



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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THE VHPA AVIATOR, THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION (ISSN 1930-5737) (USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly ~ January, March, May, July, September & November. The VHPA is organized as a 501 (c) (19) fraternal military organization and one copy of each newsletter is included in each of our Member's Dues, yearly subscriptions to the Aviator are available to non-members for \$36.00. Published by Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA), headquartered at 2100 N. Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Round Rock, Texas and additional mailing points. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to VHPA HQ, 2100 N. Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050

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# From the President of the VHPA

~ MIKE SHEUERMAN ~



There is a lot of talk going around about the Ken Burns' series concerning the Vietnam War. Most of the people involved, especially those who served in it, aren't too thrilled with what it contains. My exposure was limited to maybe 1.5 hours of viewing, and I really don't have much interest in seeing the rest. It's the creator's opinion as he understands what caused the conflict and what happened during it. Based on what I understand and experienced I'd agree with some of his conclusions and really disagree with others. But again, I haven't watched very much of it. Here's my suggestion to all of us - tell YOUR STORY, sign up for WITNESS TO WAR at the next Reunion in Atlanta and tell your story. Contact Texas Tech or the Smithsonian or any group recording oral histories of the individual's involvement in Vietnam. Write an article for the Aviator. Tell your story. I've done it two or three times.

On a more important subject - a friend from my unit in Vietnam is dying. He has COPD, requiring a liter of oxygen every 15 minutes. He really wants to attend the dedi-

cation of our Memorial Monument at Arlington National Cemetery, he really wants to make the Atlanta Reunion and see his lovely wife of 50 plus years fly in the front seat of a AH-1G he actually flew in Vietnam. He wants these things and he has earned the right to see both these things happen. But, like the young Cobra pilot in Vietnam, he knows he probably won't get to see these things happen. He's still the very practical individual he was in Vietnam, he still has the razor-sharp mind he had years ago, he still remembers what the missions were like, who he flew with and what he contributed to our Country.

I plan to go see him soon, hope I'm not too late. But, if I don't make it, no matter what happens I promise him his wife will be Arlington National Cemetery, April 18, 2018, to see the dedication and be in Atlanta in July 2018, to get her ride in 67-15295. I really hope he makes it.

*Thanks,*

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

## FROM THE VHPA STAFF AT HQ!

SOMETHING NEW! - Life members can now order life member polo shirts via HQ. More details can be found in this issue. The order form is available at [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org).

HQ is now taking orders for the 2018 directories for the price of \$15 for the paper and \$10 for the CD copies to be delivered in October 2018.

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 REMAINING 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**

## HUEY 66-15005

We know the sound of a Huey can bring tears to the eyes of some veterans. Often, veterans of all wars go silent on returning home, holding in the sights, sounds and smells of the battle. Often, the battle rages on within.

How silent now is the Huey? How lost is the sound of those blades beating the air to submission? How silent is the sound of the crew working tirelessly in the coordinated dance of control in the confusion and chaos of a firefight? How lost is the smell of cordite and blood, the screams of the wounded, the loss of those already gone?

The Huey is now silent. Holes are patched, the paint may be faded and the museum crowds hurry by on their way to the next exhibit. Some stop. Those who can still hear, smell, and in their mind's eye see the battle, stop. They see their own personal story. They remember, if only for a moment, a moment in time so long ago. They know.

UH-1M 66-15005 is now an artifact in the Patriots Point Vietnam Naval Support Base exhibit in Mt. Pleasant SC adjacent to the venerable carrier USS Yorktown and destroyer USS Laffey. The Huey sat in silence until someone researched the tail number and combat history of the ship.

The battle was October 1, 1968 in the Hobo Woods near Cu Chi and the Cambodian border. Huey 005 was with the 116th Assault Helicopter Company gunship platoon called the Stingers. Kenneth Plavcan was the gunner and was within a month of completing his extended tour of duty when he volunteered for the mission. He was seasoned. He was someone a pilot could trust with firing an M60 four feet from his head. Someone capable of putting the first round on target while flying by at 80 knots.

The 25th Infantry Division was on a sweep when Kenny spotted a sniper in a spider hole where the troops were headed. An ambush. Without action, many would die. It's an odd thing - killing to save.

In a letter to his sister he wrote: "I don't want to die, but only God knows when our time on earth is done." And later: "I just want you to know I am very proud to be serving in Vietnam as a protector of our nation." In this sense "nation" equates to those soldiers walking into an ambush.

Radio chatter prevented a warning. The pilot circled to allow Kenny to engage. To put rounds on the target he leaned out to fire under the ship. That's when 005 took fire. Kenny was hit. The short flight to the 25th Medevac pad was not short



enough. Kenny entered the KIA honor guard and joined his brothers on the wall. There is little doubt that men from the 25th were saved.

Huey 005 continued to serve a total of three years and hit five more times until she too went silent. Her stories are locked inside doors that were never shut in combat when the stories were made. How many Hueys had stories to tell? We know only a few. Those crews who flew, and those on the ground who heard that sound, know those stories. Many oddly cherish those memories, and at the same time wish they would go away.

A letter was sent to Kenny's family in Ohio. Over forty years had passed and his family was sure the world had forgotten. They had not forgotten. No family forgets. Their lives were changed...forever. The family came to Patriots Point. Speeches were spoken. Honors were made. Color guard, wreath, and dedication. In an instant, it was over.

This Huey is now different. This Huey will now memorialize this crewman, but also all those crews who gave their lives in Vietnam. As dangerous as the missions were, they saved lives. Many veterans today will testify to that.

And now, the rest of the story.

The memorial service put pressure on the museum's maintenance crew to repaint the ship and add the US Army logo and the unit symbol of the Stinger group. Overtime would be required to make the date. Joe Campbell called his wife to let her know they would have to skip bible study that night so he could finish that part of the work. Joe has been a long-time member and past elder of the Mother Emanuel AME Church. The night he worked on Huey 005 was the night nine church members were killed. They lost friends, but not their lives. Had it not been for 005, their lives too might have been taken. Huey 005 may have saved two more.

Little is known, and so little is shared. The memories that lay dormant for so long need to be released, need to be shared. It is a healing process we are only now beginning to understand.

At Patriots Point, they are all about bringing out the story.

Chauncey Clark

# From the Managing Editor

VHPA Life Member John Penny has opted to discontinue providing book reviews. Prior to his announcement, John secured the services of his replacement, Marc Liebman. Marc, a career Naval Aviator, is a well-known author with five novels in print. Book reviews from people who served... about that service (and other military topics) are a great aid in selecting from the many (and growing) number of works available.

On behalf of the Aviator staff, the Executive Council,



Chairmen and our membership we thank John for his time, expertise, perspective, efforts and for a job well done. Incidentally, as a reviewer, John has received hundreds of books. When he has finished his review, the book is given to the Texas Tech Archive.

In the September/October issue we ran an obituary for retired LTG James E. Thompson. I made an error on the middle initial and provided the military information for Life Member James A. Thompson. The General was a potential member and the only information we have for him is the Vietnam Units; which are: 67-68 128 AHC, 68 162 AHC. If you recognized James A. Thompson as a classmate or served with him, be assured he is just fine.

Our cover story is, neither typical, nor unique for the Aviator. Routinely, however, we focus on stories by Aviators and that is of course to be expected in a pilots' association magazine. A great deal of activity in restoring Vietnam era aircraft for either display or to flyable condition has (it seems to me) accelerated in the recent years leading up the 50th Anniversary of the War. Many of the aircrew that literally 'had our backs' in combat have lent their efforts to a number of these restorations; some may not have even been possible without their contribution. I am sure we all recall the long hours these men worked, often before and after our duty time, their courtesy, humor, and of course the constant vigil from their positions and how valuable all of that was. What I find to be the most significant and bravest aspect of our crew - was trusting their lives (in many, not all) cases to a couple of twenty or twenty-something old guys with 'brand new' moustaches. Rest in Peace Kenneth Plavcan. You are not forgotten.

Tom Kirk

## NOW AVAILABLE!!



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

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

~ John L. Penny

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VHPA HQ is pleased to announce a new enhancement to the Online Directory Application (ODA) available at [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org). ODA now indicates whether a member has previously purchased the current directory offering in either paper or CDROM format and prevents them from purchasing a directory in the same format a second time.

#### Directories

With your membership, you have the option to purchase copies of the membership directory that is published annually in both paper and CD-ROM media.

The last date the current year's directory may be purchased is **September 1st**. You may be able to purchase the current year's directory after September 1st, subject to availability, by contacting VHPA HQ at 800-505-VHPA(8472).

Directories will be sent to your address of record on or about the first of October of the directory year.

Limit 1 copy per media type.

**Note:** If the item appears greyed out, you have already purchased the directory in that format.

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2018 Membership Directory on CD-ROM	<input type="text" value="0"/>	10.00	0.00
Total for Directories:			0.00
Cart Total:			0.00

Members have been able to purchase directories via ODA for some time now.

The recently installed enhancement now shows members if they have already purchased one or both versions. This member has already purchased the paper version.

For those of you not familiar with ODA, please follow these steps:

- Open your favorite web browser and go to [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org).
- Click on **Membership Directory** \* that is the 5<sup>th</sup> item in the left column in the Home screen display.
- Click on **Member Login** that is immediately below the VHPA logo.
- Use your Member Number and password to complete the **Login** screen requirements.
- You will see the ODA **Welcome** screen with your name immediately below the VHPA logo. Congratulations! You now have the full power of the VHPA Online Directory at your finger tips!
- Click on the **Purchase Directory and Merchandise** tool that is the 2<sup>nd</sup> item in the **Other Services** column on the left to get to the **Directories** screen shown above.

Here is the historical data for pre-purchased Directories:

Year	2017	2016	2015
Paper	343	285	373
CD-ROM	182	190	225

# The Kien Hoa Swing

It was sometime in early May 1970 and a nice clear day for flying. I was the co-pilot, WO-1 Claret was the AC. Unfortunately, I cannot recall the names of the crew chief and gunner. Our mission was to fly the Kien Hoa Swing, an ash and trash mission to service the friendly outposts located in the Mekong Delta's Kien Hoa Province, the reported birthplace of the National Liberation Front. Although the VC were never the same in the Delta after the TET offensive in 1968, they still maintained a serious hostile presence in Kien Hoa. We were flying a UH-1H for our unit the 335th AHC "Cowboys". After refueling enroute, we were directed to the helicopter pad in front of the provincial headquarters in Ben Tre. We weren't on the pad very long before a man wearing a light jacket, slacks, and loafers strode toward the aircraft with several uniformed Vietnamese. He had an unmistakable air of authority. He seated himself on the bench seat at the back of the cargo compartment with a Vietnamese on either side. I keyed my mic on intercom and asked Claret "who is this guy?" He responded it was John Paul Vann, a senior U.S. Advisor. At the time, Mr. Vann was the chief of pacification for the Delta and a very important person indeed. It soon became evident Mr. Vann was commandeering our aircraft and we were to be his so long as he wished. Thus, began a very interesting day; what was supposed to be a mundane exercise in resupply, mail and taxi service became one in which, for the most of it, we would be the lone ship supporting a RF PF (Regional Force - Popular Force) attempt to retake a village along the Mekong River that had been overrun the previous night by a reinforced platoon of VC. Vann was more than a little upset with the VC for making this little dent in his pacification program.

Our first mission was to obtain better communication with the RF PF force. As we hovered over the troop's staging area, we were informed by their US advisor that we were taking fire from a grove of trees to their front. Vann instructed us to leave, which we did promptly. He then ordered us to overfly the village so he could look over the situation. We saw nothing. The streets were deserted and no VC were in view. This excursion was followed by another attempt at securing a radio to better communicate with the troops on the ground. This time the radio was on a river patrol boat stationed in a blocking position on the Mekong River adjacent to the village. We attempted to hover over the boat so the radio could

be handed to our crew chief. Our rotor wash caused the little boat to bob up and down and the nest of radio antennae protruding from the center of the craft added to the difficulty of the task. It proved to be more than our piloting skills could master, so we gave up the effort sans radio. Vann was obviously disappointed at our lack of airmanship but said little. In the meantime, Swamp Fox 13, piloting an O-1 bird dog arrived on the scene and began orbiting the village and reporting on enemy movements. He reported taking heavy ground fire from the village - then things got worse. A few rounds of 75 mm recoilless fire from the VC drove the patrol boat off to the safety of the middle of the river and the RF PF advance over land was repulsed by the VC.

We over flew the village again at about 400 feet and this time the VC weren't so nice. We took a burst of automatic weapons fire that missed the cockpit, but was close enough I very sincerely heard the snapping of the rounds as they went by. They did not miss by much. We did an abrupt about face and left the area. Swamp Fox 13 then reported seeing 30 to 40 VC running down the main street of the village apparently counter-attacking the RF PF. Claret toyed briefly with the idea of us rolling in on the exposed VC with our door guns, but Swamp Fox 13 advised against this maneuver rather strongly; thankfully, Vann concurred.

Following the VC counter-attack on the RF PF force, we landed among the retreating RF PFs to evacuate three WIAs. On short final for the pick-up, the door gunner excitedly announced he had seen a VC, but we were intent on getting the wounded and there were friendlies all around so we made no attempt to engage this VC with our door guns. While on the ground, we gave several belts of M-60 ammo to an RF PF machine gun crew covering the retreat from an abandoned outpost. The outpost was of the triangular shape so ubiquitous in the Delta. They smiled broadly, as they accepted the much-needed ammunition. I was happy to part with the ammo, since, of the retreating RF PF, they appeared to be the only ones willing to fight.

Later, we picked up a US Lieutenant advisor-type with a radio and delivered him to the RF PF to bolster our communication and their leadership. Later that day, this young man came on the radio, obviously out of breath, and announced "My co vans are disappearing into the sunset and I am going with them."

A trip to Ben Tre for ammo for the RF PF followed. The ammo was off-loaded from a deuce and a half by Vietnamese soldiers who tossed the wooden crates onto the tarmac beside our idling ship. I couldn't help but wince every time a crate of grenades hit the tarmac splitting open in the process. This did not appear to bother Mr. Vann. We delivered these supplies post haste to the beleaguered RF PF.

Apparently, by this time Vann had decided the village couldn't be saved intact as two Black Ponies (A-37 Dragonflies) showed up and began working over the village and the next time we went to refuel, a fire team of AH-1Gs was lifting off enroute to the fight.

As darkness approached, Vann directed us to fly to Binh Dai, the capital of the district of the same name in which the village was located. As I recall, I was at the controls and Vann instructed me to land at a soccer field on the outskirts of the town. As I brought the ship in on short final, I noticed the field was surrounded by Vietnamese civilians – three rows deep in some places. When we touched down, Vann exited the aircraft and spoke to some of the assembled Vietnamese. In short order, two bodies wrapped like mummies in white linen were gently loaded onto the aircraft followed by a group of Vietnamese civilians who jammed into every available space on the ship. Turns out the folks in the white linen were the District Chief and his son, both of whom were killed earlier in the day while leading the RF PFs in the fight at the village. The civilians were their grieving family members. In the gathering darkness, we flew the funeral party to the helipad at Ben Tre where our day had begun many hours earlier. The bodies of the deceased District Chief and his son were carefully off-loaded by family members and other waiting Vietnamese. Vann released us from the mission. As he exited the aircraft, he turned, stuck his head in the cockpit window, and said he was putting us in for medals for our work that day. That was the last I ever saw of Vann and the last I heard anything about any medals.

Postscript: As we left the area, our company was lifting elements of the 7th ARVN Infantry into the battle. The 7th ARVN Division troops were to encircle the village and wipe out the trapped VC. It was a nice plan, but it didn't work. During the night, the VC broke out of the encirclement inflicting heavy casualties on the 7th ARVN and capturing quite a few individual weapons. I was flying C and C the next day for an armed recon of the VC escape route while the slicks from our company hauled out the remains of the ARVN force. During the recon, our company's Falcon

gunships attacked many apparently abandoned hooches producing several secondary explosions. No doubt these hooches contained some of the munitions taken from the 7th ARVN the night before and quite possibly some of those we had hauled in during our resupply mission. John Paul Vann went on to serve as the Senior Advisor in II Corps and was instrumental in directing the defeat of the NVA Easter offensive in 1972. He subsequently perished in a helicopter crash under apparent night-time IFR conditions while enroute to Kontum after an aide's going home dinner in Pleiku. A full accounting of Vann's many exploits and his importance in the Vietnam War is contained in Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie*.

By William E. Sharpe

*Editor's Note: John Paul Vann was also a figure in the July-August 2016 Aviator article, Hitching a Ride.*

## WHEN WE CAME HOME

Jack McCabe, a veteran of the Vietnam War, has chronicled his experiences and those of over 150 of his fellow veterans following their return home. Never before...or since, have American citizens in great numbers shown such disrespect and lack of support for their war veterans. For many it added an emotional burden above and beyond the stress encountered during their tour of duty.

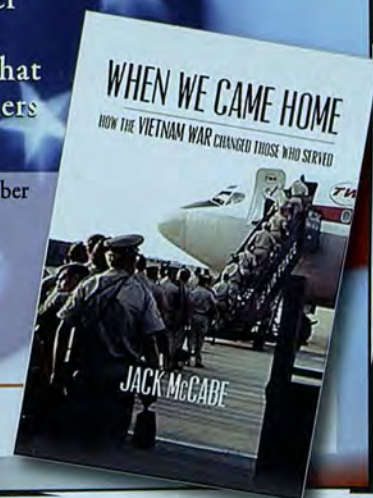
All needed to resume a normal life, whether or not support was available. For some that was difficult; for others it never happened.

Author – Jack McCabe Member VHPA #S03920

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# I FIND OUT FORTY-FIVE YEARS LATER I COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!!

*By Mike Sheuerman Panther 15 5/71-4/72361 ACE/AWC*

Bill Reeder is one of my favorite people in the world. He recently wrote a book, *THROUGH THE VALLEY*, a true story of his second tour in Vietnam flying Cobras with the 361st Pink Panthers in early 1972, being shot down at Ben Het, May 9, E&Eing for three days before being captured May 12, his trek to Hanoi, his time in the Hilton and his eventual release in the third and final group of POWs released in late March of 1973. Great book, phenomenal read and I'm the first chapter. And that's where my almost near-death experience begins and almost happens.

I had orders to go on the newly instituted "three week leave to the States" program. And since I was to depart January 3, 1972, Panther Operations didn't schedule me to fly on the 2nd. I was lounging in my "Suite" in the Panther Officers Hooch area thinking of home when my phone rang. John Mayes, Panther Operations Officer, told me to hustle to the flight line with all my gear. Two of our Snakes were all shot up and had barely made it back to Ben Het to land. They needed a replacement aircraft and needed it now. John told me to grab a "bullet brake" (front seater) on the way to the "Panther Pits." This new Captain was standing around near Operations waiting for his in-country check ride with Lash Wisener who was currently giving "Fearless" Forest Snyder his in-country check out. As I neared OPNS I yelled, "Hey, New Guy, you want to go get a medal?" He told me he was waiting for his in-country; I told him my "in-country check ride" would be much more interesting. I went in, checked with John, got a quick briefing, frequency and Lead's (Dennis Trigg) Call Sign; we ran to the ship, did a quick pre-flight, strapped in, cranked and headed north to Dak To. I briefed the Captain enroute, letting him know what he can expect and what I wanted him to do and when.

We met up with Lead at Dak To, received an additional brief, refueled and headed to the team in contact location. Seems a Recon Team out of NKP made contact with the NVA, a Jolly Green went in to get them out, got all shot up and landed at Ben Het. A heavy Panther team at Dak To launched with 57th Gladiator Hueys to attempt the extraction, got some of the team, but was forced to withdraw to Ben Het and had one Huey and one Panther aircraft pretty well shot up and unable to fly. That's where we joined the party. Lead set up the Ball Game and in we went. We got one guy out, but got the hell shot out of all the aircraft involved. Fortunately, all the birds could fly

back to Hollaway. To say Maintenance wasn't too happy to see us is an understatement. The Captain did very well, was submitted for a medal and received it. I got to go home for three weeks the next day.

Now, let's fast forward to this July in Indianapolis. The Panthers always have a TOC (meeting room) where we gather to BS, reminisce, recall old friends not there, and relive old memories. We started talking about going through flight school. Bill mentioned he flew Mohawks his first tour; we all knew that. He then started talking about his rotor-wing flight school: 10 HOURS IN AN OH-58 and 15 HOURS IN A COBRA! I almost messed my britches. I COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!!!

*By Mike Sheuerman Panther 15 5/71-4/72361  
ACE/AWC*

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1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca



### VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION SATISFIED CLIENTS

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

### KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

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

# H-21 FUN

*By Life Member Mel Pollock*

You "Old Timers" out there – do you remember the experience and fun of flying the big radial engines with carburetors which were installed in airframes with personalities? Remember, we flew them in the very early days of Vietnam, aggravated the hell out of everybody and started a war.

Automation was nonexistent; everything from start to shut down was manually monitored and controlled. We had to manually maintain RPM and navigated by dead reckoning with good mixture of luck and superstition.

Turbine engines and automation have taken a lot of the adventure out of flying. Pilots who have never had the pleasure of starting and flying a big radial engine (BRE) have missed one of the real experiences of aviation.

For instance, starting a turbine involves little more than moving a switch from "OFF" to "ON," and flipping a switch to "START" setting into motion a series of automated sequences that produces an equally mundane engine start.

Turbines start by whining and after brief period they give a small dignified little poof followed by whining louder. It has been said that starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan; while useful, it is certainly lacks excitement or challenge. In addition to smelling like a kerosene lantern, they are boring. There are no control levers to manipulate or in-flight adjustments to "fine-tune" the efficient function of the engine – demonstrating, of course, ones mastery of airmanship. A turbine's only requirement of the pilot is just sit there and listen to the whining.

Through the fog of fifty-odd years, I recall that cranking a BRE, such as the big round Pratt & Whitney requires finesse, style, and understanding. The experienced aviator is well aware that the BRE is reluctant to give up doing nothing and must be carefully convinced that this annoyance is necessary; your mind must be engaged on the task.

If Pratt happens to be installed in a helicopter, the start becomes an even more interesting challenge. While you can hear it, you can't see it. There is not a propeller to give a visual cue so you must rely on gauges to provide information about the old BRE's attitude toward this inconvenience.

After strapping in, reset the parking brake.

The start procedure begins with slapping all the shiny switches forward, fuel lever full forward, fuel boost switch on, two or three quick shots on the spring loaded fuel prime switch, followed with personal touches such as throttle twisting and a few words of encouragement. It is time to engage the starter.

Let old BRE rattle through a few turns to ensure that "normal seepage" hasn't filled the bottom cylinder with oil during its little overnight rest (just to screw-up your day). With starter still engaged the big moment arrives, mags are flipped to "both" and your right hand moves over the throttle gripping left hand to begin flicking the fuel prime switch.

Up to this point the old Pratt has been only rattling, clicking and clacking - now it really begins to protest being bothered. As a rich mixture of fuel and engine oil seepage is ignited in cold cylinders, it fires off a big macho belch or two followed by a few more rattles and perhaps a BANG of protest. It shudders, shakes and – as if clearing its lungs from a bad night - blows a lot of smoke, even an occasional smoke ring. You have a very brief twinge of sympathy for the old Pratt but, since you have made the effort get up and get in the cockpit, you keep prodding it with the fuel prime switch. It starts with a loping, wobbly, unenthusiastic effort at actually running and eventually smoothes into throaty rumble as all cylinders come to life. We liked that!

Now if your BRE happens to be a Pratt & Whitney R1820-103-A and is installed in an H-21, you're only half way to being able to accomplish anything. The rotor must be engaged and old Pratt isn't going to like this much either. Twist in the proper rpm (I recall that was about 2200 RPM). Old BRE has smoothed out and has begun to accept the idea of running. Holding a constant rpm, you again move right hand over the left to engage the – careful now - the "friction clutch."

Straining to overcome the two resting rotors, old BRE begins to sag RPM as if saying "What the hell is going on, this wasn't a part of the deal" -- twist on more throttle. Hold the rpm!! Your right hand quickly moves from the "friction clutch" switch back to the fuel prime flipping action, encouraging old Pratt not to give up now. "Come on Big Fellow you're almost there."

Much like the out of balance washing machine spin-dry cycle as it begins to gain rpm, the aircraft begins to sway and bounce in increasing amplitude as rotor RPM builds and finally settles into a constant, acceptable rhythm of various vibrations as the rotor tach needle slowly moves to join the engine needle. Persistence is paying off. The transmission directly above your head is joined by two other gear boxes in a screaming, screeching, senses annoying protests of their own.

BRE is awake and in full command now – it bellows and forces a deafening cacophony of airframe noises - growls, howls, and screeches as apposing rotors flail the air. The engine and rotor RPM needles “marry up” and it’s time to engage the heretofore carefully avoided “jaw clutch.” This provides positive steel gear engagement rather than relying on centrifugal friction.

We are now ready for the engine magneto check. Run up to operating RPM and pull in about twenty seven inches of manifold pressure for the magneto check. Switch off right mag followed by the left mag with a maximum of two hundred RPM drop allowable on either mag, and return to flat pitch.

Now, snap the throttle closed to ensure that the clutch will disengage the engine from the rotor system should old BRE decide not to finish the flight - as we say in helicopter jargon “split needles.” This will produce a startling ratcheting of steel gearing as the metal to metal jaw clutch disengages.

One never becomes completely comfortable with this hideous noise. There is a tendency to believe that this terrible racket can’t be coming from a healthy airframe but we are now “old pros.” Rather than requesting another aircraft we muster up a knowing smile to provide a little assurance to the startled stares and with the throttle we carefully ease the clutch back into positive engagement. Thank goodness the noise stopped.

Scanning the gauges we note that all temperatures and pressures are reasonably close to normal. We look around and release the parking brake allowing the H-21 to roll forward a few inches. All that fun and we are still on the ground - as a matter of fact, hardly moved - and not one of our superstitions have been used.

Round engines, noises, the smell of gasoline, exhaust smoke, oil leaks, engines and aircraft with personalities – That’s how God intended flying machines to be. You guys remember ----- don’t you?

## AAHF HELICOPTER RIDES AT THE ATLANTA REUNION

As you know, the 2018 Reunion is scheduled to be held in Atlanta, GA, July 3 through July 8. The host hotel is the Atlanta Marriott Marquis on Peachtree. We are currently wrapping up the basic event planning portion of the Reunion. VHPA is scheduling some exciting events for you to enjoy. We promise you a very good time inside and outside the Hotel.

The ARMY AVIATION HERITAGE FOUNDATION is currently located at Tara Field near Hampton, GA, south southeast of downtown Atlanta. The AAHF is an organization dedicated to preserving and keeping alive the history and aircraft of our war. They currently have six flyable AH-1s and five UH-1s. AAHF is planning to offer rides in both these types of aircraft and they are allowing two OH-6s, owned by others, to give rides also. Of course, there will be a cost involved for these rides payable to the AAHF. If you would like to go for a ride in one of these aircraft, have your wife, your girlfriend, your children, anyone you know go for a ride and enjoy what we did for a living over 45 years ago, here's your opportunity. You must contact AAHF at [REDACTED] or email them at [info@armyav.org](mailto:info@armyav.org) to schedule the rides. ***The VHPA Is Not Involved In Any Aspect Of This Event And Is Not Receiving Any Consideration From AAHF.***

AAHF will have a set donation fee for each ride. It will include transportation from the Hotel to the airfield, the ride in the type of aircraft you schedule and transportation back to the Marriott. Food trucks will be on site to provide food and drinks if you want anything. A photographer will be on hand to “capture the moment” if you so desire. Flights will be scheduled starting at 10 AM and going until 4 PM, starting July 2 and going through July 6. Flights can be scheduled after 2 PM on July 7 if necessary. From personal experience I can tell you the smile to my son Hunter's face, after his Snake ride, was worth the airfare and cost of the experience.

Again, please understand this event is not an official part of the VHPA Atlanta Reunion. VHPA has no involvement in the planning, production, scheduling and/or production of this event. If you wish to be involved and go for a ride, you must contact AAHF and schedule your ride.

**From VHPA HQ**

# The Morning Was Chilly

This is not a helicopter story per se, but it does relate to my personal introduction to the AH-1G.

07 November 1968.

The morning was chilly, as it often is, in the central highlands of South Vietnam in the month of November. I wasn't in need of a coat as were the native Montagnard troops I was with, but I was looking forward to the canteen cup of C ration hot chocolate heating up on the morning cook fire.

I was attached to a Mike-Force (Montagnard volunteers led by the U.S. Special Forces) detachment assigned to search for an NVA (North Vietnamese Army) regiment operating in the mountains between Pleiku and An Khe not far from where the French Army Group Mobile 100 met their demise during the previous phase of the Indo-China conflict.

This was starting out as just a simple "hike through the woods." We had helicoptered in to a cold LZ somewhere south of the Mang Yang Pass on 6 Nov. It was called a combat assault, but the only hazard we faced from explosive ordnance came from me. As the FO [artillery forward observer] for the mission, I was obliged to be on the first helicopter into the LZ. Now, mind you, this was only my second helicopter assault, so there were more than a few things I still had to learn about this business. Anyway, when the pilot began his final approach, I moved to the door of the slick so I could get out quickly and clear the LZ for the ships that followed. It's the FO's job to get on the ground and get organized as soon as possible to be able to respond with supporting artillery fire if the assaulting forces come under enemy attack.

This was a one-ship LZ and I wanted to ensure I did everything I could to expedite the remaining aircraft (and troops) to get on the ground. I wanted as much friendly company as soon as possible in case there was an unfriendly reception committee waiting for us. As the aircraft slowed down, I slid out so my feet were braced on the skid, my butt firmly attached to the edge of the floor and one hand on the door frame ready to un-ass this bird. When the forward motion stopped I stepped off the skid, but instead of the firm ground I was expecting, I found myself in a kind of free fall followed by a crashing belly flop onto the ground. That day I learned when the helicopters come to a one or two-foot hover over elephant grass there is still another four or five feet to the ground. I swear I heard the helicopter crew laughing as they flew off.

As soon as I could catch a breath, I scrambled off the LZ to a sheltered spot in the tree line and started a personal inventory; arms - OK, legs - OK, ribs - sore but apparently not puncturing a lung. Rifle, spare magazines, back-pack, grenades - uh oh! One of the grenades I had on my web gear was missing and must be in the middle of the LZ. If the pin had pulled out it could only be another second before the explosion and the

next aircraft was landing now! I could only hold my breath, because nothing could be done now if that grenade was armed. After what seemed an eternity to me, the second aircraft cleared the LZ and there was no explosion. I nervously watched as the remaining aircraft landed and the troops scrambled off. I said a heartfelt prayer of thanks that the grenade did not detonate. After everyone was on the ground, I went out to look for the grenade; it was an impossible task in the tall, thick grass. I abandoned the search and went back over to the tree line to join the rest of the troops and immediately gave away my remaining grenades; the second lesson I learned that day - grenades are dangerous - someone could get hurt!

We were in a very mountainous area with steep slopes covered with dense foliage. Climbing up the slopes was an arduous task often requiring a crawl while pulling ourselves up hand over hand using vines and tree trunks for leverage. That both hands were needed to hang on to the side of these slopes requiring me to sling my rifle over my shoulder caused me some anxiety; what would I do if we were ambushed in this awkward position? Going down was only slightly easier because gravity was working with us on the down slope, but it was a kind of sliding stumble from one tree trunk to the next like a pinball to keep from falling all the way down. There seemed to be more up slopes than down slopes though.

The Special Forces types were in charge of the mission, I was along to coordinate artillery support and to learn the ropes. I was, as the saying goes, still pissing stateside water, meaning I had only been in-country a short time. When we prepared to stop for the night the Montagnard commander and his SF counterpart picked two hilltops to occupy. Straight line distance between the hilltops was only about 150 meters but there was a deep ravine between them. The force was divided into two elements and we made our separate ways to each hilltop. I was on one hill and my recon sergeant, SP4 Lee Dockstader, was on the other so we could support each element in case of trouble, and minimize the risk of both of us getting killed in the same fox hole leaving the Mike Force with no FO.

The day's climbing had been difficult and I had no trouble falling asleep. The night passed quietly and I was well rested by morning. I was up at first light and ready for that water in my canteen cup to boil so I could chase away the morning chill with a cup of C-ration chocolate "comma" hot "comma" one each.

As I took the first sips of the hot chocolate, I heard the throbbing sound of helicopters in the distance moving in our direction. In Vietnam, this was a good and reassuring sound to ground troops in the sure and certain knowledge that the only helicopters were on our side. These helicopters, though, had not been called by us and we paid only passing attention to their movements; expecting they were flying through our area

on the way to some other mission. We did note the helicopters were three in number and were easily identifiable as two AH-1G Cobras and an OH-6 Cayuse scout or LOH (pronounced "loach" for light observation helicopter). This combination of helicopters is known as a hunter-killer team. We barely noticed the little bird made a pass near our two positions and we continued a leisurely routine of preparing for the days patrolling.

Suddenly, I was aware of a blood curdling whooshing sound followed by a roaring explosion, then another and another and another. We all nearly jumped out of our skins. We were being attacked and there had been no hint of any enemy activity. Then I heard a buzzing sound; like some gigantic bee was flying right at me. There were bullet strikes all around and more whooshing sounds and explosions. I realized we were not being attacked by the NVA, but by the hunter-killer team that had wandered into our AO (area of operation). The buzzing sound came from the mini-guns spewing up to four thousand shots per minute. We were four Americans with about sixty Montagnard. The LOH pilot had apparently mistaken us for enemy troops.

The Cobras were making their attack runs from the north to the south so most of their ordinance was striking the other hilltop first. Perhaps they had not seen our group on the second hilltop yet.

I was frantically calling on the radio net for someone to contact the gunships and get them to cease fire. Since we had not requested the air support we had no direct contact with the aircraft. While I was on the radio, I popped a smoke grenade and wrapped my floppy bush hat around it so I could hold it up in the air above my head to let the smoke rise through the trees as quickly as possible. The canister was becoming red hot and spewing sparks that landed on my arm burning my skin, but I held that canister as high as I could until my hand began to blister. I had to signal the aircraft somehow. The enemy didn't usually pop smoke to mark their location when aircraft attacked and I hoped the pilots would realize something was wrong.

The Cobras made two terrifying and deadly passes each and then the LOH swooped in to assess the damage and redirect the fire. He must have been drawn to the smoke I had popped. As he made a pass over my position, I looked up through a hole in the tree canopy into the eyes of the pilot whose face was clearly visible to me. I desperately prayed he could see me; I was terrified his gunner would start firing with his M-60 (machine-gun) before they recognized me as an American. I gestured frantically to indicate a cease fire and pointed toward the other hilltop. He flew another circle around my position and I quickly stripped off my shirt so that he could see my still pale stateside skin and know there were "friendlies" here. It apparently had the desired affect because, mercifully, they broke off the attack.

Once we were sure they had ceased firing on us we tried to contact our people on the other hilltop. They had two radios with them, but were not responding to our calls. I called my recon sergeant again and again, "Specter one zero alpha, specter one zero alpha, this is specter one zero, over!" I called back to

our support base and got Dustoff on the way as we gathered our equipment and headed down into the ravine. We struggled through heavy undergrowth down one slope and up the other in a desperate race to help our friends on the other hill. As we started up the opposite slope, we began to pick up the troops who had escaped down into the ravine and our worst fears were realized; many of them were wounded by shrapnel or mini-gun. It took us more than half an hour to get to the top of the other hill and see the extent of the damage.

The top of the hill had been decimated by the deadly rockets and streams of mini-gun rounds. Because of the direction of the attack runs, this hilltop took most of the hits. The other hilltop, the one I was on, was not the primary target and only received the over shoots. I was stunned by the extent of the damage to what had been a heavily wooded hilltop. A place that was normally cool and dark with only patchy glimpses of the sky was now naked and exposed to the rising sun. The leaves and branches had been stripped from the trees and the tree trunks were shattered. I could not put my hand any place on a tree trunk without touching at least two marks from bullet or shrapnel. It was astonishing how thoroughly the area was covered by the deadly missiles spewed from the cobra's weapons. I wondered how can the enemy take this kind of thing day in and day out and keep coming back?

All around the camp were the bullet-riddled remnants of the individual equipment that had been used by the men who had rested peacefully on this hilltop until just a couple of hours ago. I found my recon sergeant's body a few yards away from his hammock. He had only gotten a couple of steps before he had been hit. Later, as I sat with his body waiting for evacuation, I morbidly counted fifteen bullet holes in his clothes from his shoulders down to his feet. I had seen only a few bodies in my short time in-country and this was the first person I had known and had to attend to personally. Lee was only 20 years old and had a couple of months left before going home; I was 20 and had been here, in-country, for just under two months. If there had been any doubt before, I now fully realized this was going to be a very long year.

With help from one of the SF sergeants, I carried Lee's body back up to his hammock and laid it on his poncho. I secured his wallet and his dog tags in one of the pockets of his fatigue trousers. At some point in my military training I had been told the way to ensure proper identification of bodies was to take one of the dog tags and jam it in edgewise in the space between two teeth. I could not bring myself to do that to the body of someone I had known... I just couldn't do it.

Some of the Montagnard troops were assigned to chopping down trees to clear an area large enough to land the Dustoff helicopters; others were assisting the wounded and bringing the bodies back into the perimeter we had established in what now became an impromptu LZ – a hover hole really. I now know what an extraordinary level of skill and courage the Huey crews demonstrated that day. As a newbie officer, there was little for me to do at this point so I tried to help the remaining medic tending to the wounded. I was holding the hand of a dying

Montagnard soldier trying to comfort him as best I could. He had a horrific head wound but was still awake and alert. I could not speak his language, but I talked with him and looked into his eyes so he would know, at least, that he was not alone as he died. I will never forget his face and the feel of his grip on my hand and the sense of helplessness that I felt.

Including my recon sergeant, we had eight dead and sixteen wounded. One of the wounded was an American SF sergeant who had taken a round through the thigh that missed the bone and artery; he would be all right. He said he remembered that as he was falling down the hill he saw a tracer round pass in front of his nose as he tumbled; bullets were striking all around him, his single bullet wound was a miracle. The men who ran down the south side of the hill were the ones who survived, although some with wounds. Most of the dead were found near where they had slept or over the hill to the north side. It was bad luck to have run in that direction.

In an hour or so enough of the hilltop had been cleared so the helicopters could hover low and take our wounded away. The priorities were: first the wounded then the bodies and then the personal gear. In the midst of all this, a REMF (short for rear echelon mother f---k---) Major in clean and starched fatigues hopped off of one of the helicopters and was asking questions for the investigation. I was amazed by the "timely" arrival of the investigating officer, but I was even more startled by his clean and neat uniform. He was so incongruous to this place and the tragedy that had occurred here. For some reason, I was offended by his matter of fact attitude and could barely make myself be civil to this interloper. I don't remember his questions or my answers; I just remember intensely disliking him. It also struck me that he spent far too little time in the investigation. There should have been more questions! What was Lee like? What are you feeling? Do you want to know who the guys are who shot you up?

As suddenly as he had arrived he was suddenly gone. It must have been ice-cream day at the general's mess, wouldn't want to be late for that. I suppose he was just doing his job, but this was the most intense personal experience of my young life and I resented his lack of emotion and his clean uniform; as though this was just another day.

My head was swimming with sights and sensations that were overwhelming. While the attack and our rescue effort were going on, my training and instincts kept me moving and doing what had to be done, but no training could prepare me for the emotions I was experiencing afterward. The images of the devastation of the hilltop and the personal gear lying about, Lee Dockstader's body and how heavy it was and all those bullet holes, the dying man whose last words were spoken to me, in a language I couldn't understand. The smells of the shattered trees, the churned-up earth and the explosives; all separate and distinct and all mingled together at the same time.

At one point, I saw two Montagnards bringing the body of one of their comrades into the perimeter; they had tied his hands and feet together and carried him on a pole as I had

seen animals being carried in Tarzan movies and the man's head was blown apart so he was only recognizable as a human by his clothing. I was shocked by the indignity, but it was the only way to get the body back up the hill. I knew they knew the dead man. They were probably neighbors, if not related, since this unit was all from the same village. I felt a deep sadness for them having to do this grisly thing and knowing it wasn't the first time and wouldn't be the last. Their tour was for the duration.

The sounds of the helicopters, the whoosh of the rockets and that buzzing growl of the mini-guns made my skin crawl to remember. Most intense of all was the feeling of utter helplessness and frustration that this was an accident, a horrible mistake; these men did not need to die. Intertwined through all of these sensations and feelings was the sense of elation that it wasn't me lying there dead, but it could have been except by sheer chance. If I had gone to the left instead of right; there was no other design for being on one hilltop or the other. Why was I spared?

Even though our mission was essentially over, we remaining troops were not helicoptered out that day. We remained on the hilltop for the night. The next day we walked out of the jungle covered mountains to a landing zone that could accommodate several helicopters at one time. I don't remember anything about that night. I mean, I don't remember having nightmares or any trouble sleeping. I was physically and emotionally exhausted, but this day had to be wrapped up and stashed away in the back of my mind for some other time. There was no time for mourning. The war would not take time out for our little tragedy in a whole universe of tragedy. The next day I got up and went about my business as did everyone else; there was still work to be done – one day at a time... maybe that Major wasn't such a bad guy?

This was going to be a very long year indeed.  
Post Script: To this day, I have not been able to find an after action report related to this incident, so I do not know for certain what unit attacked us that day. They were probably out of An Khe or maybe LZ English. I recall being told speculative unit designations but I don't know if the information or my memory is accurate.

My second tour (Sep '71 – Sep '72) was as a Cobra driver with D Trp 1/1 and I have for many years (decades now) wanted to talk with those pilots to tell them I understand how it could have happened; after all, we were mostly indigenous troops in the reported vicinity of a hostile force. I have never felt any enmity toward the crews, only sympathy for how they must have felt and the many sleepless nights they would have endured. It was a terrible accident – a misfortune of war and they should forgive themselves. I am also intensely curious to know what that LOH pilot saw and what he thought when he flew over my position. And I have always wanted to sincerely thank him for shutting down the attack.

By Lonney McCann

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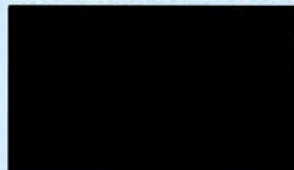


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## VHPA 2018 CALENDAR

### Available for Immediate Shipment!

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new VHPA 2018 Calendar, hot off the press and available for immediate shipment. This is the 25th calendar produced by the VHPA.

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

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

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

*On the cover: In a single day, HMH-463 used twelve helicopters in four flights of three to drop 2,000 55-gallon barrels of napalm/diesel mix on an enemy tunnel/cave complex, June 1970. Photo courtesy of Bill Stilwagen.*

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## 2018 CALENDAR

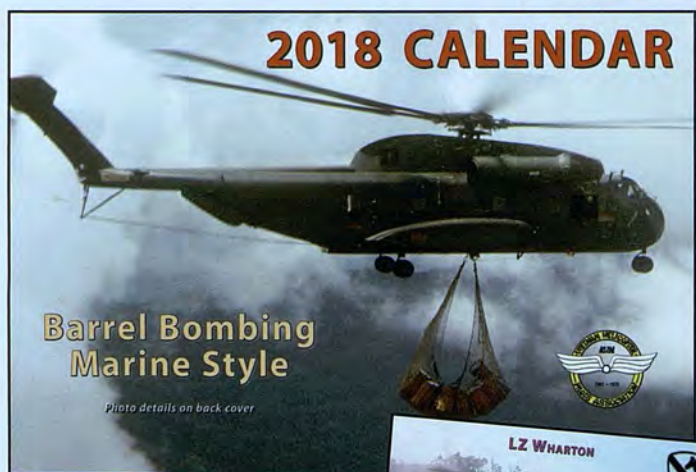


Photo details on back cover



# 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.

*AVIATOR REPORT completed for 4 New Members and covers the period 8-9-17 to 10/02/17*

Harris Jerry M  
Dutton Alabama  
Army  
69-43  
237 MED DET in 69-70

Jenkins Martin H 'Marty'  
Woodstock Georgia  
Army  
68-22  
D/3/4 CAV in 69; HHC/17  
CAG in 71-72

Smith Steven K.  
Ball Ground Georgia  
Army  
71-6  
183 AVN in 67-68; B/158  
AVN 101 ABN in 71-72

Watkins Richard K. \*\*  
Huntsville Texas  
Army  
67-8  
235 AWC; 114 AHC in 68



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If personal assistance needed  
call Terry Garlock, Treasurer  
(life member VHPA and CHPA)  
cell [REDACTED]



# Project 295 Update

It has been a while since the last update, and wanted to let everyone know we continue to make progress...step by step on 295.

To date we have raised about \$ 25,000 dollars with the sale of the Mike Folsie signed AH-1 prints, and we continue to receive significant support from Nebraska Gas Turbine and Brown Aviation. The three combined are making a considerable impact on raising money, donating parts and material, and providing technical services. These three individuals and organizations are leading the list of the many, many supporters who are contributing their time and money to the conclusion of this effort. We still have a way to go but inch by inch we keep getting closer.

The tail boom prep is finished, the engine is off for test and repair, transmission is in looking good, we have blades, just need the hub painted, we have servos on hand ready for installation, the Cockpits are de-wired and prepping for paint and a multitude of other gigs have been worked off...but we have a ways to go.

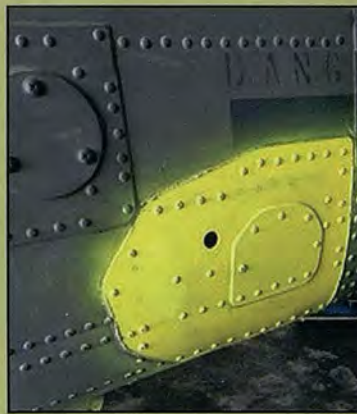
Most recently Joe S from St Louis was in and graced 295 with some sheet metal expertise, patching a spot where the APR 39 mount use to fit.

Ken W who has an active history on the armament side is helping develop our wing stores to mount the 20mm gun system.

Kawala has shifted to a focus on the wing stores, pulling the wiring out of 197 to mount the system in 295...as he is virtually finished with removing the wiring and is in the process of structuring the wiring to take on the new systems for smoke generators, lighting and avionics. It's like vascular surgery; one size does not fit all.

Glen C and grandson Stephen were instrumental in prepping the tail boom, cleaning up the engine mounts, removing the tail boom blower, and a variety of other tasks in preparation for the return of the engine.

A lot is being done and over the next few weeks as our summer flying program has slowed down briefly we need a



concerted effort and focus on the tasks at hand. Our time line for completion in September is slipping. We really need a few people to take on specific projects.

Near term what we have going, to name several: Tail rotor drive train coupling packing and installation, vertical fin tip cap replacement, tail position light cover replacement, tail rotor controls installation, painting of M/R Hub light gray, fuel hose re-manufacture, fuel sump drain repair, minor

voids repair. And then we can start the front-end canopy replacement...the real change that will really be the focus of our face lift.

We are all getting a little older around here, but with a little help, 295 will outlive us all.

By John Woodward

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

**Donations: Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and  
Museum, Inc. 506 Speedway Blvd. Hampton, GA  
30228(770) 897-0444**

# Camp Eagle Seabee

In June 1968, about 0200hrs, the Seabee encampment at Camp Eagle, Camp Wilkinson, was attacked by enemy forces and immediately requested support from 101st aviation assets. I was AC/PIC of a UH-1C "gunship" light fire team deployed in defense of the Seabee facility. Long story (and night) short, we accomplished the mission and prevented the enemy from breaching the perimeter, saving countless Seabee lives in the process. About a week later, after returning from a routine mission and upon entering my hootch, there on my bunk were several cases of T-bone steaks! No one in the company area would tell me where the steaks came from, but the grills were stoked up and steaks were on that night's menu. As it turns out, a high school friend, then a Navy ensign, had written his mom about the attack on his compound and how the 101st gunships had saved him and his unit from being overrun. After his writing home about the event, his mom called my mom and the connection was made. Neither of us knew the other was there; same time, same place, different service. Talk about a small world! After several weeks of back and forth communication, he and I finally got together and visited several times before we both DEROS'd. BTW, the Navy sure does eat well in air conditioned Quonset huts with real china and wait staff. Sure beats c-rats and a P-38.

*Tom Wood, CW4, Ret.*



## 176th AHC Challenge Coin Presented

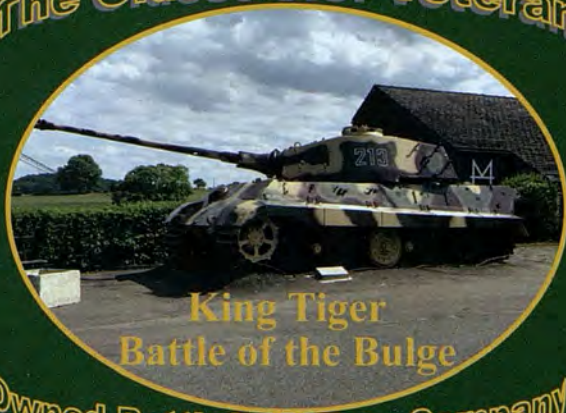
During the 34th annual VHPA Reunion in Indianapolis, IN, VHPA, Life Member, Albert L. Doucette, CW3, US Army (Ret.), 176th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) (Minuteman 42) (1970-1971), had the distinct honor and privilege of presenting a newly minted Minuteman/Musket Challenge Coin to LTC, US Army (Ret.), Charles Kettles, a member of the 176th AHC in 1967. Major Charles Kettles was awarded the DSC for heroic actions while piloting UH-1 Helicopters, yes, UH-1 Helicopters, on May 15, 1967. In 2016, the DSC was upgraded to the Medal of Honor and it was awarded to LTC Kettles by President Obama before he left office.

A partial account of LTC Kettles' heroic actions was published in the July/August 2016 issue of the Aviator.

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# LIFE MEMBER POLO SHIRT - ANNOUNCEMENT

Last updated 26 SEPT 2017

VHPA Headquarters announces a new product that can be ordered from HQ by members – embroidered Life Member polo shirts with five groups of options. A large shirt with all the default options costs \$30 plus \$6 shipping & handling. All customer service (order entry & confirmation, payment (credit card or check), order status, quality control material, & shipping.) will be performed by VHPA HQ.

Option #1 – Sleeve Length – two choices: Short sleeve is the default for no extra charge. Long sleeve add \$2 to the cost by shirt size.


Option #2 – Size – seven choices: Small through XLarge \$30, 2XL \$32, 3XL \$34, 4XL \$36.

Option #3 – Fabric – two choices: Cotton (actually 35% cotton & 65% polyester so it will not shrink) or Dri-Fit (a modern 100% polyester fabric that will last for years without shrinking). No extra charge for either option.

Option #4 – Color – five choices: True Navy, True Royal, Dark Forest Green, Graphite Grey, and Maroon. No extra charge for any color choice.

True Royal	True Navy	Dark Forest Green	Graphite Grey	Maroon
				

Option #5 – Wings in the VHPA logo – choices: VHPA wings (default), US Army Aviator, US Army Senior Aviator, US Army Master Aviator, US Air Force Pilot, US Air Force Senior Pilot, US Air Force Command Pilot, and US Navy/Marines Aviator. Add \$2 for any wing choice other than VHPA wings.

VHPA (Default)			
ARMY			
USAF			
NAVY			

To order - complete the Life Member Shirt order form found on [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) and mail or email it to HQ with your payment. Current plans have HQ collecting orders for about one week, then placing the production order to the supplier(s). The suppliers need about one week to produce the shirts and deliver them to HQ. HQ staff inspects each shirt for quality and accuracy. Once checked, HQ will mail the shirt to you.

Currently the only caption below the VHPA logo is "Life Member" ~ however, more options may be available in the near future.

# UPCOMING REUNIONS

## D Troop, 1/1 Cavalry (Air)

101st Airborne Division & 23rd Infantry Division (Americal)  
50th Anniversary Reunion - D Troop invites all troopers, family & friends

**Date: May 13-15, 2018**

Location: Flamingo Resort Hotel & Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Contact: COL Roger Wise (Saber-77) at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/D-Troop-11-Cavalry-119341268079296/>

Website: <http://www.dtroop.com>  
Reunion website: [dtroopreunion.org](http://dtroopreunion.org)

## 15th Medical Battalion Association (1st Cavalry Division) Annual Reunion

**Date: 26-28 April 2018**

Location: The Great Wolf Lodge 549 East Rochambeau Drive  
Williamsburg, VA 23188

Info and Reunion Registration: [www.15thmedbnassociation.com](http://www.15thmedbnassociation.com)  
Hotel Reservations: [www.greatwolf.com/williamsburg](http://www.greatwolf.com/williamsburg) - 800-551-9653  
(Insure they know you are asking for the Williamsburg Lodge). Use  
Group Code 15THMED for either web or phone reservations.  
Reunion Coordinator: Dan Toothman (Fang) [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

## Charlie Co., 227th Assault Helicopter BN. 2018 Reunion

**When: September 11th - September 13th, 2018**

Where: Peachtree City Hotel and Convention Center, Peachtree  
City, GA

POC: Jim Fink [REDACTED]

Also: Dennis Beckler [REDACTED] or Larry Gordon [REDACTED]

## D Troop/3rd Squadron/5th Cavalry Regiment & C Troop/3rd Squadron/17th Air Cavalry Regiment

**When: April 30-May 4, 1918**

Where: Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's "Majesty of the Seas" sailing  
out of Port Canaveral, FL

Troop Website: [www.lighthorseaircav.com](http://www.lighthorseaircav.com)

Contact: H.H. (Rick) Roll - Crusader 12 - [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

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




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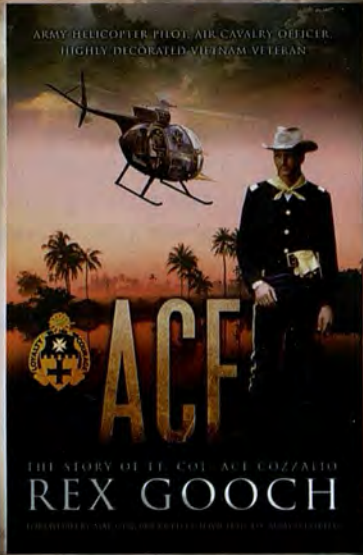



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Full details and booking information are available on our website:  
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Or call us at: [REDACTED]  
(land line) to book.



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# VHPA Scholarship Recipients

## 1. VHPA - 361st AVN Co "Pink Panthers" Heritage Scholarship \$ 3,000 - \$ 3,000 for 1 year(s)

Grant D. Alexander: Englewood, FL will attend Wake Forest University.

Grant grew up in Englewood, FL and attended high school at Venice High School in Venice, FL. His grandfather is Grover Flowers, a member of the VHPA. This year Grant is studying abroad in Denmark as part of the Global AWAKEnings Program at Wake Forest. He will be majoring in political science and economics.



## 2. Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Heritage Scholarship \$ 3,000 - \$ 3,000 for 1 year(s).

Zackary Keith Trani: Olympia, WA will be attending the University of Chicago.

Zackary grew up in Corbett, OR, a small rural town outside of Portland, OR. He graduated Valedictorian from Corbett High School.

His grandfather is Gary Vollendorff who is a member of the VHPA. He says his grandfather's military service and passion for flying was always a great fascination and pride when he was growing up. Zackary plans on studying Chemistry with a possible double major in English.



## 3. Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Heritage Scholarship \$ 3,000 - \$ 3,000 for 1 year(s).

Samuel A. Banks: Germantown, TN will attend the University of Georgia. Sam is the son of Barbara and Sam Banks of Germantown, TN. He is the grandson of LTC (Ret) Samuel Alva Banks, Sr. who served in the US Army from 1954-1973. His grandfather passed away in 1998. Samuel attended Christian Brothers High School in Memphis, TN. Sam will study for a degree in Biomedical Engineering. Sam was the recipient in high school of the Honor Roll all four years and was a four year member of the CBHS Soccer team



## 4. Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Heritage Scholarship \$ 3,000 - \$ 3,000 for 1 year(s).

Caleb Douglas Straley: Louisa, VA will attend Virginia Tech. Caleb grew up in Louisa County, located in the heart of Central Virginia. He attended Louisa County High School and is a proud Louisa Lion. During his years at LCHS he took dual enrollment classes at Piedmont Virginia Community College and obtained an Associate's degree and high school diploma simultaneously.

His grandfather, Ronald F. Maisch was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and is a current member of VHPA; and has been a real inspiration in Caleb's life. He recently began his freshman year at Christopher Newport University, in Newport News, Virginia. He looks forward to exploring areas of study in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.



## 5. Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Heritage Scholarship \$ 3,000 - \$ 3,000 for 1 year(s).

Nathaniel N. Reuter: will attend the University of Dayton. He is the grandson of CPT Neil Reuter (KIA 1966) He was born in up-state New York in 1999. He attended Chamaine-Julienne Catholic High School where he was involved in Cross-country, Lacrosse and Soccer. He was a Boy Scout and earned the rank of Eagle. He plays the piano and loves outdoor sports and activities. Nathaniel is currently studying at the University of Dayton and majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He says he plans on joining the Army ROTC at the University of Dayton. Nathaniel attended the VHPA reunion this year in Louisville as one of the Gold Star Family members.

Submitted by Thomas Payne Chairman, Scholarship Committee



# Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO), Vietnam



FVSO helps support 850 Montagnard children living at 7 orphanage sites in the Kontum & Pleiku area. Founded in 2005 by servicemen who served in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, we are a small organization, proud that 100% of your donations go directly to the children & their caregivers. FVSO Board members pay for all of the administrative expenses and any of their on-site visits. Our mission is to provide basic needs (food, medicine, dental care shelter and education). **HAPPY HOLIDAYS from the kids of Vinh Son!!**

FVSO is a non-profit and all donations are tax deductible.

For more information or to make a contribution, see our contact info below.  
**THANK-YOU** for helping!

**Friends of Vinh Son**  
P.O. Box 9322-C, Auburn, Ca 95604-9322  
Web: [www.FriendsofVSO.org](http://www.FriendsofVSO.org)  
Email: [redacted]



## LOOKING FOR

I am looking for anyone who has knowledge of my late husband's MAJ Jim Jay 118th AHC actions on May 15, 1967 while serving with the 118th Assault Helicopter Company in support of some 9th Infantry Division troops in a fire fight. According to his Silver Star award Major James (Jim) W. Jay led at least three separate flights of at least two UH-1Ds into a hot LZ on May 15 1967. The first time was to deliver critically needed ammunition while the next two were to extract the wounded.

Please contact Judi Jay [redacted] or [redacted]

## Letters to the Editor

### To the Editor of the VHPA

Hi, just an FYI we saw the Gold Star picture featured in the recent issue and we are in the picture but my husband's brother, William Borchart, was not mentioned...just wanted to let you know.

Kristy Borchart

*Kristy, we received the photo with the caption provided. Obviously your brother-in-law's name was overlooked. Tom Kirk*

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# **HOW TO LAND A CH-47C CHINOOK INVERTED (AND LIVE TO CRAWL AWAY FROM IT)**

**BY MIKE MALOY, FORMER CW2**

I arrived in country on December 31, 1968 and the Chinooks from Pachyderms, A Co. 159, ASHB, 101st Airborne picked us up at Danang and dropped us at Phu Bai at about 23:50, just in time to watch the perimeter light up like the 4th of July. I was with C Co. 159 ASHB, 101st, callsign Playtex. We spent the next couple of weeks building hooches and bunkers; filling sand bags; getting an AO orientation from the guys in Pachyderms and Varsity; and of course, a top priority: constructing our company O'Club.

The last week in January a bunch of us were sent TDY to Dong Ha and eventually the Rockpile up by the DMZ to support the Marines in the north end of the Ashau. On February 10, 1969, Captain Kelly Williams was the AC and I was the pilot. I believe our aircraft number was 67-18501. We had been flying combat resupply missions all day delivering ammo and food and taking out wounded from LZ Erskine in the north end of the Ashau valley in I Corps. On the last three or four approaches to Erskine we were



Playtex 501 crash site.

getting mortar fire and had to go around several times because of sporadic enemy fire.

At approximately 17:00, we went back to Dong Ha to refuel and all the Chinooks were going to head back to Phu Bai. While refueling, we were notified by Marine Division at Vandegrift (or the Rockpile...I'm not sure which it was) that they had one more load of 105mm ammo to go out to Erskine and four Marines who needed a ride back to Erskine. Williams told them we would take the passengers and the load and then head for Phu Bai from LZ Erskine. After refueling, we picked up the four Marines and then picked up the load of approximately 10,000 pounds of 105mm ammo in a sling load and headed back to Erskine. During the day, we had problems with the beep sticking several times, but it always seemed to fix itself before it became a serious problem so we continued to fly missions. At approximately 17:50, while on final approach into Erskine with me at the controls, we both saw a puff of smoke and dust on the LZ and the Marine on Erskine told us to go around because they were taking mortar fire. We circled out into the Ashau valley and made a second approach. We still had the four Marine passengers on board. I shot my approach to the ground with the sling load and set the load down, but didn't get it where they wanted it and they asked us to move it.

Because of the altitude, the heat, the 10,000-pound sling load, and the fact we had just refueled, we were very heavy and had to shoot the approach to the ground rather than bringing it to a hover. At that point, Williams took the controls and said he would move the load.

He told me with the periodic enemy fire he didn't want to stay over the LZ any longer than necessary. We took off from the LZ with the sling load and made a tight 360-degree pattern to come back to the LZ. I doubt we ever got above 60 or 70 knots during that 360. We were never very far from LZ Erskine and had it in sight the entire time. As we approached Erskine the third time with the sling load, and while on short final (about 150 yards from the perimeter of the LZ and at about 35 knots) we experienced a beep failure on No. 1. I followed through with emergency procedures for a beep failure and Williams said he was going to dive down the side of the mountain to try to gain airspeed and save the load. As we dove down the side of the mountain, I saw we were losing rotor rpm to the point that it was critical. When the rpm hit about 200, I yelled at Williams to punch the load off, and almost immediately told the flight engineer to release the load. At the same time, I hit the emergency release switch. When nothing happened and we still had the load I recycled the switch three or four times. To this day I can recall all during flight school being told that if a switch doesn't work, recycle it. Unfortunately, in the case of the emergency release switch, it operates on compressed air. The recycling was bleeding off a little bit of air pressure each time, so it never blew the hook open. I was told some months later that the Army made an amendment to the TM-55 Chinook operators manual advising pilots not to recycle the emergency hook release switch for this reason. The flight engineer was never able to reach the manual release handle on the hook because we were bouncing around so much due to extremely low rotor rpm. The load never released and according to the report I saw back in 1969 when I got out of the hospital it stated the load finally caught in the tree tops and pulled us into the ground nose first. My last recollection of the

rotor rpm was it passing through 170 and going down fast. When I regained consciousness, I was hanging upside down in my shoulder harness and the entire cockpit was gone except for my seat and Williams in his seat. The instrument panel, cyclic stick, pedals and center console and overhead console were all gone. I could barely see or speak due to a lot of blood in my eyes and all over my face. In addition I was choking on blood and bone in my throat. I tried to take my flight helmet off but it took me several tries because my left jaw bone was sticking out through my neck and the chin strap was tangled around the bone. Once I got the helmet off, I looked back through the companionway and all I could see were flames. I knew we had almost a full load of fuel so I yelled at Williams and told him we had to get out immediately. I saw him undo his shoulder harness and fall into the jungle. Then I did the same. Kelly got up and ran and I tried to, but when I got to my knees the nerves in my back were pinched and I fell flat on my face. I tried several times to get up and couldn't so I started crawling away from the aircraft. I made it about 20 feet from the aircraft and then the crew chief saw me and came back and dragged me away as the aircraft blew up.

WO1 Gene Collings from Playtex was notified by the Marines on Erskine we had gone down in the jungle and he came back from somewhere near Camp Eagle and tried to pick us up from the jungle, but couldn't get to us because of the trees. We crashed about 300 yards down the mountain from the LZ and the Marines sent a squad down to us to provide cover from the VC. They set up a small perimeter around us and I recall hearing them firing at the enemy occasionally while we waited for a rescue aircraft. We were so far away from the LZ that the Marine squad opted to stay there with us rather than try to carry us back up the mountain to the LZ. After what seemed like a couple of hours, a Marine CH-46 got in to pick us up and take us to the hospital ship Repose.

The entire crew got out alive with me being the most seriously injured. Unfortunately, three of our four Marine passengers were killed when they were thrown from the aircraft before impact due to violent gyrations caused by extremely low rotor rpm. Apparently, they were not strapped in. I suffered simple fractures of the upper and lower right jaw, simple fracture of the upper left jaw, compound fracture of the lower left jaw, compression fractures of six vertebrae in my lower spine, loss of a tooth, and numerous cuts, and burns. They had me in surgery all that night and when I came to the sun was just coming up and I could see the beginnings of daylight through the porthole in our room on the ship. Four days later, I was transferred to Danang, and about 12 hours later flown to Tripler Army hospital in Hawaii. I was there for 30 days and then transferred to Brooke Army Medical Center in Ft. Sam Houston where I stayed until May when I was released for convalescent leave.

After getting out of the hospital, I was stationed at Ft. Benning, GA for two weeks at which time I called the Pentagon and requested immediate reassignment back to Vietnam. I arrived back in Vietnam on July 4, 1969 and completed my second tour with Playtex C Company, 159th ASHB, 101 Airborne Division.

*Mike Maloy's article is published  
with the permission of his son Robert Maloy.*

# MIDNIGHT REQUISITIONING

Virtually every military unit had a character in it that was especially adept at acquiring desirable, hard to get goods through purchases, trades and midnight requisitioning. Midnight requisitioning was a kind of military borrowing where one unit stole something from another unit. The practice was generally acceptable to the military powers-to-be as long as a few rules were followed: (1) the theft must be benign to anyone and not done to profit, (2) the borrowing was not reoccurring, and (3) the goods borrowed were more or less surplus to the so-called aggrieved party.

All of the plywood the Division Artillery Air Section pilots used to build their recreation room was acquired from the Navy Seabees through various trades and some midnight requisitioning.

Div Arty Air's trader and chief of midnight requisitioning a.k.a. grave robber was Sergeant Jenkins. Some of Jenkins's trades had become legends. His mother-of-all trade was the acquisition of a Huey load of live lobsters. Jenkins traded, two flight jackets, two AK-47s, a bloody NVA flag (made and bought at the local village decorated with chicken blood) and 10 cases of cokes to the Navy Chief in charge of a lonely radar station billeted on a small island off the coast of Chu Lai. The Chief in turn traded the cokes to the villagers for the lobsters. The lobsters were placed in hand-made bamboo cages that were stacked four high in the C & C Huey. The critters were probably scared-to-death on what would be their first and last helicopter ride. They arrived in great shape, anxious to jump in the hot water and be eaten.

Jenkins's monster trade allowed the Div Arty pilots and crew chiefs to have quite a feast. It was a big party. Pilots from sister flight units filtered in. Two non-rated majors from the hill above called 'silk stocking row' even ventured down into Div Arty Air territory to partake of the feast. Later their Commanding Officer, Colonel Jones, heard about the soirée and asked Captain Fuller about it. A few days later, the Colonel asked Fuller if he might be able to get the handy Sergeant Jenkins to obtain lobsters for one of his senior officer calls. Fuller told him he would be glad to relay his requisition request to Jenkins.

Trades were by far the best ways to obtain things in the Military. In contrast to trades, midnight requisitioning could become embarrassing, and sometimes it could become a serious, punishable offense. It required experience and finesse to do it well. The key consideration in midnight requisitioning was to never get caught...and if by chance you did, then have

a clever explanation.

One recent incident of Div Arty Air grave robbing backfired awkwardly. This incident involved Div Arty's colorful, mature Lieutenant Baker affectionately known as "Pops". Old Pops was quite a character. He was older than dirt, but didn't act like it. The man was always cutting up and acting goofy. Fun to be around, and the brunt of many jokes, he has had his share of stories, close calls and pranks pulled on him.

Pops was a 32-year-old First Lieutenant with a wife and four kids. He had been a non-com who went to officer candidate school and flight school. Two months ago, the 32-year-old former non-com and a crew chief, Buck Sergeant Perkins, decided to steal some plywood to use for hootch improvement. Perkins had heard there was a bunch of new plywood pallets over at Artillery Hill being pretty much ignored.

## TWO MONTHS PRIOR

"Heck, Lieutenant, we won't even be stealing it from the Navy," said Perkins. "This stuff belongs to the 325th. They are Artillery pukes just like us. What's the difference?" Lieutenant Baker sat, thinking as Perkins continued. "Heck, Lieutenant we are in Division Artillery Headquarters; those guys really work for us. We can drive up there, pick up a load and be back within an hour. No one will even miss it." After some serious inward deliberation, the Lieutenant said, "It sounds like a good idea to me."

They borrowed a three-quarter-ton truck from the flight line and drove across the sprawling Americal Division. The Division area covered eight square miles and butted up against the even larger area of the Chu Lai Airfield.

The two vagabonds passed through the main gate, drove across Highway One, and turned up on to a three-mile paved road that led up Artillery Hill. They asked, rather brazenly, at the Battalion's security gate where the plywood was stored. The guards directed them down the road to the supply area. They carefully looked around and tried not to look suspicious. They got out of the truck near some PFCs unfastening pallets. The grave robbers shared cigarettes with the soldiers and made a little conversation. "We're here to pick up some plywood for the Old Man," said Perkins. "Uh huh," said one of the PFCs, a huge bare-chested guy. "You'll need to get your paperwork straight with Sergeant Cramer." "No problem," replied Perkins. The guy's a friend of mine." "Uh huh," said the PFC.

The men directed Perkins and Baker to the supply hut a quarter mile up the road. The grave robbers drove part way up and stopped at a place in the yard filled with 1/4-inch 4 by 8-foot plywood sheets covered by tarps. They filled the enclosed truck bed with plywood. They loaded quickly, but not carefully. Instead of laying the sheets down flat on the bed of the truck, they leaned the plywood sheets against the side of the cargo bed. The grave robbers jumped in and drove quickly down the hill past the two soldiers.

Baker sighed, relaxing a bit now that they had pulled off their plywood heist. They hit a bump. The Lieutenant bounced in his seat and bumped his head on the roof of the truck cab. He yelled, "SHIT, SLOW DOWN PERKINS." The truck continued downhill, bouncing. The load shifted in back and Perkins felt the truck suddenly pull to the left. "SHIT, I CAN'T KEEP IT STRAIGHT, LIEUTENANT!" he yelled.

Perkins fought the wheel and slammed on the brakes. The truck swerved. He had it back under control when, suddenly it swerved again to the left. He turned the wheel right and it skidded. He swung the wheel back to the left attempting to regain control. The truck skidded on the left shoulder of the road, then bounced and slipped off the road. It slowed in the brush and rolled slowly over on its left side. Inside the two felt like they were on a TV camera in slow motion as it rolled and stopped. Baker and Perkins climbed out, unhurt but both knew they weren't going any place without help. They heard a quarter-ton jeep approaching from the hill. Inside was a large Sergeant. He appeared to be smiling.

"Shit," said Perkins. "They made us." "Don't worry," said the Lieutenant philosophically. "What can they do? Send us to Vietnam!" Jenkins laughed, guardedly.

About a half-hour later, Captain Fuller at Div Arty's Operations heard the phone ring. Fuller picked it up and said, "Captain Fuller, Div Arty Operations."

"Captain Fuller, this is Captain Malkovich, 1st of the 3rd S4. I have a Lieutenant Baker and Sergeant Perkins here. They claim they belong to you. It seems that they have had a slight driving accident. Don't worry, Captain, they're unhurt, but it seems they rolled over a Div Arty three-quarter-ton that was full of OUR PLYWOOD!"

Shit, thought Fuller. Fuller took a deep breath then said, "No kidding Harry, surely, there must be some mistake. Let me check this out and call you right back."

Fuller hung up and told Sergeant Jenkins the

Baker-Perkins saga. Jenkins digested this information then said, "Sir, hmm, what do we have to trade?" He thought some more then said, "How about those two extra cases of steaks? You know, Sir, those that were left over in that shipment we brought back from Cam Ran for Colonel Jones?"

"Yeah!" said Fuller. "That could work."

"Right, Sir! Those guys on Arty Hill surely would like a BBQ. While you call back the Captain, I'll call their Operations Sergeant and then their Supply Sergeant. Their Operations Sergeant is a buddy of mine. He owes me!" "I hate to lose those steaks, Jenkins, but they have us by the short hairs and they know it."

Fuller picked up the phone and dialed a number. He said, "Captain Malkovich, this is Fuller. Say, friend, I checked out that little incident you mentioned. Now it is my understanding that our Operations Sergeant, you know Sergeant Jenkins, the guy who gets you all that hook and slick support every day. He's a great guy—runs the place over here. You know what I mean? "Uh huh." Yeah, right! He's always doing favors for you guys...goes the extra mile for the Battalions. Somehow, he always finds a way to get your artillery Batteries out in the field with a little extra chopper support.

"Well I was told that he made a trade with your Operations Sergeant or maybe it was your Supply Sergeant. I'm not clear on that. Anyway, I think it was something about two cases of filet mignons or something like that." Fuller paused to give the Captain a moment to think about those delicious, prime cut steaks. They are probably thin and tough as hell Fuller thought. "I didn't know anything about the steaks," said Captain Malkovich. "You did say filet mignons?" "Sure did. They are being placed in a quarter-ton as we speak."

"Well then there is really no problem, Fuller. I'll get the truck rolled back upright and will send the two gentlemen back your way with the plywood. Hell, we have plenty"

"Thanks a bunch. Malkovich, you are a real sweetheart. Call us anytime if Div Arty Air can help you."

"You know I will." "Jenkins, have Lieutenant Baker and Sergeant Perkins report back to me when they get here. They just cost us a BBQ. I am going to cut them a new one."

"Yes Sir."

**By Life Member, Darryl James**

*DON'T FORGET YOU CAN NOW JOIN, RENEW OR CORRECT YOUR PROFILE ONLINE.  
See the Mar-Apr 2016 Aviator for an illustrated guide to these features.*

## VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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

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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:

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

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# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER  
James Boykin, President

ALASKA CHAPTER  
Lynn Kile, President

ARIZONA CHAPTER  
Bill Sorenson, President

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

Email: VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

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

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

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
Tom Payne, President

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

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER  
Don Agren, President

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

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  
Jim LePenske, President

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional  
Ken DeHoff - POC

## Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

The Alamo Chapter ladies enjoyed lunch together at Pappadeaux on August 11, and met on October 13, in Bracken Village, a lovely country shopping village near San Antonio. The men had lunch at Houlihan's on August 8.

On September 5 we met for a couple's lunch. There was a great turnout of almost 40 men and ladies at the famous Gristmill River Restaurant and Bar in Gruene, Tx near New Braunfels. After lunch, Alamo Chapter member Mike Law graciously invited all to his nearby home for ice cream.

At the deadline for input for this article, we were scheduled to meet for dinner at the Barn Door Restaurant on October 12 and conduct the election for 2018 officers, so our new officer names were not available. The 2018 officer list can be found on our website at [www.vhpa-alamo.org](http://www.vhpa-alamo.org) and will be published in the January-February Aviator.

Al Flory will again host a Christmas party at the Army Residence Community, this year on December 1. If Alamo Chapter members receive this issue in time, they should send \$30 per person and a reservation to Al. Food, booze, and live music will be provided. We will begin with cocktails at 1800. This party has been great fun year after year.

Members should watch for e-mails and check our website to stay abreast of activity plans and details.

By Chuck Oualline

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The NCVHPA Chapter participated in the following events: August 1st, National Night Out, New Bern, NC (OH-6), Ed Hughes, Tom Braaten were assisted by MSG(Ret) Danny Elzie; Sept 16th, Clayton Harvest Festival, (UH-1), Brock NicholSEN. We also held four work days in Hillsboro, NC preparing a UH-1 for the National Archives Display in Washington, DC.

Up-coming events include: Mum Fest In New Bern Oct 14th and 15th with five helicopters; Touch a Truck with the Junior Women's League in Smithfield Oct 28th (UH-1); National Archives in Washington DC for the opening of their Vietnam program Nov 9th thru the 13th, (UH-1, OH-58, A Jeep and a Tug); and finally Touch a truck at the Pamlico Community College Nov 18th (OH-6).

Ed Hughes, President, NCVHPA

## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

The Ohio River LZ Chapter is preparing for its next reunion on April 6th to April 8, 2018, in Frankfort, KY.

The reunion committee is working to make the reunion unique by offering a choice of activities that may not be available at other times to visitors to the Capitol of Kentucky.

Choice of activities, times and logistics are still being worked out for the weekend. We are scheduling a military "heroes tour," a tour of the Governor's Mansion, Kentucky State University. The

feature event on Friday is opening day at Keeneland Race Track. We expect to have a VIP section reserved overlooking the Pad-dock area. We expect space to be limited, so it is imperative that reservations are made for that event as early as possible. We will not know about Keeneland's availability and numbers until some-time in December.

Please consult our website at [WWW.OHRIVLZ.ORG](http://WWW.OHRIVLZ.ORG) for times, availability and registration form download.

Bob Hamilton

## SOUTHERN MISSOURI CHAPTER

The second quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association was held at Uncle Buck's, located at the Bass Pro Shop, Springfield, MO. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a period of silence in remembrance of the fallen who served in hostile zones and those who have fallen since returning home. Dennis Wilson, former mayor of Rolla, MO, attended the meeting as a guest of Dick Elgin. Dennis is a retired Army aviator, fixed and rotary wing rated. The main speaker of the day was Glen Amundsen with Honor Flight of the Ozarks, located in Springfield, MO. He discussed the challenges facing the Honor Flight programs. There are challenges working with the many benefactors of the program. It is an all-volunteer organization, dependent on volunteers, private donations, and corporate sponsorship. An effort is being made to reach out to World War II, Korea and terminally ill veterans enabling them to travel to see their memorials while they are able. More information is available at their website, <http://www.honorflightoftheozarks.org/>.

John Sorensen announced several activities conducted at the College of the Ozarks (C of O). C of O hosted its 28th annual "Honor America Celebration" Sunday, June 25, 2017. A special addition this year is the United States Army Parachute Team, The Golden Knights. They performed a night pyrotechnic jump from approximately 12,000 feet, prior to the fireworks. The C of O Associates BBQ was on Thursday, July 13, at 6:30 p.m., in the Good Memorial College Center. John announced that the VHPA Executive Council has accepted the commemorative monument proposal for Arlington National Cemetery. Several chapters have begun collecting donations for this Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument. He requested that any chapter members wishing to contribute contact him with their contributions. Monies collected for this monument were presented to John Shafer, VHPA President, at the reunion in July.

Dick Elgin spoke briefly of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire, NM. The park provides a memorial to veterans and a Visitors Center that serves as a place for reunion, reflection, healing, and sharing of experiences. The memorial was originally known as the Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel. It's origin was in a battle near Con Thien, South Vietnam in which 16 men lost their lives.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Among the men, was David Westphall, son of Victor and Jeanne Westphall. Thanks to their vision and determination the memorial exists today to honor not only these 16 Marines but also all members of America's armed forces.

The third quarter meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2017, at 11:00 a.m., at the Hy-Vee Club Room, 405 E. Nifong Boulevard, Columbia, MO. This meeting will include the election of officers. The chapter will provide the meal at this meeting. The featured speaker is scheduled to be COL Donald "Doc" Ballard, US Army National Guard (Ret). COL Ballard received the Medal of Honor for actions while serving as a Navy medical corpsman with the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, and 3rd Marine Division in Quang Tri province in May 1968.

On Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11, 2017, the chapter will meet on the campus of the College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout (Branson), MO. The meeting will begin with the laying of a wreath at the Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the college's campus at 12:30. It will then move across the street to the Keeter Center for lunch and a short program. Missouri Governor Greitens and Lt. Governor Parson have both been invited to attend the meeting and speak. Both are military veterans. Joining the chapter will be members of the Ozark Empire Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). Should you be in the Branson area over Veterans Day, contact our chapter for more information about the meeting.

**By John Wilkinson, President 2015-2017**

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The chapter held a well-attended lunch meeting on September 21 at the New Richmond Wisconsin airport where member Dave Schmidt and co-owner Barry Hammarback hangar their restored flyable UH-1H helicopter. Around 25 guests and members attended the business meeting and lunch.

Barry Hammarback reported to the chapter on the numerous veteran events they have attended with the helicopter as well as attending the EAA Oshkosh air show. He commented on how well received they have been at these events. Six new members joined the chapter as a result of the efforts of chapter members, Facebook page and VHPA magazine article. Chapter member Jim Ottman brought the trailered UH-1H helicopter from the local VVA chapter to the meeting to show the results of the new paint job and stenciling.

One of our guests was Kenneth Eward, president of the Helicopter Conservancy. His group is in the process of restoring several Vietnam Helicopters and requested help from the chapter in participating in this effort. He can be contacted at [REDACTED]

After the meeting and lunch, all members were given the opportunity to fly in the Huey around the local area.

On November 10, members of the chapter will be participating with the local VVA chapter for a Veterans Day celebration at the New Richmond Wisconsin Middle School. This is an annual event where veterans give talks to the students as well as have the opportunity to let students sit inside the trailered Huey and ask questions of the chapter members.

The next meeting of the chapter will be a dinner social on November 16 at a location that will be announced and published on the chapters Facebook page at Upper Midwest Chapter Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. Member Jim Crigler will report on his fund raising canoe trip of the Mississippi River for Gold Star families and American Huey 369. Jim made many new friends and was interviewed by numerous TV stations during this trip. Anyone interested in attending this meeting and social event may contact chapter secretary Dick Anderson at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

**Submitted by Bert Leach and Jim Bankston**

## ALASKA CHAPTER

The Alaska summer is slowing down and we are setting our sights on our fall dinner. Lots of little weekend events throughout the summer, such as the VA health fair, Veterans Museum, and

other events that members participated in individually.

We held our annual picnic August 12th under cloudy skies, a great turnout of forty-two folks made for all the sunshine we needed! With Gerald Morgan and his smoked BBQ brisket, Terry Vraniak doing the other cooking and David Buirge in charge of and setting up, it was a super event as usual. Lots of food, drink, and friends even when light sprinkles began to fall, no one was in a hurry to leave and we carried on like good soldiers. Just a great time and looking forward to next year and yes MORE BRISKET! We would also like to welcome three new members bringing our membership to 81. Not bad for a youthful three-year old Chapter!

**By Lynn Kile, President**



**Annual Picnic**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The Fall of 2017 has seen the North Alabama Chapter ramping up our activities to our usual frenzied pace at this time of the year. On August 15th, a group of NAVHPA members and spouses attended the preview of the Ken Burns Film, *The Vietnam War*, that was held at the United States Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL. This hour-long preview consisted of parts and pieces from about a dozen of the episodes. The preview received mixed reviews by our members. Many of the spouses thought it was OK. But some of our members were more skeptical. All decided to withhold judgement until we saw the entire series. We all met at a local microbrewery for lunch prior to the showing. We all enjoyed the day.

September was typical for us in the Fall. We had Buc-3 on the road for the first three weekends of September. In addition to exhibiting Buc-3, the Chapter had the opportunity to have our astronaut member, BG (Ret) Bob Stewart show us around the Saturn 5 and other actual space flight gear exhibited at the US Space and Rocket Center. Bob's personal view of space flight gave our members and spouses a unique perspective of the achievements and challenges of manned space operations. Afterward, we ate German food, always a treat, under the suspended Saturn 5 rocket. What a thrill.

On September 9th NAVHPA supported the 2017 Madison County Military Heritage Open House at Huntsville Executive Airport (KMDQ), where we store Buc-3, our UH-1C/M gunship. The event was hosted by Saving our Flying Heritage (SOFH) and the theme was "Honoring our Military Heritage." SOFH is our partner on the restoration of BUC-3. We were one of over a dozen organizations providing exhibits, display aircraft, rides in a Huey, free rides for kids in a fixed wing, and many other interesting aviation heritage-type exhibits. BUC-3 was a big hit as was our member astronaut Bob Stewart. As a Commemorative Partner for the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration we presented several Vietnam Veterans pins – these presentations are always special and very much appreciated.

The following Saturday, September 16th, saw the NAVHPA participate in the 2017 Annual Grass Fly-In at Moontown Airport. BUC-3 was set up next to the grass strip where many fly-bys took place by dif-



Retired astronaut Bob Stewart explains the lunar lander to NAVHPA members



NAVHPA members and spouses enjoying a meal at a local brewpub prior to the Preview of the Vietnam War documentary



Setting up for the annual Grass Field fly-in at the Moontown Airport



NAVHPA Chapter Secretary Sam Maki demonstrates a bungee-mounted M-60 to a future gunner



Children of all ages enjoy the view of Buc-3 and a photo with an astronaut.

ferent types aircraft. Sponsored by EAA Chapter 190 and Moontown Airport, BUC-3 drew her usual large crowd of folks wanting to look at and sit in a Vietnam "veteran" Huey Gunship. Airplane rides were given to kids by the EAA Young Eagles Program. A local high school band fixed both breakfast and lunch to raise funds for their uniforms and travel. Another successful event for NAVHPA and BUC-3.

NAVHPA carried BUC-3 to the annual Yulista family picnic at Tate Farms in Meridianville, AL on September 23rd. Yulista supported our restoration of BUC-3 with sheet metal work and hangar work space. Our member, Bernie Parr, worked for Yulista and was our project officer on the restoration. He passed away in January 2017. BUC-3 has a plaque mounted on the inside of the left door dedicating her to Bernie's memory. We had 26 members and spouses attending the Yulista picnic, all showing support for Clair, Bernie's loving bride of 50 years. Yulista leadership was very appreciative that we brought BUC-3 to the event for the fourth year in a row. Yulista employees and their families, around 1000 total attendees, seemed to enjoy visiting BUC-3 and talking to our members.

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

The chapter continues to meet at the Schnitzel Ranch, [REDACTED] Huntsville, AL 35801 on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 PM (1830).

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## VHPACCN CHAPTER

CCN held its annual business meeting at LZ Fritz on August 12th. We had about 12 members and a few wives present. Several others could not make it and voted in-absentia. We elected new officers (some new and some old). See the Membership page on our website for the new list. We discussed the Huey parking at LZ Fritz and voted to purchase a truck cover, since everything is outside for the summer. Hopefully, we can move the Huey and truck back to an empty hay barn this winter. We also agreed to keep the MOC. Mike Nord arranged to park the MOC at Alpine Helicopters for free, avoiding paying for rental space. Alpine Helicopters is located on Hwy 12, just west of I5 in Lodi, CA. We also use their facilities to repair the MOC. It needs work after the last winter rain. Hopefully, we can get started in September. The MOC was moved a few weeks later. We discussed the plan for the MOC. It turns out the MOC can be transported by rail. We have tentatively approved a "Farewell Tour" plan for the MOC. We will try to take it next year to Atlanta by rail, then Oklahoma City and finally to San Diego. After San Diego, it will be retired and sold. It will cost about \$6,000 to transport the MOC to and from Atlanta, so donations will be important to make this happen. We all then enjoyed BBQ hamburgers and liquid refreshments. Thanks to Ken and Marcia Fritz for hosting the event.

CCN showed off Huey 563 in another parade. The Nicolaus Labor Day Parade on 4 September. Nicolaus is a small farming town just north of Sacramento. Enthusiastic crowds as usual. CCN's participation in the Nicolaus Labor Day Parade was up close and right down Main Street. Mike Whitten, Jim Stein, Al Doucette, Ken Fritz, and Curt Knapp crewed Huey 563. We were again awarded a 1st Place Ribbon.

On 25 September, we participated with a static display at "Salute to Valor" in the scenic Serrano Country Club, El Dorado Hills, CA. "Salute to Valor" is a major golf tournament/fundraiser for El Dorado county veterans. Al Doucette, Ed Morris, and Curt Knapp proudly displayed 563 and watched a mini air demo by Julie Clark.

We look forward to displaying Huey 563 at a two-day Welcome Home Vietnam Vets event at the Red Oak Victory Ship Museum in Richmond, CA on 7-8 Oct. This coincides with Fleet week in San



Static display at "Salute to Valor".



At the Nicolaus Labor Day Parade

Francisco Bay. The Red Oak is the last Victory ship floating. It delivered ammunition in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. We are also signed up for the first time at the Stockton Veteran's Day Display sponsored by the Village Barber Shop. There will be plenty of military vehicles, a band, a BBQ, and even a flyby.

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

By Dave Anderson, VHPA-CCN Webmaster

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

On October 23 our SoCal VHPA Chapter, SoCal Chapter of Quad A (Army Aviation Association of America) and Army Aviation Heritage Foundation were together at Yanks Museum for a day of camaraderie. This event was payback to the Yanks museum for their sponsorship of AAHF AZ Chapter who shared their Cobra (Black Pearl) and gave rides for the past 5 months. This day they gave 13 rides in a four-hour period. The Cobra pilots were John Harris and Bob Sullivan with Robert Warner copilot/mech. The next day the Cobra returned to AZ.

While people were flying, August Swanson (VHPA Member) brought his Serv-one catering crew and served lunch to the 50 of us in attendance.

Thanks to Ron Warner, Steve Lund, Russ Chung, Jim Davidson,



AZ Chapter's Cobra Black Pearl.

Andy Hoder, Mirko Duvnjak, August Swanson and the Yanks Museum Crew for putting on this great event.

Sven Akesson

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

On 15 July 2017, our Georgia VHPA Chapter mustered its bi-monthly breakfast meeting at our tactical CP, the Marietta Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo).

Two of our members, David Sherrard and Ernest Pratt, attended the 2017 VHPA Reunion and gave a report of their experiences. Again, during this meeting, there was considerable discussion regarding the 2018 Reunion scheduled for Atlanta. We are ready to assist in showing VHPA the kind of Southern hospitality that gives this city its well-deserved name, Hot Lanta! And in July, it will be Hot!!

Our guest speaker for this meeting was CPT Melvin Pender (USA Ret.). Mel served 21 years in the Army, retiring in 1976. Mel enlisted in the Army during 1955. Subsequently, he attended OCS and interestingly, one of our Chapter members, David Sherrard (present for Mel's presentation), was one of Mel's OCS classmates. Mel subsequently served one tour in Vietnam as a rifle company commander. But, early in Mel's Army career his athletic skill and running speed was noticed on the football field and his coach encouraged him to try out for the US Olympics. While his sprinting speeds were world class, an injury prevented him from participating in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. But he did participate in the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico where he anchored a gold medal win in the 4x100m relay. Mel brought in the medal and passed it around for all to examine. We learned the medal is



Bob Lanzotti and Susan Clotfelter Jimison

not solid gold, but is gold plated. After Mel retired from active duty he became head track coach at the US Military Academy. Mel is the author of 'Expressions of Hope, the Mel Pender Story.'

Our next meeting is scheduled for 23 September 2017. Our guest speaker for this meeting will be Susan Clotfelter

Jimison. Susan's brother, Mark Clotfelter, was a Cobra gunship pilot assigned to the 361st Aviation Company. Mark was killed in 1968 while supporting a US Army Special Forces Camp under enemy siege. Susan wrote a book about her brother entitled, *Dear Mark*, that was nominated for 2015 Georgia Author of the Year award in the memoir category. Susan also authored another book, *Through the Eyes of a Tiger; The John Donovan Story*. This book is about a distant relative who flew with the American volunteer Group during WWII, known as the Flying Tigers.

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] or [REDACTED]

By Bob Lanzotti, President

## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER- UP COMING EVENTS

**SEPTEMBER 2017** 16 & 17 September -

NAS Oceana Air Show, Blue Angels performing Virginia Beach 21 September - 2017 rendezvous at 3:00PM for Wine Tasting at Generals Ridge Vineyard 1618 Weldons Dr. Hague, VA. Then meet at Bay Motel Parking lot Reedville at 6:30 PM for group dinner at Tommy's or Crazy Crab. If you need a room please book directly with Karen @ Bay Motel Tel 804-220-2027.

22 Sept 2017 - Day trip Cruise to Tangier Island, Book direct @ <https://tangiercruise.com/> meet at 09:45AM @ Buzzard Point Marina Reedville, VA

**OCTOBER 2017** 4 Oct 2017-4PM to 8 PM Chesterfield Kiwanis Vietnam Veteran Welcome Home Event and Dinner for Vietnam Veterans and Spouse at the Chesterfield County Fairgrounds 10,300 Courthouse Rd Chesterfield, VA 23832

21 October 09:00 AM-Train Ride, Autumn Rambler, Old Dominion Chapter National Railway Historical Society, Buchingham Branch Railroad, Dillwyn, VA Book your own tickets ASAP @ <https://odcnrhticketleap.com/> Group Lunch following at Pino's Italian Grill Dillwyn, please let Jim Squyres know if you are attending lunch.

**NOVEMBER 2017** Meeting Saturday 4 November will be in Norfolk or Portsmouth. Ken Paulson is working on arrangements.

**DECEMBER 2017** 8 December-Christmas Gala with Richmond Chapter MOAA. [www.racmoaa.org](http://www.racmoaa.org) Friday 8 18:00 Hours at Mead-



Old Dominion Chapter of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots & Ladies Friday morning in Reedville, Buzzard Bay Marina before boarding the Chesapeake Breeze to Tangier Island with Tom Kirk, Don Agren, Jim Squyres, Jesse Dize, Hugh Adams, Mel Anderson & Jim Holden. We had a great day & perfect weather.

owbrook Country Club 3700 Cogbill Rd. North Chesterfield VA 23234 tel: 804-275-7865 Make reservation and payment directly to [www.racmoaa.org](http://www.racmoaa.org)...more details with pricing later.

Volunteering to lay wreaths on graves at Arlington National Cemetery <https://wreaths.fastport.com/donateLocation.html?page=14720>

**APRIL 2018** 18 April 2018 Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Amphitheater 16:00 to 17:00 hours dedication ceremony of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots & Crew Members Memorial

## CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Don Agren [REDACTED]  
Vice President: Jim Squyres [REDACTED]  
Treasurer: James Holden [REDACTED]  
Secretary: Hugh Adams [REDACTED]  
Webmaster: Frosty Price [REDACTED]  
Website: [VHPAVirginia.org](http://VHPAVirginia.org)

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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

Chapter meetings continue to be held at the American Legion Post #1 on Wednesdays, with the American Legion Post hosting lunch for our members. Holding our meetings midweek has improved our attendance, plus, having lunch together is a bonus. In the recent photograph the attendees

are: Front row L to R are: Bob White, George Mayl, Carl Cavalluzzi, Dale House, Phil Lanphier, Terry Olson; Back row L to R: Cliff Lawson, Jim McNamee, Mike Silva, Mike Poindexter, Walt Wise, Bill Robie, Doug Neil, Rick Beaver, Fred Lyssy, Jeff Roy, and Bill Bates.

We had three events the past two months, two museum events and an Honor Flight reception. Our August event was held in conjunction with the Erie Airfare in Erie CO. Docents for the Erie event were; Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Cliff Lawson, Dale and Candy House and friend Trish Flaherty. There was a very good crowd despite quickly rising temperatures. In fact, the line started forming early to enter the museum. We had to start managing it to keep the number of visitors inside the museum to a comfortable level. The event seemed to be much better attended this year. The military helicopters displayed were a Chinook, and an Apache. Both grabbed everyone's attention. Our visitor count was nearly 700. The reason we do this is on the faces of the children in the picture "Huey Kids".

Our September event was in conjunction with Broomfield Days, in Broomfield, CO. Docents for the Broomfield event were; Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Dale and Candy House with friend Trish Flaherty, Bill Bates, Rick Beaver,

Doug Neil, and Terry Olson. This is an annual community event. We were guests of the Broomfield Veterans Memorial Museum. The weather was cool and rainy which kept our visitor count down to about 200. Because the count was lower we were able to spend more time with each visitor. We all had a good time sharing our stories, keeping the memory alive and teaching the kids how to fly a Huey helicopter. The

joy is evident in the picture "Huey Tiger".

Twice a year we participate in Honor Flight by meeting the returning flight from Washington D.C. and greeting the veterans who attended memorial ceremonies. There was a total of 123 veterans representing three different eras of conflict who participated in this years

event: nine WWII, 23 Korean, and 91 Vietnam Vets. Greeting the returning Veterans were Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi who help organize the event, Bill

Bates, Rick Beaver, Terry Olson, and Cliff Lawson who provided photography documentation. In the picture is a WWII Veteran giving thumbs up to a few Air Force Cadets.

Chapter member Mike Silva attended an event hosted by the Wings over the Rockies Museum (WOR) and sponsored by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). Volunteers from the WOR and EAA together have flown nearly 500 Young Eagles since 2016. Mike spoke to the group of Young Eagles about the virtues and importance of an education to dozens of children, with their parents, ranging in age from elementary to high school.

We normally hold meetings once a month, now, on the third Wednesday 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



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have a holiday get together in December. The Museum committee meets periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays. Visit our Web site at [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com). We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum; among these items are a chicken plate with the cloth holder our visitors can put on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. He can be contacted through our mailbox at:



We will report on the upcoming Veteran Day activities and our annual Christmas Party in the next issue of the Aviator.

Dale House

## WASHINGTON CHAPTER

For several months, preparations were made in Spokane, WA to coordinate all elements and efforts supporting the Vietnam "The Wall That Heals," a 250-foot replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Many organizations assisted the Public Broadcasting Station KSPS to accomplish this event held between August 23-27, 2017 at Mirabeau Park in Spokane Valley.

The wall was escorted by a large contingent of Law Enforcement Motorcycles from the various agencies acting as an honor guard and was met by an equally large contingent of Combat Veteran Riders with American and Military flags.

"The Wall That Heals" was strategically located across the street from the Spokane Vet Center whose clinicians specialize in working with combat Veterans and their families. This placement, along with their Mobile Vet Center located up behind the Wall, was established to ensure clinical support resources were readily available to our local combat Veterans and family members visiting the site. The Vet Center, the largest in the nation, was staffed 24 hours a day to assist with any support required for Vietnam veterans who might want to avail themselves of their services.

All of this is a lead up to the 10-part historical documentary series, produced by acclaimed documentarian Ken Burns, "The Vietnam War," being released in September.

The Washington State Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) was counted among the organizations supporting the event. Coordination between members of the Chapter, the Olympic Flight Museum and Northwest Helicopters, Inc. facilitated the static display of the venerable and iconic Huey towed on a custom trailer across the mountains.

The head of the Wall didn't want the Huey positioned in proximity to the Wall or to the two large trailers housing Vietnam memorabilia as it was thought the presence of the aircraft could be some kind of trigger to a Veteran.

Even with my continued negotiations about that not being an issue, including my personal evidence of over 15 years of flying veterans in Hueys and Cobras with both the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and the American Huey 369 Organization, I could not convince them



to let us park the Huey close to the Wall or the trailers.

Initially, the aircraft was placed across the street at the back of the parking lot by the Spokane Vet Center, but after the first day, we were permitted to move the aircraft closer to the road so that it could be seen more easily by visitors to the Wall and security personnel. In addition, the PBS station KSPS created signs and put them strategically around the area to ensure people knew where the Huey was located.

We didn't have the capability to count the people who came to visit the aircraft or know the percentage of the total visitors, but the five of us from the Chapter were kept very busy showing off the aircraft to a large number of visitors. We supported the Huey at a minimum of nine hours each day for two days until dark.

The visitors, young and old, were all very appreciative of us bringing the Huey to the event, as was the PBS TV station and the Eastern Washington University personnel. There were many tears shed as aircrew members, medics and grunts remembered their various connections to the helicopter war.

PBS Station KSPS and all their personnel, who arranged for this to happen, and supported by many community businesses and organizations, need to be highly commended for their efforts. I was extremely impressed by the several KSPS personnel who worked tirelessly all through the event. Same for the lead individual from Eastern Washington University.

The event, although tied to the more than fifty-eight thousand who died during the war, was specifically tied to the 214 Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho military personnel who didn't make it back. Included in that number were nine of my Eastern Washington University (then Eastern Washington State College) ROTC Classmates from the 60s and 70s who lost their lives. We had bios of all of them on display at our EWU booth with members of that era's ROTC graduates who manned the booth all day each day.

It was a very tiring five-day event, but based on the comments about the overall event and the presence of the Huey specifically, I'm glad I was able to be a part of the planning and operation of the event.

Jerry P. Mellick  
LTC, US Army Aviator 1967 – 1993  
Class of 1967, EWSC

# A VOICE IN THE DARK

Did you ever fly a mission that seemed surreal when it ended? I flew one in early 1969 while commanding a Dustoff unit supporting the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi.

We had been extremely busy all day and, as night approached, became concerned about a huge cloud system forming along the Cambodian Border. After a couple of early evening missions, things quieted down, but just before midnight, the bottom fell out of the sky and rain began to come down in sheets. Sure enough, the alert phone rang and one of our radio operators said, "Sir, we just got a call for five US wounded just northeast of Dodge City. I don't recognize the call sign of the unit and I've looked in our codebook and can't find it there."

Like most pilots, I ran the coordinates he gave me through my mind and knew they spelled trouble because they were in an area of frequent, heavy fighting. I looked out the door and could only see a blur of lights at the unit next door, so I knew the visibility would be horrible.

When I called for take-off clearance, Cu Chi tower asked where we were going. I told him we were going about 15 miles north. He replied, "Roger Dustoff, be advised a Little Bear slick landed a few minutes ago and reported quarter mile or less visibility in the north and west quadrants."

Rain pounded against our windshield as we climbed out. At about 800 feet, the rotating beacon began lighting up the clouds around us and visibility dropped to zero, so we stopped our climb and continued ahead. After a few minutes, I made the first call to the ground element "Corner 24, this is Dustoff 156, over." A calm American voice responded, "Dustoff, this is Corner 24, go ahead." I told him we were about five miles out and asked for his situation.

"Dustoff, we have negative enemy contact at this time. We got into some booby-traps and I've got several people hurt. Be advised you can't land at my location because of the trees, but it looks like there's an opening off to my whiskey (west) that you might be able to get into."

"Corner 24, we should be about three miles out. Go ahead and show your light."

"Okay Dustoff. Listen, you're going to have to find someplace to land out there and then we'll work our way to your aircraft with the wounded."

The crew and I searched the darkness for 24's light, but could see nothing. A couple of minutes passed and the radio crackled, "Dustoff, this is 24. We didn't

see you, but it sounds like you may have just gone past us?"

"Okay 24, you must be in that heavy rain we were in a moment ago. We'll circle around and try to come in from the other side."

Although the weather was horrible, I felt comfortable because I was instrument qualified and had flown in that area for nearly 18 months and was certain we were right on top of the ground element, so I called again "Hey 24, you certain you have a light on?"

"Sure do, Dustoff, we've got a red lens flashlight, but be advised it's raining awfully hard down here." I flashed my landing light a couple of times, but he couldn't see it either. Suddenly, the crew chief spoke up and said, "Sir, I think I see them! Look at our two o'clock position low."

We assumed the light belonged to Corner 24 and started in. At about 150 feet, I switched on our landing light and saw a quick blur of trees and then we were over what appeared to be a small rice paddy. I turned the nose of the aircraft toward where we thought Corner 24 might be located and began to ease the skids down into the water. It seemed like an eternity before they sank into the mud in waist deep water.

"24, this is Dustoff, we're on the ground."

"Okay, Dustoff. I'll get the wounded started towards you. Be advised, it's going to take quite a while because we're a long way away from you."

I switched off all our lights and we sat there in pitch black darkness. I didn't have to remind our crew in back to get their weapons ready because they were already aware we were in a hotly contested area and didn't have the foggiest idea who was near the aircraft. For all we knew, we could have landed in the middle of a NVA unit's night position.

We waited for ten minutes or more before our medic finally broke the intercom silence, "I've got movement out to our left front. I think it's the wounded."

Out of the darkness, several shadowy figures came toward us carrying some of the wounded and helping others along. Our medic did a quick assessment and reported, "Sir, it looks like we'll have two litter and four ambulatory patients." I replied, "Okay, let's get them loaded and get out of here."

"Ah, Dustoff---ah wait one." We waited several moments and then Corner 24 continued, "Dustoff, my people tell me we have some more wounded over on the other side of these woods from where you're

located. Is there any way you can go over there and pick them up because I don't want anyone else moving through this area if I can help it?"

"Roger 24, we'll try. Is there a place for us to land over there?"

"Dustoff, I just don't know. It looks like there might be a small clearing off to my southeast. I apologize for not checking it out myself, but I'm pretty sure I bumped into a booby-trap just before you landed and I don't want to move around until we get the wounded out."

Silence. Absolute silence! I wasn't sure what I'd heard. "Say again, 24!"

"Roger Dustoff. Just before you landed, I'm pretty sure I stepped on a booby-trap, but it didn't go off. I'm certain I can feel the wire, so I'd rather sit tight until we get everyone picked up."

After the wounded were loaded at our first location, we lifted straight up and skirted around the clump of trees where Corner 24 was apparently located. Luckily, we found a small triangular clearing and landed.

"24, we're on the ground."

"Okay Dustoff, we'll get the rest of the wounded started toward you."

In the rear of our helicopter, the medic and crew chief were making the wounded as comfortable as possible and offering them encouragement that they would be in a hospital within a few minutes. All the co-pilot and I could do was wait silently and listen to the rain pouring down.

"Dustoff, my people tell me we have five more wounded. Can you take all of them in one load or will you have to come back?" I made a quick assessment, eleven wounded Americans would be one heck of a load, but the alternative was worse.

"24, this is Dustoff. We'll try to take all of them this time. By the way, what are your intentions?"

"Well Dustoff, as soon as everything is squared away, I'm gonna try to move from where I'm at."

Several minutes passed before we saw movement to our front and then several soldiers materialized out of the darkness. Our medic and crew chief had already made room for the additional wounded and began loading them. At that point, I called Corner 24 and told him we were just about loaded and asked a critical question, "24, want us to wait?"

"Okay, Dustoff. I'd sure appreciate it."

The crew and I sat there helpless. Somewhere out there in the darkness, an American soldier had more than his share of trouble and we couldn't imagine what Corner 24 was thinking as he prepared to move from what was or could have been a booby-trap's trip wire.

The rain continued to pour down as we stared

unseeing into the darkness. We fully expected to see a bright flash of light signaling another booby-trap had been tripped and that pieces of metal were flying through the air, through the trees, and through people.

After what seemed to be an eternity, our radio finally came to life, "Dustoff, this is 24. I think I'm okay now. My people and I will be moving out of this area and setting up our night positions. Thanks a lot for waiting."

We began what amounted to an instrument departure and turned south. "24, we're off at this time and headed to Cu Chi with your wounded." There was a long silence and then came a reply that I still treasure. "Okay, Dustoff. Thanks again for your help and God Bless you. You Dustoff people are the greatest guys in Vietnam."

I quickly replied, "Thanks 24, but we think you're pretty special too."

We sped through the night towards Cu Chi with our precious cargo aboard and were right on top of the basecamp before we saw the faint lights marking the way to the hospital helipad. As they were being unloaded, most of the wounded either waved or gave us thumbs-up signals. Those simple gestures from men who had given so much made our jobs the most gratifying in Vietnam.

After parking on our alert pad, the crew and I trudged through the rain and mud to our rooms in silence. We had just experienced the thing that makes our soldiers the world's best. In what must have been a terribly dangerous situation, Corner 24 and his men had remained calm and disregarded their own safety until the wounded were cared for. Our troops can be the most cantankerous and unpredictable people in the world at times, but when the chips are down, they sure can produce.

As mentioned earlier, I only have a mental picture of what I think happened that dark, rainy night, but if I am anywhere near correct, that was a courageous group of men. I sent a memo to the 25th Division G-1 outlining what I knew with the hope they could identify the unit and perhaps recognize them in some way, but never heard anything back.

With all the good intentions I had, I never had the opportunity to meet the "Voice in the Dark" and didn't hear his call sign again. The war kept on and another Medevac mission turned into another and then another. I've often wondered who he was and whether he survived his tour in Vietnam or not.

Whoever he was, or is, he certainly earned my respect and admiration on a dark, rainy night nearly 50 years ago.

Douglas Moore is in the Dustoff Hall of Fame

**Douglas Moore**

# TAPS

## FROM THE EDITORS

Furthering last issue's promise to reduce the content in TAPS, we are substituting initials for military awards previously included in the text. As shown below, a list of abbreviations will become part of the obituaries section for the benefit of non-military readers. Also shown below is a sample of how this will be accomplished. In the sample, the change

is shown in red. Other awards and decorations such as Vietnam Service Medal and National Defense Medal will not be included.

*For Example: Vincent, Charles A. USA CW3 (Ret.); Flight Class 71-52; RVN: 71-72 900TH AHC; **DFC**, **BS**, **ACM**; Callsign: Black Eagle*

**MOH** = Medal of Honor; **DSC** = Army Distinguished Service Cross; **NC** = Navy Cross; **AFC** = Air Force Cross;

**DSM** = Distinguished Service Medal; **SS** = Silver Star; **DSSM** = Defense Superior Service Medal; **LM** = Legion of Merit;

**DFC** = Distinguished Flying Cross; **SM** = Soldier's Medal; **NMC** = Navy and Marine Corps Medal; **CGM** = Coast Guard Medal;

**BS** = Bronze Star Medal; **PH** = Purple Heart; **MSM** = Meritorious Service Medal; **AM** = Air Medal; **CM** = respective service Commendation Medal

Atack, Anthony P. USA; Flight Class: 68-522/68-40; RVN: 69-70 B/1 AVN 1 INF; Callsign: Rebel 51.



Anthony Atack, 73, of North Kingstown, died Sunday, August 6, 2017. He was the husband of the late JoAnn M. (DesGranges) Atack. He was born in Didcot, England.

Mr. Atack proudly served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, being honorably discharged as a Captain. He worked as a safety inspector for OSHA until his retirement.

Bartolucci, Ronald A. USA; RVN: 69-70 C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV 1/9 CAV; **DFC**; Callsign: Blue Max.

Ronald A. Bartolucci, of Brooklyn, NY, formerly of Ansonia, CT entered eternal rest on August 31, 2012 in his residence. Mr. Bartolucci was born in Derby, CT on August 23, 1952. He was employed as a litigation attorney in New York City for many years.

Bernard, Frank J. USA; Flight Class: 69-37/69-35; RVN: 70-71 C/159 ASHB 101 ABN; **DFC** (2), **BS**; Callsign: Playtex 29.



Frank departed this life surrounded by his loving family on April 26, 2017 in Long Beach, CA after a courageous battle with cancer.

Frank was born on March 21, 1946 in Youngstown, OH. He was a 1964 graduate of Ursuline High

School and received his B.S. in Psychology from Youngstown State University. He enlisted in the U.S. Army from 1968-1971, serving as a First Lieutenant and Chinook pilot, courageously completing two terms of duty. After moving to California, Frank worked thirty years as a financial advisor. As a Certified Financial Planner, he worked many years with Smith Barney and most recently with Royal Bank of Canada. Frank was a devoted husband to the love of his life, Martha Bernard. They were married on July 14, 2001 and made their home in Long Beach. He will always be remembered for his unconditional love and selfless generosity. The two words that best describe Frank Bernard are integrity and selflessness.

Brown, Robert A. USA CW4 (Ret.); Flight Class: 64-3W; RVN: 65-66 68 AVN, 70-71 156 AVN; **DFC**; Callsign: Mustang 22.



Robert Alan Brown 80, passed away September 22, 2017. He was born in Taylors, SC.

Robert was a 1953 graduate of Cocoa High. Robert proudly served his country in the U.S. Army as a pilot. At the age of 31 and as a Chief Warrant Officer he was platoon leader of an armed helicopter platoon located at Phu My, Vietnam.

After he retired from military service, he became a commercial pilot for Bank Air Airlines.

Caron John E. USA LTC (Ret.); **DFC**, **BS**; (no flight class or RVN duty available).



John E. Caron passed away on October 13th at his home in Fort Collins with members of his family at his side.

He was born March 16, 1932 in Frankfort, IA. He graduated from the University of Dayton in 1954, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and married Barbara Feltman on June 19th. He then entered active duty at Fort Benning, GA and eventually completed Army Aviator flight training in both airplane and helicopters.

Following his military retirement, he moved to Fort Collins, CO where he began a second career as an Administrator at Colorado State University where he retired in January 1992.

John is survived by his wife Barbara.

Chole, Hilbert H. USA LTC (Ret.); Flight Class 67-6; RVN: 67-68 B/1/9 CAV 1



CAV, 70 E/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 70-71 HHT/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; **SS** (2), **LM**, **BS** (4); Callsigns Saber White/Lobo 6/Longknife 2/Longknife 3.

Hilbert "Bert" Chole passed away November 26, 2016 after a long struggle with heart, lung, and kidney problems. Bert was born in North Dakota in 1936 and grew up in Bremerton, WA. He joined the Army National Guard at age

# TAPS

18. One year later he became an active-duty infantryman. After completing Infantry OCS in 1964, he was commissioned in the Armor Branch. He wrote *Flashing Sabers* as a memoir of his first tour. During his second tour (1970-71), he commanded Echo Troop, a provisional unit formed as part of the in-country "Air Cavalry Combat Brigade" experiment, and served as the squadron XO. He later caused to be published the 9th (Air) Cavalry Brigade (Provisional) Combat After-Action Report – a document whose original drafting he had over-seen. Bert served for 24 years.

He was awarded the Senior Aviator and Parachute badges, the Airmobile Badge, and the Army Staff Badge, and was a member of the OCS Hall of Fame.

Bert is survived by his wife Eileen.

**Connor, James T. USA;**  
**Flight Class: 67-21;**  
**RVN: 68 B/123 AVN**  
**23 INF, 71 B/123 AVN**  
**23 INF; PH (2); Call-**  
**sign: Warlord.**



James T. Connor was born June 9, 1940 in Dallas, TX. He passed away on August 5, 2017 in Tyler.

Jim or Jimmy, as his friends called him, was a life-long resident of Daingerfield. He attended Northwestern State University for two years before being drafted by the Army. He served in the US Army for 13 years as a helicopter pilot. He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Pat Connor of Daingerfield.

**Davis, David P. USA**  
**(Ret. rank unk.); Flight**  
**Class: 64-3W; RVN: 65-**  
**66 129 AHC, 67-68 361**  
**AVN, 69 7/17 CAV;**  
**Callsigns: Panther**  
**3/Bulldog 34.**



David was born February 9, 1936 and passed away on September 21, 2017. He is survived by his wife of

61 years, Evelyn.

**Edmunson, John D. USA**  
**CW4 (Ret.); Flight**  
**Classes: 69-**  
**27/69-25; RVN: 69-70**  
**48 AHC; Callsign:**  
**Joker 95.**



John Edmunson died on August 6, 2016. No obituary accompanied the notice.

**Green, Michael D. USA;**  
**Flight Classes: 66-23/67-**  
**1; RVN: 67-68 C/227**  
**AHB 1 CAV; BS; Call-**  
**sign: Viper 13.**



Michael Dee (Mike) Green of North Richland Hills, died August 3, 2017, in North Richland Hills. Mike was born June 18, 1946, in Marion, IA. He received his Associate's degree from McClendon College in Waco. After Vietnam, he served as a flight instructor at Fort Wolters from 68-69. Mike retired from Quick Wash Coin Services after 30 years as a supervisor.

He is survived by his second wife Patricia Woolaver Green.

**Hamilton, Jesse USA; Flight Class:**  
**63-3W; RVN: 67 179 ASHC, 70-**  
**71 166 APD; PH; Callsign:**  
**Shrimboat.**

Jesse Hamilton passed away in April 2017. He deployed to Vietnam in 1964. Upon his return he went to Transportation Corps OCS. Upon graduation, he was shipped back to Vietnam. While there, flying a CH-47 he was shot. The bullet went in one side of his helmet around the inside, and out the other side, resulting in a brain concussion. Back on flight status in 12 months, Jesse retired in 1973, and found employment at Fort Eustis, VA. For 20 years Jesse was President of the Transportation Corps Association of America.

Jesse's flight helmet has been on display at the Fort Rucker Museum for many years.

**Heisterman, Robert J. USA**  
**MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 65-**  
**7; RVN: 65-66**  
**119 AHC, 68-**  
**69 4/77 ARA 101 ABN, 69 D/101**  
**AVN 101 ABN; LM.**



Bob was born on December 13, 1941, and left this world from San Antonio, TX on June 9, 2017 after a long illness. Bob was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant of Field Artillery through ROTC in Florida, and eventually retired as a Major. Before his illness, Bob lived in Port Aransas, TX with his wife, Karen.

During his retirement years, Heisterman sought out and induced many of his former comrades to join the VHPA, especially during the nineties when many of those he contacted had not heard of the organization.

During his first tour at Camp Holoway, Bob was shot down in a UH-1B gunship, along with future fellow VHPA member Ron Richtsmeier, on July 28, 1966. They went down just before dark in 200 feet of triple-canopy jungle near Dak To. All four crew members were injured, and Heisterman was pinned in the wreckage. He was pinned on his side in the left pilot's seat, partly on the jungle floor, with the Huey on its left side on top of him. Richtsmeier and gunner SSG Reed, were the only crew members able to walk. The two lucked into a small, 40-foot clearing in the darkness, just as a rescue helicopter swept it with his searchlight, and they were picked up. Unfortunately, a rescue effort for Heisterman and the crew chief could not be mounted until first light.

U.S. infantry soldiers, guided by Richtsmeier's directions and those of Ken Christensen, their wingman when they went down, rappelled down on ropes from a Chinook and effected rescue of the other two crewmembers. All four eventually recovered from their injuries, although Bob spent about nine months in hospitals.

Robert Heisterman is survived by his wife, Karen.

**Hines, Jesse A USA; Flight Class: 70-2; RVN: 70-71 C/7/1 CAV; SS; Callsign: Comanche One.**

Jesse A. Hines of Winter Haven, FL, passed away unexpectedly on August 11, 2017. He was born May 9, 1945 in Buffalo, KY.

Jesse retired to the Florida sunshine after a successful 30-year career as a Human Resource Executive with Osram Sylvania. He was a graduate of Larue County High School and Western Kentucky University. Jesse was proud to serve his country as a Captain in the U.S. Army.

He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, the former Bennye Pepper.

**Howell, William H. USA CW5 (Ret.); Flight Class: 69-24; RVN: 70-71 128 AHC; BS, PH; Callsign: Tomahawk 71.**

William Howell of Treasure Island passed away August 18, 2017. He was born in Nyack, NY on December 2, 1945. He relocated to St Petersburg, FL where he graduated from Boca Ciega High School in 1963 and Florida State University in 1967.

He honorably served the Army in Vietnam as a Captain. After his service, Bill was a successful Real Estate Investor and Developer. He is survived by his former wife Susan.

**Holub, Cullis L. USA/USCG CPT (Ret.); Flight Class: 65-7; RVN: 65-66 A/502 AVN; Callsign: Outlaw 22.**

On August 19, 2015 Cullis Lee Holub joined our Heavenly Father. He was born in San Antonio, TX on October 12, 1941. He graduated from St. Mary's University in 1963 and upon graduation served in the US Army for three years, obtaining a designation as an Army Aviator and serving a tour in Vietnam. From 1967 to 1990 he served in the US Coast Guard achieving the rank of Captain and was Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Air Station Corpus Christi. During his years of mili-

tary service, he received many awards, medals and commendations. After military retirement, he worked in his brother's home-building business as office manager. He was 3rd Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

He is survived by his wife Diane Elizabeth Holub.

**Junsch, John W. USA (Ret. rank unk.); Flight Class: 67-26/67-503; RVN: 68 173 AHC, 68-69 120 AHC; Callsigns: Crossbow 35/Razorback 36.**



John William Junsch, loving husband of Kathleen (Kay) Junsch, passed away in San Francisco on August 4, 2017. He was born in Brooklyn, NY and attended St. Patrick Elementary School, Brooklyn Prep High School, St. John's University and the University of Vermont.

John entered the U.S. Army in 1965, graduating from Army Infantry OCS in 1966 and Army Flight School in 1967. He served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam 1968-1969 and in the Republic of Korea 1971-1972. John retired from active duty with the Vermont Army National Guard in 1996. He worked for Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. as a pilot in the Gulf of Mexico and later as an EMS pilot in California.

**Kellogg, Kenneth E. USA COL (Ret.); Flight Class: 56-7; RVN: 66-67 116 AHC, 68-69 335 TC CO 58 TC BN; LM, BS, Callsigns: Hornet/Beekeeper.**



Kenneth E. Kellogg, of Belleville, IL, died September 10, 2017 at Sycamore Village Assisted Living in Swansea, IL. Kenneth was born on the family farm in rural Hardin County, OH, on December 11, 1932. He graduated from Dunkirk High School and from Ohio State University with a BS in Agricultural

Education in 1954 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Army Reserves through the ROTC program. He taught high school Vocational Agriculture and Industrial Arts and was called to active duty in the US Army in May of 1955. He married Marjorie 'Midge' Sprang shortly after college graduation.

Shortly after entering active Army duty at Fort Sill, OK, Ken was offered the opportunity to go to Flight School. After training at San Marcos, TX and Fort Rucker, AL, Ken received his Army Aviator Wings in August of 1956. This led to a decision to make the Army a career, resulting in 30 years of service. His assignments included OK, TX, AL, Korea, VA, MI, PA, Panama, Vietnam (2 tours), the Pentagon, Iran, and MO where he retired from the Troop Support Company in 1985 as the Deputy Commander. He earned an MBA at Michigan State University in 1963 and attended numerous schools while in the Army to include the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College.

After Army retirement, he worked for Beech Aircraft, then as a tax preparer where he was an Enrolled Agent authorized to practice before the IRS. During the non-tax season, he became an FAA Certified Flight Instructor (CFI). He taught at the Scott AFB Aero Club until its closure in 2012. He then worked as an independent CFI and as a simulator instructor at the Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC). He was awarded the FAA's Wright Brothers Master Pilot award in 2010 for 50 years of accident free flying. In 2013 he was named St. Louis Flight Instructor of the Year.

Ken was a participating member in many aviation organizations to include a Charter member of the Army Aviation Assn., EAA, QB, and Military Officers Assn. He served in leadership positions in a number of these organizations.

**Kerrigan, George J. USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 67-15; RVN: 67-68 3 BDE 101 ABN, 72-73 146 ASA; DFC, BS, PH, CM; Callsign: Little Eagle.**



George Joseph Kerrigan of Stratham, NH, passed peacefully after battling dementia on August 19, 2017 with his wife Alice by his side. He was born May 28, 1944 in Quincy, MA.

A Master Aviator, George served in the Army for 20 years as a helicopter and fixed wing pilot.

After retiring from the Army, he worked as a Standardization Instructor Pilot, at Fort Rucker, AL for 15 years. He was the proud owner of Gate Side Court Mobile Home Rentals at the main entrance to Fort Rucker, known for its stunning mural depicting George's time in Vietnam.

**Mahoney, James F. USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 68-6; RVN: 68 A/4 AVN 4 INF, 68-69 1 BDE 4 INF, 69-70 B/4 AVN 4 INF; SS, DFC, BS, MSM; Callsigns: Blackjack/Gambler 3.**



James F. Mahoney, age 76, died August 13, 2017, at the Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, PA. He was born in Darby, PA.

After being drafted into the U.S. Army in 1966, Major Mahoney attended Basic Training, AIT, Infantry OCS, and Rotary Wing Flight School. In addition to his medals, he also earned the CIB. Major Mahoney retired from the USAR in 1988 after 23 years of service.

**McCord, Thomas H. USA; Flight Class: 72; RVN: 72-73 F/8 CAV; BS; Callsign: Blue Ghost.**



Thomas Hart McCord, of Salinas passed away from a heart attack Wednesday, July 26, 2017. He was born in Tucson, AZ. March 6,

1945. The family lived in Fayetteville, AR. and Houston, TX before settling in the East Bay Area in 1949.

He immediately joined the U.S. Army after graduating from Pleasant Hill High School in 1963. Tom was stationed at Ft. Ord for basic training and accepted into the U.S. Military Academy, West Point in 1965. He graduated from West Point in 1969 and went on to Helicopter Flight School at Ft. Rucker, AL.

He served seven years on active duty. After Vietnam, Tom was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY until resigning from the Army in 1976.

Tom relocated to Tulsa, OK and received a Master's Degree in mechanical engineering from Tulsa University in 1983. A short time later, Tom took a job as manager of the mechanical engineering laboratory at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey until retiring in 2001.

He started McCord Specialty Automotive in Salinas, a business of "Engineered Improvements for Street Rods and Muscle Cars." He never advertised, but frequently had more work than he could handle.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Laura McCord of Salinas.

**Miller, George C. USA (Ret. rank unk.); Flight Class: 65-3W; RVN: 66-67 147 ASHC, 67 200 ASHC, 70-71 2 SIG GRP; DFC, BS; Callsigns: Hillclimber 28/Pachyderm 3B/Satellite 77.**



George Miller passed away on August 1, 2016. He was born in Michigan. His Army career was 26 years, followed by working another 16 years as a maintenance contractor at Ft. Rucker.

After his second retirement, George volunteered time to the DAV and conducted military history to flight classes at the US Army Aviation Museum. George was also; a 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, VHCA, charter member of DROMEOS, the Pachyderm Association, the VFW and the Enterprise Amateur Radio Society.

**Nicholas, Ronald L. USA (Ret. Rank unk.); Flight Class: 69-21; RVN: 69-70 B/229 AHB 1 CAV; DSC, SS, DFC, BS, MSM; Callsign: Killer Spade.**



Ronald LeRoy Nicholas of Portland, died August 18, 2017, surrounded by his family. Ron was born on January 24, 1948 in Tucson, AZ. He attended Manzo Elementary and Brian C. Doolan Junior High School, and graduated from Catalina High School in 1966. Ron attended Phoenix College for one year before volunteering for the U.S. Army's Rotary Wing Flight School.

After his return from Vietnam, Ron restarted his education at the University of Arizona, receiving a Bachelor of Science in business administration. After graduation, he was offered a direct commission to First Lieutenant.

Ron married the love of his life, Brenda S. Nicholas, on Nov. 11, 1972

Through his various duty stations and many moves, Ron earned his Master of Business Administration degree from Webster University in St. Louis, MO. He retired after more than 22 years of service. He then moved to Portland and followed several business opportunities/investments.

Ron is survived by his loving wife of 44 years, Brenda Nicholas.

**Pushak, James W. USA; Flight Class: 67-11; RVN: 67 147 ASHC, 67-68 242 ASHC; Callsign: Hillclimber.**



James W. Pushak of Bradenton, FL, formerly of Bethel Park, was born April 1, 1945 in Lebanon Ohio. Jim passed away August 8, 2017.

He studied Engineering at Pitt University and proudly served in Vietnam as a United States Army Chief Warrant Officer flying Chinook helicopters. He was retired from the Army Reserve and the Federal Aviation Administration and lived in Bradenton Florida.

**Royle, Michael F. USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Classes: 58-3FW/60-10Q; RVN: 66 HHC/12 CAG, 66 162 AHC, 66-67 USARV FLT DET; BS, CM; Callsigns: Army/Vulture 3/Army 66.**

Michael F. Royle received his final clearance for take-off to soar with the eagles on May 24, 2017. He was born on December 10, 1929 in Dallas, TX. He graduated from Greenville High School, Greenville, TX in 1947. He received his BA from University of Tampa, Florida in 1971, and his MA from University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida in 1974.

He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 1948, and was honorably discharged as a Corporal in March 1950. He enlisted in the United States Army in December 1950 and attended the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School. He next attended Army Flight School eventually becoming a fixed and rotary wing Senior Army Aviator and FAA Commercial Pilot.

He served in positions all over the United States, Japan, Korea, Italy, Vietnam, and Thailand. He was awarded numerous campaign ribbons and a Sikorsky Winged S for Rescue. He retired from the Army with over 22 years of service. He was next employed as a Federal Investigator for the Office of Personnel Management until he fully retired in 1971. After retirement, he volunteered his services to Colorado Springs Garden of the Gods, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife rescuing injured and disabled wildlife. His many activities included attaining 32nd degree Mason, and Shriner and a black belt in Judo. He was a member of Mt. Scott Lodge No. 540, A.F. & A.M., the MOAA, Army Otter and Caribou Association, DAV, VFW the, American Legion, and the NRA.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, JoAnn.

**Pacelli, Vincent A. USA LTC (Ret.); RVN: 65-66 HHC/2 BDE 1 CAV, 69-70 CO QUI NHON AAF, 70 HHC/4 AVN 4 INF; LM, DFC, BS, MSM.**

Vincent Pacelli of Chesterfield, our beloved father and friend, passed away peacefully on Father's Day, June 19, 2016. He was born in Auburn, N.Y., July 11, 1932. He graduated in 1954 from Syracuse University as a Second Lieutenant in the ROTC program, with a B.S. in microbiology, after which he entered the U.S. Army. He earned a Master's Degree in education from the University of Southern California, and after 25 years of service retired in 1979. Vincent was dual rated and earned a CIB.

He is survived by beloved former wife and best friend, Erika Pacelli.

**Santoro, Alfred E. USA CW4 (Ret.); Flight Class: 69-23; RVN: 69-70 ACT 11 ACR, 70 HHT/11 ACR; DFC (2), BS, PH (3).**

Alfred Santoro passed peacefully at Einstein Medical Center surrounded by his loving family on Sunday, August 20, 2017. He was 69. 'Fred' was born and raised in Norristown, PA. He attended Holy Savior Elementary School and graduated from Bishop Kenrick High School in 1965. He received his Associates' degree from Temple University, his Bachelors' from the University of New York and his MBA from Boston University.

Following high school and while attending Temple University, he attended Officers' Candidate School in Quantico, VA before joining the United States Army. Fred led a distinguished career as a rotary and fixed wing pilot serving for 20 plus years.

Following his retirement from



the US Army, Fred returned home to the suburban Philadelphia area where he continued his career in service to others. He became the Director of Human Resources with Upper Merion Township, where he served for 14 years prior to retiring in 2013.

Fred is survived by his beloved wife of 46 years, Michele Chiaradonna Santoro.

**Seals, Dennis A. USA; Flight Class: 69-17; RVN: 69-70 2 BDE 1 CAV, 72-73 247 MED DET; DFC, SM; Callsigns: Silver/Dustoff 55.**



On August 25, 2017, Dennis Alan Seals of Paradise, UT, passed away peacefully at home after a long battle with esophageal and stomach cancer. Dennis was born July 11, 1950 in Morris, Grundy County, IL.

Following graduation from high school, he volunteered to serve his country during the Vietnam War by joining the U.S. Army where he became a Warrant Officer helicopter pilot. Before leaving for his first combat aviation tour in Vietnam, Dennis married his high school sweetheart, Georgia Lewis in 1969. They celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary before he passed in late August.

Dennis served a full career in the Army, primarily with the Utah National Guard, as a helicopter and airplane pilot. When he was grounded due to heart disease, Dennis finished his career in the Army as the UTARNG state safety officer. Following his military retirement, he completed a second career as an FAA aviation inspector, a job which allowed him to return to flying doing what he loved.

Dennis is survived by his wife, Georgia.

**Scott, Samuel L. USA CW2 (Ret.); Flight Class: 71-13; RVN: 71-72 361 AWC; DFC, BS, CM; Callsign: Panther 32.**

Samuel L Scott passed away October 2, 2015. He retired in 1984 with 20 years of service.

While in Vietnam, Scotty would have his wife send him large boxes of really-cheap make-up. He would give this to the local girls to take downtown Pleiku and resell at exorbitant prices. He was a true capitalist.

He and his wife Martha moved to Belize and operated a mini resort for 20 years before bad health forced him to move back to the States. He is survived by his wife Martha.

**Simpson, John F. USA CW3 (Ret.); Flight Class: 70-10; RVN: 70 B/25 AVN 25 INF, 71 C/4/77 ARA 101 ABN; BS, PH (2), CM; Callsign: Griffin 21.**



John Franklin Simpson passed away quietly at his home in Boca Raton, FL on August 16, 2017. John was born March 7, 1937 in Newark, OH.

John served twelve-years in the U.S. Navy as an electronics instructor and as a P2V (submarine searching aircraft) flight crew member. John was a member of the Navy's Operation Deep Freeze (stationed with his brother Jim) in New Zealand and the Antarctic.

John transferred to the Army in 1967 as an avionics and communications specialist. He attended the Special Forces Qualification Course and Army Airborne School. He served as a Green Beret with the 46th Special Forces in Thailand. That experience resulted in John's first book "Operation Minerva". John requested to go to Helicopter Flight School and in 1970 graduated at the top of his class. He was given his choice of advanced aircraft qualification. His choice was

AH1-G Cobra school. Upon graduating from Cobra school, he received orders for RVN. Following Vietnam, John was stationed in Nuremburg, Germany with Air Cav Troop, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, where he served as a border patrol pilot, AH1-G Maintenance Test Pilot, and Company Training Officer. After returning stateside and following retirement, he went to work for Bell Helicopter in Isfahan, Iran as a Cobra Instructor and AH1-G Maintenance Test Pilot. In 1979, he narrowly escaped Iran following the fall of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime, hence his book "Ten Months in Iran".

Following John's second retirement, He worked as a technical writer, publications consultant as well as an engineer. John wrote over 300 technical manuals as well as the books previously mentioned.

John is survived by his second wife and best friend, JoAnn of 37 years.

**Seymour, William L. USA; Flight Classes: 66-18/66-16; RVN: 66-67 498 MED CO; Callsign: Dustoff 40.**



William Lyle Seymour, 81 of Bella Vista AR, formerly of Babylon NY died on April 22, 2017. He is survived by his wife Janet Seymour.

**Tajer, Leonard USA; Flight Classes: 66-23/67-1; RVN: 67-68 192 AHC; Callsign: Polecat.**



Leonard Tajer, of White Lake, passed away June 1, 2017 at 72 years of age. He is survived by his wife of 50 years Sara.

**Webster, Bruce J. USA; Flight Class: 69-39; RVN: 70-71 A/227 AVN 1 CAV; Callsign: Chickenman 22.**



Bruce James Webster,

66, of Spotsylvania County passed away Wednesday, July 26, 2017 at VCU Medical Center. Mr. Webster was a U. S. Army helicopter pilot veteran. He was president of International Air Safety, Ltd. He was an active member of Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association since 2007 and was a volunteer puppy raiser for Canine Companions for Independence.

He is survived by his wife Gayle Webster.

**Willeumier, Robert C. USMC; Flight Class: 7-62; RVN: 65-66 HMM-36.**



Robert C. Willeumier, age 78 died in September 2017. Bob was a proud Marine Corps Veteran serving two tours as a combat helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War; a retired Captain with Pan Am Airlines flying 747s; retired Barrington firefighter with 30 years of service; an avid horseman, owning horses for 40 years.

**Zahrt, Frank H. USA; MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 71-17; RVN: 71-72 B/101 AVN 101 ABN, 72 362 ASHC; Callsign: Kingsman 29/United.**

Frank Zahrt died on August 13, 2017. No obituary was provided.

# TAPS

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](http://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](mailto:HQ@VHPA.org) or call 1-800-505-VHPA (8472) so it can be added to our database.

Bowman, Donald C. USA; Flight Classes 71-23/71-21; died July 21, 2017 (no other data).

Croom, Calvin S. USMC; DFC; died September 8, 2017 (no other data).

Crowe, Joseph L. USCG CPT (Ret.); RVN: 71 37 ARRS; died February 22, 2003 (no other data).

Edwards, James R. USA; Flight Classes 70-11/70-7; died August 22, 2017 (no other data).

Murphy, Edward S. USMC COL (Ret.); died September 7, 2016 (no other data).

Gilson, Mark D. USA/ USAF COL (Ret.); Flight Classes 68-20/68-34; SS, LM, BS; died August 29, 2017 (no other data).

Greenfield, Ronald B. USA; Flight Classes 68-8/68-10; RVN: 68-69 A/4/77 ARA 101 ABN; died August 5, 2017.

Hicks, William R. USA (Ret. rank unk.); Flight Class 66-21; died August 31, 2017 (no other data).

Huebner, Anthony C. USMC LTC (Ret.); SS; died February 24, 2016 (no other data).

Lawrence, Walter L. USA LTC (Ret.); Flight Class 70-28; died September 7, 2017 (no other data).

McCaslin, William A. USA; Flight Classes 67-21/67-19; SS (2), DFC (3), BS, PH; died August 23, 2017 (no other data).

Oberst, John R. USAF COL (Ret.); RVN: 68-69 21 SOS; died September 12, 2017 (no other data).

Murphy, Richard O. USA COL (Ret.); Flight Class 70-21; LM, BS, CM; died September 9, 2017 (no other data).

Parker, Stanley E. USA; Flight Class 66-6; died June 4, 1994 (no other data).

Peterson, Franklin G. USA (Ret rank unk.); RVN: 65-66 174 AHC/ 66 170 AHC; MSM; died September 18, 2017 (no other data).

Shook, John R. USA; (Ret. rank unk.); died July 13, 2017 (no other data).

Tanner, Barry D. USA; Flight Class: 67-17; RVN: 68 C/7/17 CAV; died August 5, 2017 (no other data).

Royal, Walker K. USA; Flight Class: 70-38; BS; died September 1, 2017 (no other data).

# Selections from Past Newsletters

*This issue's column is from June 1994*  
**Boats Take Automatic Weapons Fire**

Recently I discovered an old photo and a flood of memories (plus a few tears) came back. I'd like to relate this story as a tribute to the three men who flew with me that day but who are no longer with us.

In March of 1966, I joined A Battery 2/20 ARA just about the time many of the originals were getting short. I was an Artillery officer and worked hard learning to fly gunships in Vietnam.

In late April or early May, we received some SS-11 French anti-tank missiles. Somehow, they got assigned to my section and it became my job to make them work. Our maintenance and avionics people spent hours reading wiring diagrams then we'd take it up to see what happened.

I'd guess I'd fired about 30 or 40 missiles, mostly in training or against some old bunkers when, on October 9, we received what proved to be a very dicey mission. It seems Navy patrol boats had been taking heavy automatic weapons fire at night from some caves on a rocky peninsula north of Qui Nhon. By day they could not identify the origin of the attacks; so, that morning they inserted a 1st Cav LRRP team.

The patrol began searching the narrow beach front and scanning the mountainous cliffs and hill mass above them. They were taken under fire from above, which pinned them down on the beach and they were clinging to the rocky ledges for cover. They called in the Air Force, but they could not fire at the narrow pillbox without hurting the LRRPs.

Our battalion CO, LTC Morris J. Brady, called us in with the warning to be careful of the LRRPs. CW2 Alex (Alejandro Makintaya) flew the aircraft, Smitty was the CE, and Jonesie was the gunner, and I flew the wire-guided missile.

We launched the first missile about 800 meters out and kept it on track until the very last instant when some mild turbulence buffeted the aircraft and caused the missile to impact about a foot high and to the right of the pillbox opening. During that eternity, we had to stay as level and as stable as possible because the missile control gyros and joy stick were in our aircraft.

Naturally, the VC were shooting at us plus knowing the LRRPs were in trouble and with a cast of thousands watching, it was anything but dull in that Charlie Model!!

Alex and I roused each other for many months after that about the mild turbulence vs. who flinched and what caused that first shot to miss. He was a very good pilot and was certainly cold as ice that day.

On our second pass, Smitty and Jonesie knew where to fire so they tried to suppress the 12.7mm gunners with M60s. Alex went on instruments so we'd know for sure who flinched. The second shot ran hot and straight and normal. Smitty, Jonesie

and I saw the tail fins shear off as the missile entered the mouth of the natural bunker but...nothing happened!!

We all swore "Oh, no, a dud!" Then this Guns of Navarone-type fireball erupted from the bunker. Jonesie took a picture and later talked with the LRRPs when they returned. The LRRPs got into the cave. Apparently, the missile exploded against the back wall in the middle of their ammo cache. They reported 102 VC KIAs from that blast and in an adjoining cave another 55 became instant Chieu Hois.

I don't think there were any heroes here; only soldiers all willing to go back a second time and do it right!

Smitty and Jonesie were still together in that same ship on January 24, 1967, when it was flown by CPT William Hingston, a West Pointer and a good friend. I was flying wing on them that day helping check Bill out as a team leader. The front of the ship took a lot of fire, they crashed and only the badly injured co-pilot survived. Sometime before, Jonesie had given me the roll of film to get developed; that's how I ended up with the picture.

Sadly, Alex was killed on September 11, 1971, during his second tour. So, you see, I am the only one left to narrate this history, and to dedicate it to these brave men who have gone ahead.

Rodger L. McAlister,

FALCON 27 ALFA March 66-March 67 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV

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# BOOK REVIEWS

By VHPA Life Member: JOHN PENNY



*Dear Readers,*

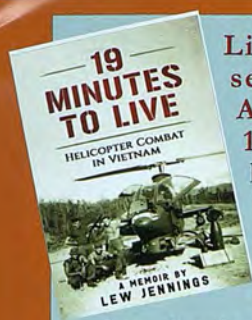
After about 9.5 years as your Aviator book reviewer, this issue is my last set of reviews. I have enjoyed the experience and the opportunity to meet so many wonderful VHPA members I probably would have never encountered. I am especially proud of all the VHPA authors who have shared their stories with all of us. Also, it would not have been nearly as much fun were it not for all you sup-

portive readers out there who frequently thanked me for writing the reviews.

Marc Liebman, an accomplished author in his own right and a VHPA member is stepping in as your new book reviewer. Rest assured he will do a great job.

Thanks again for the experience. Best Wishes to all of you. And if you are still thinking about writing your own memoir, please get busy now!

*John L. Penny*



**Life Member, Lew Jennings, who served with C/7/1st CAV and A/2/17th CAV, 101st ABN, has written 19 MINUTES TO LIVE**, a memoir of his life and service in Vietnam. Jennings had flying in his blood, handed down to him by his father. Jennings earned his pilot's license at 19. Inevitably, a letter from his draft board arrived in his mail-

box. Jennings had a pilot's license and wanted to fly in the Air Force who turned him down as did the Navy, and Marine recruiters. The Army was far more accommodating.

Jennings was soon headed down the "pipeline" to Ft. Polk, and Ft. Wolters followed by Ft. Rucker, and on to Hunter AAF for a Cobra transition. He was unaware that the newspapers had recently reported that the longevity of an Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam was 19 minutes!! By February 1969 he was headed to Vietnam. Arriving at Tan Son Nhut after a steep, circling

approach Jennings stepped onto the tarmac to be greeted by the heat and smell of Vietnam.

Jennings began in-processing and in-country orientation including the demonstration by a Kit Carson scout who could enter a base undetected in broad daylight! A Huey soon arrived from C/7/1 (Comanches) and took him to Vinh Long where he was soon introduced to his hooch mates from the Weapons Platoon. A few weeks later, he was headed north to join the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) at Camp Evans near the DMZ.

Jennings has written one of the best memoirs of the service and sacrifice that helicopter pilots faced in Vietnam all those long years ago. In 2008 he came out of retirement to fly ISR missions in Iraq. I highly recommend this book.

**19 Minutes to Live-Helicopter Combat In Vietnam-A memoir by Lew Jennings, 376 pages with photos, paperback, \$19.95, ISBN-13: 978-1548484538.**



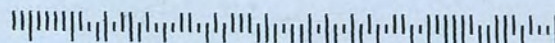
**ABOVE THE BEST-281st Assault Helicopter Company, First US Army Special Operations Helicopter Company edited by William McDaniel McCollum** is a compilation of stories written by members of the 281st AHC covering the five years the unit served as the first US Army special operations helicopter company in Vietnam.

The unit was formed up on paper October 6, 1965 at Ft. Benning, GA and was soon put to work packing Conexes with equipment to ship over along with the 200 men of the 281st to Vietnam. The USNS Breton and the USNS Gordon came out of moth balls for what would be a rough ride for the members of the unit accommodated on board the lower decks.

Shortly after arriving in Vietnam the 281st was in serious combat and the casualties mounted. The stories include unforgettable characters, humor, white knuckle combat flying, extractions of special forces, along with the loss of comrades. A list of the KIA/MIA for the 281st is included and makes for somber reading.

McCollum has done a great job of editing this book and bringing the many stories and voices of the men in the 281st to light. I highly recommend this book.

**Above The Best: 281st Assault Helicopter Company, First US Army Special Operations Helicopter Company, 266 pages with photos, hardcover, with by William McDaniel McCollum \$24.99, ISBN-13: 978-0-9962872-8-9**



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