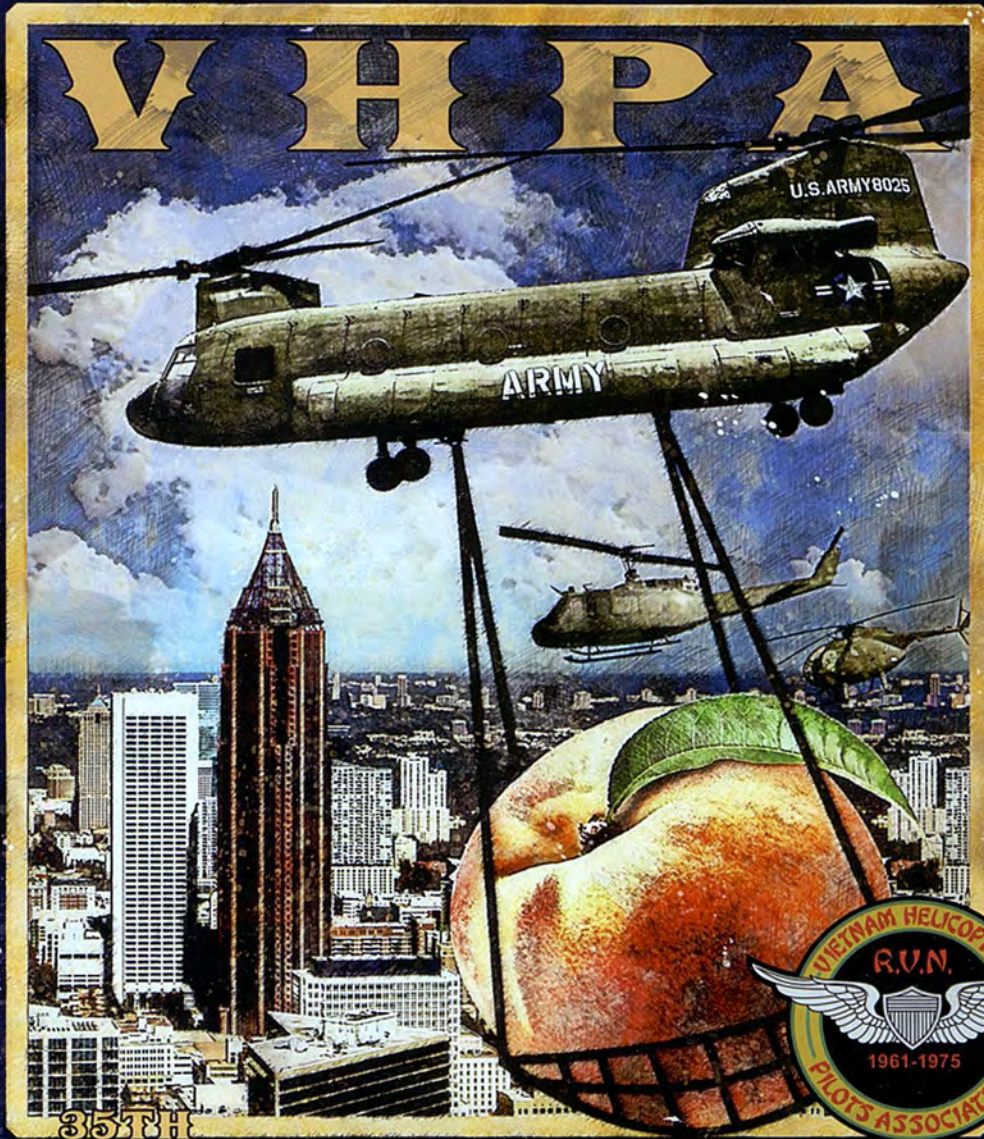




# The VHPPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



## REUNION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA • JULY 3-7, 2018

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

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# *From the President of the VHPA*

~ MIKE SHEUERMAN ~

## *VHPA Brothers,*

First of all JOYS OF THE SEASON TO ONE AND ALL! Hope all are enjoying the time.

This has been a great year for VHPA. John Shafer handed over an extremely well run and financially solvent Association to me and, to the best of my knowledge, I haven't messed it up too badly. We have:

- Had a great Reunion in Indianapolis
- Established a very strong working relationship with Texas Tech, the Vietnam War Center and Archive.
- Added two more awards to the VHPA Scholarship program (36 VHPA descendants received awards this past July).
- Won approval for the Pilot's and Crew Member's Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery (being installed any day now and dedicated April 18, 2018).
- Added a few new members (can always use more), got some non-current members to renew (again, can always use more).
- Improved our investment policy to take advantage of the times.
- Selected a new printer for our magazine.
- Finished the first phase of our database and computer upgrade.

In all, it was a productive 2017. I extend my and the membership's thanks to all who helped with these many accomplishments.

We expect another great year for VHPA in 2018. As you can see in this issue we are working hard on the Atlanta Reunion. The venue is strong, the planned activities are great and we look forward to you and your families attending.

**SEE YOU IN ATLANTA in July!**

Mike Sheuerman  
Panther 15, 5/71-4/72  
361 ACE/AWC  
President



## *FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!*

*We hope everyone enjoyed the holidays!*

If life members would like to order a life member polo shirt, the order form is available at [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org). Your order form can be mailed or faxed to HQ. Please allow three weeks for delivery once HQ has received the order.

HQ is now taking orders for the 2018 directories for the price of \$15 for the paper and \$10 for the CD. Copies will 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 REMAILING ITEMS! If you move, PLEASE go on line to

<https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password or use your social security number. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under "Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information. You can also call HQ with an update to your contact information!

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

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

**By Sherry Rodgers, VHPA Office Manager**



# From the Managing Editor

The November/December issue mailed quite late and for that I apologize. Although there is nothing different about the Aviator, as of that issue we have retained a different printing firm. Our past vendor Shweiki Media produced the newsletter for some time and did so professionally. Our new printer (Modern Litho) allowed us additional flexibility as well as a lower cost. In addition, they mail directly from their facility, eliminating a step for us. None of this, I'm sure, would be of any particular interest to our readership, but there is a point. A problem arose in switching our mailing account funding, thus a delay in getting the November/December issue to the members.

The push from Mike Sheuerman and others to "tell your story" in support of the Witness to War project seems to have motivated several members to provide articles for the Aviator. *There's no reason not to participate in both venues.*

The membership's contribution to our collection of stories, the notification of obituaries for Taps, HQ, EC, Gary Roush, committees etc. and the many chapters that provide both narratives and photos of their activities are all essential

to producing (hopefully) an interesting and informative periodical.

Tom Hirschler's and my name are on the masthead and, of course, we have the opportunity, as in this case to be visible to the readers. There are, however, two additional members of the team that are essential to the finished work I wish to thank. Kay Taylor is our layout artist. Tom and I send all the stories, announcements, reports and pictures to her. She (with minimal input from us) selects the color schemes and arranges the content in an orderly fashion that is both attractive and maximizes the available space. The majority of death notices are provided by Sammie Williams, the wife of member Robert A. Williams, who performs Internet searches for the appropriate keywords and provides us with the link to the notice. She has been doing this for a very long time. Without her contribution, we would likely be unaware of many of our colleagues passing in a timely manner, if at all.

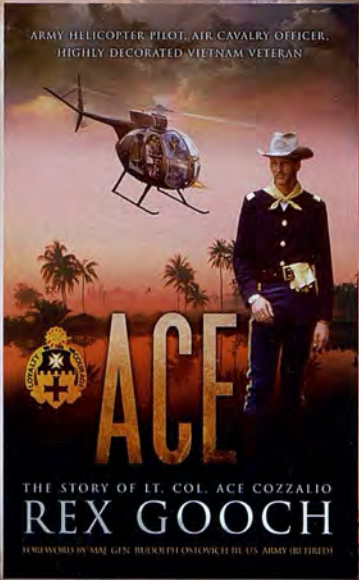
Tom Kirk

Extraordinary  
Vietnam War Hero

Distinguished  
Service Cross  
Recipient

Riveting Helicopter  
Combat Stories

High-spirited Cavalry  
Pride & Revelry



ARMY HELICOPTER PILOT, AIR CAVALRY OFFICER,  
HIGHLY DECORATED VIETNAM VETERAN

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## ~ MISSION ~

### Preserving the Oral Histories of Combat Veterans



Witness to War is proud to be a content provider for  
the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

WWII: 3527  
Korea: 287  
Vietnam: 1274

VHPAers: 105  
Afghan/Iraq: 279  
AS OF NOVEMBER 2017

An update on the Witness to War (WTW): VHPA relationship since our last report printed on page 6 of the Sep/Oct 2017 Aviator. By Mike Law

**First:** The video collection is growing! As of mid-July, WTW reported 5,010 videos. As of late-November, they have 5,367. While the WWII and Korean War veterans still have priority, most of the new videos came from Vietnam guys. To date WTW has videos from 105 VHPAers (members and subscribers).

**Second:** Sign up NOW for a 90-minute interview slot during the Atlanta Reunion. To sign up to be interviewed in Atlanta, please contact Mike Law at [REDACTED]

**Third:** [www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org) added a new page to support the VHPA's many Legacy efforts. The new page is named Our Legacy.

**WWW.VHPA.ORG**

Step #1 ~ Click "Our Legacy" on Home Screen

Home  
Reunion Information  
**Our Legacy**  
Member services  
Membership Application

**Last Man Standing**

As a last man standing organization, the VHPA war, the Vietnam War. The biased news media

**Witness to War**

Step #2 ~ Check for "New Details" in this area  
Preserving oral histories of Combat Veterans.

It is available on the public (non-secure) side of the website. From the Home page, click the 3rd item on the left and the Our Legacy page appears. As plans and Oral History events materialize, details will be posted in the Witness to War area,

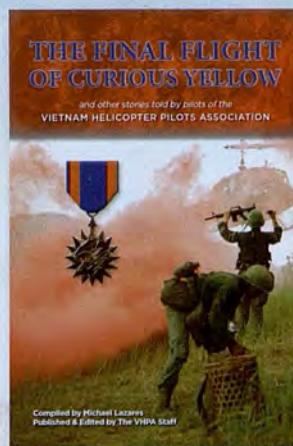
**Fourth:** We all need to tip our caps to the North Alabama Chapter for "pioneering" the idea of getting Oral Histories recorded NOW. On Oct 3-5, they hosted WTW's interviewer, Martin Madert, in Huntsville where 10 interviews were done. This past April, The Alamo Chapter also had Martin collect 10 interviews. WELL DONE VHPA CHAPTERS!!

**Fifth:** By a stroke of good luck the VHPA was able to take advantage of Martin having an extra day and a half in Tucson following several days in Phoenix. VHPA HQ sent out an E-mail blast to some 400 folks in Arizona

resulting in 11 interviews on Nov 4 & 5.

**Sixth:** In mid-November, Mike Law travelled to WTW headquarters in Atlanta for training on how to conduct Oral History interviews to WTW standards. WTW also loaned him a complete set of digital camera and lighting equipment. So, now you have been warned! Beware Mike Law and his Oral History recording equipment maybe in appearing at a VHPA Chapter meeting or reunion event in your area!!!

If you have questions or comments  
about Oral History interviews,  
Contact Mike Law [REDACTED] or  
[REDACTED] or  
Martin Madert [REDACTED]  
or [REDACTED]



"VHPA Member and author Michael Lazares, who passed away last year, approached the VHPA late in 2015 with an idea to publish a collection of stories which had been submitted to the VHPA and placed on the VHPA website. This would be something entirely new and extraordinary for the VHPA: publishing an anthology of 30 stories

written by 28 VHPA members under our own copyright. This is an opportunity for the VHPA to tell the stories of the service and sacrifice of their members all those years ago, maintain the legacy of our service, and use the profits to support the VHPA Scholarship Fund."

~ John L. Penny

**GET YOUR COPY  
TODAY**

**AVAILABLE AT: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)  
in paperback and kindle**



# Annual Reunion Registration, Cancellation, and Refund Policy

This document was approved on 29 November 2017 by the VHPA Executive Council and supersedes all previous versions of this policy.

## REUNION REGISTRATION

All individuals attending a Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) annual reunion must register with VHPA Headquarters (HQ) in one of the following categories:

1. Life, Regular, or Honorary Member of the VHPA in good standing. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'in good standing' means the individual's VHPA database record at HQ contains a valid mailing address, and that all membership dues are paid in full through the last day of the Reunion. For example, if the last day of the Reunion is 5 July, then the individual's dues expiration date must be later than 5 July. This also means that someone desiring to attend a VHPA reunion who is a "Potential Member of the VHPA" must join the VHPA prior to or during the reunion registration process.

2. A Subscriber to the VHPA magazine (currently named, *The Aviator*) in good standing. A Subscriber is someone who does not qualify for traditional membership but purchases *The Aviator* magazine. The definition of the term 'in good standing' used in the Members paragraph also applies to Subscribers.

3. An approved Vendor in good standing. In 2013 the VHPA Executive Council (EC) authorized the relocation of the Vendor Coordinator (VC) duties to VHPA HQ. VHPA HQ has the authority to approve an individual, company, organization, etc. as an "approved Vendor" acting under the direction of the National Reunion Committee (NRC) chairman. A Vendor is considered to be 'in good standing' when they have paid all required vendor fees for the specific Reunion to VHPA HQ, and when their vendor application form is complete.

It is important to note a Vendor can also have a Member or a Subscriber registration active for a specific Reunion. This is important when considering the privileges associated with each category.

4. A VHPA Invited Guest (VIG) in good standing. The EC, the NRC chairman, and certain EC-approved individuals have the authority to invite an individual or family to a specific reunion as a VIG. The term 'in good standing' means the NRC chairman has authorized the designation and confirmed the identity of the subject VIG.

Examples include a VIG and family members attending a function where the VIG is a guest speaker or recipient of an award; another is contracted individuals (i.e. entertainers, a security firm). Generally, individuals who are or could become a VHPA member should not be given VIG status.

Individuals submitting a reunion registration (versus a modification to an existing registration) must be a Member or a Subscriber as defined above, and will be known as the Primary Registrant (PR). As a general rule the PR must provide payment by cash, check or credit card to register.

HQ shall establish a Vendor PR while processing the vendor application form.

VIGs must contact the EC, NRC, or EC-approved individual to authorized VIG status for those individuals attending on their behalf. As a general rule HQ does not create a registration record for VIGs, nor is a PR established. Their attendance and participation is recorded at HQ, but generally not in a reunion registration record.

## REGISTERED GUESTS

Each Member, Subscriber, or Vendor PR is allowed to have guests added to their reunion registration. Generally, these guests are members of the PR's family. Individuals cannot directly contact HQ and be authorized guest status on another's PR registration. Registration additions/revisions can only be accomplished by the registering PR.

Vendors are permitted to have a reasonable number of guests to allow them to conduct business.

There is only one hard and fast rule concerning guests: they cannot be a VHPA Member or Potential Member.

## NAME BADGES

HQ will prepare a Reunion Name Badge (RNB) for all PRs and Guests. Traditionally the RNB is used to designate those authorized to attend a VHPA Reunion. The individual's name, home town, and other pertinent information to include PR's Member Number shall appear on the RNB.

Generally, an individual must have a valid RNB to attend a reunion event and/or receive reunion-affiliated discounts. Additionally, specific security requirements may dictate the display of the RNB to gain entry to a facility or function.

## REGISTRATION FEES

The NRC works with the EC to establish the registration fees for all PRs and their guests for each reunion. Traditionally there are different registration fees for adult guests and those younger than 21.

As a general rule the registration fees for a Member or a Subscriber PR are identical. There are no registration fees for a Vendor or VIG.



## REGISTRATION PRIVILEGES

The VHPA uses Event Tickets or/and the RNB to identify specific event participants. The details for Event Tickets are as follows:

1. The NRC coordinates with the EC to establish individual event prices. When the price is determined, it is published in various ways such as the Registration Form printed in *The Aviator*, within the Online Reunion Registration Application (ORRA), and the VHPA website, [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org).

2. In addition to the face value (event price mentioned above), Event Tickets can be refundable or non-refundable. The NRC coordinates with the EC to determine any Events that are non-refundable plus any rules for when the non-refundable status might change. When an Event is designated as non-refundable, that non-refundable designation must be published with that Event's price as mentioned above. The VHPA uses Event Tickets for several business processes such as a reminder of the date and time of the event, for inventory control, for bus loading, for resales, etc. Thus, even a ticket with a \$0 face value has business value. An event with a \$0 face value ticket is also known as a "no cost ticketed event."

3. A Member or a Subscriber PR can purchase any number of Event Tickets up to the number in his or her party. The term 'number in party' is defined as the number of registered guests plus one (for the PR). The 'number in party' is based on a specific reunion registration. By way of example, assume a VHPA Life Member registers just himself for a reunion. His 'number in party' is 1. Additionally, assume a Subscriber registers himself, his wife, two adult children, and one grandchild. His 'number in party' is 5.

A Member or a Subscriber PR pays exactly the same price for the same Event Ticket – the published price as described above.

A Member is entitled to have one ticket to the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). Only Members are allowed

to attend the ABM.

4. A Member or a Subscriber or a Vendor PR can purchase any number of Non-Registered Banquet Guest (NRBG) tickets at the published price. By definition, a NRBG ticket allows the holder to attend the Closing Banquet even though he or she is not a Registered Guest of a Member or a Subscriber PR. A Vendor PR may purchase a NRBG ticket to attend.

5. Other than the NRBG scenario outlined above, Vendor PRs and VIGs cannot purchase any event tickets.

6. A Member or a Subscriber PR may enroll in the Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) program by paying the appropriate fee when submitting their initial reunion registration.

7. After making the initial registration a Member or a Subscriber PR may modify their registration to add/remove guests and/or purchase/return event tickets by contacting HQ. An "Add-on transaction" is the sum of all modifications made by a PR on a specific day.

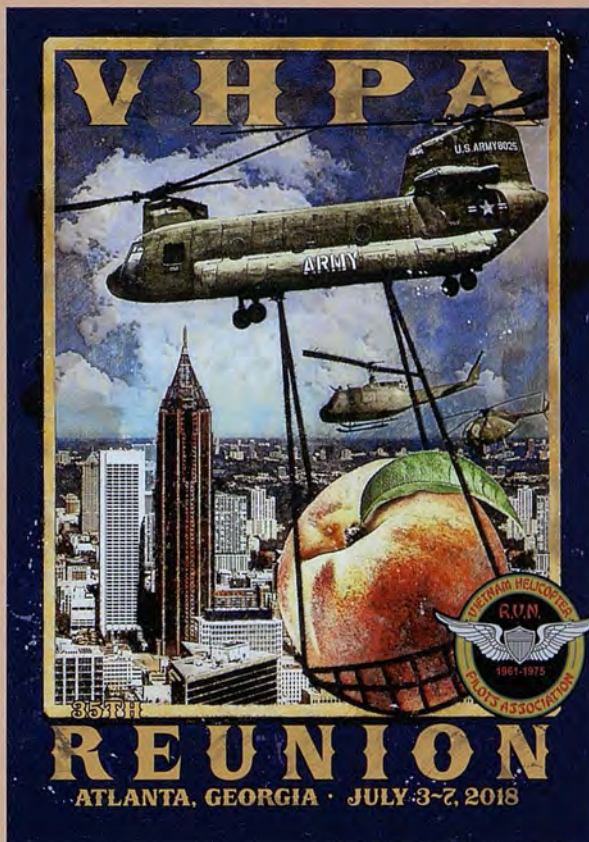
## REUNION PUBLIC AREAS and NON-TICKETED EVENTS

While these areas and/or events are under the VHPA control (they are held in business rooms that are part of the VHPA's contract with the hotel), they are accessible to the public. Within contracted areas the VHPA reserves the right to provide security and/or restrict access to those individuals displaying RNBs.

## REGISTRATION PAYMENTS

Payment in full is required for all initial and add-on registrations on the date of the transaction. As a general rule ORRA transactions require a credit card form of payment. PRs desiring to pay with a check or money order can call HQ to complete the registration transaction and obtain the registration amount. They have five (5) calendar days to mail their check or money order to HQ else the transaction is voided.

Add-on transactions that result in a credit due to the PR are processed after the reunion along with all the refunds as described below. Any subsequent add-on transaction made by the PR can take advantage of any credit due situations.





## REGISTRATION CANCELLATION

A PR may cancel all or portions of his or her reunion registration at any time prior to the reunion and/or the event by contacting HQ via fax, email, telephone, or mail using the contact information on the reunion registration form. The NRC coordinates with the EC to establish the Official Cancellation Date (OCD) for each reunion. The OCD appears on the reunion registration form. Only cancellations received by HQ by close of business Central Time Zone on the OCD (including those via US Mail) are considered for refunds, unless covered by GRI. Registration Fees and non-refundable Event Tickets are not considered in the refund calculations even if they are canceled prior to the OCD.

It is important to note that reunion registration cancellations and hotel reservation cancellations are completely separate business processes. Since each PR is responsible for both processes, the PR cannot assume that when they cancel their hotel reservation that the hotel will notify HQ to cancel the reunion registration or vice versa.

## T-SHIRT ORDERS

There are two options for PRs who cancel their reunion registration and have purchased official t-shirts. First, the PR can cancel the entire registration (including all t-shirt orders) prior to the OCD and the t-shirt purchase will be considered for a refund. Second, the PR can agree to pay a shipping and handling fee for any t-shirt orders. The t-shirts will be mailed by HQ after the reunion and subject to inventory availability. HQ quotes the shipping and handling fee to the PR at time of cancellation.

## GUARANTEE REFUND INSURANCE (GRI) PROGRAM

As part of their initial registration transaction a Member or a Subscriber PR may enroll in the Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) program by paying a fee calculated at 10% of their total Event Tickets purchased. Note that registration fees, dues payments and donations are not included in this calculation.

The GRI program allows the PR to receive a refund for himself/herself and/or their guests who have to cancel or have their reunion travel plans interrupted for any of the following reasons:

1. Sickness or injury of the PR, a traveling companion or members of immediate families, which is diagnosed and treated by a physician or requires hospitalization during the time of the reunion.
2. PR's involvement in a traffic accident, en route to the reunion that causes you to miss the reunion or a

particular event.

3. PR's home is made uninhabitable by a natural disaster such as fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, or volcano during dates of the reunion.

4. PR is recalled into active duty by the military that causes the PR to be unavailable to attend the reunion.

5. PR is served a subpoena or being called to serve for jury duty during dates of the reunion.

6. PR is quarantined during dates of the reunion.

7. Death of the PR or immediate family member.

The GRI program covers only specific VHPA events and fees, and does not cover cancellation costs that might be associated with hotel rooms, airfares, rental cars, and other non-VHPA generated expenses. It also will not cover events' costs should the PR or a guest not attend a particular event once they have arrived at the reunion host city, or checked into the VHPA host hotel, unless one of the seven (7) eligible criteria mentioned above occurs during the reunion itself.

PRs enrolled in the GRI program and needing to take advantage of the program's features are encouraged to contact VHPA HQ either by email or by contacting the reunion HQ desk directly at the host reunion hotel as soon as possible in the event of cancellation.

## REGISTRATION REFUNDS

It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are nonrefundable even with purchase of GRI: reunion registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions, cancellation fees, plus any event tickets designated as non-refundable. For cancellations after the OCD, the GRI fee is non-refundable.

As a general rule HQ starts processing refunds about two weeks after the reunion ends. No refunds are processed until after the reunion ends.

For PRs who will receive a refund, there is a two step process. First, the PR receives a letter and/or a statement from HQ outlining the details of the refund including the amount. Normally this correspondence is sent from HQ by US mail but it can be via email. Second, the PR receives a check via US mail from the VHPA's bank. The goal is to complete the entire refund process not later than one calendar month after the reunion ends. Any clerical errors in the details of the refund should be brought to the attention of HQ.



# Reunion Info

## Last updated 14 December 2017

**Who Can Attend the Reunion** - As a general rule anyone who is "dues current" in the VHPA can register, order tickets, etc. simply by paying the Reunion Registration Fee. All who served in the Vietnam War as helicopter pilots must not only be a member of the VHPA but also be current with respect to their annual membership dues as of the first day of the Reunion to register. Anyone who was not a pilot is also welcome to attend as long as they are a "dues current" subscriber to the VHPA *Aviator* magazine. Exceptions are vendors, specifically invited performers/speakers, Gold Star Family guests and Non-Registered Banquet Guests; these people do not have to be a subscriber to attend. Anyone wishing to purchase a ticket for any of our events must pay the Reunion Registration Fee.

As a general rule since VHPA Membership and Subscriber dues expire on the last day of the month, someone who is dues current when they register, could be non-dues current on the 1st day of the Reunion (3 July 2018). Because of this, the VHPA Reunion Registration software is "forward looking" with respect to the dues status.

Please understand, all Reunion Attendees (anyone who pays the Registration Fee) are treated as equals. A VHPA Life Member, a former enlisted man, the widow of a deceased Vietnam Vet, a good friend – are treated equally once they pay the Registration Fee. The one exception is that only VHPA members can attend the Annual Business Meeting.

The bottom line – Who Can Attend This VHPA Reunion? Answer – anyone who pays the Registration Fee and is "dues current" as outlined above and their invited guests.

**Reunion hotel** - Atlanta Marriott Marquis, 265 Peachtree Center Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30303-7402.

**Reunion hotel reservations:** There are at least three ways to make your hotel reservations while insuring that you receive the VHPA Group Rate of **\$119 plus tax** over the dates of **July 01 thru July 10**. **Cutoff date for the hotel rate is June 10, 2018.**

Please consider the following:

- Via the Reunion's personalized website, go to: <https://aws.passkey.com/go/VHPA>.

- Via [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org), then Reunion Information and use the "reserve your hotel room" link.

- By calling the hotel's reservation line at **(888) 789-3090**. You need to **mention "VHPA 35th Annual Reunion 2018"**. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY or MARIOTT'S CENTRAL RESERVATIONS NUMBERS. You MUST speak to a Passkey Agent.

**Transportation from the Airport** - The hotel does not offer a

shuttle to/from the airport. Please contact Cooper Global Transportation at **404-977-0877** for an exclusive VHPA rate of \$22.50/PP each way for airport transportation. **Please mention group code VHPA.** You may also use Atlanta's rail line MARTA for train transportation to hotel. Please refer to MARTA for fare and schedule. Taxi service will cost an estimated fare of \$30 - \$40 each way.

**Parking** - VHPA has negotiated a 20% discount for parking at the hotel. The 2017 price with our discount is \$36 for valet parking (the hotel only has valet parking).

**Internet Access** - The VHPA has negotiated free internet for attendees in their sleeping rooms. The hotel will provide a special code to access the internet when you check in.

**Dress Code** - The dress code is casual for this Reunion, with the following reminders and suggestions:

- It is a good idea to wear your Reunion lanyard so other attendees can recognize that you are with VHPA.

- At the Closing Banquet, many men wear a suit and tie with the ladies wearing a nice dress. You will even see Dress Blues.

**Vendor Area** - The Vendor Area has been a huge success for the past several years! If you are interested in becoming a Vendor for R2018 please go to [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules & Regulations. Complete the forms and mail, fax or email to VHPA HQ. If you know of anyone that you think would be an asset to the Reunion Vendor Area be sure to let them know or contact VHPA HQ to give us the info and we will be happy to give them a call.

**Volunteers** - The Georgia Chapter is this reunion's Host Chapter and as such will organize the volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are organized around stations and then shifts with the number of volunteers needed for that shift. Sounds like a Duty Roster! We've found that 3-hour shifts will not take up much of your time or make you too tired. Additionally we can guarantee everyone is trained on their duties. Needless to say but WE GREATLY APPRECIATE having volunteers! Not only do we avoid the cost of hiring local convention bureau temps but we get a chance to interact with each other while performing the tasks EXACTLY as a VHPAer would have it done. As is our tradition, the Host Chapter, Georgia Chapter, gets "first shot" at the Duty Roster. If you are interested in volunteering you can contact Bob Lanzotti of the Georgia



Chapter at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or contact HQ at 800-505-8472. In February the Duty Roster is loaded onto the Reunion Information page at VHPA.ORG for the rest of us to "join in on the fun"! Instructions for how to volunteer at that point will be posted on the website. BTW, husband and wife teams can volunteer.

**Reunion T-Shirts** - Honor & Pride is this Reunion's "Official Reunion T-shirt" contractor as he has been for over a decade. This year's Reunion T-shirt will be a navy color with VHPA logo on left front and a large version of the Reunion Logo on the back. You are welcome to order as many as you wish with a Reunion Registration until 01 June 2018. All orders after 01 June 2018 are subject to inventory on hand at the end of the Reunion. If we have a supply of the shirts you requested, we will mail them to you; if not we will refund your T-shirt money. All cancellations made prior to 01 June 2018 come with the option to have the T-shirt mailed to you after the Reunion or having the amount paid for the T-shirt refunded. There is a \$5 shipping & handling fee per shirt when HQ mails the T-shirts.

Please know it is possible to order Reunion T-shirts even if you do not plan to attend the Reunion. Simply contact VHPA HQ and tell them you only want a "Reunion T-shirt order". The shirts will be mailed to you after the Reunion.

**Cutoff date to order a T-shirt is June 1, 2018**

**S, M, L & XL - \$20      XXL - \$21      XXXL - \$22**

**Primary Attendee (Member or Subscriber) Registration** - The registration fee for the member is \$35 through 4/30/2018 and \$50 thereafter.

**Adult Guest Registration** - The registration fee for the guest is \$35 through 4/30/2018 and \$50 thereafter.

**Please remember that each person 21 years and older who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.**

**Under 21 Guest Registration** - The registration fee for someone under the age of 21 years is \$15.

**Cancelling a Reunion Registration** - The VHPA Member or Subscriber who made the Reunion Registration is known as the Primary Registrant (PR). A PR may cancel all or portions of his or her registration any time prior to the reunion by contacting HQ via US Mail at 2100 North Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050, Email to [HQ@vhpa.org](mailto:HQ@vhpa.org), Phone at 800-505-8472 or Fax at 817-200-7309. It is important to note that reunion registration cancellations and hotel reservation cancellations are completely separate business processes. The PR is responsible for both processes. PRs cannot assume that when they cancel their hotel reservation that the hotel will notify HQ to cancel the reunion registration or vice versa.

**Reunion Refunds** - The Executive Council establishes the official cancellation date (OCD) for each reunion. **The OCD for R2018 is Friday, June 1, 2018.** Only cancellations received by HQ by close of business Central Daylight Time (normally 3pm) on the OCD (including those via US Mail) are considered for refunds, unless covered by Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) described below. It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are nonrefundable even with purchase of GRI: registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions plus any event designated as non-refundable. There are zero nonrefundable events for R2018. For cancellations after the OCD, the GRI fee is non-refundable. As a general rule, HQ starts processing refunds about two weeks after the reunion ends. No refunds are processed until after the reunion is over. For PRs receiving a refund, there is a two-step process. First, the PR receives a letter and/or a statement from HQ outlining the details of the refund including the amount. Normally this correspondence is sent from HQ by US mail, but it can be via email. Second, the PR receives a check via US mail from the VHPA's bank. The goal is to complete the entire refund process not later than one calendar month after the reunion ends. Any clerical errors in the details of the refund should be brought to the attention of HQ.

**Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) Program** - As part of their initial registration transaction a PR may enroll in the Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) program by paying a fee calculated at 10% of event ticket purchases. As mentioned above, registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions are not included in this calculation. The GRI program allows the PR to receive a refund for himself/herself and/or their guests that have to cancel or have their reunion travel plans interrupted for any of the following reasons:

1. Sickness or injury of PR, a traveling companion or members of immediate families, which is diagnosed and treated by a physician or requires hospitalization during the time of the reunion.
2. Death of PR or immediate family member.
3. PR's involvement in a traffic accident, en route to the reunion that causes you to miss the reunion or a particular event.
4. PR's home is made uninhabitable by a natural disaster such as fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, or volcano prior to or during the time of the reunion.
5. PR is recalled into active duty by the military that causes you to be unavailable to attend the reunion.
6. PR is served a subpoena or called to serve for jury duty during dates of the reunion.
7. PR is quarantined during dates of the reunion.

The GRI program covers only specific VHPA events and fees, and does not cover cancellation costs that might be associated with hotel rooms, airfares, rental cars, and other non-VHPA generated expenses. PR's enrolled in the GRI program



needing to take advantage of the program's features are encouraged to contact VHPA HQ either by email or at the HQ desk at the host reunion hotel as soon as possible in the event of cancellation.

**Mini-Reunions: 3 July through 7 July** - Keep in mind one of the primary reasons for our Reunion is to reconnect with past compatriots from your RVN unit and flight school. The best way to meet up with unit members is to schedule your own Mini-Reunion. If your unit does not have a Mini-Reunion, why not take the initiative to start one up, or you could combine with other sister units you are familiar with if you wish. In addition to specific units and flight classes, we've had Mini-Reunions for such subjects as tandem rotor, Dust-off, Operation Lam Son 719, anyone who was stationed at Soc Trang, VHPA chapters, anyone interested in radio controlled aircraft models. Really, there are no rules! Mini-Reunions are typically scheduled in 4-hour blocks and are available for booking on most days during the Reunion. You can also request a second four-hour block. However, this second block will be granted on a space available basis with priority for the particular space given to units requesting only one block. Due to decreased usage and increased expenses, the Reunion no longer provides AV equipment for Mini-Reunions. Once your Mini-Reunion is scheduled, the details will appear on the webpage. You still should make an effort to get the word out to your buds. Use your directory to contact members (encourage them to re-up with the VHPA if they are not dues current), write a short article for the VHPA Aviator, and schedule early, so we can list your unit in articles such as this.

**Unit TOC (Tactical Operation Center):** If you have a big group you know is coming (say approximately 20 registrants), then we invite you to schedule a TOC. A TOC is a specific Mini-Reunion room given to your group for all day or for several days. This is like a super Mini-Reunion. Since the group is going to "hang out" in the same room for several days, they can bring almost anything into the room (AV stuff, displays, etc.).

*It is easy to schedule a Mini-Reunion or TOC. Complete the Mini-Reunion Request form available at [VHPA.ORG](http://VHPA.ORG) and email it to Sherry Rodgers at [Sherry@vhpa.org](mailto:Sherry@vhpa.org) or call [redacted] or mail the completed form to HQ in Grand Prairie, TX.*

#### **KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast Sponsorship - \$25**

Use this item to make a contribution to the Gold Star Family Breakfast organized by Julie Kink. Effectively you are paying the price of the meal for a Gold Star Family member. This item was added to the VHPA Reunion Registration form at the request of VHPA Members attending the Annual Business Meeting during the 2010 Reunion in San Diego. Thank you for your generosity.

**O'Club: 2 July – 4:00pm-8:00pm / 3 July – 6 July -11:00am – 11:00pm / 7 July - 12:30pm – 11:00pm**

In the tradition of a Vietnam unit's Officer's Club you can get a beer and shoot the breeze with your buddies. The O' Club will again be part of 'ground zero' – meaning the Vendor Area, Ballrooms, Registration and Pre-registration, and the O' Club are all within hand grenade range.

**AmericasMart Atlanta Exclusive Shopping Pass: 3 July, 5 July and 6 July – 10:00am – 4:00pm - \$25**

Atlanta is the nation's only global wholesale marketplace housing the world's single-largest collection of home, gift, area rug and apparel merchandise. Find rare items, apparel, home furnishings, and gifts in more than 1,400 showrooms and more than 2,500 temporary exhibiting companies. Located in downtown Atlanta and a block away from the Marriott Marquis via skywalk, the AmericasMart complex contains more than seven million square feet of space. It's a huge global stage on which manufacturers; designers and sales representatives unveil new lines, launch new designs and introduce new categories – all for the benefit of buyers seeking all that is fresh and first on the market. **This is an EXCLUSIVE VHPA pass for admission. Admission is not open to the general public for shopping.** Please visit <https://www.americasmart.com/> for more information on AmericasMart Atlanta.

**Capacity: This event is limited to 50 participants.**

**Early Bird Gathering with Entertainment: 3 July – 7:00pm – 11:00pm - NC**

This social gathering continues the long-standing tradition of having an appointed place and time for everyone who comes "early" to the Reunion to meet and greet others. Since the room is configured with lots of tables and chairs, you can sit, stand, and walk around as you see fit. The O'Club is in the Marquis Foyer right outside the Marquis Ballroom and the Early Bird Gathering is in the Marquis Ballroom. We'll position other cash bars to make certain no one has to stand in a long line.

**Note: No food is provided at this gathering.**

**KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast: 4 July - 7:30am – 9:00am - \$25**

Gold Star Family Breakfast is a traditional VHPA reunion event organized by Julie Kink. This is an opportunity to recognize our Gold Star families. All are welcome to attend. These families are extremely appreciative of the fact that their loved ones did not die alone and that we care about them and remember them like a brother.

If you would like to sponsor guests for the breakfast, you can use the Event Sponsorship section under Voluntary Contributions in Step 2 of the online registration.

If you would like to invite KIA/MIA Gold Star family members who will not be registering for the Reunion, please call VHPA HQ to provide their names and contact information so we can have Name Badges prepared for them.



Julie Kink often writes something like the following as a separate article in *The Aviator*: "As aviators who have seen combat, most of you remember someone from that long-ago time who didn't make it back from Vietnam. A few of you have connected with the families of your fallen buddies, either through the Family Contacts Committee or by other means, to share with them a memory or two, perhaps a photo, most of all, the knowledge that their loved one was never forgotten. Have you thought of inviting them to attend the VHPA reunion, and particularly, the Gold Star Family Breakfast, with you? As a sister of a fallen Vietnam helicopter pilot, I remember the first time I sat down with veterans who served with my brother, who was killed while flying C 1/9 Cav scouts at age 19. The experience of being with men who could tell me more about his life and his service was powerful. I learned that not only are we families of the fallen welcome at veterans' reunions, we are welcomed "warmly" by those who knew our loved ones and shared their last days. You might have wondered previously: "Should I invite John's family to a reunion? What in the world would they do there, among 600+ of us rowdy pilots? Would they feel out of place?" For the past few years, there's been an event designed especially to bring Gold Star Families (families of the deceased) together with pilots in remembrance and celebration of the lives we lost: the Gold Star Family Breakfast. We are still working out the details but we know this year, as in the past, the breakfast will be a fitting time for you to share great stories about the lives of the guys we lost, with their families, and the rest of us. For family members, reunions provide a great opportunity to experience, firsthand, the camaraderie that our loved ones shared with veterans who have never forgotten them. Have you been sending Christmas cards to John's family all these years? Been calling Harry's mom on the phone at Mother's Day just to brighten her day? Have you been emailing back and forth with Bob's brother for years, but just never got a chance to shake his hand? This is the opportunity to do that. Invite them to attend the reunion and bring them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast. I'm happy to answer questions about the breakfast, as details get confirmed, or about how to connect with a buddy's family. Little sister, Julie Kink sister of WO David Kink C Troop 1/9th CAV KIA 8-3-1969. I am also a member of VHFCN Family Contacts Committee.

Visit [www.VirtualWall.org/contacts](http://www.VirtualWall.org/contacts) or email me at [REDACTED]

#### **Atlanta City Trolley Tour: 4 July – 10:00am – 11:30am - \$35**

Simply the best way to see the sights and get acquainted with the city known as Hotlanta, The ATL or the Big Peach, hop on the Atlanta City Peachtree Trolley for a 90 minute fully-narrated tour. This city tour will introduce you to the "Must- Sees" of Atlanta. VHPA members will learn the history of Atlanta and enjoy the stories and legends of the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, CNN, Underground Atlanta, Oakland Cemetery, and The Fabulous Fox Theater, just to name a few.

Gratuities are included in ticket price.

Please visit <http://thepeachtreetrolley.com/tickets/> for more information.

**Capacity: This event is limited to 28 participants.**

#### **Writers' Workshop: 4 July – 10:00am – 12:00pm – NC**

This year's Writers' Workshop will be hosted by VHPA's book reviewer, Marc Liebman. The guest speaker for this event will be Bob Babcock, CEO of Deeds Publishing, who is an author as well. His insight can provide needed guidance to writers and potential writers, and give publishing guidance.

#### **Symposium of Speakers: 4 July – 2:00pm – 3:30pm – NC**

The Symposium of Speakers will feature two noted speakers. Colonel John Thompson, former Scout Pilot, and Commander of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment will give a talk on the status of Army Aviation and Special operations. The second speaker is Tom McIntosh, who operated commercial aircraft in Vietnam for several years. His talk is Vietnam from 1975 to today. Each talk will be followed by a short question and answer period.

#### **National Infantry Museum, Columbus, GA: 5 July – 8:00am – 5:30pm - \$60**



The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center salutes soldiers in a 190,000-square-foot facility nestled where Columbus meets Fort Benning. It is the only museum in the country

dedicated to the American Infantryman and preserves one of the greatest collections of military artifacts. Featuring state-of-the-art exhibits, the museum traces infantry history from colonial times to the present in a series of galleries. The museum also showcases the Vietnam Memorial Plaza, featuring the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall and the iconic World War II Company Street. VHPA guests will have time to wander throughout the museum and galleries at their own pleasure and pace, enjoy lunch, and our ticket price includes a donation to cover admission to the museum and bus driver gratuity.

Please visit <http://nationalinfantrymuseum.org/> for more information.

**Note: This tour will include a box lunch with the choice of turkey, roast beef or chicken salad sandwich, chips and a small drink.**

**Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.**

#### **Roswell and Antebellum Home Tour: 5 July – 10:00am – 4:00pm – \$55**

Hop on board the coach bus to the beautiful town of Roswell, Georgia to enjoy a narrated and exciting look





into Southern life during the Civil War. This tour includes a guided tour of the Smith Plantation home and grounds, free time for our members to eat lunch and shop in the local restaurants and interesting shops in the historical town square, and a drive through the Roswell Mill ruins, Mill Village, and gorgeous antebellum homes in the town. Gratuity is included in ticket price.

Please visit <http://www.visitroswellga.com/> for more information on Roswell, Georgia.

**Note: Lunch IS NOT included in this tour but is available for purchase during lunch/shopping break on the square.**

**Capacity: This event is limited to 50 participants.**

#### **Best of Atlanta Movie Tour: 5 July – 1:00pm – 4:00pm – \$55**

With over 1,200 movies and television shows filmed here in Atlanta, we pack this tour with tons of locations, clips and behind the scenes stories. Whether you love Captain America: Civil War, Ride Along, Stranger Things, The Hunger Games, The Walking Dead, The Fast and the Furious, The Blind Side, Anchorman 2, Baby Driver, or The Real Housewives Of Atlanta, this tour has something for everyone. Gratuity is included in ticket price.

Please visit <https://atlantamovietours.com/tours/gone-with-the-wind-tour/> for more information.

**Capacity: This event is limited to 50 participants.**

#### **Quilter's Show & Tell: 5 July – 2:00pm – 4:00pm – NC**

This special meeting continues the tradition started at least six years ago to present wonderful hand-made, American flag themed quilts to VHPAers and possibly local area veterans. At the 2018 Reunion the group plans to present eleven (11) quilts mostly to reunion attendees who are Vietnam veterans versus the eight (8) that were presented in Indianapolis. Each year there is a "little twist" in the selection process. This year one of the guiding points – the recipient (or suitable proxy) must be able to attend the presentation portion of the Show & Tell. Following the presentations, each quilter will have the opportunity for a show and tell of their quilt blocks or projects, either completed or in progress.

#### **First Time Attendee Reception: 5 July – 7:00pm – 8:00pm – NC**

This is a special reception for those attending a VHPA reunion for the first time. Besides meeting other first-time attendees, you will visit with members of the VHPA Executive Council and various VHPA committee chairmen in an informal setting. After a brief presentation about the history of the VHPA and the way the VHPA operates there is time for Q&A and one to one conversations. For example - maybe you want to meet and speak with the VHPA President or the Editor of The Aviator? Maybe you have a question about how the annual financial compilation is conducted? Maybe you have a photo that you'd like to see published in the VHPA Calendar? Now is a good time to have these conversa-

tions! While the primary audience is VHPA members, their guests and friends are also welcome. A cash bar is available in this reception.

**Note: At the conclusion of this reception, you are welcome to join the Welcome Reception already in progress.**

#### **Welcome Reception: 5 July – 7:30pm – 11:00pm – NC**

Traditionally this reception was the first official event for everyone to get together FOR SURE at a Reunion. Now it is just a "get together" at an appointed place and time for everyone who attends the Reunion. Please don't be concerned about the word "reception" ~ there will be NO RECEIVING LINE and NO FORMALITIES. The room will be configured with lots of tables and chairs so everyone can sit and talk. We'll position cash bars to make certain no one has to stand in a long line. You are welcome to bring a unit sign or guidon so people will know where "your table" is located. We CANNOT hang unit banners over the tables at this Reception, sorry.

#### **Scholarship Breakfast – Mike Sheuerman & Tom Payne - 6 July - 7:30am – 9:00am – \$25**

This is the second of three breakfasts with speakers offered at this Reunion. Speakers will discuss the VHPA Scholarships, how to apply, who is eligible to apply, when to apply and how the selection process is handled. The program will be conducted by the Chairman of the VHPA Scholarship Committee, the Fundraising member, a member of the AAAA Scholarship Board and several recipients of awards from the program.

Enjoy the JW Marriott's Marquis Breakfast Buffet including orange juice & bottle fruit juices, sliced seasonal fruits & whole fruit, farm fresh scrambled eggs, crisp bacon strips, seasoned breakfast potatoes, seasonal breakfast bakeries, regular & decaffeinated coffee, Tazo teas & hot chocolate. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.



#### **Golf Outing @ Stone Mountain: 6 July – 7:00am – 4:00pm - \$140**

This year we will play at Stone Mountain Golf Club. Golfers will play the Lakemont Course which features incredible views of Stone Mountain and the lake. The front 9

holes of the Lakemont Course wind around Stone Mountain Lake, with six holes having water in play. The back 9 offers beautiful holes with rock outcroppings and four holes where water comes into play. The dramatic elevation changes offer a unique ambience that appeal to every golfer. Your golf ticket includes bus transportation, green fees, carts, score cards, status board scores, complimentary range balls, **BREAKFAST AND LUNCH**. Rental golf sets of Taylor Made M2 Clubs including 2 sleeves of balls are available for \$50/round.



The Power Pack rules are carried forward from previous VHPA events. One (1) Power Pack is included with your golf registration. A Power Pack ticket cost \$20 and can be purchased at the HQ Registration Desk in the hotel with cash or credit card. Cash is required to purchase an individual team member Power Pack at the golf course. Included in the Power Pack Bonuses are the following: Two each Mulligan's off the tee only for each 9 hole side (total of 4 per team member). Mulligans are for each player and cannot be used by another team member. "Get-Out of Hazard Free" per 9 hole side (total of 2) per 18 holes – Place ball where last traveled before entering the hazard or OB, no penalty. Used for sand traps, water, and Out of Bounds with no penalty. Use of the most forward tee, one (1) per side (total of 2) per 18 holes- Not available on Par 3s.

Visit <http://www.stonemountaingolf.com/> for details about the course.

**Capacity: This event is limited to 60 participants.**



**Atlanta History Center: 6 July – 9:15am – 2:30pm – \$35**

History happens every day and that's a lot of history to tell. Set your own pace and enjoy learning about all

things Atlanta history as you stroll through the exhibitions, gardens, and historic houses. Founded in 1926, the Atlanta History Center is an all-inclusive 33-acre destination featuring the Atlanta History Museum, one of the Southeast's largest history museums; two historic houses, the 1928 Swan House and the Smith Family Farm; the Centennial Olympic Games Museum, a museum gift shop, and acres of historic gardens and woodland trails. Lunch is not included but our group can enjoy lunch at the Swan Coach House Restaurant or the Souper Jenny Café.

This is a self-guided tour which allows VHPA members the opportunity to spend as little or as much time as they like in areas on the 33-acre campus. Gratuity is included in ticket price.

Visit <http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/> more information.

**Capacity: This event is limited to 50 participants.**



**Delta Flight Museum #1: 6 July – 10:30am – 1:30pm - \$35**

**Delta Flight Museum #2: 6 July – 12:00pm – 3:00pm - \$35**

Delta Flight Museum offers a one-of-a-kind experience and an innovative focus on the future of aviation. Once you arrive at the museum you can head over to the two most historic airplane hangers, built in 1941, that give you an up-close look at historic aircraft dating back to the 1920s, explore exhibits inside

the historic Boeing 767, The Spirit of Delta, and see other interactive exhibits and rare artifacts. After that, you can head over and tour the first Boeing 747-400 produced! The Boeing 747 is the most popular and recognizable aircraft in the world today. Once inside, visitors can sit in aircraft seats, check out the upper deck, walk out on a wing, look down into the fuel tank and cargo bin, and learn all about the history of the 747 and its role in Delta's history. Gratuity is included in ticket price.

Please visit [www.deltamuseum.org](http://www.deltamuseum.org) for more information.

**NOTE: NO LUNCH is included in this tour. There is NO place to eat at the Delta Museum so members will need to bring snacks, eat a late breakfast and/or an early/late lunch.**

**Capacity: This event is limited to 50 participants each tour.**

**Pre-Memorial Service Breakfast: 7 July – 7:30am – 8:45am – Speaker TBD - \$25**

This is the third and final breakfast offered at this Reunion. The Memorial Service, scheduled to begin at 9am is primarily a time to honor the several hundred VHPA members and potential members who passed away since the 2017 Reunion in Indianapolis.

Enjoy the JW Marriott's Marquis Breakfast Buffet including orange juice & bottle fruit juices, sliced seasonal fruits & whole fruit, farm fresh scrambled eggs, crisp bacon strips, seasoned breakfast potatoes, seasonal breakfast bakeries, regular & decaffeinated coffee, Tazo teas & hot chocolate. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.

**Memorial Service: 7 July – 9:00am – 9:30am – NC**

The Memorial Service has been part of the "Reunion's Fabric" for at least ten years. It has evolved into the perfect setting / opportunity to reflect and remember our fallen brothers and friends. Since the KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast is dedicated to our KIA/MIA brothers, this Memorial Service is dedicated to those who passed away after their service in Southeast Asia with SPECIAL EMPHASIS on those who have passed SINCE THE LAST VHPA REUNION. The VHPA often uses the term DAT (Died After Tour) to refer to those who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era, survived the War, and then passed away.

A roster of all DATs (known to the VHPA) since the last Reunion is printed in the program. In Washington there were 327 names on the roster! In Reno, 229 and in Indianapolis, 291.

The brief Memorial Service is patterned after a traditional grave-side service many of us experience at a National Cemetery. It begins with the Posting of the Colors and we all repeat the Pledge of Allegiance. There is an opening prayer and we all sing the Star Spangled Banner.

Traditionally a local pastor or a VHPAer delivers a short message. Often Taps is played or a special musical arrangement is presented. We all sing God Bless America as a closing hymn. A Closing Prayer is offered.



It is important to note that no financial donations or contributions are requested or accepted during the Memorial Service.

Questions concerning this event should be directed to VHPA Executive Council Member Art Price or by contacting VHPA HQ.



**Spouse/Guest Event – “Margaret Mitchell’s Gone With the Wind Tour”: 7 July – 9:00am – 12:00pm - \$55**

This tour is a Broadway play on wheels that picks you up at the Marriott Marquis for a VHPA exclusive must-see for any fan of *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell or anyone interested in the Civil War and Reconstruction Era! With this event, you will join “Margaret Mitchell” herself as she shares the fascinating story of her life while touring through Atlanta. You will walk with her as she traces her footsteps at The Margaret Mitchell House where she wrote *Gone with the Wind*, learn how the South’s most beloved novel was finally shared with the world, see her typewriter, first drafts of the book and her Pulitzer Prize. Gratuity is included in ticket price.

Please visit <https://atlantamovietours.com/tours/gone-with-the-wind-tour/> for more information.

**Capacity: This event is limited to 50 participants.**

**Annual Business Meeting: 5 July – 10:00am – 12:30pm – NC**

The Annual Business Meeting (ABM) is when we conduct the official business of the association. On Wednesday morning, committee chairmen will give reports on their activities over the past year and you will have the opportunity to vote on administrative issues plus elect our next two Executive Council members. This is a good time to learn about the workings of the VHPA behind the scenes and to influence the future direction of our association.

Only VHPA Members in good standing (meaning the former pilot is dues current and HQ has a valid mailing address for him in the database) may attend. You must present your ticket at the door. VHPA Members in good standing not attending the Reunion can also attend the ABM but must obtain a ticket from the Registration Desk.

**Atlanta City Trolley Tour: 7 July – 1:00pm – 2:30pm - \$35**

See description on 4 July

**Capacity: This event is limited to 28 participants.**

**Closing Banquet: Registered Adults – 7 July – 5:45pm – 10:30pm - \$75**

This ticket is for an adult banquet meal (beef or chicken) for someone who has also paid the adult reunion registration fee. The highlight for most reunion attendees is our closing banquet. This is the only “dress up” occasion of the reunion. It is a celebration of our time together opening with a tribute to our missing men and closing with the change of command from

our current president, Mike Sheuerman to the new one, John Sorensen after the meal.

For those who just want to visit after the closing remarks, please know you can stay at your table until 11 pm. Cash bars remain open until they are no longer needed.

**Closing Banquet: Registered Child <10 – 7 July – 5:45pm – 10:30pm - \$20**

This ticket is for a kid's meal for the closing banquet. A word of warning is appropriate here. This meal is for children under the age of 10 years. Trust us when we say this meal will NOT MAKE a teenager happy!

A few years ago, the only meal option available was an adult meal for children. Rather expensive indeed. While this price is still rather high for a “kid's meal” it is much more attractive than paying for an adult meal for a 10-year old!

**Closing Banquet: Non-Registered Guest – 5 July – 5:45pm – 10:30pm - \$85**

This ticket is for an adult banquet meal (beef or chicken) for someone who has NOT PAID the adult reunion registration fee. Please review the Non-Registered Banquet Guest (NRBG) details in the Reunion Information at [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org).

A non-registered guest enjoys all the features/details described in the registered adult narrative above.

## WHEN WE CAME HOME

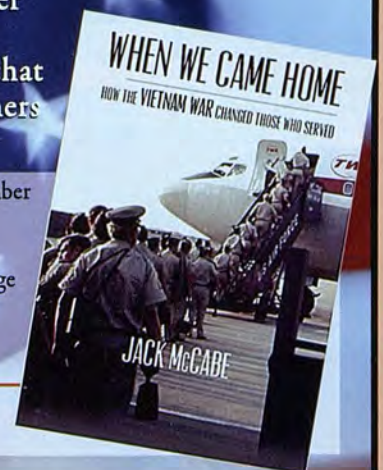
Jack McCabe, a veteran of the Vietnam War, has chronicled his experiences and those of over 150 of his fellow veterans following their return home. Never before...or since, have American citizens in great numbers shown such disrespect and lack of support for their war veterans. For many it added an emotional 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  
Order a signed copy from the author: \$19.99 + postage

Check or Pay Pal accepted

Also available from Amazon and Barnes and Noble





# ARMY AVIATION HERITAGE FOUNDATION

## Twentieth Anniversary

I was fortunate to be able to attend the 20th Anniversary and Christmas Celebration for the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation Sky Soldiers this past weekend at the Stone Mountain, GA resort in Northeast Atlanta area. As usual, it was a great event, but this year we were also celebrating the 20th anniversary of the forming of the organization in June of 1997.

I took the opportunity to join in the spring of 1998

and am counted among the "oldest" and longest serving members. Three of the current active and regularly participating Founding Life Members were in attendance: Me, Member # 9), Tiffany Schumacher #13) and Glenn Carr #16. There are no active and participating members with lower numbers than the three of us.

By Jerry Mellick



Pictured is our first aircraft and lists the highlights of our past 20 years.

During the VHPA Reunion 3-8 July 2018, the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) will be offering rides on either the UH1 or AH1.

Please contact AAHF at the number and email address listed below for information and to schedule rides.  
AAHF website: [www.armyav.org](http://www.armyav.org); reference the VHPA Convention (reunion) tab on the drop down menu.  
For additional questions or information please send a message to [info@armyav.org](mailto:info@armyav.org) or call 770-897-0444.

\* The scheduling, payment and conduct of the helicopter rides are under the auspices of the AAHF and are not affiliated with VHPA National Reunion or its Officers and membership.



# QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

At the Show and Tell in Indianapolis, we presented eight quilts to our deserving veterans. Those who received the quilts were: CPT Mike Jimison, CPT Dale Davis, CW2 Tom Maley, CW2 Jim Ingersoll, CW4 Ed Bohlke, CPT John Hoffman, LTC Gary Fowler, and CPT Drew Christensen.

The "Quilts for VHPA Veterans" program has gone beyond our internal VHPA Quilters. Many of the blocks donated for next year's quilts were pieced by non-VHPA friends here in the U.S. as well as snowbirds from Canada. I'd like to extend a blanket thank-you to everyone who assisted in making next year's presentation our best yet. We will be presenting 11 quilts to randomly selected veterans in Atlanta. See you there!

In October, Wanda Payne and Dianna Law were able to join me for two days of sewing at the American Legion Post 370 in Overland Park, KS to assemble the quilt tops for the 2018 recipients. At this time, the quilts tops are being quilted.

In appreciation, a quilt was presented on behalf of the VHPA Quilters to the American Legion which was accepted by Doug Latessa, Commander and Steve Putnum, Adjutant. The generosity of Post 370 in allowing us to use their facilities is greatly appreciated. Thank you to Connie Holmes, manager.



Dianna Law



Wanda Payne



L-R Doug Latessa, Commander, Steve Putnum, Adjutant and Kathleen Sherfey.



L-R Steve Putnum, Adjutant; Connie Holmes, Facility Manager, Doug Latessa Commander

I am asking once again for all quilters attending next year's reunion to bring your "Show and Tell" projects and/or blocks for all to enjoy.

The requirements for the blocks are the same as last year.

Wanda Payne, Dianna Law, Kathleen Sherfey "One quilt down and many more to go."



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# OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

See our Website at: [WWW.VHPA.org](http://WWW.VHPA.org) for the latest details and to register for the Reunion

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

## TUESDAY, JULY 3,

## THURSDAY, JULY 5 **America's Mart Shopping Pass (Must purchase a ticket for entry)**

## & FRIDAY, JULY 6

### MONDAY, JULY 2

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm Welcome Desk & Pre-registration

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm HQ Registration Desk

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm O'Club Open

### TUESDAY, JULY 3

8:00 am - 8:00 pm T-shirt Pick Up

8:00 am - 8:00 pm Welcome Desk & Pre-registration

9:00 am - 10:00 HQ Registration Desk

9:00 am - 12:30 pm Mini Reunions / TOCs

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Vendor Room Open

1:30 pm - 5:00 pm HQ Registration Desk

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm HQ Registration Desk

7:00 pm - 11:00 pm **Early Bird Gathering**

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 4

7:30 am - 9:00 am **KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast**

8:00 am - 11:00 am HQ Registration Desk

8:00 am - 8:00 pm Welcome Desk & Pre-registration

8:00 am - 8:00 pm T-shirt Pick Up

9:00 am - 5:00 pm Vendor Room Open

9:00 am - 10:00 pm Mini Reunions / TOCs

10:00 am - 11:30 am **Atlanta City Trolley Tour**

10:00 am - 12:00 pm **Writers Workshop**

11:00 am - 11:00 pm O' Club Open

12:00 pm - 5:00 pm HQ Registration Desk

2:00 pm - 3:30 pm **Symposium of Speakers**

3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Banquet Seating

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm HQ Registration Desk

### THURSDAY, JULY 5

8:00 am - 11:00 am HQ Registration Desk

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Welcome Desk & Pre-registration

8:00 am - 5:00 pm T-shirt Pick Up

8:00 am - 5:30 pm **National Infantry Museum w/box lunch**

9:00 am - 5:00 pm Vendor Room Open

9:00 am - 10:00 pm Mini-Reunions/TOCs

10:00 am - 4:00 pm **Roswell & Antebellum Home Tour**

11:00 am - 11:00 pm O' Club Open

12:00 pm - 5:00 pm HQ Registration Desk

1:00 pm - 4:00pm **Best of Atlanta Movie Tour**

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm **Quilters Show & Tell**

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm **1st Time Attendee Reception**

7:30 pm - 10:00 pm **Welcome Reception**



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## FRIDAY, JULY 6

7:20 am - 3:30 pm	<b>Golf Outing - Stone Mountain</b>
7:30 am - 9:00 am	<b>Scholarship Breakfast - Mike Sheuerman &amp; Tom Payne</b>
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini-Reunions/TOCs
9:15 am - 2:30 pm	<b>Atlanta History Center</b>
10:30 am - 1:30 pm	<b>Delta Museum Tour #1</b>
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Banquet Seating
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm	<b>Delta Museum Tour #2</b>
1:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts

## SATURDAY, JULY 7

7:30 am - 8:45 am	<b>Pre-Memorial Breakfast w/ Speaker</b>
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 9:30 am	<b>Memorial Service</b>
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	<b>Margaret Mitchell's Gone With The Wind Tour</b>
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	<b>Annual Business Meeting</b>
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
12:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
12:30 pm - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	<b>Atlanta City Trolley Tour</b>
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Mini-Reunions / TOCs
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:00 pm - 5:45 pm	Studio Photos
5:45 pm - 10:30 pm	<b>Closing Banquet w/Entertainment - TBD</b>

## REUNION CONTINUING EVENTS

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

Visit ...

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

for current Reunion details

Click on Reunion Information

(second down on the list to the left on the Home Page)



## Riding the MARTA Train from Atlanta Airport to Peachtree Station

### Train Frequencies

#### Gold Line

6-9am  
Every 10 mins

9am-3pm  
12 mins

3-7pm  
Every 10 mins

7-8:30pm  
12 - 15 mins

8pm and later  
Approx. 20 mins

#### Red Line

6-9am  
Every 10 mins

9am-3pm  
12 mins

3-7pm  
Every 10 mins

7-8:30pm  
12 - 15 mins

### 1. Follow signs to the baggage claim area

### 2. Enter the Rail Station from the North or South Terminal

In most cases, you'll exit the airport plane train and go up a tall escalator to baggage claim. At this point you'll be facing the Airport MARTA station, but it won't be visible due to restrooms that are immediately in front of it. Turn right or left to enter the North or South baggage claim area and both have doors that Lead into the rail station near the last baggage claim carousel.

### 3. Buy or Reload Fare Inside the Station

Inside the station you can buy or reload a Breeze Card or get a paper Breeze ticket at a vending machine. RideStores are also staffed during business hours if you want to purchase fare via a person. In most cases you will select "trips," which are one-way fares. If you plan to ride MARTA multiple times a day, then choose the "day" option so you can purchase a pass with unlimited rides.

### 4. Board the RED or GOLD Train

If arriving after 8:30 PM then ONLY ride the GOLD Train.

### 5. Get off at Peachtree Center Transit Station

Marriott Marquis is about a 2 block walk inside via skywalk. Please follow the Marriott Marquis signs thru the food court.



Please visit [www.itsmarta.com](http://www.itsmarta.com) for full train schedule times.



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You may also go directly to the link:

[www.cooperglobal.com/vhpa](http://www.cooperglobal.com/vhpa)

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# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

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

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

*AVIATOR REPORT completed for 9 New Members and covers the period 10-9-17 to 11-17-17*

## NEW MEMBERS:

Creal Thomas F. \*\*  
Prairie Village Kansas  
Marine Corps  
July 70  
HMM-263 in 71; MABS-36  
in 71

Dodson Richard E 'Rick' \*\*  
Chester Virginia  
Army  
62-5

Fielder Larry D. 'Dave'  
Oxford Georgia  
Marine Corps  
HMM-164 in 74-75

Fish Charles A 'Chuck' \*\*  
Frankston Texas  
Army  
71-33 71-25  
A/7/1 CAV in 71; C/16  
CAV in 72

Garrett Eugene T  
Loganville Georgia  
Army  
71-19 71-21  
18 CAC in 72-73, A/7/1  
CAV in 72-73

Heehn Richard C. \*\*  
Colbert Washington  
Army  
69-18  
C/159 ASHB 101 ABN in  
70-71

Lynch Edward F.  
San Antonio Texas  
Army  
66-16  
283 MED DET in 67-68

Post Ronald R  
Temple Texas  
Army  
65FW 68QC  
125 ATC in 65-66, 185  
RAC in 68-69, B/7/17 CAV  
in 69

Sramek James B  
Banner Elk, NC  
Marines  
65-1  
HMM 165 in 66-67, HMM  
165 in 72-73

## A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



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Richard Yood, MAS  
Vietnam  
67 - 68 & 70 - 71  
Master Army Aviator, Ret

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# UPCOMING REUNIONS

For those not going on the reunion cruise for D Troop

3/5 Cav and C Troop 3/17 Air Cav

Please note the Reunion Information:

**Dates: April 26-29, 2018.**

Location: Franklin Marriott Cool Springs Hotel,

Franklin, Tennessee 37067.

Information:

**227th Assault Helicopter Battalion Reunion  
of Vietnam Veterans for 2018**

**Dates: April 25th to 28th, 2018.**

Location: Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville,

Tennessee. All members, guests and friends of the

227th Assault Helicopter Battalion are invited to attend.

information: Available on our reunion website at:

<http://reunion.227ahb.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](http://www.15thmedbnassociation)

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) or

**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 - or

**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

or

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

Website: <http://www.dtroop.com>

Reunion website: [dtroopreunion.org](http://dtroopreunion.org)

**Silver Spur Reunion**

**A Troop, 3/17th Air Cavalry Squadron**

**When: May 16 - 20, 2018**

Where: Holiday Inn Denver Stapleton in Denver, Colorado.

Contact: Bill McCalister (Silver Spur 24)

Google: A Troop 3/17th Air Cav and see Reunion Page

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

Also: Dennis Beckler

or Larry Gordon

**Want to see your**

**Reunion listed here?**

*Send details to:*

**Aviator@VHPA.org**

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**Ned Crimmin**

**TSgt, USAF, Ret**

USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74

USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83

Tours of Duty:

1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

**email:**

**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



# LOOKING FOR

## Looking For

I would like to identify the pilot of an OH-6A (tail number 68-17173) involved in a combat incident while flying a reconnaissance mission for E Company Rangers, 9th Infantry Division on July 13, 1970, in Dinh Tuong, South Vietnam. One passenger was killed by small arms fire, while a second passenger and the pilot were both wounded. The pilot was able to get the helicopter back to the base despite his injuries.

According to VHPA records, the helicopter was assigned to 20 TC Co. that day. I am seeking this information as part of research for a book manuscript about E Company Rangers. Thanks for whatever assistance you can provide. I can be contacted at [REDACTED]

LaMar Bryan

On December 12, 1972, we were attached from the 60th AHC out of Ninh Hoa. It was a regular recon on the Bong Son. Since many units had stood down by then, CPT Petrosky had been assigned from Blue Max as the OP's officer. Enroute, the A.C. in the lead Cobra began the mission brief. During which he was interrupted, and Petrosky told him to make right orbits because he was in the right seat of C&C Huey.

The Cobra A.C. declined, due to the fact any time Cobras cover a scout, they always make left orbits in order to cover and cross check. Petrosky was required to orbit with right hand turns, but had to stay 500 feet above the Cobras orbit. That altitude put them above a broken layer. During the mission, the scout started taking heavy fire and was shot down. Even though the aircraft was burning, the pilot and observer got out. Because the C&C bird and chase were above the clouds, they weren't able to respond. At that point, the lead Cobra descended through heavy ground fire to rescue the crew on the ammo bay doors, and fly them to a safe area. I believe they were not recognized because this was so close to the end of the war.

It would be great to identify these folks and get them the recognition they deserve, even though it was so long ago. The OH-6 was likely 67-16089 attached. The coordinates were: BR961273.

Mike Evans [REDACTED]

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor of the Aviator:

Dear VHPA,

Our family was contacted by Julie Kink Sprayberry about the Gold Star Family breakfast at your July reunion in Indianapolis. Since that time, our world has been deeply enriched. Julie put us in contact with 25th AVN 25th INF

Little Bears who eventually set us on the path of finding the lone survivor in the crash that took our brother, Lt. Gary D. Frasher.

We came to the reunion with no expectations, just taking one moment at a time and possibly meeting men who may know what Gary's life may have been like. What we weren't prepared for were the kind-hearted men and woman that welcomed us into their world. Our short time there was filled with information and avenues for our continued search.

The Gold Star breakfast was indescribable. How can one celebrate and grieve in the same breath? For so many years, families have carried the grief in silence. Who could understand that kind of multi-faceted pain and loss? With a room full of veterans, wives and families of those who were lost, it was now possible to find a voice and know that from that day forward, we are not alone.

Thank you for opening your doors and your hearts to the families of your brothers. We will be forever grateful for the help and guidance as we continue on our journey of learning more about our brother.

*Thank you for serving your country. Blessings to you,*  
Joan Drees and the family of Lt. Gary Dean Frasher

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Unit specific items: Patches, Uniforms,  
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# WANTED

## Helicopter Memorabilia from the Vietnam War

Contact: John Conway

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

ARMY ~ NAVY ~ AIR FORCE ~ MARINE CORPS  
Assault - Cavalry - Trans - Medical Rescue etc.

Fair Prices Paid. Not for profit.  
References available.



# THE GRUNT

by *Bob Metzger*

Preface by *Terry Garlock*

At the 334th AHC (a Cobra company) in Bien Hoa, 1969, John Synowsky was my Dragon Platoon Leader and Bob Metzger was a mentor to me, both VHPA members. Both taught me what I needed to know to stay alive, two of the young men who preceded me, those I watched to learn the true meaning of loyalty, courage and trust, the men I admire.

Like the rest of us, Bob Metzger flew Cobras and later became the Operations Officer. In addition to Cobras, he flew UH-1s and has a good UH-1 story about pilot strategy sneaking an AWOL nurse safely back under the wire, a story saved for another issue. Bob also flew OH-58s, and single and multi-engine fixed wing.

At Ft. Lewis, WA, Bob put together the first Fully-Modernized Cobra Company, D Co 9th Av Bn. The S Model Cobra had a fire control computer, laser range finder, TOW Missiles and a 20 MM cannon. The Modernized S was the last evolution in the series of Cobra upgrades.

Bob remained in the Army for 24 years and served in a variety of command and staff positions. After retiring as a LTC, Bob served as a firefighter and paramedic in a career metropolitan fire department in Northern Virginia and also volunteered at his local department in

West Virginia when he was off shift. He was one of the responders at the Pentagon on 9/11. Bob retired from his career fire department and continues to serve as a Captain/Paramedic with his volunteer department in Canaan Valley, WV. Between emergency calls, Bob can be found weeding the garden and picking tomatoes these days, but he has a bad-ass snow blower because winter up there isn't kidding.

I see Bob at least once a year when we gather at John Synowsky's ranch just south of Weatherford, TX. John was our Platoon Leader for the Dragons. Last October my daughter Melanie, then in her sophomore year at U of GA, joined us at the ranch, pic of Bob with Melanie below. Bob likes to hang around the ranch and help John roll and stack hay, and generally play with the tractor until something breaks, but has to watch his replaced hips, another story that will have to wait.

## *The Grunt*

While having a conversation with a gentleman recently, the topic got around to the military and I was speaking about some of my experiences. I was in the U.S. Army for 24 years of active duty service and spent most of that time as an Aviation Officer and helicopter pilot. I recounted some of my combat experiences as a Cobra pilot in Vietnam, and how we supported the "Grunts" when they got into a serious firefight. The person to whom I was speaking had never served, and having heard the term grunt before, thought it to be derogatory. I assured him that it was not.

Later as I sat at home and reflected, I realized that less than five percent of our population has served and most of what the American public think they know about the military is what they've seen in some of those terrible Vietnam movies. Some of the later movies such as "We Were Soldiers" did a much better job. Most, however, depicted Vietnam soldiers as drug-addled baby killers who turned into crazed killers on the battlefield with no regard for human life. With the exception of a handful of crazies, nothing could be further from the truth.



At the 334th Round Table in the breezeway, 1969. John Synowsky (L) on the scramble phone, likely taking a sitrep on a ground unit in contact, waiting for the scramble order. Bob Metzger (R) with Mother, his scrounged survival weapon.



## *Which brings me to "Grunt."*

Grunt is a term which should not be used casually, especially by a civilian who has never served. Grunt is a privileged term reserved for those who have taken the oath, worn the uniform, and stepped onto the field of battle. The only civilian I know of who can use the word Grunt freely is Joe Galloway, whom I know personally. Joe was a combat correspondent and photographer and was present with the Troopers of the 1/7 Cavalry at Landing Zone Xray, Ia Drang Valley in 1965. Their situation became so dire that Galloway picked up an M-16 Rifle and defended himself and the Troopers of 1/7 Cav in that desperate three-day battle. By his actions, Galloway is not only authorized to use the term Grunt, but also became a Grunt himself. To this day, Joe Galloway is the only civilian to be awarded the Bronze Star for Valor. He wears the miniature version of the medal proudly on his lapel.

Grunt is a term for an Infantryman. In the Army, the Infantry is the tip of the spear. In Vietnam, it was the Infantry who slogged through the rice paddies and steamy jungles, wearing heavy Rucksacks. It was the Grunt who fought through the violent ambushes and night attacks, often being out in the "bush" for days at a time.

As helicopter pilots, we were more detached from the close jungle fights of the Grunts simply because of the job we had. However, if we didn't completely realize it then, all of us old pilots certainly realize it now, that the only reason we existed, was because of our Grunts. And they were our Grunts. We were there to serve, support and protect them. We loved them ...and they loved us.

As Joe Galloway has written; "We carried them into the battlefield, we resupplied them with ammunition, water and food, we evacuated their wounded, and we carried out their dead."

Doing all those types of missions my unit often provided armed aerial escort and conducted close air

strikes for our Grunts involved in fierce close combat, often putting our ordnance within 20-30 meters of their positions. Nothing got our adrenaline flowing more than to hear our Grunts yelling on the radio that we were hammering the enemy positions and to keep it coming. When the battle was finally over, the lift helicopters came to take them out of the hell hole they were in and transported them back to their base for some much-needed rest.

We often risked our lives for our Grunts, taking off at night in marginal weather to put in a strike for a unit in heavy contact. We could see the action even as we approached the area, red and green tracers flying back

and forth through the jungle canopy, illumination flares slowly drifting down under their small parachutes creating weird shadows, the haze of smoke over the jungle canopy, and the smell of cordite as the battle raged. Our Grunts knew help was on station by the sound of our rotor blades even before we made radio contact. The enemy knew we were there too and many times

those green tracers reached up for us. For every round you see, there are four you don't, and the tracers at night look like they are coming right between your eyes until they veer off to miss, and our pucker factor made our butt-cheeks take big bites out of the seat. Over 2,000 helicopter pilots lost their lives in Vietnam supporting our Grunts.

The point of all of this is the Grunt is the noblest of soldiers, often bearing much more than his share of the burden and horror of combat. It is the term we combat pilot veterans use to speak of the Infantryman, and the term they use to speak of each other. When next you hear the term Grunt, know that it is not slang or derisive. In our world, it is an earned badge of honor, spoken with respect and carried by those who earned it with pride.



Bob Metzger presenting Melanie Garlock her Dragon shirt

**Robert J. Metzger, LTC (USA Ret), Dragon 31, 334th  
Armed Helicopter Company, RVN '69 - '70**



# The Vietnam Helicopter Monument: Moving Towards Completion

Construction of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument is complete, and at the time of this writing in transit to Washington, DC. The Vermont Granite Company completed the complicated process in time for Thanksgiving, and now the carefully packaged, 1100-pound monument will move towards its final destination: Arlington National Cemetery (ANC).

The next step will prepare the site in advance of placing the granite monument. The sandy soil within ANC shifts beneath the manicured surface, and a 3-foot deep, concrete footer must be laid to ensure the stability of the stone. This will be accomplished by an approved landscape contractor.

The VHPA Legacy Committee is now undertaking the complicated task of planning the April 18th dedication ceremony. The committee will seek a keynote speaker for the occasion, send invitations to national veteran's organizations, Gold Star families, congressional legislators and their staffs who played key roles in facilitating the monument approval, and begin the planning of a significant helicopter flyby for the event. The post-ceremony reception at adjacent Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall will require a great deal of planning and fundraising, as well.

Trying to predict attendance at the dedication and reception is difficult. The combination of invitations and traditional press releases and social media announcements will reach a wide audience. Many Vietnam Veterans who appreciated rotary-wing support during their combat experience have already expressed interest in attending. How many will join us at 4:00 PM, April 18th is almost impossible to accurately forecast. If you plan to attend, it is not too early to search out accommodations.

April is a busy time in the Washington, DC area and hotels in and close to the District will increase room



rates as the date nears. For those driving to Washington, you may wish to consider hotels away from the downtown, but near the excellent Metro system. ANC has a subway stop at the entrance to the cemetery, making the Metro an attractive alternative to fighting through the congested highway traffic.

Four difficult years of hard effort by many people will culminate with the April 18th dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument - a lasting testimony to the courage and sacrifice of those who died while operating rotary-wing aircraft in the Vietnam War.

*It is a worthy tribute.*

By Bob Hesselbein,  
Chairman: Legacy Committee.  
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

Grand Prairie, TX 75050-1030

[bobhesselbein@vhpa.org](mailto:bobhesselbein@vhpa.org)



# 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  
Herb Koenig, President

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

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  
Dr. Dick Elgin

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER  
Dale E House, President

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Jim Davidson, 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 [REDACTED] or via E-Mail at: [REDACTED]. Feel free to contact John concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## ALAMO CHAPTER

Our ladies have continued their monthly luncheon meetings at The Avocado Café in Bracken Village on October 13th, and at The Grill at Leon Springs on November 10th. Chapter members met for lunch at one of the Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchens on October 17th and at the Heavenly Pho Vietnamese Cuisine Restaurant on November 14th.

Our chapter members and ladies met on November 12th at the Barn Door Restaurant in San Antonio. After another fine dinner, we elected officers to serve in 2018. They assumed their duties on January 1st. Chic Carter moved from his position of vice president to president. Mike Clark resigned from his 2017 junior member-at-large position, so he could run for vice president, and he was so elected. Al Flory was re-elected as secretary, and John Deer was likewise re-elected as

treasurer. Jim Martinson automatically moved from intermediate to senior member-at-large. To fill Mike Clark's vacated position as 2018 intermediate member-at-large, we elected Mike Law. Finally, we elected Fred Lyssey as the new and junior member-at-large.

Our Christmas party was enjoyed on Friday evening, December 1st, in the Army Residence Community Sky Lounge in San Antonio, with cocktails, dinner, live music by Two for the Road, and dancing. It was, again, a huge success, with over 50 members, ladies, and guests in attendance. We all thank Secretary Al Flory for hosting and arranging this fun gathering each Christmas. The party was partly subsidized from our treasury to lower the cost for members who attended.

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

By Chuck Oualline



## ALASKA CHAPTER

Another year has come, and well almost gone, and our annual fall dinner was a fun success; with 48 folks attending. We thank the Eagle River VFW for their help and support. The evening kicked off with fellowship and cocktails and was followed by a business meeting.

The election of new officers was accomplished with David Buirge our new Vice President, Tim Kavanaugh our secretary and (a new board position, crew member at large), Swerv Petty. This was followed with ideas for events next year, a membership report, noting 81 members, and dinner. We also encouraged each member to become involved with the Veteran's History Project and record their own oral history.

The Legacy Fund for our Arlington Cemetery Air Crew Memorial was discussed and as a chapter we have decided, and are glad to raise money in support of the effort. A collection was started and we hope to be able to send a donation by the end of the year.

After dinner we closed out our event with the Quilt of Valor Chapter presentation of four quilts to Bob Moore, Jim Pazsint, Milton Cross and Steve Fisher our guest Chaplin. Bob Doehl, Deputy Commissioner for the State of Alaska Department of Military Veteran Affairs, presented each Vietnam Veteran with a special book called "A



Bob Moore Quilt



General group shot



Milton Cross receiving his Quilt



Jim Pazsint Quilt General group shot

"Time of Honor" and a reference guide to Veteran services. Both are very special.

We concluded this very special evening notifying the members of our next meeting set for 25 February.

By Lynn Kyle

## ARIZONA CHAPTER

After a long break, the Arizona Chapter of the VHPA attended a picnic hosted by the Arizona Chapter of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation on Saturday, October 14 at Falcon Field Airport Park. The function of the picnic was to welcome home Cobra 589 from its summer mission in California and to welcome home Vietnam Veterans. It was a great success. There were



Vehicle and Helicopter display

about 105 people in attendance, of which approximately 15 members with their families were from the Arizona VHPA.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The weather was perfect for the event. It was catered by a local restaurant, The Steak and Stone which put on an excellent feed. The Arizona Chapter had their AH-1F Cobra on display. There was also a display of "Charlie Chopper", an OH-6 and an A-10 Simulator and Gamma Goat. Several members of a local Corvette club showed up and displayed their cars.



AH-1 on display

The event included dignitaries such as our U.S. Congressional Fifth District Representative, Andy Biggs, who is a big Veterans supporter and his Veterans / Military Constituent Representative; Mr. Lee Huff; the Mayor and Vice-Mayor of Mesa Falcon Field Airport officials and President of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce.

The event was a big success and everyone had a great time.

By Bill Sorenson, President, Arizona Chapter VHPA



Attendees enjoying lunch



Volunteers

## FLORIDA CHAPTER

The Florida Chapter ended 2017 with a blast! We participated in four special Veterans' events within a five-week span. The first event was with the Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park, Tampa, FL from October 25-30. Wherever the 'Wall' travels throughout the State of Florida, our Chapter



The Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park, Tampa, FL. VHPAF members from left to right: Tom Tomlinson, Robert 'B.J.' Atkins, Ernest 'Rabbit' Hare, Dr. Joe Ponds, and John Hawn.

is present barring any conflicts in schedules. This Veterans Park is very special to our Chapter since many of the founding members are from the Tampa Bay area, and we have two helicopters (one UH-1 and one AH-1G) mounted there. Additionally, for more than 20 years, we've held our Chapter meetings there. It was like 'homecoming' for many of our members.

Our second event was "Take a Veteran to School Day" on November 3 at Sea Park elementary school located in Merritt Island, FL. "Take a Veteran to School Day" is a national program developed and sponsored by HISTORY (The HISTORY Channel) and was launched in 2007 to link veterans with students nationwide. Schools and communities invite veterans of all backgrounds to share their stories and receive thanks for their service, typically on or around Veterans Day. Before we could register at the school, around 0800



The Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park, Tampa, FL. VHPAF Sales Table and LOACH are ready to receive the hordes of visitors attending the Opening Ceremony.



At the Flagler County Freedom Fest, the LOACH 'static' display got a lot of attention.



At the Flagler County Freedom Fest, Ernest 'Rabbit' Hare and Robert 'B.J.' Atkins stand ready to answer questions at the LOACH static display.



Sea Park Elementary School, Satellite Beach, FL. Students, teachers, and visitors awaiting the COBRA's aerial exhibition.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

that morning and pick up our name tags, we were already bombarded with students who had gathered at our OH-6 (Loach) which was a static display. Within 30 minutes, all classes had come out to see the helicopter and have their questions asked and answered. The children, faculty, staff, and visitors were also treated to several low-level passes and 'gun runs' by our AH1G (Cobra) gunship. A camera crew from a local TV station was present and captured the entire aerial exhibition which was later shown on local TV. We then attended an all-school assembly program. Half of our group went to classrooms and gave presentations while the other group experienced the special assembly program. The school principal started the program by welcoming the mostly Veteran group, and then a student led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the wonderful, student-led program, the other half of our group was invited into the classrooms to share their stories with the students and teachers while the first group went to the assembly program. It was a great way to connect generations and bring history to life in the classrooms while helping young people learn about the past. Finally, they fed us a wonderful hot lunch! What a great way to end a very special day.

The third event was at Flagler County's Freedom Fest, November 4-6 held at the Flagler Executive Airport. The VHPAF and a few vintage military and civilian aircraft were on hand. As always, the Cobra gunship was much appreciated. Not only did it fly low-level down the runway a few times and perform a few cyclic climbs while simulating gun runs, but it then landed, shutdown, and co-located with our Loach and 'Sales Store' as a static display. It was a wonderful way to celebrate and commemorate the sacrifices of Veterans, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives.



At the Flagler County Freedom Fest, our LOACH, Sales Tent and COBRA were co-located.



The Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall up close at Ft. Meade, FL.



The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall at Ft. Meade, FL



The Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall up close at Ft. Meade, FL. The reaction of visitors at the Wall is always the same!

mate sacrifice by giving their lives.

The final event was with the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall (always a reminder of the great sacrifices that were made during the Vietnam War) at Fort Meade, FL, November 8 – 13. Even though it's a 'small town' (less than 5,700 residents), they showed up in a grand way. The event kicked off with a huge parade that started about 20 miles away from the town. The VHPAF was honored to lead the parade with our Loach in tow, followed by more than 300 bikers, and numerous law enforcement vehicles that escorted the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall to where it would be set up at the Ft. Meade VFW Post 11179 and Ft. Meade American Legion Post 23. Not only did the residents of Ft. Meade show great support, but people from neighboring cities and towns attended the event as well. What a GREAT way to end the year! By the way, our Chapter's 25th Annual Reunion that was scheduled for September was postponed until November because of Hurricane Irma. Lord willing, we'll say more about that in the next issue of the Aviator.

**By Dr. Joe Ponds, Chapter President**

## FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Our next Chapter meeting will be Saturday, March 3rd, at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst. The Executive Council will meet at 1100 with General Membership meeting at 1130, or whenever the EC finishes its meeting. Lunch, which includes coffee, tea, or a soft drink, is \$20 per person from a special rate menu. The beer is on you. Guests eat if you or someone pays. Peanuts are free and you can throw the shells on the floor. The address is [redacted] Hurst, TX. Phone is [redacted]

GPS data: [redacted]

As our chapter begins to wind down and as age takes its toll, the chapter is trying to raise \$25,000 to give our chapter credit for the OH-23 display to be placed at the Museum Visitor's center. To date, the chapter has raised \$18,000 toward this goal. We hope to achieve this goal by the end of 2018.

The National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells is the Legacy of the Fort Wolter's Chapter of the VHPA. It is currently run by an independent Board of Directors and continues to grow. The latest additions to the museum are an H-34 Helicopter, an Admiral's Barge, two minesweepers and a Captain's Gig. The plan is to restore these items for static display along with the other items currently on display at the museum. The museum is also in the process of raising one million dollars for the phase one construction of a new visitors' center. As of this writing, it plans on ground breaking on December 9, 2017. To see more about the museum, go to the museum website at: <http://www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org/>.

The Website for the Fort Wolters Chapter is: <http://fwcvhpa.org>.

**By Herb Koenig, President**



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## GEORGIA CHAPTER

On November 18, 2017, our Georgia VHPA Chapter mustered for its last 2017 bi-monthly breakfast meeting at our tactical CP, the Marietta Rib Ranch (LZ Romeo Romeo). Our business meeting addressed two subjects, the PBS Ken Burns 18 hour Vietnam Series and our supporting roll in the 35th Annual VHPA Reunion. Regarding the PBS Series, we discussed the excellent written critiques of the documentary by both MG Pat Brady and Oliver North. That discussion evolved in our own spirited comments with respect to the commentary. The VHPA Headquarters made members aware of the volunteer schedule for our support of the 35th Annual VHPA Reunion recently sent to us. It was decided that we need a committee to begin recruiting and planning for the event.

Our guest speaker for this meeting was Jim Lawrence, author of "Reflections on LZ Albany." Jim was a 24-year-old Lieutenant and the Executive Officer of Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry when he just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. That place would be near the 2nd Battalion's objective, LZ Albany. As the battalion approached LZ Albany for a helicopter extraction back to their base camp, all hell broke loose. They were ambushed by a much larger NVA force and suffered the greatest number of American casualties in a single Vietnam battle, 151 KIA and 125 WIA.

Jim was wounded, but survived the battle. Perhaps the best way to



Jim Lawrence

describe his experience that day exactly 50 years ago is to quote the endorsement made by Joe Galloway about Jim's book. Joe wrote, "Jim Lawrence is one of the unsung heroes of the Battle of Landing Zone Albany in the Ia Drang Valley of Vietnam, 17-18 Nov 1965. That he survived a bullet wound to the head was a miracle; that he crawled off that bloody battlefield, paralyzed from the waist down, was a testimony to his determination to survive. Jim Lawrence has written his story of survival in the hottest fires of combat, and he has written it well." Jim's outstanding presentation evoked a lively Q & A period as well as a lengthy book signing session following our meeting.

Our guest speaker for our first breakfast meeting on January 20, 2018 will be Donna C. Rowe. Donna entered the Army via the Student Nurse Corps Program (ROTC) and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in 1966. During 1968-1969, she served in Vietnam as Head Nurse, Emergency Room/Triage at the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon. Donna was featured in "The Kathleen Story" segment of the World Film Festival's award winning Vietnam Documentary film, "In the Shadow of the Blade," which was released on both the "Military Channel" and the "Discovery Channel."

If former Vietnam helicopter pilots are 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]

By Bob Lanzotti, President



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

### September Report

*Note: Because of a mislabeled file on our end, the chapter's prior report was overlooked in the Nov/Dec. Issue. It has been added to this version. I apologize to the members for this administrative error. Tom Kirk*

### Sunday September 11th at Maple Grove Airport

The Michigan Chapter of the VHPA was well represented with a total of nine members. There were about 30 fixed-wing and 11 or 12 helicopters that flew in, and the crowd was in the multiple thousands. Everyone seemed excited to be there. The weather was perfect; very few high clouds and a nice gentle, cool breeze. The event included a special '911' remembrance.

I arrived at 0900 and three or four members were already there, making the set up quick and easy. Although we were prepared to stay until 1700, the crowd disappeared about 1300, within an hour after the all-you-can-eat breakfast stopped. As a result, we packed up and left early.

I want to express my appreciation for the great efforts of all the volunteers who



VHPA MI Quilt presentation to Charlie Martin on 9/11/16: L-R Rich Deer, Charlie Martin, Dave James



VHPA MI Quilt presentation to Charlie Martin on 9/11/16: L-R Rich Deer, Charlie Martin, Dave James



Michigan Chapter Lunch in Traverse City L-R Mark Benjamin, Bob Matlis, Ed Canright, Carol Luck, Lee Luck, Rich Deer, Walter Topp, Fritz Barrett. Not pictured: Barry Witt.



At Maple Grove Airport: Seated L-R Rich Deer, Dave James, Mark Benjamin, Charles Eliason. Standing L-R Bob Rich, Doc Farrell, Charles Marvin, Glen Veno



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

I want to express my appreciation for the great efforts of all the volunteers who supported the mission. The credit for this success belongs collectively to the following members: Mark Benjamin, Rich Deer, Charles Eliason, Doc Farrell, Dave James, Charlie Martin, Charles Marvin, Bob Rich and Glen Venio. We plan to repeat our participation in this event in 2018.

Past President Charlie Martin, was presented with a quilt from the National VHPA, awarded for special recognition for his work, founding this Chapter.

*By Dave James, Boomerang20, Vice President*

The Michigan Chapter had a very active year in 2016. Our spring meeting in Grand Ledge was attended by 19 members, spouses and guest speaker LTC Todd Fitzpatrick of the Michigan National Guard. The meeting launched three activities that chapter members undertook for the year.

In June, the "Lest We Forget" in Benton Harbor was attended by four members and was a repeat of the previous year. Although it was cut short by weather it is an impressive event and worthy of another repeat participation in 2017.

Another repeat event was the Operation LZ Michigan in Oscoda in July. Our display included a static UH-1H from the Wurtsmith Air Museum which drew a steady crowd. Being located next to the American Huey 369 flight activity increased attendance as well, though we were reminded of the power of Huey rotor wash as it challenged our canopy and took all hands to hold it during takeoff and landing operations. Being that close to a flying Huey was fantastic. We wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Six chapter members with a detached VHPA member from Wyoming stood their posts at this event.

The next planned activity is expected to be our spring meeting, details TBA. Chapter members and interested parties will receive updates on the particulars. Everyone is encouraged to bring spouses, family members, former crew members and anyone interested in our role in the Vietnam War.

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

## November Report

Michigan Chapter Members planning to attend the April 18, 2018 dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument in Arlington National Cemetery are requested to contact President Rich Deer to coordinate our participation in the ceremony.

The Michigan Chapter had a successful fundraiser in support of the Monument in 2017, and a check from Rich Deer was relayed to member-at-large Lee Luck for presentation at the VHPA reunion in Indianapolis. Pending the VHPA Legacy Committee's research on costs of perpetual care, a repeat fundraiser is being considered.

Chapter members should watch their emails for details of our annual spring meeting tentatively set for May at the Log Jam in Grand Ledge. Following the lunch gathering a possible tour of the Michigan National Guard Army Aviation Flight Facility is being explored

including an overview of the UH-72 Lakota.

Chapter Member-At-Large Mark Benjamin hosted another monthly gathering at Brady's in Traverse City on October 13, 2017. I think this was his 5th iteration but I may have lost count. I was able to join his band of merry men along with Carol Luck who made the trip across the state with husband Lee. A special guest was Fritz Barrett, USAF, who flew C-47 Spooky aircraft in Vietnam. We teased Fritz about flying circles all the time. That was while his ship was raining grief down on Charlie in the form of several mini-gun fire hoses. While I had witnessed that continuous stream of tracers, I hadn't realized the tracers were 1 in 5 of the rounds. Responding to our questions, Fritz also detailed his long career in the Air Force.

Ed Canright discovered that Barry Witt had been in his same unit. That opened a lot of discussion between them. Lee Luck and Rich Deer had also been in the same unit. Lee brought in a plaque he was presented while at Da Nang with the unit logo. Lee also brought his Fort Wolters flight school class photo and wore his CAV hat.

The current issue of the VHPA Aviator was made available as well, along with a Newsweek copy of a Vietnam War commemorative. (My apologies for not noting the provider of each – my secretary took the day off.) Both prompted much discussion including the upcoming dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmembers Monument at Arlington National Cemetery on April 18, 2018. Several are making plans to attend the ceremony.

Brady's is an excellent location for these lunch gatherings. It has a great atmosphere; very attentive and humorous wait staff, and great food. (Try the Blue Gill!) It was a bit noisy at first with a lot of customers enjoying it as well, but we outlasted them and pretty much had the place to ourselves by the time we finished. Nine of us gathered for the group picture. Barry Witt had to leave before we could get his presence documented.

Mark's next lunch gathering November 9, 2017 was at McGee's M72 east of Traverse City. The usual HQ at Brady's was not available – but for a good cause. Attending were Bob Matlis, Bob Potvin, Bob Rich, Bart Halliday, Walter Topp, Mark Benjamin, Ron Hofmeister. A forecasted early snowstorm prevented at least three more from making the trip (this is Northern Michigan in November after all, not even the U.P.). Mark's recruiting of Traverse City area members made it a good-sized group.

Mark advised that Ron is a Vietnam vet but was not in aviation. Mark invited Ron because he is the Chairman of the Michigan Veterans Coalition. This is a lobbying and advocacy group for veterans. Ron is great guy and very knowledgeable on Vet issues. He was a major player in the "welcome home" events in this area over the last three years.

Mark added that the food at McGee's was great and the group had lots of great stories especially from Bart Halliday. He told us how a perfectly happy A-4 pilot ended up with lots of Helo time in his logbook purely by a mistake by USMC management. We enjoyed him as he has different stories than the average Army Huey pilot. Mark plans to continue to hold these lunch gatherings on the second Thursday of each month at Brady's. Make plans to join him

*By Richard Deer, President*



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

*Fall has not hampered the activity of the North Carolina Chapter.*

On September 9/10 and 11 we were in Conniver NC with the Moving Wall supported by Jerry Seago, Brock NicholSEN, Jerry Phelps and Paul Sigmon manning the AH-1G and the UH-1H.

Then on September 19/20 and 21 work days were held at the "Seago Helicopter Pad". Seven members restored our newest UH-1H "MEDI-VAC" aircraft. This aircraft participated in MUM Fest and the National Archives events.

On October 14 & 15 we displayed five aircraft in New Bern, NC at their annual MUM Fest. We had two UH-1Hs, a "Slick and a Medevac"; a UH-1M Gunship; an OH-58; and OH-6 Scout. Supporting this event were Jerry Seago, Brock Nicholson, Peter Gotch, Terry Lanier, Jerry Phelps and Ed Hughes. A "Low County Boil" was enjoyed on Saturday night at the Hughes'.

In November we were invited to participate in the week long opening of the National Archives "Remembering Vietnam" program that runs through January 2019. We departed on Sunday November 5th with our AH-1G, towed by Jerry Seago; the UH-1H Medevac towed by Jerry Phelps and the OH-58 towed by Terry Lanier. Monday morning we surveyed the location where the aircraft were to be staged and got a good look at the 18" wall that had to be crossed.



Phil Keith, Ed Hughes Jerry Seago, Joe Delfanzio, Terry Lanier; Front row Lynn Stephens, Peter Gotch and Jerry Phelps.



Later that afternoon Jerry Phelps was prepping the UH-1 for it's trip downtown and being



Terry Lanier is waiting his turn with the OH-58.



The AH-1 in place.



Placing the AH-1 with the fork lift and six ground guides.



Later that afternoon Jerry Phelps was prepping the UH-1 for it's trip downtown and being lifted by a ten ton fork lift.



Placing the OH-58, Peter Gotch watches the action.



Placing the UH-1, Jerry Phelps and Jerry Seago work to place the UH-1H.



Jerry Seago taking a break.



Jerry Phelps, Bob English (asleep) and Joe Armstrong man the UH-1H Medivac



Jerry Phelps taking a break.



Jerry Phelps, Bob English (asleep) and Joe Armstrong man the UH-1H Medivac

We arrived at the National Archives at 2200... that's right we had to take the aircraft off of their trailers and reposition them onto the lawn of the National Archives.

We all got a good workout ground guiding the aircraft from their trailers, around lamp posts, over fire hydrants, and around trees to place them on the raised lawn.

It was a fantastic week, even though it rained all day Monday and the temperatures dropped into the twenties on Thursday and Friday. The National Archives personnel took exceptionally good care of us, the coffee was always hot and the snack box was full. There were many veterans in DC either for unit reunions or on Honor Flights.



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

We tried to talk to all of them. We also met a number of "Grunts" who were in the Chu Lai area, we talked a lot about events and fire bases. All of the pilots commented on seeing a number of nurses who served in Viet Nam. They have a lot of respect for what the helicopter pilots did in trying to save lives.



A sample of the crowd. The Archives estimated we saw 30,000 people in six days. We talked to people from 37 different countries, Romania, Slovakia, Peru, Latvia, China, Vietnam, Cameroon, Kosovo, El Salvador, and many, many more.



Phil Keith, Ed Hughes Jerry Seago, Joe Delfanzio, Terry Lanier; Front row Lynn Stephens, Peter Gotch and Jerry Phelps.



## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The fall is always a very busy time for the North Alabama Chapter. Veterans Day approaches and many civic and veteran's organizations want and need our participation. This year was no different. NAVHPA accepts all of the requests we can. But, as we all get older, the strain can begin to tell.

From 3-5 October, ten NAVHPA members were interviewed about their experiences in Vietnam by Martin Madert of the Witness to War organization. Martin came from the Atlanta, GA area to Huntsville to conduct these two-hour, in depth, interviews. The interviews were conducted in the 'green room' at the Defense Acquisition University campus in Huntsville. All ten members are looking forward to seeing "how they did" and possibly get a story posted to the Witness to War website.

The NAVHPA has been supporting the Huntsville Downtown Rescue Mission. This organization provides three daily meals, safe shelter, recovery programs and other services to needy individuals and families. We serve an evening meal to homeless and in-house people. On October 19, we had five members and spouses serve nearly 150 people in need of a warm meal. Many of these people are veterans who either come in from off the street or are participating in an in-house recovery program.

For three and a half days during the week of 30 October, 31 NAVHPA members and spouses helped the Huntsville Wreaths for



Members and spouses of the NAVHPA fluff wreaths prior to placing them on veterans' graves.



The wreaths honor veterans from all US conflicts at local cemeteries.



Period uniforms from the past were a feature of the Vietnam 50th anniversary commemoration



Buc-3 was a big hit at the Cullman Veteran's Day celebration.



The Veterans Day Parade wagon dedicated to our fallen brothers who passed in 2017.



A suitably uniformed guard with a 1918 military truck at the Huntsville parade.

Veterans organization prepare over 3,400 wreaths for placement at two Huntsville cemeteries. Wreaths had to

be cleaned, greenery fluffed, new red bows attached, and re-packed in boxes. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie and social interaction during these long work days. On 14/15 November, these wreaths



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

were placed on veteran's graves in two Huntsville cemeteries. NAVHPA members and spouses helped about one hundred other volunteers unload, distribute and place wreaths. In addition to the physical wreath placement, the volunteer says the name of the veteran and thanks him or her for their service. It is great way to honor our veterans.

On November, 4, we carried BUC-3, our Vietnam flown UH-1C/M static display, to Cullman, AL for the city-wide celebration of Veterans Day. This event was held at the Cullman Airport and the theme was Vietnam. There were many Vietnam equipment displays, period reenactors, vintage memorabilia, period music, aircraft (both rotary and fixed wing) displays, and public interviews of Vietnam veterans including NAVHPA member BG(R) Bob Stewart. Huey and Cobra rides were available. BUC-3 was a huge attraction for Vietnam and other veterans, as well as people who had never seen a Huey up close – sitting in the front seat was very popular.

We exhibited Buc-3 again the following Monday, November 6th, at the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Many local civic leaders and military veterans observed the occasion.

Of course, at the end of the week, the NAVHPA and Buc-3 participated in the annual Huntsville Veterans Day parade on Saturday November 11. The size of the parade is staggering. There were over 160 units included in the parade. In addition to military and veterans' organizations, Scouts, civic organizations and bands from the area,



NAVHPA members inducted into the Hall of Heroes pose with the other inductees. Claire Parr is front row, third from left, to her right are Paul Keil and Don Harp.

there were more than 20 military vehicles representing all the conflicts of the 20th Century. Even a World War I truck was there, "guarded" by a suitably uniformed sentry. This year's parade was again dedicated to our members who are no longer with us. On the wagon that many NAVHPA members and spouses rode for the parade route, we placed a banner remembering NAVHPA members Bernie Parr and Jim Seeber who died since the last Veterans' day. It was a sobering reminder to all who beheld it.

As a special addition to the Huntsville Veterans' week celebration, three NAVHPA members were honored by induction to the Madison County Hall of Heroes. CW4 (Ret.) Don Harp and CW4 (Ret.) Paul Keil were selected based on medals for heroism in Vietnam. MAJ (Ret.) Bernie Parr was posthumously inducted for his Vietnam heroic acts. Bernie's widow, Claire Parr accepted for Bernie. All three were featured in the Veteran's Day parade, riding in style in new Jeeps - a far cry from the M-151s.

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

If you live in the North Alabama and Middle Tennessee areas, we want you to join our chapter. You can contact us at 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 each heard all of the other's. We need new war stories! "There I was..."



## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

On October 7 and 8, CCN proudly displayed Huey 563 at the "Red Oak Victory" Museum for a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" event in Richmond, Ca. The ship is located in the old Kaiser ship yard and has a beautiful view of San Francisco Bay. This event coincided with Fleet Week in San Francisco, including an air show by the Blue Angels. The "Red Oak Victory" is the last remaining Victory ship built at the Kaiser Richmond shipyards during WWII. It served in WWII, Korea, and hauled ammunition to Vietnam until 1968, before the ship was retired. Jim Stein, Mike Whitten, Gil Ferry, Ed Morris, Ken Lake and his grandson Gavin worked our well-attended display on the dock at the foot of the gangplank. Al Doucette and Curt Knapp did the same and berthed all night in the "luxurious" cabins on board.

Our next event took us to Placerville to participate in the "Vettes for Vets" car show at the Red Hawk Casino on October 15. We missed this event last year (and so did most if the Corvettes) due to heavy rains. Our Huey 563 stood out among all of the beautiful Corvettes. CCN was given the Warrior Spirit Award.

Village Barber Shop owner Bobby Page has sponsored this Veterans Day event for over 20 years. He had a flyover of 10 private planes including a missing man formation, BBQ, raffle prizes, music, and more on tap from 1100-1500, with our Huey as the centerpiece.



Enjoying the View of San Francisco Bay



563 on Display in front of the "Red Oak Victory"



Where is the Collective?



Luxury Suite



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Significant funds were donated that will help CCN fund the Huey in 2018. His shop is like a veterans museum. California Chapter North's UH-1C was the main attraction. A good mix of appreciative adults and wide-eyed children toured our Huey and learned our legacy from Al Doucette, Dave Anderson, Ed Morris, Jim Cunningham, Ken Lake, and Curt Knapp.

A "Toys for Tots" fund raiser was held on November 18. CCN displayed Huey 563 at the Citrus Heights Vets' Center to help with their Toys For Tots drive. US Representative Ami Bera enjoyed the view from the left seat. Al Doucette, Ed Morris, and a contingent of local police helped Curt Knapp back 563 into the small parking lot.

The last event is over and 2017 is officially a wrap! Huey 563 was covered until the next event which will be in February 2018. Al Doucette, Ken Fritz and Ed Morris worked several hours in the light rain cutting the 29' x 19' tarp that Al bought, about 20' down the middle, attaching grommets and hooking everything together to try to keep it dry for the next couple of months (Curt had a conflict and could not be there, although he has been at every other Huey event and work day for the last three years.) There are blankets over the windshields to prevent the tarp from scratching the plexiglass.

We are looking forward to a Holiday party at LZ Fritz on December 9 and then planning 2018. The chapter participated in 16 parades and static displays in 2017. We also managed to fit in a summer party and several work days during the year. Merry



Getting ready for Veterans Day. How many pilots does it take to change a light bulb?



"Vettes" for Vets



Citrus Heights Veterans Center



Veterans Day 2017



Ami Bera in 563



It's a Wrap!

Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

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

By Dave Anderson VHPA-CCN webmaster



## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

The Old Dominion Chapter has enjoyed a busy fall season. In September, we traveled to Reedville, VA for a day cruise to Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay aboard the Chesapeake Breeze out of Buzzards Point Marina. On the island we walked or rode a golf cart around those one and a half square miles that is Tangier. Lunch and shopping in the many restaurants and village shops were also on the agenda.

October was the Autumn Rambler train ride in Dillwyn. Fall foliage was expected, however nature did not cooperate. With fourteen of us in attendance we took advantage of relaxing on the ride through the rolling hills. Afterwards, we all had a great Italian lunch; as always we enjoyed the company and conversation with fellow Aviators.

On November 10, we had our regular meeting at Legends Brewery. Chapter President Don Agren called the meeting to order and offered



Tom & Carolyn Kirk, Don & Angelia Agren, Jim & Patty Squyres, Jesse & Sheila Dize, Hugh & Deane Adams, MEL & Linda ANDERSON, Jim & Betsy Holden

Jim & Betsy Holden  
Don & Angelia Agren,  
Jim & Patty Squyres

an opening invocation. Following the reading of the previous meeting minutes by Hugh Adams, Secretary, they were approved.





# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Frosty Price gave an excellent demonstration of the new projector the chapter has purchased to help with presentations to other groups. Any member of the chapter can contact Frosty and he will send the unit to you with instructions on use. This projector can be used with a laptop, tablet or smartphone for your presentation, pictures, slides and videos can be downloaded.

Our annual Christmas Gala will be celebrated with Richmond

## THE 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; comradery at lunch is a bonus.

Our Veterans Day event was a big hit at the Aspen Crossing Elementary School in Aurora, CO. Chapter member Joe Minkiewicz coordinated with the Principal Karen Puga, who invited us to attend their annual Veterans Day Celebration. Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Bill Robie, Al Harnick, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Phil Lanphier, Carl Cavalluzzi, and Dale House hosted approximately 550 children from first through fifth grades.

We all had a good time providing a history lesson to the children, explaining the meaning behind some of our exhibits, and teaching the kids how to fly a Huey helicopter while they sat in our Huey cockpit. Our Christmas Party, hosted by chapter member Greg Mann, will be held after the Aviator suspense date, so you'll have to stay tuned for a report. Last year there were approximately 40 attendees. Judging from the number of RSVPs, this year is expected to be as well attended as it was last year.

### *Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:*

Planning is underway for the 2018 season. Chapter meetings, BBQs, museum events, and other other activities will keep us busy. We will report on the 2018 schedule in the next Aviator.

### *Meeting Schedule and other Information:*

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third

Chapter of MOA. Our next scheduled meeting is January 13 at Legends Brewery. Major General Phillips, USMC (Ret.), owner of Generals Ridge Winery in Hague has invited the Chapter to have one of our meetings at the winery date to be announced. Several of us tried the wine at Generals Ridge while in Reedville and found it to be excellent.

By Jim Squyres

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 dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have a holiday get together in December. The Museum committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays. Visit our Web site 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 that our visitors can put on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: [REDACTED]



Carl Cavalluzzi and Doug Niel speaking to the kids outside the Museum about the Vietnam War.



Some of the chaos in the museum, with Al Harnick, Bill Robie, Rick Beaver and Phil Lanphier providing some semblance of control over the situation.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Our SoCal Chapter had our business meeting at the Newport Beach Elks on October 28. Jim Davidson was elected as our new Chapter President. Ron Warner is still our Vice President and Jim Grimm our Secretary/Treasurer. Jim Davidson has a great background. He is a VHPA Life Member; served two tours in Vietnam flying Scouts and Cobras, and received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of safe flying. Jim recently retired as a Fire Pilot for the Orange County Fire Authority. He will soon be flying a Cobra with the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation.

I am proud and honored to have served as your President for the past 5 years..



L/R. Ron Warner, Andy Hoder, Jim Grimm, Tom Crosby, Larry Rogers, Sven Akesson, Jim Davidson at Newport Beach Elks Lodge.

Thank you every one for your support for helping me and supporting our SoCal Chapter.

For those who would like to catch up on the Chapter Dues, \$25 can be sent to Jim Grimm Sec/Treasurer 4607 Everest Circle, Cypress CA 90630.

On Wednesday November 15th at 0900 our SoCal Chapter and (AAHF) Army Heritage Foundation will have a joint breakfast at Flo's Restaurant, Chino Airport; afterwards we'll meet at Yanks Museum for a joint meeting regarding next year's activities with VHPA SoCal and AAHF.

You're all welcome to attend.

By Sven Akesson



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## South Missouri Chapter

The

South Missouri Chapter of VHPA held its quarterly meeting November 11, 2017, in Branson, MO. Branson is a Veteran-friendly town and we were treated very well. Eighteen of our members participated in the Branson Veterans Day Parade and were well received and applauded, to include one woman shouting out "You guys brought my husband home!" We tried to shake hands with all the WWII and Korea veterans along the way as well as many Vietnam veterans.

We then had a wreath-laying ceremony at the Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial, located at the entrance of the College of the Ozarks. The College of the Ozarks has tremendous respect for veterans and the military and has a very nicely designed memorial for the Missourians killed in Vietnam. This ceremony helped all of us remem-



Wreath laying at the Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial. From left to right: Missouri Lt. Gov. Mike Parson, College of the Ozarks President Dr. Jerry Davis, Chapter President Dick Elgin, chapter members John Sorensen and Chuck Guy.



Missouri Lt. Gov. Mike Parson.

ber our fallen comrades. Our Chapter officers and our Lieutenant Governor Mike Parson (a veteran himself) placed the wreath.

Our meeting was held in the Keeter Center at the College of the Ozarks. It began with a missing man ceremony. Our Lieutenant Governor then gave an excellent speech. A drawing was held and a quilt made by wives was awarded to the winner. Lunch and fellowship followed.

Guests included members of the Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers of America (MOAA).

The next meeting will be March 24, 2018, at Creve Coeur with a visit at the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation hangar. For more information on this, and other chapter activities, visit our website, [vhpasmo.org](http://vhpasmo.org).



Members participating in the Veterans Day parade in Branson.

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

On November 10th, Bert Leach, Jim Ottman, and Don Abrams participated in the Veterans Day program at the New Richmond Wisconsin Middle School. Jim and other members of Vietnam Veterans of America brought along their "towable Huey" for the kids to tour. The program consisted of a welcome ceremony with speeches from students, musical numbers by the choir and orchestra and a flag folding ceremony. There were over 100 veterans present. After the program, students rotated through classrooms with speakers making presentations on all the various wars the U.S. has been involved in. One of the stops was at the Huey where Bert Leach gave a short talk on the Huey and her crews in Vietnam. It was an excellent program.

On November 16, the Upper Midwest Chapter held an evening social meeting with our spouses at the White Bear Lake VFW. After Dinner, Jim Crigler gave a presentation on his "Mission of Honor" this past spring and early summer. He departed by solo canoe from Lake Itasca just after "ice out" and paddled the entire length of the Mississippi River. Along the way he stopped at various cities to meet with Gold Star Families and presented them with a commemorative Gold Star coin. His goal was to complete his journey in time to be at the Indianapolis VHPA reunion, but unusually high-water conditions forced him to stop his journey in Missouri. He attended the meeting in Indianapolis and after water conditions improved, he restarted his trip in Missouri and reached New Orleans in August. His purpose for the trip was to raise awareness for Gold Star families and raise money for American Huey 369 organization. Our hats are off to Jim for this courageous undertaking.



November chapter meeting.



Jim Crigler Presentation.



2017 Vet Day School Presentation

Submitted by Don Abrams and Jim Bankston



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## UTAH CHAPTER

The Utah VHPA has enjoyed comradeship with our fellow members through various activities and events during the past six months. In October we hosted a trap and skeet shoot at a local range with brats and burgers prepared on site. We invited fellow vets in the local area and were privileged to have four former Iraq and Afghanistan vets join us and enjoy the day comparing war stories from different eras - to the amusement of all.

Our educational endeavors are being established with our second effort to bring education about the Vietnam War and the role of the helicopter during that time. As reported last issue the Utah VHPA was represented at a local Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association's fundraiser for Veterans and in November we were invited by the Utah Valley



Veterans Day Panel at Utah Valley University

University's veterans' department for their annual Veteran's Day celebration and panel discussion on the Vietnam War. The event was well attended by the students and several thoughtful questions were asked. We were also able to display several items of memorabilia and photos from the Vietnam era the students found interesting. Our chapter has just made a leadership change in accordance with our bylaws and Tom Meville will be the new President for the upcoming year. Our holiday wishes to all VHPA members and a prosperous New Year in 2018.

By Doug Drury, Past President



Memorabilia display at the University

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## AWARDS LEGEND

**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

**Bew, Joseph E. USA  
CW4 (Ret.); Flight  
Classes: 68-507/68-9.**



Joseph, or Jody as a lot of his friends and family knew him, was born in Newport News VA, and died peacefully on October 5, 2017 at Legacy House in Ocala. He graduated from Churchland High School; and completed college while serving in the U.S. Army for 29 years as a helicopter pilot. He is survived by his wife Joan.

**Broome, Don F. USA;  
Flight Class: 62-5; RVN:  
63 8 TC CO, 63-64 117  
AHC.**



Don Broome, of Dallas died December 15, 2014. He was born on May 22, 1937, in Pampa, TX.

He graduated from McLean High School in 1955 and from West Texas State University in 1959. In 1959, he entered the Army.

He started as manager of helicopter maintenance with Hughes Tool Company in 1967 in Los Angeles. In 1970, he moved to Merrill Lynch in Beverly Hills. He then moved to the Dallas and Ft. Worth offices of Merrill Lynch and finished his career at Smith Barney, retiring in 2008 as Senior Vice President of Investments and Financial Consultant.

He is survived by his wife, Beverly.

**Brown, Isham H. USA;  
Flight Class: 56-12; RVN:  
66-67 120 AHC, 173  
AHC; Callsign: Robin  
Hood.**



Isham H. Brown, 86, departed this life on November 13, 2017. He was a Vietnam Veteran, helicopter pilot and flight instructor. Mr.

Brown was a letter carrier with Riviera Beach Post Office for 20 years. He was a graduate of Hampton Institute with a degree in business administration. CPT Brown was predeceased by his wife, Evelyn J. Brown.

**Davis, Arthur S. USA  
CW4 (Ret.); Flight Class:  
67-15; RVN: 67-68 48  
AHC; Callsign: Blue Star.**



Arthur Davis of Lawrence, formerly of Boston, passed away on October 9, 2017. Arthur was born in Boston on June 22, 1945 and raised in Brookline. He retired from the U.S. Army with 35+ years of service. He was a veteran of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf (Desert Storm) wars. Arthur was also retired from the Federal Aviation Administration, New England Region where he served as an Operations Inspector. He was a consummate airman whose instructing skills benefited scores of Aviators, including this Editor.

He is survived by his wife Susan (Jacobs) Davis.

**Drangstveit, Erling R.  
USAF LTC (Ret.); Flight  
Class: 58-J; RVN: 65-66  
38 ARRS; DFC; Callsign:  
Jolly Green.**



Erling Drangstveit passed away peacefully on September 26, 2017 and is now with his Lord and Savior. He was born November 14, 1932, in Blair, WI. He was raised on a farm and aspired to join the U.S. Air Force and become a pilot. He served honorably from 1952 to 1973 and was triple-rated having served as a navigator, fixed wing pilot, and helicopter pilot with air rescue missions during the Vietnam War where he received several medals.

Erling had multiple assignments worldwide which included Detachment Commander positions. While stationed in Washington State he carried out air search and rescue missions.

He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Lucretia Murray Drangstveit.

**Howell, William G. USA;  
Flight Class: 69-24; RVN:  
70-71 128 AHC; BS, PH;  
Callsign: Tomahawk 26.**



William Howell, of Treasure Island, quietly joined his loving parents Bill and Catherine Howell on August 18, 2017. Bill was born in Nyack, NY on December 2nd, 1945 and moved to St. Pete Beach in 1960. He graduated from Boca Ciega High School in 1963 and graduated from Florida State University in 1967.

He honorably served the Army in Vietnam as a Captain and helicopter pilot. After his service, Bill was a successful Real Estate Investor and Developer. He was a good man and will be missed by many. He is survived by his former wife and always dear friend Susan.

**Kern, Gordon R. USA  
CW4 (Ret.); Flight Class:  
66-11/66-9; RVN: 67-68  
176 AHC, 69-70 355  
HHC; SS, MSM, DFC,  
BS, ACM; Callsign: Mus-  
ket 44/Work Horse 44.**



Gordon Rae Kern was born January 29, 1938 in Waterloo, IA. He passed away September 6, 2016.

Gordon enlisted in the Navy and after two years on board USS Princeton, he met and married his lifelong love, Christine Koch. After a brief civilian job at John Deere in Waterloo, IA, he felt the call to serve again and enlisted in the United States Army. He graduated Airborne school in 1962. Later in his military career



he wanted to fly. Upon completing and graduating Warrant Officer Candidate school in 1966, he was sent to his first of two tours in Vietnam where he was decorated for his selfless acts of bravery.

During his military career he flew CH54s and UH1s. After retirement in 1979, he operated his own landscaping business and later worked in the oil and gas industry. When he finally decided to retire, he still felt the need to serve and volunteered at the Veterans Home in Lawton.

**Kimbrell, Gary M. USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Classes: 66-23/67-1; RVN: 67-68 C/3/17 CAV, 68 173 AHC; SS, BS; Callsigns: Charlie Horse 14/Robin Hood 34.**



On Veterans Day November 11, 2017, Gary McRoy Kimbrell of Abingdon VA, an Aviator, made his final landing. Gary was born in Rock Hill, SC.

He graduated Statesville, NC high school in 1964, and then attended Pfeiffer University prior to being drafted into the Army in the fall of 1965. In April of 1967, he earned his flight wings at Ft. Rucker. After leaving Vietnam in December of 1968, he did a tour of Korea. He left the active Army in 1973 and joined the Army Reserves. While in the reserves, he graduated from the Command and General Staff College. Gary retired in 1993 with 28 years of military service. He reconnected with fellow aviators when he joined the National Association of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and became a life member. Gary was an aviator to the end.

Gary earned an Executive MBA Degree from Queens University in Charlotte, NC that furthered his career in data systems, which brought him to Abingdon, VA as a project manager for KVAT Food Systems. He retired from there in 2010. During his time in Abingdon, Gary served on the planning commission for the Town of Abingdon.

Gary is survived by his wife of 31 years, Susan Mann Kimbrell.

**Lindekens, Richard A. USA; Flight Classes: 67-503/67-25; RVN: 68-69 254 MED DET; Callsign: Dustoff 112.**



Richard A. Lindekens pushed back from the gate and took flight on his next adventure on November 9, 2017, where he is now flying high above the planes and eagles he so loved. He was born June 14, 1947, appropriately on Flag Day and the U.S. Army birthday, in Pasadena, CA.

From early on he had a love of flying and spent his career flying helicopters in Panama, the Amazon Jungle, Alaska, and for the Army. He was a proud Vietnam Veteran until the end. A true patriot, he retired after 20 years of service. He became a corporate pilot for Fluor Corporation where he developed a love of international travel. This love of flying took him to work for AirCal and shortly thereafter to American Airlines, where he retired as a Captain on the 757/767.

He leaves behind wife Raelynn.

**Lopriore, Michael USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 66-14; RVN: 67 A/9 AVN 9 INF, 67 120 AHC, 69-70 120 AHC, 70 IIFFV; DFC, BS (2), MSM, ACM; Callsign: Jayhawk.**



Michael Lopriore of New Smyrna Beach, FL died September 30th, after an extended illness. He was born an American citizen, in Anagni, Italy, on Feb 26, 1938. The family relocated to Jamestown, NY, in 1953. He enlisted in the US Army following graduation from Jamestown High School in 1957. In 1964, he was commissioned a 2nd LT after completing Officer Candidate School. Helicopter pilot training led to a tour in Vietnam. Fixed wing pilot training followed and preceded his second tour in Vietnam as a forward air controller. Mission demands returned him to helicopter pilot status for the remainder of his tour. He earned a BA from Park College in Missouri before his assignment to Redstone Arsenal, AL as Chief of Flight Operations where he arranged a city-wide fly-by of the plane

transporting one of the space shuttles in the 1970s. He retired from the military in 1977. He was a lifetime member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' Association (VHPA) in Florida. He made the transition to civilian life as a travel agent with Christopher Travel in Huntsville, AL. He is survived by his wife Shirley.

**Miller, Michael B. USA; Flight Classes: 70-17/70-15; RVN: 70-71 129 AHC; Callsign: Bulldog 21.**



Michael (Mike) Miller, of Dixon, CA passed away surrounded by family on October 1, 2017. He was born in Indianapolis, IN on May 12, 1949. He graduated from South High school in Bakersfield, continued his education by attending College of the Desert where he received his AA degree in Law Enforcement. Mike married Dana on September 28 in Duncan, OK; they were married for 45 years.

Mike was a traffic officer for the California Highway Patrol from 1973-1979 and then a Helicopter Pilot from 1979-1994. In addition, Mike served in the Army National Guard as a Helicopter Pilot from 1981-1994.

**Moentmann, Dwain T. USA LTC (Ret.); Flight Class: 60-1; RVN: 65-66 60 AHC, 69-70 B/229 AVN 1 CAV; SS (2), LM, DFC, BS (V), (3) PH; Callsign: Killer Spade 6.**



Dwain (Bud) Moentmann passed away at home on October 10, 2017. He served for 20 years in the Army earning Airborne and Ranger tabs. Approximately 1500 hours of his total 4400 hours of flight time was during combat.

After retiring from the military, he ran unsuccessfully for State Representative. He then opened an Edward D. Jones brokerage at the perfect time. The Dow was 850 and interest rates were 16%.

He is survived by his wife Holly.



**Myers, Marvin O. USA;**  
**Flight Classes:** 60-7/60-  
 6A; RVN: 64-65 197  
 AHC, 67 313 AVN  
 DET, 68 HHC/4 AVN 4  
 INF; SS, BS (w/cluster),  
 ACM; Callsign: Dragon  
 36.



Marvin Otis Myers of Duluth passed away on November 12, 2017. He was born in Hutchinson, KS on July 24, 1936. Much of his early life was spent on a ranch in Kansas. He graduated from the University of Illinois and immediately entered the US Army as a Second Lieutenant. During his military career he was stationed at Fort Riley, KS as an Infantry Company Commander; Hanau, Germany flying H-34s; Fort Benning, GA as an instructor in the Brigade and Battalion Operations Department. Marvin pioneered the use of Aerial Searchlights on helicopters and was the first to use this innovation in a combat environment. He was also the first aviator to use the 40 millimeter grenade launcher on a helicopter in combat. Marvin had 950 hours of combat flying time. He graduated from Airborne School, Ranger School, Flight School and the Infantry Career Course.

By 1990, he was involved in the Veterans community and was one of the founders of a Vietnam veterans group. He served on the national board of Vietnam Veterans of America. A major accomplishment of the Georgia Veterans was when Marvin, the State President, led a group to Washington, DC and applying pressure to the Congressmen. Agent Orange legislation was subsequently passed in the US Congress.

**Pittman, Ted R. USMC;**  
**Flight Class:** 65-66; RVN:  
 67 HMM-265; PH.



Richard Pittman was born on April 3, 1943, in New Orleans, LA, and passed away in the early morning of November 20th with his wife and four daughters by his side after battling melanoma cancer. Ted is survived by his wife of 53 years, Coco.

Ted graduated with a bachelor degree

from Louisiana State University where he met and married Coco (Edna May Grantham). After college, Ted joined the Marine Corps, achieving the rank of Captain. He served in the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot.

Ted then went on to work as a Real Estate Developer, involved in 45 commercial developments primarily in the Dallas/Fort Worth area as the Owner of The Pittman Company, Dallas; Managing Partner for Ellis & Pittman; Partner in Second Century Investments and Owner of Pittman Commercial Properties. With a strong passion for running, Ted finished 17 marathons including the prestigious Boston Marathon.

**Potter, Gary A. USA;**  
**Flight Classes:** 66-23/67-  
 1; RVN: 67-68 45 MED  
 CO, 69-70 A/4 AVN 4  
 INF; Callsign: Dustoff 15.



Gary Alan Potter, 70, passed away on October 4, 2017 at Kaweah Delta Hospital in Visalia, CA following a battle with lung cancer. Gary was a long-time resident of Three Rivers, CA where he resided for nearly 40 years. Gary was born in Faulkton SD on August 19, 1947, moving to Porterville, CA at an early age. He graduated from Porterville High School and enlisted in the United States Army in 1967. Upon his discharge from the active duty Army in 1970, Gary continued flying helicopters for the California Army National Guard and several civilian companies. He is survived by his wife Katherine.

**Ratcliff, Walter A. USA COL (Ret.);**  
**Flight Class:** 55-D; RVN: 65-66 335  
 TC CO, 71-74 765 TC BN; Callsigns:  
 Naughty 78/Arrow 6.

Walter Allen Ratcliff was called to be by his heavenly father's side on October 1, 2017. He is survived by his wife of 65 years Jo Dene (Bryan) Ratcliff.

He was a graduate of Kemper Military School, followed by a Bachelor's in Petroleum Geology in 1953 from Cen-

tenary College. His Master's in Public Administration was from Shippensburg State College, PA in 1976. Starting in 1953, he began 28 years of service in the United States Army. He flew both fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. Throughout his career, he was a test pilot for numerous cutting-edge aircraft, including the UH-60 Black Hawk. He was a graduate of the Army War College in 1976. He commanded (ARADMAC) U.S. Army Transportation Aeronautical Depot Maintenance Center. He served as Director of Development and Engineering for (AVRADCOM) Aviation Research and Development Command. He also served as the Commanding Officer of the Corpus Christi Army Depot. He retired in 1981.

His second career of 11 years began with Central Power and Light in Corpus Christi, TX as Vice President of Corporate Services. He was promoted to Vice President of Corporate Services at Central Southwest in Dallas, TX.

**Romaine, Peter J. USA; Flight Class:** 68-  
 4; RVN: 68 C/3/17 CAV, 69  
 HHT/3/17 CAV; Callsigns: Charlie  
 Horse 9/Red Horse.

Peter Roamaine died January 7, 2017. No obituary was provided.

**Schierenbeck, Everett E.**  
**USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight**  
**Classes:** 61-1/61-1W;  
 RVN: 63-64 339 TC CO,  
 68-69 478 HHC; DFC  
 (2), BS (2), PH; Callsign:  
 Hurricane.



Everett Edward Schierenbeck of Oklahoma City, OK passed away on November 16, 2017 surrounded by his loving family. He was born February 28, 1935 in Jamaica, NY. Everett is survived by his wife, Constance B. Schierenbeck. Everett piloted the CH-54 Skycrane, Bell UH1 Iroquois and C-12.

After his military career he worked at the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a Grant Management Specialist and retired in 2014.



# TAPS

**Silver, Benjamin S. USA COL (Ret.); Flight Class: 46 RVN; 65-66 228 ASHB 1 CAV 70-71 16 CAG; Callsign: White Charger 6.**



Benjamin Stump Silver, of Gatesville, TX, went to be with his Lord and Savior on August 26, 2017. Benjamin was born on August 22, 1922 in Havre de Grace, MD.

Benjamin graduated from Havre de Grace High School in 1939 and the University of Maryland in September of 1943. He enlisted in the United States Army and graduated from Officer Candidate School, in Fort Benning, GA. He retired as a Colonel with 32 years of service. Ben married Frances Aylette Bowen on February 16, 1946 and she preceded him in death in 1992. He then married Kyoko "Kay" Matsumura Jones on April 9, 1994 who survives him.

**Thomas, Howard M. USA; Flight Classes: 69-47/69-43; RVN: 70-71 134 AHC; DFC, BS (2); Callsign: Demon 24.**



Mike Thomas passed away on June 10,

2017. He was born on May 28, 1947 in Spur, TX.

After leaving the army he returned home to Spur to farm with his Dad. After he retired from farming, he pursued his passion for riding motorcycles. He saw 45 states on his motorcycle with his son and friends.

**Welch, Randolph B.; Flight Class: 69-13; RVN: 69-70 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN; Callsigns: Condor 15/Condor 45.**

Randolph Welch was an Ohio resident on November 16, 2017, the date of his death. Following his Vietnam service he returned to Goodyear as a machinist.

**Zimmerman, Bobby D. USA CW4 (Ret.); Flight Class: 62-2W; RVN: 65-65 116 AHC, 68-69 A/228 ASHB 1 CAV; DFC, BS (v), MSM; Callsign: Hornet 18.**

Bobby D. Zimmerman, "Zeke", of Crofton, KY passed away on February 20, 2017 surrounded by his loving family in Nashville, TN. He is survived by Ellen, his wife of 64 years.

He was born in Cainsville, MO. He was drafted into the US Army in March 1953. His initial training and assignment was at Ft.

Sill, OK where he excelled in Searchlights in the 88th FA Battery. After his initial service of two years, he was ordered back to active duty in 1956 and assigned to Germany.

In February 1962, Dale and his family moved to Camp Wolters, TX where he entered Primary Helicopter Training. His flying career took him to Ft. Clayton, Panama Canal Zone (1962-1965, 1969-1973), Ft. Campbell, KY (1966-1968, 1973-1975), and two tours in Vietnam. In July 1965, Dale was sent to Ft. Bragg where the 116th Avn Co was formed and shipped out to Vietnam. There, on top of his flying duties, he was given the additional duty of Project Engineer for Construction. His task was to build the company buildings and improve the standard of living for the company. He labored along with the company using his many skills.

Dale retired in 1975 having been qualified in the OH-23D, OH-13H, UH-19D, UH-1A/B/D/H, CH-47A/B and OH-58.

After retiring from the Army, Dale made north Christian County, KY his new home and began his second career as a tobacco farmer, owner of the Crofton Eat Shop (small restaurant), and active member of his community.

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

Alvord, Harold F. USA COL (Ret.); RVN: 70-71 174 AHC; DFC, BS, ACM (4); Callsign: Dolphin 16; died September 30, 2017.

Berta, Thomas L. USA COL (Ret.); Flight Class: 60; RVN: 67-68 C/228 ASHB 1 CAV, 70 FLIR NETT, 70 2/17 CAV 101 ABN, 70-71 159 ASHB 101 ABN; LM, DFC, BS; died September 6, 2017.

Bisbey, Jay B. USA LTC (Ret.); DFC, BS, PH (2); died October 8, 2017 (no other data).

Boyd, Thomas L. USAF LTC (Ret.); Flight Class: 60-D; RVN: 71-72 20 SOS; DFC (2), MSM; Callsign: Green Hornet; died November 8, 2017.

Christensen, Peter L. USA; Flight Class: 71-25; BS (2), ACM; died October 27, 2017 (no other data).

Dodge, Richard L. USA COL (Ret.); Flight Class: 67-1/66-23; RVN: 67-68 174 AHC; DSSM, DFC, BS (v), BS, MSM, ACM; died October 18th, 2017.

Head, Robert L. USA; died October 19, 2017 (no other data).

Lenderman, William USA; RVN: 67 219 AVN, 69 62 CAC; Callsigns: Headhunter/Royal Coachman; died October 21, 2017 (no other data).

Malek, Joseph H. USA; Flight Class: 69-9; RVN: 70 61 AHC; DFC (2), BS; died November 11, 2017.

Mullican, John A. USA; Flight Class: 67-13; RVN: 67-68 118 AHC; DFC; Callsigns: Thunderbird 13/Bandit 37; died October 1, 2017.

Rasmussen, Gene R. USA LTC (Ret.); DFC; died October 12, 2017 (no other data).

Smith, James S. USA; Flight Class: 71-11; died October 1, 2017 (no other data).

Smyth, Peter H. USA LTC (Ret.) Flight Classes: 68-512/68-20; died October 27, 2017 (no other data).

White, John A. USA; Flight Class: 71-7; RVN: 71-72 F/79 AA BN/1 CAV; died September 24, 2017.



# A Tribute to Rae Cheney – a Faithful Friend and Supporter of the VHPA

Rae Cheney, Gold Star mother of US Army helicopter pilot LT Dan Cheney and co-founder of PeaceTrees Vietnam passed away 14 August 2017 at the age of 97. Rae and her daughter, Jerilyn Brusseu, attended many VHPA Reunions. They faithfully supported the Reunion's Gold Star Family Breakfasts led by Julie Kink who wrote the following about Rae: "For those of us who've lost our own mothers (which is likely most of us), she was like a mother to us all. An ordinary life turned extraordinary by her loving embrace of Vietnam War veterans and Vietnam's people, and the gentle determination to put that love into action in helping eliminate the lingering dangers of the war."

PeaceTrees Vietnam is perhaps the most tangible example of "putting that love" into action. It currently sponsors eight major programs: Clearance of Landmines and Unexploded Ordinance, Mine Risk Education, Citizen Diplomacy/Tree Planting, Farming Programs to assist families, Survivor Assistance, Schools and Libraries, Microcredit Lending, and focus on Quang Tri and Quang Binh Provinces. I and many other VHPAers (especially Dave Hansen) have returned to Vietnam via PeaceTrees. Please let me share my view of how this most laudable legacy came to pass.

This all started in 1995 soon after the United States reestablished relations with Vietnam. However, what you see in PeaceTrees today took years and years of pioneering work, love, dedication, patience and sacrifice to come to pass. Jerilyn spent nearly a year living in Đông Hà to earn the trust of the Vietnamese government, the local Vietnamese leaders and people, and the Montagnard people in Quang Tri especially near Khe Sanh. I assume every VHPAer knows that "everything" in Vietnam is political – especially recording history! Then slowly things started happening something like this. A remote Montagnard village had



government approval to relocate from a flood-prone area to higher ground well known to contain UXO (unexploded ordnance) AND they wanted a kindergarten. The village came to PeaceTrees for help. Now as I understand it, the Vietnamese government does NOT BUILD kindergartens (only elementary schools, etc.), but if a village establishes a kindergarten, the government will pay the teachers, etc. So, PeaceTrees cleared the UXO for the access roads, new village, and farms, etc. Then, PeaceTrees hired locals to build the building. The government gets the credit. Everyone wins!

Perhaps these two pictures best summarize Rae's efforts. At age 90, she traveled to Quang Tri to dedicate a Mothers' Peace Library and a kindergarten in honor of her son. As Rae told the story of her loss, she was embraced by a local Montagnard mother, 92 years of age, who lost her two sons when the war passed by her village. In Rae's words, "The moment Ms. Ho Ti Moan and I embraced each other in love and understanding, I asked myself, who could have ever dreamed this exchange of forgiveness would be visible for the world to see?"

While there are dozens of other Rae and PeaceTrees stories and even a ton more of details to the ones I've mentioned, I believe it is important for the membership to know that collectively the VHPA lost a "tall tree" when Rae Cheney passed. I only wish we had a million more just like her.

Slow hand salute!

Mike Law

*Editor's Note: To read more about Rae Cheney, her daughter Jerilyn Brusseu, and PeaceTrees see the November/December 2016 Aviator issue article: Good Things from Bad.*

## One Last Book Review by Life Member John Penny



VHPA member Rick Bishop has written *Shady Lady, 1500 hours Flying the U-2 Spy Plane*. Bishop flew Chinooks in Vietnam with the 132nd ASHC, out of Chu Lai, in 68-69 for the Americal Division earning AC with call sign Hercules 17. Upon returning from his tour in Vietnam, Bishop joined the Air Force to fly jets. What followed was an incredible career flying top secret aircraft in the upper regions of the atmosphere.

Following a two-week interview process Bishop was selected to join the U-2 program. He and his fellow U-2 trainees quickly appreciated the U-2 allowed for few mistakes and took them to places and heights very few individuals have ever been. Acknowledged to be the most dangerous aircraft in

the world, the U-2 is still considered a National Asset.

Over the years of his U-2 career, Bishop rose to Commander of the 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron prior to an early retirement in 1991. He then flew for American Airlines for another 16 years. He now resides on a small farm in Florida. The book is very informative giving the reader a front row seat with details of the strenuous training and mechanical features of the aircraft. Once you get started reading, it is hard to put the book down. I highly recommend this book and thank Rick Bishop for sharing this phenomenal experience with us.

**Shady Lady: 1,500 Hours Flying the U-2 Spy Plane Hardcover (with photos) by Lt. Col. Rick Bishop (Ret.) hardcover, 304 pages ISBN-13: 978-19108099099**



# SAR NORTH - HUGS & KISSES

I was the section leader ordered to stand SAR north duty for 24 hours up on the DMZ in the fall of 1965. Back then, Marine H-34s were providing the helicopter portion of the Air Force's North Vietnam rescue service. We reported to Air Force Ops at Danang at 3AM and had to leave all our personal effects and get our survival package containing money, wedding rings (we had to leave our own wedding rings) and other stuff to buy our way out of captivity if captured. (Good luck with that.) Our mission was to rescue any downed pilots from the DMZ north up to Vinh. If we had to go as far as Vinh, we would not have enough fuel to return to South Vietnam so we would have to fly out into the South China Sea and rendezvous with an Air Force Dumbo and then ditch. For that, we carried an 8-man life raft. I can't imagine how I would have informed our recently rescued pilot he would have to be rescued a second time that day.

We armed ourselves heavily. We carried two M-60 machine guns in the cabin manned by our crew chief and gunner who each carried side arms and an automatic weapon of choice. We also carried an M-79 grenade launcher with a box of grenades. Up in the cockpit both the co-pilot and I carried side arms and an automatic weapon we carried on our laps. I also hooked two fragmentation grenades to my survival vest. If we went down, the North Vietnamese would think they had a small battalion surrounded for a few minutes.

That day, we relieved the old SAR crew at Dong Ha just south of the DMZ and settled down to wait while listening to the strike chatter on the radio while hoping nobody got shot down. It didn't take long until we were ordered to launch because an Air Force 105 was hit and the pilot was trying to make it to South Vietnam. As we crossed the DMZ northbound, we picked up two Air Force SPADs and checked in with Dumbo off shore.

The Air Force 105 pilot was telling everyone on the radio he was doing a thousand miles an hour, smoking, losing fuel and his hydraulics. After a few minutes, he announced "I just lost all hydraulics, so I'm leaving the aircraft."

The Air Force "Sandy's" spotted his chute just north of the DMZ so we headed at full speed to get him.

He landed in an area of medium high scrub so we could see his chute

in the trees, but there was no place to land. I hovered and lowered our crew chief through the low trees to look for him. It didn't take long for the North Vietnamese to get within shooting range. As we hoisted both up, we started taking fire. As soon as we hauled them into the cabin, I dumped the nose and pulled max power to get out of there.

After a few seconds, I called down to see how everybody was but got no answer. I called again and again still with no response. Suspecting everyone was hit, I told the co-pilot to pull up his seat and go into the belly to help. Just as he unstrapped, the intercom squawked into life, "Sorry, sir. I couldn't answer you because this guy was hugging and kissing me so hard I couldn't get to the mic button."

Respectfully submitted,

**Rich "Hip" Hippner**  
VHPA Member #  
M13471



Eight-man raft and one of our M-60s in our H-34 cabin.



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# ~ BOOK REVIEWS ~

For the past ten years, John Penny has done a wonderful job reviewing books for The Aviator coaching potential authors and encouraging others to write their memoirs or novels. Now that the torch has been officially passed, I have big shoes to fill. Like many other VHPA members who are authors, John was one of the first reviewers of my first novel *Big Mother 40* and over the years, kept egging me on to send him the latest book in the series that now has five published with number six and seven on the way.

One of the many things John started is the "Author's Panel" at the annual reunion. Now that I have the "con" so to speak, the panel will continue because it has spawned several books by VHPA members who, after attending, put pen to paper. Several times, attendees have reached out to me for help and ultimately, they became authors. Getting published is a mine strewn path and, like John, I hope to continue to be a resource to prospective authors.

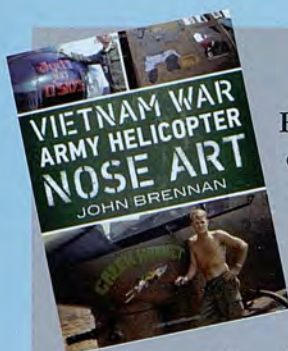
So, all y'all – that's Texan for all of you out there - get your books written, published and send them to me. If you have any questions, you can reach me directly through my website – [www.marcliebman.com](http://www.marcliebman.com) or through VHPA.

Marc Liebman



**Marc Liebman, a VHPA Life Member, is a retired Navy Captain and Naval Aviator who flew combat search and rescue missions during**

**the Vietnam War. He is also the author of five published novels with more coming.**



## Book Review by Author & Life Member Marc Liebman

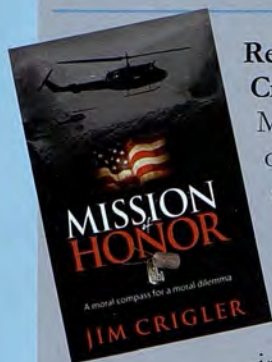
### Review of Vietnam War Army Helicopter Nose Art by John Brennan

My hats off to John who has pulled this wonderful book together. What's more amazing is that this is John's fifth book on name, nose art and photos of Army helicopters from the Vietnam

War. John does a wonderful job of organizing the photos by type of aircraft to make it very personal and enjoyable to read. The photos, considering the dates when they were taken, are clear and show the guys as well as the helicopters. While nose art is not unique to the American military, we seem to do more of it than our allies and it ranges from the serious to tongue and cheek to off-color. The narrative is in the words of the guys who flew during the war and gives the

reader insight into the often dark humor and the aircrew's emotions during a war that ended forty plus years ago. I would never have thought that creating nose art was a money making business, but one Army Aviator - John Mumaw – openly admitted he charged for his artwork! I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in aviation history and particular, the history of those of us who flew during the Vietnam War. He concludes with his thoughts on the lessons learned from the war which by itself, is worth the read. Well done, John Brennan!

**Book is available from either the printer Fonthill Press, Amazon or through John Brennan. 187 pages in paperback with photos and text in soft cover. ISBN number is 978-1-62545-035-7. Price is \$34.95.**



### Review of Mission of Honor by Jim Crigler

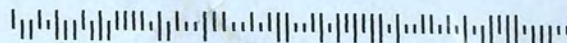
Mission of Honor is not just another memoir about flying in Vietnam. It's a poignant story about a man on a quest who flew Hueys during the Vietnam War. The book is at times hilariously funny other times, very sad. On the surface, it is a tale of men fighting a war that was growing increasingly unpopular back here in the

states. Underneath, there is a story of man with a sense of duty to two young girls. Depending on your perspective, one might smile or recoil in horror when you read that Jim managed to get not one, but two women pregnant just before he was drafted. Both kids were borne out of wedlock and the families refused to allow him to communicate with or see his

daughters for years. One briefly allowed him into her life after he came back from Vietnam but then pushed him out the door – literally – and disappeared. The other just ignored him and never answered his letters. It was only through happenstance and the passage of time as in at least a decade that the truth was told to the two young women. Both wanted to know Jim and have him become part of their lives. Jim flew with honor and did his duty in Vietnam. More significant was that Jim did his duty and persisted in searching for his two daughters on a more important Mission of Honor. The book is a fast, enjoyable read and I highly recommend it. It will make you think and say to yourself, "Good on you, Jim Crigler!"

**Book is available from either the printer Panoma Press, Amazon, Barnes & Noble or through John Brennan. 305 pages in paperback with photos and text in soft cover. ISBN number 978-1-784521-08-0. Price is \$21.95.**





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