation technology and careers in public safety. The AMERICAN HEROES AIRSHOW is the nation's premier admission-free, helicopter-only, aviation event designed to profile rotary-wing aviation's dynamic role in law enforcement, public safety, communications, Search & Rescue, as well as homeland security and national defense. It also seeks to educate the public about the helicopter's unique capabilities through static displays and equipment presentations.

There were at least 15 helicopters from military, law enforcement, fire & private / EMS operations on display. We participated with our LOACH and COBRA as static displays along with our Sales and Vietnam Memorabilia display. Of course, the crowds were most excited about the landing and departure of the COBRA.

An additional event included a very special Naturalization Ceremony conducted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. It provided the opportunity to meet and welcome our newest U.S. Citizens. Overall, we had a great time, and of course, the 70 degree temperature for this event in March was absolutely perfect!

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, President



American Heroes Airshow promotional pictures.



VHPAF LOACH on static display with Cobra in background.



There were at least 4 Sheriff's helicopters from different counties on static display.



A U. S. Coast Guard helicopter (orange & white) on left of picture is flanked by two Sheriff's helicopters. Behind them is another row of EMS helicopters.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

On 18 March 2017, the Georgia VHPA Chapter conducted its bi-monthly breakfast meeting at its home base, the Marietta Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo).

Our speaker for this meeting was Bob Babcock who served in Vietnam as a 4th Inf Div rifle platoon leader during 1966-1967. From 1968 to 2002 Bob enjoyed a 34-year career as a Sales and Marketing Executive with IBM. But, Bob could never leave the Army. Since his departure from active duty, Bob served as President of the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society for 10 years and currently serves as the 4th Inf Div historian as well as president of the 4th Inf Div National Association. These prestigious positions were not gained without merit and that was well evidenced in his presentation to our GA VHPA members on 18 Mar 2017. During this presentation, Bob showed one slide which read, "Did God ever tap you on the shoulder and give you a mission?" He went on to say that on one rainy Sunday afternoon in May 2003, he read on a 4th ID website, "Does anyone know what's going on with the 4th ID in Iraq?" Well, Bob did as he had contacts and had been passing on info ever since the 4th ID was alerted for Iraq in 2003. He then communicated to the Web Master, "I may be opening Pandora's Box, but I'm willing to share my info with anyone who's interested." In the first hour after that message to the Web Master, Bob received 84 responses together with email addresses. By the end of that first 4th ID deployment Bob had 30,000 email addresses and communicated with all of them in his daily 4th ID updates as to what the 4th ID was doing in Iraq. In the beginning, he communicated daily, then went to five updates a week which in itself required some 12 to 16 hour working days. During the 4th ID's



Guest speaker George Babcock.

second deployment in 2005-2006 he started out with five updates per week and later reduced it to three a week. It was indeed a phenomenal feat for a citizen soldier. As Bob stated during the briefing, it was truly a life changing experience. He's made life-long friends from Army families of all ranks and walks of life. He's been invited to three Medal of Honor ceremonies in the White House and commissioned by two 4th Inf Div Commanding Generals to write chronologies of their year-long deployments to Iraq. Bob has personally authored six books and is currently the CEO of Deeds publish-

ing where he has published over 175 books of aspiring authors, many of them about the military service. His final slide read, "If God taps you on the shoulder and gives you an opportunity – step forward and do it!" Truly inspiring words coming from a Great American.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 20 May 2017. Our guest speaker for this meeting will be Colonel John (JT) Thompson. Colonel Thompson is retiring from active duty this year and will be on terminal leave during May. He agreed to be our speaker, his first speaking engagement as a retiree. Colonel Thompson commanded the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), the Night Stalkers and is combat veteran of operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He has had multiple deployments in support of Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

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

**Bob Lanzotti, President**

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

As president of the Michigan Chapter I was invited by the USS Silversides Submarine Museum <https://silversidesmuseum.org/> in Muskegon to give a presentation on the role helicopters performed during the Vietnam War. The museum hosts programs on a variety of military and naval related subjects and my presentation would be the first of their new season. The board member extending the invitation advised that with the ranks of the WW2 vets thinning out that Vietnam vets had become more prominent in their programs and since they were a Navy based organization they were interested in learning about different aspects of the Vietnam War.

About 40 persons attended my Mar. 6 presentation. Chapter members present included; Vice President Dave James, Jim and Suzie Hunt, Roger Blaha, and JP and Linda Johnson. The event was live-streamed and recorded. It has been posted on the Facebook page for the USS Silversides Submarine Museum.



Vice President Dave James and President Rich Deer at USS Silversides Submarine Museum

Our next planned activity is our spring meeting at noon on May 6. It will be held in the Back Room of the Log Jam restaurant, 110 W. Jefferson, Grand Ledge, MI. This will be another great opportunity for telling enhanced war stories as well as meeting old friends; while making new ones. The meeting will include a short business agenda. Chiefly, we will discuss the events in which we will participate this year. There will also be a guest

speaker. Chapter members and interested parties should check emails for updates. Everyone is encouraged to bring spouses, family members, former crew members and anyone interested in our role in the Vietnam War.

For any VHPA members in or near Michigan who would like to be added to our email list for updates on our activities, contact me at [REDACTED]. You do not have to join the Michigan chapter to be listed as an interested party if you prefer.

**By Rich Deer, President, Michigan Chapter**



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER



Spring 2017 has found the NAVHPA hard at work again.

First, the good news is our restaurant partner, The Schnitzel Ranch, is again open at its new location in Huntsville. We had the March meeting there and it was great. Good food in a room that held us all! The buffet dinner was even better than usual. It is difficult to find a monthly venue that will accommodate about a hundred members, spouses and guests. This is getting harder and harder to do. The Ranch, as we refer to it, has stepped up to make the chapter meetings a fun social event.

Mid-March found us with one of our longest "hauls" of the season. We towed our Huey gunship, Buccaneer 3 (Buc 3) to the Birmingham Jefferson County Convention Center for our third trip to the Gun and Militaria show. This involves towing the Huey more than 100 miles South of Huntsville. Then maneuvering it indoors among tanks, trucks already there. More than 20 members and spouses served to make this show another great success. Meanwhile, many members were camping at Oak Mountain State Park to avoid a two-hour commute twice each day of the three-day commitment. We worked hard at the show while the ladies worked hard at visiting outlet malls and soaking up the Spring sunshine. We all had a good time.

The NAVHPA Chapter has taken on a new responsibility of committing to serving the folks who are a little less fortunate. Once a month our members serve lunch or dinner at the Huntsville Downtown Rescue Mission. For those of us who have done it, what a rewarding and humbling experience. All of us have a very blessed life. The Mission is based on Christian Faith of helping the people who have, not only physical, but Spiritual needs. In March, the NAVHPA served dinner to more than 100. The spouses who volunteered served main course and salads, while the members served dessert and drinks. Some good-hearted grumbling was evident at this division of duties. Many will return in April to serve lunch, though. So, it couldn't have been too bad.



A youngster gets the feel of handling a M-60 in the door of Buc 3.



NAVHPA members enjoyed being back with our restaurant partner in March.



NAVHPA members and spouses enjoy an after-hours get together at Oak Mountain.



Buccaneer 3 is always a great hit at the Birmingham Gun Show and Militaria Expo.

As this article goes to press, the chapter was supporting the Grissom High School JROTC event in Huntsville. We took Buc 3 there as the centerpiece of an effort to recruit JROTC cadets and engage the community in the program. There was a 5K run that saw NO members of the NAVHPA participate. They were content to cheer on the contestants.

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.

Ralph Weber

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

Recent chapter meetings were held at the American Legion Post #1 on February 18 and March 18 respectively, with a good turnout at both meetings. We are getting 15 to 20 members at each of our meetings. Since lunch is being served at our next meeting we should have overwhelming attendance.

We are conducting renovations to the Helicopter War Museum, getting it ready for this season's event schedule. We moved the Museum to Bill Bates Back Yard and parked it next to his wood-working shop. He and Rick Beaver along with one of Bill's neighbors who is pretty handy are conducting the renovation projects. Chapter member Cliff Lawson, a Denver Area photographer has been conducting a campaign to get as many portraits of our members as possible. Two

such portraits are attached. We are hoping more members take advantage of this opportunity.

Robert (Bob) White has been a long-time member of our Chapter. Bob was one of approximately 20 US Army pilots who became POWs. On March 27, 1973 when the POWs were released as part of Operation Homecoming following the Paris Peace Accords, Bob was still in captivity. He wasn't released until April 1, 1973. Bob stated, "they just plain forgot about me." Reporters dubbed him as "the last known POW of the Vietnam War." He was on his second tour when his OV-1 Mohawk was shot down 20 miles south of Vung Tau on November 15, 1969. We are glad to have Bob as a member. Bob has loaned his personnel belongings from three years of captivity to our Museum for display. We will be placing his story on our Web site soon.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

We have a new member with a very interesting story. The whole story is published on the web site but the long and short of it is that Bill Greener is the Oldest and Newest member to the RMCVHPA. Bill's MOS was a Transport Pilot in the Air Force. When he got to Vietnam in 1960, he was flying C-47s. One month in, he was reassigned as an advisor to an ARVN Helicopter unit. Bill states, "My job was to fly the H-34 with the South Vietnamese helicopter pilots. The South Vietnamese had one Helicopter Squadron in Tan Son Nhut, and a Helicopter Detachment up-country at Pleiku. We would take off from Tan Son Nhut and fly the H-34 to wherever there were wounded ARVN troops. When I first tried to join the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, my records showed I was an Airplane Transport Pilot. So now you had an Air Force Transport Pilot flying South Vietnamese helicopters as an advisor. I guess that got the Association's attention. Thanks for letting me join this prestigious group of helicopter pilots." Because of his MOS, he was not authorized to join the VHPA until recently. Welcome Aboard!!

We were invited by Congressman Ed Perlmutter, 7th Congressional District, to attend a pinning ceremony at the Red Rocks Community College in an effort to reach out to Denver area Vietnam Veterans as part of the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Celebrations being held across the country. Congressman Ed Perlmutter's office, in partnership with the Commemorative Partner Program as authorized by President Obama, is thanking over 600 local Vietnam Veterans in ceremonies over the next 5 months on behalf of a grateful Nation. The ceremony, was held on March 24, 2017. Among the Chapter Veterans who attended this ceremony were Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Carl Cavaluzzi, Dale House and Bill Robie. The members received a commemorative lapel pin and a certificate signed by Governor John E. Hickenlooper. Making the presentations were Major General H. Michael Edwards, Brigadier General John Rose, and Mrs. Nancy Perlmutter. Congressman Ed Perlmutter was called away to Washington, D.C.

Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

We have a full year ahead for the Helicopter War Museum. Events are



Cliff Lawson Photo of Rick Beaver



Robert (Bob) White  
April 1, 1973



LR MG H. Michael Edwards, Dale House, Rick Beaver, Bill Robie, Bill Bates, BG John Rose (ret)



Cliff Lawson Photo of Dale House



Carl Cavalluzzi receiving Commemorative Pin at the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War ceremony.

planned for a one day event in Westcliff, CO, and Memorial Day weekend in conjunction with the Traveling Wall in Ft. Collins, CO; The Greely Stampede; Bandimere Speed Way and City of Golden for 4th of July celebrations are among events planned. 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 new 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 that 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: [REDACTED]

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VHPA CHAPTER

Our SoCal Chapter had the annual St Paddy's Day meeting and BBQ at the Wings and Rotor Museum at French Valley airport. Over 30 of our members and family attended. Thank you Member wives Linda Williams and Sandy Crosby for attending to the bbq and food.



Thanks to Ed Moore for his H-34 presentation. He later called me and said he checked his logbook and had flown four missions in this H-34 in Vietnam. Nice job Ed.

One of our members, Terry Opdahl passed away last Thursday. The



services are March 31st and our Chapter will be presenting Terry's family with the SoCal Chapter personalized Flag Case.

Sven Akesson



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The NCVHPA took a much needed break in February, recovering from the Inaugural Parade Marathon. March began with a "ground recon" of Ocean Isle Beach and four vehicle insertion. Four Chapter couples (Jerry & Barbara Seago, Larry & Gloria Pigg, Brock & Colleen Nicholson and Ed & Claudia Hughes spent a wonderful weekend eating seafood, shopping, sharing war stories and consuming adult beverages. We also spent considerable time planning our trip to New York City for the FOX and Friends morning Show (This trip was canceled). We rented a beach front cottage from a fellow Vietnam Veteran, Frank Walker and met Ed Shanks, also a Vietnam Veteran at breakfast.

Brock Nicholson took his "Blue Star" UH-1H to the North Carolina Vietnam Veterans program held at the NC Museum of History. Brock estimates he saw between 100 and 150 people on Saturday March 18th.

On Wednesday March 29th, Jerry & Barbara Seago, Sam McLamb, Brock & Colleen Nicholson and Ed Hughes ate lunch with former VHPA President Moon Mullen and

his wife Maggy.

The Chapter has the following confirmed engagements upcoming engagements:

- May 4-8 McEntire National Guard Base, Columbia, SC.
- May 19-22 Wings Over Wayne, Seymour Johnson AFB.
- May 27 Memorial Day Parade Myrtle Beach SC.
- May 29 Memorial Day Parade Washington DC
- June 24th July 4th Parade and Town Celebration, Lewisburg, PA
- August 1st, National Night Out, New Bern NC.
- Oct 14 & 15 MUM Fest New Bern, NC.

By Ed Hughes, President



Huey outside museum



Group at breakfast

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER



On April 1, 2017, the membership of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA met in Blue Springs, MO to review past activities and preview coming events and activities. The meeting opened as normal with a welcome and the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence remembering those no longer with us, those who died during their tours, those who have passed since returning, and those who are still in harm's way in combat zones today. Of special note to the members is the passing of Roger Shields, who passed away on January 17, 2017. Roger commanded the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company on its deployment to Vietnam from Ft. Benning to the Republic of South Vietnam in January, 1966. In September 1966, he was reassigned to the 12 CAG for the remainder of his tour of duty.

Following lunch, discussion about future activities and administrative actions was pursued. Russ Emory announced that the 2d quarter meeting will be at Uncle Buck's, located in the Bass Pro Shop in Springfield, MO, on June 10, 2017. The 3rd quarter meeting is to be determined. The current plan is to meet in central Missouri or in the St. Louis area. This meeting will involve the election of officers, and the changing of command.

John Wilkinson reported that the chapter website has been rebuilt and is now active. It will be being updated and information posted over the next few weeks. The website is [www.vhpasmo.org](http://www.vhpasmo.org).

Dick Elgin, chapter vice-president, discussed the planning and coordination for the 4th quarter meeting that will be held at the Keeter Center, College of the Ozarks, on Veterans Day, November 11, 2017. The meeting is being coordinated with the timing of the Branson Veterans Day parade.



South Missouri meeting attendees.



Joel Trautman

Several members plan to be in the parade. Dick also discussed several possibilities for a speaker, which will be announced as the plans firm up.

John Sorensen discussed several activities at the College of the Ozarks and Branson which are veteran related.

First, on April 19, 2017, there will be a dedication of a memorial for the Missouri Gold Star Families held at Patriots Park, College of the Ozarks, at 2:30 p.m. The public is invited, so anyone in the Branson, MO, area on that day is encouraged to attend. These events are memorable.

Next scheduled is a dedication ceremony at the Branson Veterans Memorial Museum of a UH-1C helicopter now on display at the museum. This aircraft was flown by Tom Payne, a past president of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. The ceremony is on May 27, 2017 at 12:00 noon. Any VHPA members in the area are invited to attend. More information will be put on the website.

The VHPA reunions have been announced for the next three years. They are:

2017 – JW Marriott Hotel, Indianapolis, IN 2-6 July 2017

2018 – Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, GA 3-8 July 2018

2019 – The Kansas City Marriott Downtown, Kansas City, MO May 2019



At the last meeting, an additional signatory was added to replace Bill Thompson, who has relocated to Texas. The motion was made, seconded, and passed by the membership that Bill Thompson be removed as a signatory.

Over the weekend of March 25-26, 2017, the Grain Valley business owned by COL (Ret) Don Ballard, the only living Medal of Honor recipient in the state of Missouri and an honorary member of VHPA South Missouri Chapter was burglarized while he was in Washington to honor two Columbia, MO residents for rescuing a person from a burning vehicle. The loss is estimated to be in the area of \$100,000, much of it cash, along with a large amount of memorabilia and commemorative military awards. The cash stolen was to be used to defray funeral costs of veterans, and to provide markers and caskets through the Forgotten Veterans organization and its parent group, National Combat Medical Memorial & Youth Education Center. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to make a contribution to COL Ballard's organization to assist in rebuilding his fund.

The featured speaker for the meeting was Joel R. Trautmann, who spoke of his personal experience as a platoon leader in C Company, 3/187 Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, during the Battle of Hamburger Hill in May 1969. An excellent and interesting presentation from a different perspective than that which most of us as aviators have.

John Wilkinson, President, 2015-2017  
VHPA South Missouri Chapter

# WANTED

## Helicopter Memorabilia from the Vietnam War



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references available

Contact: John Conway

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



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# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

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

Line 1, Last, first, MI and/or nickname of new member; double asterisks (\*\*) ID new life members. Line 2, current city and state. Line 3, branch of service. Lines 4 to 6, flight class and Vietnam units and served with, if that info is available.

9 members who have joined in the period of February 7th to March 27th, 2017.

**Billings Roy H \*\***  
Brush Prairie Washington  
Army  
64-7W  
114 AHC in 65-66

**Dalfonzo Joseph A 'Joe'**  
Springfield Virginia  
Army  
68-1 QC68-9  
604 TC DET in 69-70; 1 TC BN in 71-72

**Doonan Robert \*\***  
Bronx New York  
Army  
67-503 67-23  
A/101 AVN 101 ABN in 68-69

**Fieg John E**  
Headland Alabama  
Army  
66-17  
B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 67-68

**Hahn Erich N. \*\***  
Brookline New Hampshire  
Army  
70-3  
61 AHC in 70-71

**Longhenry Raymond L.**  
Brooklyn Iowa  
Army  
70-31 70-29  
B/158 AVN 101 ABN in 70; HHC 1  
BDE 101 ABN in 70-71

**Stephan Robert K.**  
Cumberland City Tennessee  
Army  
68-508 68-12  
C/101 AVN 101 ABN in 68-69;  
D/101 AWC 101 ABN in 69;  
A/4/77 ARA 101 ABN in 71

**Talmadge Douglas V**  
Cleveland Georgia  
Army  
68-510 68-16  
A/25 AVN 25 INF in 68-69

**Youngs Robert R. 'Bob' \*\***  
Kansas City Missouri  
Army  
71-1 70-47  
178 ASHC in 72; 120 AHC in 72



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

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**TheCubInn.com**  
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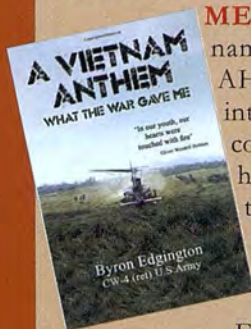


# BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



VHPA Member Byron Edgington has written **A VIETNAM ANTHEM: WHAT THE WAR GAVE ME**, another memoir drawing on his Vietnam service with Alpha Company, 101st AHB, 101st Airborne in 1970-1971, his international flight time as a civilian helicopter pilot, and stateside medical transport helicopter pilot. While many veterans of the Vietnam War came home with a negative experience that shaped their post-Vietnam lives, Edgington shares a more positive outlook on his time in Vietnam.



Edgington relates that his time in Vietnam freed him from the fear of death. He feels he is living on borrowed time and embraces life and all the opportunities available if you embrace a positive attitude and go after them. And embrace them he did, serving for 31 years with three different National Guard Units and going back to col-

lege at the age of sixty-three.

This book will take you back to Vietnam when young men in helicopters went forth with courage and faith in their fellow aviators and crew members to do what must be done. This was an emotional and reflective volume which provides a great reading experience and I recommend it highly.

Edgington has garnered a number of awards for his books which include *The Sky Behind Me: A Memoir of Flying and Life* (previously reviewed in the Aviator) and has an upcoming novel entitled *Waiting for Willie Pete* that will be available soon. He lives with his wife, Mariah, in Panama. His website is [www.byronedgington.com](http://www.byronedgington.com)

**A Vietnam Anthem: What the War Gave Me** (184 pages with photos, \$10.99 paperback, \$3.99 Kindle) by Byron Edgington, ISBN 13: 978-1541020665 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.

*In a departure from my usual, I am reviewing two military books unrelated to Vietnam within one review.* **Yvonne Doll** and **Ruth VanDyke** have co-authored **REFINED BY FIRE** and **TRAILBLAZERS**, novels about the entry of women officers into the ranks of the US Army through West Point and ROTC. The books represent firsthand accounts of the authors experiences, but must be fictional by necessity.

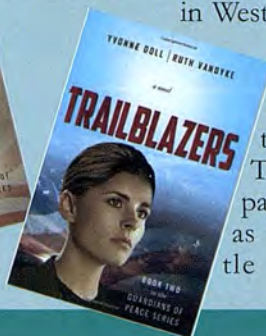
In the summer of 1976, the first women were admitted to West Point, and the first women to complete a four-year ROTC program were commissioned as second lieutenants. All involved parties faced new challenges and many adjustments were required, along with frequent reassessment by the Army. Acceptance of women did not come easily in the male-dominated Army where the only women who had previously served were WACs and nurses.

*Refined by Fire* chronicles the intense daily training and educational experience of female cadets at West Point along with "real Army" life experiences of the two female ROTC commissioned 2LT's in West Germany. In *Trailblazers*, the cadets and lieutenants meet and work together in Europe. Their journey is a page turning adventure as they encounter subtle and in-your-face

roadblocks along with other challenges as they perform their duty assignments and work to earn acceptance into an army struggling to integrate women officers.

Both *Refined by Fire* and *Trailblazers* take the reader back to the post-Vietnam/Cold War era when the US Army was in the process of reorganizing and reevaluating its mission in the face of new threats. The author's unique and inside view provides the reader with a nearly approximated 'I was there with them' experience. Both books serve a highly informative role for anyone who served in Europe during this time or have a daughter, granddaughter or acquaintance of another young woman who is interested and thinking she may join the military. I highly recommend these books.

A third book by the authors, entitled *Athena Unleashed* is due out later this year. Yvonne Doll was among the first 100 women to graduate from West Point. She served twenty-six years of active service. Ruth VanDyke was an early ROTC graduate, and was one of the first women to be assigned to a Special Forces Group as a Russian linguist. She is a retired Army Chemical Corps officer.



**Refined by Fire** (314 pages, \$15.95 paperback, \$6.15 Kindle) by Ruth VanDyke and Yvonne Doll, ISBN13: 978-1938416842 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers. **Trailblazers** (268 pages, \$13.46 paperback, \$1.99 Kindle) by Yvonne Doll and Ruth VanDyke, ISBN13: 978-1457539114 is available from Amazon, and other book suppliers.





# "Looking For"

## Looking For

Hi Tom, my name is Norman E. Bruner. Gary Roush advised I should direct my question to you as he could not find the data I was looking for.

On Friday, November 13th, 1967 I was flying one of the two gunship escorts for the 227th AHB 1st Air Cavalry Division for a flight of six slicks of infantry to protect another downed chopper. We had engaged the target and were subsequently shot down which occurred at night and southwest of DaNang as I recall. This was my first experience observing "green" tracers and later learned this was the beginning of the major Tet offensive.

The purpose of my writing is to determine if you could help me recall my crew members, names and see if any are still alive. I can't explain why I've waited this long to explore this. I believe my co-pilots nick name was "Bones" and last name may have been Bradley.

If it would help, I could attempt to locate some old slides which I gave to one of my daughters which may identify the tail number of my "C" model gunship. If I can, you may want to have it for historical purposes as well, if I could get it back. Anyway, I will await your reply and thanks for any help you can provide in learning not only the identity of my crew but the crew who rescued us as well. Both crews received Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFCs) so it has to be documented somewhere. *Thank you. Ed Bruner*

**Tom:** I've got copies of the 2011-2016 issues of The VHPA Aviator and copies of the 1994-2008 Membership directories available to anybody who wants them and wants to pay the shipping costs. I'm trying to clear things out and downsize but don't want to put these items into recycle, so I'm offering them to anybody in the VHPA who wants them.

*Contact- Tom Putnam*

## Looking for downed Cobra crew:

On March 8, 1969 my crew chief and I responded to a Mayday from a cobra team that had one go down near Ben Soi which had been under heavy enemy control. We snatched them in the nick of time.

I flew out to Seattle for a reunion with Dave and we were just wondering if those two were still around but neither of us got their names.

At the time, we just wanted out of there. Both of us were short and would have preferred an 'fng' would have taken the mission but there wasn't enough time to find one who was looking for his first medal. I was in my last two weeks.

*Thanks,, Pat Dougan*

**Looking for anyone who flew UH-1H 66-00958 in Vietnam**, on behalf of Michael Sutton, MSgt USAF (Ret.), VVA Chapter 31 Muskegon, MI. This Huey is displayed in Muskegon with the title "Final Approach" in a Vietnam memorial.

Vietnam Memorial Final Approach, Muskegon MI - Muskegon, Michigan - Local Business | Facebook

By research MSgt Sutton has found it belonged to the Casper Platoon of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and served from December 1968 through December 1970. It has a Casper ghost nose art.

The VVA chapter wants to place a plaque with its Vietnam history and is looking for any pilot or aircrew member who flew it so they can honor both

the helicopter and aircrew.

If anyone has information that will help find a pilot who flew it, please contact MSgt Sutton at [REDACTED] If you prefer you can contact me at [REDACTED] and I'll relay any information.

**Rich Deer ~ Michigan Chapter**

## Dear Gary and Tom,

Thank you both for the leads which led to the tribunal proponents being very happy in knowing the full story of those involved with the downing of Taipan UH-1C, tail number 65-09522, 02 Feb 1969.

This breakthrough just leaves us with the search for my Crew Chief Spears and Air Crewman Francis. The left hand gun is very important as it is he who at 1,500 spotted and engaged the .50 Cal. He and Bob are the only two who witnessed the events on the ground until at we were close to the ground and I turned to run in finals. Even then, I only had very brief glimpses in concentrating on the ground ahead.

Inserted below your emails are the relevant emails from my earlier 2012 search with local 135th guys. It ended with hearsay that Spears had lost the plot and lost his way in Mexico. But that's a rumor and I only included this in case somebody else hears the same rumor.

My thinking is we again turn to Gary for a lead in seeing if the Goldbook Incident Record, can shed any light on Spears in the report on the low level, 300' catastrophic engine failure suffered by UH-1H tail number 66-16136, 08 Apr 1969. (One side of the side of the engine casing blew out and like a sausage machine it filled the engine compartment with small fragments of metal.) Maybe it was a mechanical failure or maybe it is another example of how the enemy had it in for Don Miller. PS: But Don survived Vietnam and it was great to spend two days with Don in Sydney, May 2016.

*Michael Perrot:* [REDACTED]

## "Looking for my" Guardian Angel"

Does anyone in the 1968/69 Rattler crew know this Angel? Contact Jim Adams, [REDACTED]

In February 1969 I was an FNG and the WO/AC let me fly for 10 min low level. We were crossing Bantangan peninsula flying out of the 71 AHC's AO for a large Marine operation (18,000 Marines) south of Chu Lai.

While I was in control of the Huey, flying pretty amateurishly, the turbine took several rounds. This 11-month short-timer WO took over controls (no power, low level autorotation), flipped freq to the emergency channel and made a "May Day" call while crash landing within 10-15 sec of being hit. Had he not flown like a genius, made that call to a sister AC that knew our location, we would have been overrun at the crash site. We hit hard enough the main rotor partially severed tail boom, skids curled up over doors and the (recoil belts didn't work) he and I were hanging out over the nose.

I think of this kid (now old man) in the middle of the night and think how I really never did thank him properly for saving my/our lives. I want to do that.

**James J Adams, 12/68-69**

**CPT, Plt Ldr, 1st Plt 71 AHC, Rattlers, Chu Lai, RVN**

**18133 South 1525 Road**

**PO Box 526**

**Nevada, MO 64772**

Cell [REDACTED]



## Photo placement corrections from the March/April Aviator

The obituary for CPT Harold Tanner was run with the picture of Henry Stoddard. LCDR Stoddard's notice was printed w/o his photo. Please note the correct images below. I apologize for the error. ~ T. Kirk



Harold Tanner



Henry Stoddard

**Bergmann, Walter M. USA MAJ (Ret.)**  
Flight Classes: 58-5/62-6Q, RVN: 66 174 AHC, 66-67 161 AHC, 69 138 ASA, 70 146 ASA, 70 144 ASA, Callsign White Whale.

This is to inform you of the death of MAJ Walter M. Bergmann, USA (Ret.) on February 4, 2017. Wally, known to his many friends as "The Great White Whale" deployed with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company in 1966 as a "Dolphin" in the 1st Platoon and subsequently flew as a "Pelican" Section Commander with the 2nd Platoon of the 161st Assault Helicopter Company out of Lane Army Airfield. He is interred at Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL. He was a great guy, and super teacher for a new aviator like me who arrived in country straight out of RWQC with 30 hours of H-13E&G time. Born, Howard "Flash"

**Bliven, David M. USA MAJ (Ret.)** Flight Class: 62-8, RVN: 114 AVN (year unk).



David Merritt Bliven, 78, of Goffstown, passed away peacefully on March 5, 2017, at Catholic Medical Center in Manchester NH. David was born in Worcester, MA, on May 5, 1938, son of the late David P and Hazel (Merritt) Bliven. At an early age, David and his family relocated to Manchester where he attended local schools.

He graduated in 1961 from the University of New Hampshire, having earned the rank of Lieutenant in the ROTC program. He served his country piloting armed helicopters with the 114th Aviation Company "Knights of the Air" in the early years of the Vietnam War. He earned many citations, including the Purple Heart, and attained the rank of Major before

injuries caused him to retire in 1970. He umpired youth baseball and was a firearms instructor with the New Hampshire Hunter Safety Division for several years. He also enjoyed hunting and gunsmithing and over the years maintained a remarkable flower and vegetable garden.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Joan (Prindiville) Bliven in 1972. David is survived by his wife, Laura (Trask) Bliven; one son, and a grandson. Other family members include four step-children and several step-grandchildren.

Heartfelt thanks to Dr. Donald Bernard and the entire staff at the Manchester VA Hospital, to his many friends at the Vet Center in Hooksett for their comradeship and encouragement, and to Hackett Hill Healthcare Center and Catholic Medical Center for the excellent care provided to David over the last several months.

Burial: with Military Honors at the New Hampshire Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen.

**Booth, Benny L. USA LTC (Ret.)** Flight Class: 58-6, RVN: 65 116 AVN, 66 116 AHC, 66 11 AVN BN, 68-69 USAAMMC.



Ben was born and raised in Camp Point, IL the second son and fifth child of 13 children born to William N and Gladys E (Davis) Booth. He attended school and graduated from Maplewood School. After graduation Ben began attending classes at the University of Illinois. At the onset of the Korean war, he enlisted in the U S Army along with his brothers Bill and Chris and began his distinguished military career. During his early years of enlistment and after returning from Korea, Ben resumed attending college and graduated with a bachelor's degree from Auburn University and soon after was commissioned as Second Lieutenant. Continuing his education, he later earned a master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Southern California. Ben rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel prior to his retirement after 26 years of military service to his country. In addition to his tour of duty in Korea, he also served two tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. While serving his country in the Army, Ben received the following decorations and awards: Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Air Medal, National Defense

Service Medal, Army Occupation Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Meritorious Unit Citation and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Unit Citation.

After his career in the military, Ben became involved in real estate by developing properties, building homes, buying and selling properties, eventually joining Century 21 Realtors in Fort Bragg on the northern coast of California for almost 30 years.

Ben was preceded in death by his parents, his first wife Annette; two older brothers and three older sisters. Ben is survived by his wife Barbara; a granddaughter, a step-grandson, a step-granddaughter, a step-great granddaughter. Also surviving are his three younger brothers and three younger sisters. Ben was very proud of his Booth family history and was very active and involved along with his cousin Jeanette Pierce in acquiring and maintaining ancestry and family heritage information.

Per his request, cremation services were performed but no funeral service was conducted in California. His ashes were returned to Illinois, and a graveside service with Military Honors was celebrated by family and friends for Ben at Hebron Cemetery in Rural Camp Point, IL on March 4, 2017.

**Cesar, John J. USA Flight**  
Classes: 71-24/71-22, RVN: 71-72 48 AHC, Callsign: Blue Star 21.



Cesar, John "Jack" of Absecon, NJ went to be with the Lord on March 23, 2016. Jack was predeceased by his father Charles, his mother Ruth, and his brother Chris. Born in Oceanport, NJ Jack spent most of his life in NJ. Jack was always a "volunteer" at heart. He started his career by obtaining the status of Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts. He was a member of the American Legion Post 28, the VFW and the DAV. In addition, he was a tour guide at the New Jersey Vietnam Memorial in Holmdel, NJ. Jack was also instrumental in the start of the Veterans Day program in the Absecon school.

Jack graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in civil engineering and forest engineering. He was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and continued his flying career by working for the FAA as a flight inspection pilot.

Jack was married to his wife Joyce for forty years. They have one son John and several nieces and nephews as well as great nieces and nephews.



Burial will take place at Arlington Cemetery, Washington D C at a future date.

Suggested Memorials: the New Jersey Vietnam Memorial Holmdel, NJ.

**Cole, Kenneth J. USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-14, RVN: 69-70 A/1 AVN 1 INF, 70 HHC/11 CAB, Callsigns: Bulldog 34/Red Dog 3A.**

Kenneth J. Cole was born in Atlanta, GA to Kenneth Yager Cole and Eunice Sanders Cole. His early years were spent in Atlanta and Washington, DC. After graduation from Lee High School in Springfield, VA, he attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX on a scholarship with the famous 99 Guys and A Doll marching band. In 1967, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Infantry and was selected for Officer Candidate School. Upon graduation from Infantry OCS in March 1968, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. Two days after commissioning, he married his OCS sweetheart, Joan Smith.

The new couple began their life adventure by heading to Ft. Wolters, TX for Army Rotary Wing Flight Training. Cole deployed to Vietnam from July 1969-July 1970, flying 987 combat flight hours in the venerable UH-1 Huey. During a year of combat action in Vietnam, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Air Medal with numeral 26, and the Army Commendation Medal. Flying U.S. Army helicopters as an aircraft commander and instructor pilot, Cole completed his Army career (active duty and reserve) with more than 3,000 hours, earning the Army's highest aeronautical designation, Master Army Aviator and promotion to Major.

Cole began corporate life working for Boise Cascade in St. Louis, MO. With rapid promotions, he took his family to Kansas City, New York City, and Chicago, where he worked for Continental Can as a Regional Sales Manager. In Chicago, he founded his own business, PRI Group and The Recruiting and Search Report. He was accepted into the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business Executive MBA program, graduating in 1983. His published works include *The Headhunter Strategy* (John Wiley & Sons), *The Executive Search Research Directory*, and *The Euro Directory*.

Cole's articles on executive search, search research, and related subjects have appeared in more than twenty-six national publications. As an Executive Recruiter, he consulted for

diverse corporations such as Sirius XM, Lucent Technologies, Perrigo, United Copper, and others. He completed both U.S. and international assignments for senior executives around the world, including Japan, Singapore, Spain, and Germany. In 1984, Cole moved his family and business from the Windy City to their dream home (his childhood vacation destination) in Panama City Beach. Continuing his work as a publisher and consultant, he served as the official job hunting advisor to The Flag & General Officers Network (TFGON). As a speaker and senior executive job hunting coach & strategist, he accepted invitations to speak at graduate schools around the country, including Kellogg, Stanford, Columbia, University of Florida, and his alma mater, the University of Chicago. Throughout his career, he assisted thousands of senior executives, managers, and professionals in finding new positions through individual job campaigns, published resources, and seminars. He continued work until a few weeks prior to his passing.

Cole was an energetic, active member and leader at the Woodlawn United Methodist Church, where he freely dispensed smiles and encouragement to all he met. He loved to read to his grandchildren, canoe the Suwanee River, hike the Appalachian Trail, study the great works, exchange war stories with his sons and friends on the family's back deck (including fine cigars and libations), and enjoy every day of love and life with his wife.

Cole is survived by his wife of 48 years, Joan Smith Cole; his brother, his two sons and six grandchildren. Rest in peace, beloved husband, strong father, adoring grandfather, and friend of Jesus. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be sent.

Suggested memorials: Woodlawn United Methodist Church for a new Educational Wing.

**Cornell, Delbert N. USA Flight Class: 69-3, RVN: 69-70 189 AHC.**

Delbert "Del" N. Cornell, 68, of Newington, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, February 10, 2017 at his home. He was the beloved husband of Eileen Bloch. Born in Norwich, son of the late Levi B. Cornell, Jr. and Pauline L. (St. Martin) Cornell, he was a longtime Newington resident. Along with his parents he was predeceased by brother, Craig B. Cor-

nell of Mansfield. He is survived by four brothers.

Del served his country honorably in the US Army as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War and then the Army Reserves. He was employed by the Dept. of Motor Vehicles for 28 years until his retirement as Division Chief. We are proud of the restoration he did of his Dad's original 1959 State Police cruiser which he subsequently donated to the Connecticut State Police Museum. His most enjoyable project was restoring a 1931 Model A Ford as a father/son project during the 1990's.

Burial: with Military Honors, West Meadow Cemetery, Newington CT.

**Dent, Larry E USA Flight Class: 71-14, Callsign: Delta XXX.**



Larry Eugene Dent, 75, of Spartanburg, SC, died Friday, February 17, 2017. Born October 20, 1941 in Spartanburg, son of late Henry Eugene Dent and Lottie Wanida Cogdill Dent; husband of Florence Elizabeth Dent. He was a graduate of Wofford College, and a talented musician and photographer. As a Major in the US Army, he proudly served his country as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. After leaving the Army, he became an air traffic controller for the FAA from which he later retired.

Larry was a Mason, a member of Anderson Mill Baptist Church, a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Florence; a son, and three grandchildren.

Suggested memorials: Spartanburg Regional Hospice Home, 686 Jeff Davis Drive, Spartanburg, SC 29303.

**Doane, Edward R. USMC MAJ (Ret.) Flight Class: 65-66, RVN: 65-66 HMM-364, Callsign: White Gold.**



Edward R. Doane, 81, passed away at his home in Newcastle, CA on February 19, 2017. He was preceded in death by his mother Edna McCullough, father Robert Doane, step father Herbert McCullough, and younger brother, James Doane. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Linda (Heeger) Doane; three children, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Ed was born in Alameda, CA but raised in Auburn, CA. He graduated from Placer High School, Sierra College and received his BA degree from California State



University, Sacramento. After graduating college, Ed joined the Marine Corps and went to flight school where he flew the F4-B Phantom Jet with the VMF-542nd squadron. He served a tour in Vietnam, flying combat and Medevac missions in the UH-1 Huey helicopter with the Purple Fox squadron. Ed used to joke he had the privilege to fly just about every aircraft in use in the Marine Corps and hoped they would bring back the blimp so he could try that. Ed's favorite aircraft was the KC-130J Hercules where he logged over 10,000 flight hours. He retired as a Major from the Marine Corps after a 20-year career earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, 18 Air Medals, Navy Achievement Award, Republic of Viet Nam Cross of Gallantry and the Gold Star. Ed turned his love of the C-130 aircraft into a second career flying for Southern Air and Transamerica Airlines. While Ed wasn't flying, he assisted his parents with taking care of their ranch where he developed a love for farming and raising cows. He enjoyed teaching his grandchildren how to drive the tractor and golf cart, lay irrigation pipes, and bring in the hay. Ed also loved working on cars and building furniture, was active in his church and loved helping people. His cheerfulness, contagious smile and ridiculous sense of humor will be missed.

**Evans, Scott A. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Classes: 70-15/70-13, RVN: 70-71 A/3/17 CAV, Callsign: Silver Spur 17.**

At age 67, Scott Evans of Superstition Mountain, AZ, born in Pittsburgh, PA, peacefully passed away on May 1, 2014. He was a graduate of John Carroll University. Scott served on active duty in Vietnam and another 18 years with the National Guard and Army Reserves. He worked for 3M for 35 years finishing his career as director of sales. After retirement, he volunteered at the VA hospital in Mesa, AZ. He loved his wife, family, country, golf, Harley, old cars, traveling and the Pittsburgh Steelers. He is survived by his beloved wife of 41 years, Terri Evans; a daughter, a son, his mother, Geraldine Evans, a brother, and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his father, Walter Evans. His fun-loving way of life, wisdom and humor will be dearly missed and cherished.

Suggested memorials: American Cancer society, or Wounded Warrior Project.

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery.

**Faseler, Marion C. USAF LTC (Ret.) Flight Class: 52-G, RVN: 68-69 38 ARRS, Callsign: Pedro.**

M.C. "Pacer" Faseler was born in Yancey, TX on February 10, 1931 to Louis Frank and Bertha Christina (Spellman) Faseler. He passed at the age of 85 on October 22, 2016 in Norman, OK. Pacer was born 11th of 12 children into a farming family which made its living from the land. His boyhood experience on the farm kindled his life-long passions for agriculture and machinery, interests which guided his career choices through life. He was descended from members of the Plymouth Colony, and was separated by only a few generations from ancestors who fought in pivotal battles in the War for Texas Independence.

After attending Southwest Texas State College on a football scholarship, he joined the US Air Force, eventually piloting B-47s, flying helicopters, & working with Titan-II ICBMs. He flew helicopter rescue missions in Thailand during the Vietnam war and served as a helicopter flight instructor after returning from Southeast Asia. Pacer accumulated numerous meritorious citations and recognitions and was a graduate of the Air Command & Staff College.

Shortly after joining the Air Force, Pacer met the love of his life, Carolyn June Cornwell. The couple was married on September 9, 1956 in Salina, KS. They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary just over a month before his passing. The couple had four daughters. Pacer was a proud, loving and devoted father and grandfather, relishing time spent with his children and grandchildren. After retiring from the Air Force in 1980 Pacer began a second career as a water district manager in Texas' Rio Grande Valley. Following his 12 years in the Valley and with their four daughters grown, Pacer and Carolyn moved to retire in Norman, OK where they had lived for a few years while stationed at Tinker AFB in the early 80s.

A reunion meeting with a former Air Force friend, A. A. "Bud" Vance, soon after arriving in Norman led to a third career in the development of road-building equipment and the administration of Broce Construction and Broce Manufacturing Companies.

Pacer was a true lifelong learner with kaleidoscopic interests. He loved growing vegetables & flowers and experimenting with horticultural techniques. He loved hunting, fishing, guns and shooting. He loved history, poli-

tics, economics & traveling. He loved drama, music & literature. He was a sailor, a master wood worker, and a jewelry maker. He was an excellent cook and baker. Voracious does not sufficiently describe his reading appetite. He furthered his educational exploration through the University of Oklahoma's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), and completed over 200 OLLI classes. Pacer's interest in agriculture followed him through his whole life. At each military post where the family was stationed he kept a garden. He was tending his tomato plants the day before his death. Pacer will forever be remembered by his friends and family for his good nature, his competitiveness, and his sense of humor.

Pacer is survived by his wife Carolyn; four daughters, two sisters, and six grandchildren. Pacer was preceded in death by his parents and nine of his eleven siblings.

Suggested memorials: The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the OU Foundation.

Burial: Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX.

**Green, Lorane USA MAJ (Ret.) Flight Classes: 66-15, 66-13, RVN: 66-67118 AHC, 70 355 AVN, 70-71 134 AHC. MAJ (Ret) Green died on October 27, 2016 (no obituary provided).**

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery

**Higgins, Gary S. USA Flight Class 67-16, RVN: 67-69 361 AVN, Callsigns: Panther 12/Panther 16/Panther 3.**

Gary Stuart Higgins, 71 passed away with his family by his side on Saturday, February 4, following a brief illness at Baptist Medical Center. Gary was born in Monroe, LA to the late Jean and George W. Higgins, Jr. He earned a BS in Management from Embry-Riddle University in Daytona Beach and later achieved his MBA from Stetson University in Deland, FL. Gary proudly served his country in the US Army 361st AEC Operational Control in support of 5th Special Forces SOG in Vietnam.

After serving five years in the US Army as an infantry officer, pilot, and combat aviation commander in Vietnam, he was promoted and assigned to the Commanding General's staff as Chief of Plans, Development, and Training for a major military installation. He made Jacksonville his home in 1974 and took





advantage of the many wonderful opportunities it brought as well as enjoying the St. Johns River for recreation. He served as Chief of the Division of Planning & Research for Sheriff Dale Carson and Jim McMillan for 20 years, and retired from Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. He continued his passion for leadership training as past Vice-Chair and Chairman of the Duval County Juvenile Justice Council and the Fourth District Board serving a five-county metropolitan area of over one million citizens. As founder and Chairman of the Florida Serious Habitual Offender Secure Care Unit. His concern for the health and future of children and youth in the community through intervention and prevention was reflected in his work as a Board member of the Human Services Council, Drug Alcohol Treatment, Full Service Schools, and the Children's Commission. Gary was a true family man and cherished every moment he could with them. He loved boating, especially with friends from the Marina at Ortega Landing. He also enjoyed the camaraderie of the Jaguar Car Club of North Florida and the honor of being a part of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Gary is survived by his wife of 31 years, Debra; two sons, two brothers and three grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made in Gary's name to the United Services Organization (USO).

Burial: Jacksonville National Cemetery.

**Kendrick, John C. USA Flight Class: 71-7, RVN: 71-72 187 AHC.**

John Kendrick died in Tripp City, OH, at the age of 66 on March 10, 2017.

Suggested memorial: American Cancer Society

**Masica, John M. USN CDR (Ret.), RVN: 71-72 HA(L)-3, Callsign: Seawolf 78.**

John Michael Masica passed away unexpectedly on November 9th, 2016. Born June 29th, 1946, in Trinidad, CO, Mike was a true Navy brat, attending 17 different schools from Yokosuka, Japan, to Newport, RI, up through high school. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1969 and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1970 after completing initial flight training in Pensacola, FL.



As a skilled helicopter pilot, he served in a variety of combat, support, and training units flying the UH-1 Huey, CH-46 Sea Knight, and TH-57 Jet Ranger helicopters. His operational tours of duty included a combat deployment to Vietnam with HAL-3, multiple shipboard deployments spanning the Western Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and Mediterranean Sea with HC-3 and HC-6, and embarked support for United States Marines in Lebanon as the Assistant Air Officer aboard USS Inchon (LPH-12). Additional tours of duty included serving as a helicopter instructor pilot with HT-8, attending the Naval Postgraduate School as both a student and later as a staff member, and serving as Computer Systems Director at the Fleet Numerical Oceanography Center.

Falling in love with the Monterey peninsula while attending the Naval Postgraduate School, Mike returned to Monterey to complete his 20-year Naval career. After his retirement from active duty, Mike continued his service to the nation and Department of Defense with a 20-year career as a senior government civilian with the Defense Manpower Data Center in Monterey, CA, where he led efforts to develop and deploy innovative technology solutions such as the Defense Biometric Identification System (DBIDS) to improve personnel screening and strengthen access control to better protect DoD installations. In support of this effort, he traveled to Korea, Japan, and Iraq to ensure this system met the needs of America's deployed warfighters.

Mike enjoyed a variety of outdoor pursuits both natural and man-made. A skilled golfer, he greatly enjoyed the challenges found among the storied golf links of Pebble Beach and Carmel Valley. An experienced hiker and backpacker, he opened up the wonder of Big Sur, Yosemite, and the Sierra Nevada mountains to both his family and friends.

Mike was immensely proud of his family and he is survived by his wife of 40 years, Denise Masica; his father, CPT Gene Masica, USN (Ret.); his sister, his daughter, his son CPT Mike Masica, USN, and six grandchildren.

Over a long and distinguished 40-year career with the Navy and Department of Defense, Mike never wavered in his duty to the nation he loved so much and he leaves a lasting legacy of honorable service, dedication, and selfless sacrifice. He will be long

remembered for his keen wit and sense of humor and for the profoundly positive impact he had on those who had the honor of knowing and loving him.

**Mathews, Charles H. USA unk (Ret.) Flight Classes: 65-9W/65-9, RVN: 67 196 ASHC, 67-68 179 ASHC, 69-70 147 ASHC.**

Charles Mathews died on February 1, 2017 (no obituary provided).

**McElroy, James L. USA Flight Class: 58-8, RVN: 65-66 UTT, Callsign: Raider 26.**

James "Jim" McElroy was born June 20, 1930, and died at the age of 86 at 5:45 a.m. Thursday, March 16, 2017, at a Dallas medical facility.

Jim was a veteran of the Vietnam War. He earned several medals, including the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and the Dragon is Forever for over 500 combat hours, 650 combat missions, outstanding performance of duty, dedication and bravery, discipline and patriotism. He is survived by his former wife, Behjat McElroy of Dallas; four children, and nine grandchildren/great-grandchildren.

Burial: National Cemetery, 2000 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, TX.

**O'Brien, Thomas D. Flight Classes: 69-29/69-31, RVN: 70-71 B/2/17 CAV 101 ABN, Callsign: Banshee 25.**

Thomas O'Brien died on February 15, 2017 (no obituary provided).

**Opdahl, Terry G. USA CW4 (Ret.) Flight Classes: 68-509/68-13, RVN: 68-69 189 AHC, 68-69 52 CAB, Callsign: Avenger 7.**



Terry Glenn Opdahl, age 70, entered into rest on March 16, 2017 at his home in Redondo Beach, CA, due to heart failure. He was born in Chicago, IL, on November 15, 1946 to Leonard and Lenore (Clancy). At a very young age they moved to Southern California where he lived all but four years when he served in the U.S. Army.

Terry joined the service in 1968 and served his country admirably during the Vietnam War. He received an honorable discharge in 1971. His bravery flying helicopters earned him numerous medals, including three Air Medals for Valor, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and the Distinguished Flying



Cross. After his service in Vietnam, Terry had a very rewarding and successful career as an executive with State Farm Insurance for 35 years. He also continued to fly helicopters for the National Guard for 26 years, earning the rank of CW4.

Terry's family and friends remember him for his integrity, intellect and goodness, sense of humor, generosity, and genuine friendship. He traveled extensively with his wife Judith; they sailed in the British Virgin Islands for 15 years. He spent many years fishing with close buddies, and loved to talk helicopters and cars and tell jokes.

He is survived by his wife Judith; five children two grandchildren, a sister and brother. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Memorial donations in Terry's memory can be made to the Cancer Support Community Redondo Beach, 109 W. Torrance Blvd, Ste. 100, Redondo Beach, CA 90277, also honoring his wife, Judith, who is a 27-year cancer survivor.

Burial: With Military Honors in Green Hills Memorial Park.

**Phillips, Daniel P USA Flight Class: 71-43, RVN: 72-73 57 MED DET, Call-sign: Dustoff.**

It is with regret I inform you my father, Daniel Philipps passed away on August 13, 2014. I am sure you can imagine we have had a lot of people to notify over the last two years. It was an oversight that we had not notified your association. I am sorry for that. Receiving his new life member card today was a pleasant reminder of my father, but also a reminder that I must notify you he is no longer with us. He died of lung cancer. He was diagnosed on June 13, 2014 and passed away on August 13, 2014. Two friends he toured with in Vietnam also died of similar causes within a year of him. Thank you for providing a place he could feel as though he belonged and try to remember his tour in Vietnam in a more positive way. When he was ill he often would talk about Vietnam. When he wasn't lucid it was as though he thought he was still in Vietnam. He would look around the room and talk to men he knew then who had died. I am aware Vietnam was a traumatic time for many of its pilots. I thank you for your service both then and now.

**Raab, Robert H. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Classes: 64-1/66-3, Callsigns:**

**Merkin 5/ Big Windy 6.**

Robert Raab, 80, Smiths Station, AL, died Friday, November 25, 2016-no obituary details provided.

Burial: with full Military Honors conducted at Fort Mitchell National Cemetery.

**Rhoades, James M. USA Flight Class: 67-21.**

James Manning Rhoades, 83, of Marshall passed away, Friday, March 17, 2017 at his home. James was born June 18, 1933 in Wakeeney, KS to James Manning and Leila Lucinda Isenberg Rhoades. James made his career in the Armed Forces, first serving in the Air Force and then in the Army attaining the rank of Chief Warrant Officer, W2. During his 21 years of honorable service, he served two tours in the Korean War, two tours in the Vietnam War, was a helicopter pilot, a mechanic, and a military police officer. He was a member of several pilot associations including AOPA and VHPA. James was a man of many, many talents. He could sing, play guitar, yodel and play the harmonica. He also played miniature golf and pool and could beat you at both every single time! James greatest love was that of Jesus and he would witness to people as often as he could. He was a faithful member of Family Life Outreach Center. He was well loved and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. James is preceded in death by his parents; siblings, Gwen Lee Denning, Lois Jean Norton and Michael Edward Rhoades; and the mothers of his children, Jeannine Rhoades Varner and Dianne Hamer Rhoades. James is also survived by his three daughters, two sons, 16 grandchildren, 27 great grandchildren and a sister.

Burial Golden Cemetery in Golden, CO.

**Robertson, Charles D. USA Flight Class: 57-12, RVN: 61-63 USARYIS, 64-65 121 AHC, Callsign: Viking23/Wrecker 2.**

Charles Robertson died on February 17, 2015 - no obituary was provided.



**Santillo, Frank A. USMC 1963/USA 1968 Flight Class: 69-13, RVN: 69-70 158 AVN 101 ABN, Call-sign: VINO.**



Skip Santillo, 73, passed away Monday, February 6, 2017 in Arlington, TX. Skip was born to Frank and Elsie Santillo on October 28, 1943 in Lambertville, NJ.

After graduating college, Skip entered the United States Marine Corp in February of 1963. In August 1968, he entered the United States Army for his second tour of duty. During his time in service of his country he was awarded the National Defense Services Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 device, Army Aviator Badge, Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Army Commendation Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and 18 Air Medals.

Upon leaving the military he settled in Texas where he always knew he was meant to be. After settling in Texas, Skip continued to fly with PHI until starting his own successful company in 1980, which he continued to run until his passing. Skip's love of animals led him to rescue several greyhounds and spoil them rotten. He enjoyed spending time at the gun range, off-roading in the Hummers and long fast drives in the Corvettes to relax. Skip was a very loving and caring man who was passionate about his opinions and would do anything to help the people he loved.

Skip is survived by his loving wife Karen Santillo, of Arlington, TX; two daughters, two grandchildren-in law, two great-grandchildren, and his brother.

He was truly loved by many and will be deeply missed by all.

**Santo, Roger R. USA CW2 (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-27, RVN: 70-71 334 AWC, 71 B/229 AVN, Callsign: Gunrunner.**

Roger Raymond Santo passed away March 27, 2017 at 10:24 pm in Rochester, WA. He was born April 19, 1939 to Bernard and Alyce Santo, in Browns Valley, MN.

Roger was in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1975, retiring from Fort Lewis, WA where he served the last 4 years as a Dustoff Helicopter Pilot.

He attended South Puget Sound Community College, 2 years earning Associate in Civil Engineering Technology. He worked for WSDOT. Olympic Region, Materials Lab for



22.5 years.

He is survived by his wife Sherry Santo of Rochester, a sister, two sons, four grandsons, 4 step children, and numerous great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his sister Judith, and parents Bernard and Alyce Santo.

**Sasin, Bill R. USA LTC (Ret.)**  
**Flight Classes: 68-30/68-18,**  
**RVN: 69-70 4/77 ARA 101**  
**ABN, Callsign: Dragon 33.**



Bill "Billie" Ray Sasin, 73, fought a long and courageous battle with brain cancer. He peacefully entered his heavenly home early Wednesday morning, February 22, 2017. Bill was born May 12, 1943, in Roscoe, TX, to Adolf John Sasin and Francis Krista. He was awarded the Bronze Star along with many more medals and hon-

ors. Bill was a member of the 101st Airborne Division Assn. He was awarded The Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroism while flying a Cobra helicopter during an aerial battle in the Vietnam War. On one of his missions, he was shot down which forced him to retire as a Lieutenant Colonel after 25 years of service. Later in life, he met the love of his life and married Diane Marie Sasin. Together they enjoyed going to the movies and watching the Cowboys play at the AT&T Stadium. Bill was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He will be missed by everyone, more than words will ever be able to express. He was preceded in death by his father and mother, Adolf and Francis Sasin; brother and sister-in-law, George and Carol Sasin. He is survived by his beloved wife, Diane Marie Sasin; one son, one daughter, two grandchildren, a

twin brother, and one sister.

Burial: with Military Honors, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery.

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

Roger James Shields, age 85, of Nixa, passed away January 17, 2017. He was born in Newton, MA, the son of William and Helen Shields.

His wife Carolyn (Pesick) Shields survives him. A full obituary will be posted at a later date. A graveside memorial service will be announced in April, at Missouri Veterans Cemetery, Springfield, MO.

*Note: The Aviator may or not be provided with any future information, ED*

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.

**Brown, Robert E. USMC MAJ (Ret.),** died on October 17, 2016 (no other data).

**Byram, George D. USA Flight Class: 68-1/67-25,** died on February 20, 2017 (no other data).

**Cole, Gene W. USA COL (Ret.) Flight Class: 69-24,** died on February 2017 (no other data).

**Gonzales Leonard A. USAF LTC (Ret.),** died on 13 March 2017 (no other data).

**Greenlee, Thomas P. USN RVN: HC-1 Det 25, HA (L)-3 Det 3,** died on March 9, 2017.

**Harris, Frank E. USAF LTC,** died on February 22, 2017 (no other data).

**Holifield, Richard N. USA Flight Class: 67-24, RVN: 68-69 71 AHC,** died on February 10, 2017.

**Hopkins, Allan W. USAF MAJ (Ret.),** died on June 19, 2016 (no other data).

**Jones, David E. USA Flight Classes: 67-503/67-23, RVN: 68-69 A/227/AHB/1 CAV,** died on January 27, 2017.

**Lepko, John V. USAF MAJ (Ret.),** died on February 14, 2017 (no other data).

**Lovretich, Robert J. USAF COL (Ret.),** died on March 3, (no other data).

**Lyell, William A. USAF COL (Ret.),** died on May 4, 2016 (no other data).

**Marshall, Walter D. USA COL (Ret.), RVN: 67-68 192 AHC, 129 AHC,** died on February 13, 2017.

**Massengill, James R USA LTC (Ret.),** died on February 22, 2017 (no other data).

**Miller, Thomas J. USA Flight Class: 69-24, RVN: 69-70 174 AHC,** died on March 3, 2017.

**Mullenix, David E. USAF MAJ (Ret.), RVN: 71-72 37 ARRS,** died on February 21, 2017 (no other data).

**Rose, Dale W. USA (Ret. Rank unk), Flight Class: 65-13W/65-11,** died on March 1, 2017.

**Sanders, Burnett R. USA COL (Ret.),** died on December 9, 2016 (no other data).

*NOTE: Col Sanders first and last names were transposed in the March/April issue. Ed.*

**Sims Billy G. USA LTC (Ret.),** died on March 4, 2017 (no other data).

**VanMeter, Donald E. USAF COL (Ret.), Flight Class: 62-A, RVN: 38 ARRS DET 10, Callsign: Pedro,** died on March 1, 2017.

**Washburn, Beecher N. Jr. USA Flight Class: 69-2,** died on February 3, 2017 (no other data).

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

**Wilson, Gene USA COL (Ret.) Flight class 59-12, RVN: 66-67 220 AVN CO, 69-70 HQ 2/20th ARA,** died on December 8, 2016.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

*Brian and Marilyn Paine*

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