



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



Photo by Rae Walker Photography

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From the President of the VHPA

~ MIKE SHEUERMAN ~

The 2018 Reunion in Atlanta is off and running. Over a third of our room block at the Marriott is already booked, several tours are filled and additional ones being added. If you haven't made your reservations yet, I suggest you do. Don't wait till the last minute. We have plenty of things scheduled for Atlanta but some tours, once filled, can't be increased. Just so many slots being allotted by some of the vendors.

One of the really outstanding activities planned for this Reunion is the opportunity to get your family members a ride in a Vietnam era aircraft. The Army Aviation Historical Foundation, located at Tara Field just outside Atlanta, is scheduling rides July 3 through July 6. They are doing the planning and you must contact them directly to schedule your rides. VHPA is not involved with any aspect of the operation.

The Foundation will have UH-1s and AH-1Gs available for rides each day from 10 AM till 4 PM or when the last person goes up. They are accepting reservations for the

rides and providing round-trip transportation from the hotel. A photographer will be present to record your ride. There will be food and drinks available for purchase as well. Everything has been organized to allow for an enjoyable "authentic helicopter ride." Two groups have indicated they may bring a Vietnam OH-6 in for rides also. More on that in the next issue.

You can contact the AAHF at info@armyav.org or call

Guys, this is a once in a lifetime chance to get your family members in the front seat of a Cobra or ride in a Huey. The Foundation has five flyable UH-1s and seven flyable Snakes - THEY CAN REALLY DO A COMBAT ASSAULT!!!



See you in Atlanta!

Mike Sheuerman
Panther 15
361 ACE/AWC
Pink Panthers

FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

PLEASE NOTE:

Don't forget to register for the 2018 Reunion in Atlanta. Events are selling out quickly. In fact, the early response to many tours has exceeded our original estimates. Accordingly, we are attempting to expand capacity for any event where that is possible.

Please call HQ to be placed on a 'wait list' for any tour that is currently noted as sold out. We will attempt to accommodate these requests to the extent possible.

If life members would like to order a life member polo shirt, the order form is available at vhpa.org. Your order form can be mailed or faxed to HQ. Please allow 6-8 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 to be delivered in October 2018.

REMEMBER - You can now pay your dues and pre-

order your CD or Paper Directory on line thru the Online Directory at <https://directory.vhpa.org/>

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

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

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

Sherry Rodgers, VHPA Office Manager

From the Managing Editor

During the months of January and February, my wife and I leave New Jersey for Florida. I mention this only since it applies to a recent experience (although, in retrospect, this winter it seemed a very wise plan).

I received an email for the Letter to the Editor section. Pete Frazier commented on a recent article that had special significance to his Army Aviation experiences and his letter is printed in this issue. I noted he had added his home address to the message and it was a town about 40 miles from our location. I emailed him suggesting I would like to get together if possible.

That very evening he called, and we made plans to meet. He graciously offered us an afternoon on his boat. As is typical in these circumstances, we spoke of our time in Vietnam and memorable events. He related a story about a mission I never thought feasible or at least had never witnessed or heard about. I indicated that was just the type of material that is so important to our readers, who enjoy variety as well as the unusual.

He obviously gave it some thought, because later that

evening the story arrived in my email. He titled it the Tale of Three Tails (also included in this issue).

Prior to our meeting, Pete had never considered submitting the 'tale'. Naturally, I encouraged him to do so – as I do with many people I meet at the reunions. The most important aspect of this message is the fact that he decided to write it the same day. Now this, of course, is not what most veterans will do and as time passes the plan disappears. If you have a story (I deliberately avoided the word good because to each of us the particular event meant something), make a few notes or an outline and build it in increments. Tom Hirschler and I are always willing and available to assist in the finished product if we have the narrative and the essential facts.

Grammar and spelling ability varies with individuals and are easy to address after the fact. Please consider joining the ranks of the many pilots who continue to provide all of us with material. We extend our thanks to them and look forward to some more 'first timers'.

Tom Kirk

"AN OLD FRIEND"



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GUNSHIP 049 UPDATE 2017

At the October 2017 Knob Creek Kentucky Machine Gun Shoot, American Huey 369 (AH369) debuted Gunship 049, a recently restored to flight B Model Huey Gunship. The thousands of enthusiasts at the "Shoot" gave it resounding applause as she appeared overhead and made passes up the gun range, with remotely controlled pyrotechnics simulating actual fire from the aircraft.

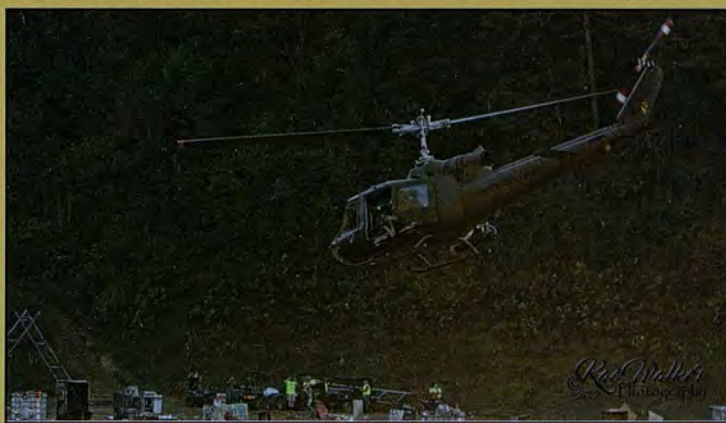
Those of you who saw 049 during "The Day with the Hueys" during the 2017 Indianapolis Reunion know this is a very rare bird which sports an M-21 weapons system, one of many that she carried over the years. Complete and as exactly restored to flight as possible, this B Model still has the original Charlie Model tail boom which was installed in Vietnam. 64-14049 flew with the 229th Assault Helicopter Company Smiling Tigers, the 1st of the 9th Cav, 282nd AHC Alley Cats and the 335th Aviation Company Falcons. Many of her former crewmembers are familiar with her restoration.

During the flyover presentation at Knob Creek, the following facts about 049 were pointed out:

- 1) For the presentation on the Range, 049 had her first crew chief, Chuck Jones, on board, again manning a weapon.
- 2) 049 had her weapons zeroed in "just over the hill from Knob Creek" at the Fort Knox gun range before departing for Vietnam.
- 3) She was shot down 4 times during one six-month period with the Alley Cats. Recovered and repaired each time by her crew chief Bill Wilson and others, she continued to battle the enemy.
- 4) 78 bullet holes were found during restoration, each round is marked with a Vietnam Service Ribbon or stencil. Restoration staff realized the 78 were only a fraction of what she probably sustained during her 6 years in combat.
- 5) Every major weapon system ever installed on a Huey was mounted on 049 at one time or another, a tribute, again, to her History.

This B Model Huey survived for 6 YEARS in Vietnam when many Hueys only lasted 3 to 6 MONTHS. Her Flying History needed to be preserved, and that is what the AH369 Organization has done. We were told it would be

Photos by Rae Walker Photography



"economically infeasible" to restore her to flight; after sitting outside in the weather, exposed and unprotected, she was too far gone to restore to flight. But with lots of donations and lots of effort, her value now surpasses by far the cost of restoration back to flight.

**For more information on Gunship 049
and the American Huey Organization,
go to AmericanHuey336.com.**

The Tale of Three Tails

I had arrived in South Vietnam around Thanksgiving of 1965 and was a member of the 6th Airlift Platoon, attached to A/501 from Bien Hoa. I was assigned the right seat of one of the Rattler "D" Hueys for the day. We made the short flight to Saigon having very little to go on as to what we were to do on our arrival. We shut down on the ramp and waited.

After 30 minutes or so, a semi-truck and trailer pulled up with a strange cargo of three Huey tail boom assemblies complete with vertical fins. My AC asked the driver what was expected of us. It was only then we were told to commence loading these assemblies on our ship for a flight to Vung Tau, some 50 or so miles to the east on the coast. We then asked what the plan was – how were we to carry these to the town some 50 miles away. They told us we were to push two tails in from one side and the third from the other side. I guess we put some tie lines around the assemblies to keep them from shifting around.

We got our crew together and cranked up our bird. We tried a little hovering, and all seemed well. We got our clearance for takeoff and we were on our way. It wasn't long

after takeoff that we found out 50 knots was too much, and maybe 40 knots was about max. The Huey just wanted to buffet or dance around, so we slowed down. What would normally be perhaps a one-half hour flight turned into almost an hour.

When we were about 15 minutes east of the field we called the tower advising them of our position and requested to land. We were to continue our approach; they didn't see a Huey, but told us to call on short final. At about a mile out I called the tower advising them of our position. The response was that all they saw was a large 'blob' coming from that direction. Was that us? "Yes" we said, "are we cleared to land"? "Yes" they replied.

I don't recall too much about the unloading, but the bird sure flew a lot better on the way home.

I guess this is just one of the ways we adapted to our missions and surroundings. This is one of many stories that demonstrate how this remarkable aircraft did such a remarkable job!

By Peter Frazier: 65-11 RVN 1965-66,
6th Airlift Plt, D/229th 1st Cav

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COBRA 826 RIDE

On Saturday, 15 July 2017, I had the privilege of an extended flight in 826 as a Father's Day gift from my wife, so drove over to Tara Field for an early flight. I am an AAHF member and formerly served in RVN with A/227 of the First Cavalry Division. During my service, I witnessed numerous times from the air and ground our Cobras "working out", but never had the opportunity to experience flight in one. When we arrived, I found the entire staff both courteous, helpful, and safety conscious. The aircraft was immaculate and was presented well on the flight line. I was somewhat apprehensive not having been in an Army helicopter for the past 47 years, so didn't really know how I would do. The pilot and Phil Isaacson the crew chief were extremely professional and reinforcing. Everything was explained in detail about what to expect, and as Freddie "cranked", my mind started drifting back in time.

I normally am a chatterbox, but found myself on departure to be so mesmerized by Freddie's narration of what we were doing, I was silent nearly the entire flight. He explained each maneuver beforehand, and executed each transition smoothly and efficiently. I'm certain he wondered why I was so quiet, but it was just something an old veteran wanted to do; sit back and combine

the past with the present in his thoughts - truly an enjoyable experience. I have flown in the past with good pilots, and then there are a few who are GREAT ones...and Freddie fits the latter description.

I walked away with an even greater appreciation of our Army Aviators and crews. I realized that flying in an attack helicopter is not like looking down the iron sights of a battle rifle or aerial M-60. It's safely flying the aircraft, locating targets, placing the ordnance on target, and evading ground threats while communicating air to air, air to ground, and on the intercom...a task requiring great skill and training. I would recommend any veteran from that era and beyond to experience this organization. And for those young people who already have an early interest in aviation, this is one of those opportunities in life made available by well qualified and experienced personnel you really shouldn't pass up from an educa-

tional standpoint.

Whether one has an interest in operations, maintenance, or as a flight crewmember, this is the experience for you that will illustrate the professional teamwork within the Army Aviation community - "Above the Best!" Thanks for the opportunity to share.

Wayne Carlisle



SOCKS

by John R. Fox

Socks is about an event that occurred during the Battle of Tet in January of 1968 with my good friend and Classmate Carl Hess, a long, tall drink of water from Troop, TX. We were in A/228th, 1st Cavalry Division, a CH-47 Chinook unit, located in I Corps near the northern border at the DMZ. On the night of 27 January, the Tet Offensive of '68 began and with it came the bad weather. Since Carl and I were both instrument instructors we were assigned to fly some of the first missions. We both took with us a duffle bag with our TA-50 equipment and some clothes; we would not be returning to a home location. Instead, we were spending the night wherever our mission stopped. We flew medevac missions, combat assault, equipment delivery, sling loaded UH-1s and Cobras that had been shot down back to Quang Tri, Camp Evans, or Phu Bai. Then we received a mission to sling load a UH-1 from Quang Tri down to Da Nang's Red Beach maintenance facility. This was on about our 7th day. No showers or clean clothes, and it had been cold. Unfortunately, I still had on the same pair of socks! We had been shaving in the dark with cold water and eating only C-rations. The weather south of Hai-Van pass and across the bay from Da Nang was much better and warmer. So, Carl and I were really pleased to get this mission. It was right after lunch when we coordinated with the maintenance crew that would have the UH-1 ready to hook-up. The weather at Quang Tri was marginal but we decided to go. We hooked up with a good load. To sling load a UH-1 was always a pain because it wanted to spin and did not "weather vane" well. So, airspeed would be kept below 50 kts. We contacted air traffic control and took off IFR and headed out over the South China Sea where the weather was better, and we could fly VFR down the coast line to Da Nang. We had to stop at Phu Bai to refuel and load up some passengers returning to Da Nang. It was mid-afternoon by the time we were south-bound again to Red Beach. As we passed the Hai Van pass, the weather cleared up with the whole panoramic view of Da Nang bay, blue skies and sunshine. What a great feeling! Our skins were starting to look like prunes. We dropped the UH-

1 off at Red Beach maintenance pad, then proceeded to fly on down to the Marine base at China Beach to drop off some Marines.

It was around 1630 and starting to get late, but there was still some daylight left to get back past Hi-Van pass. Carl and I found a hot shower and indulged ourselves. But I wanted a fresh pair of socks! We found a Marine supply office and I began to beg for a fresh pair of socks. But, they wanted to barter. I had nothing to barter with! Finally, I got hold of the Marine Base Operations and offered to fly any of their troops back to Phu Bai in exchange for a fresh pair of socks.

Yep! They had a young Marine who had just got out of the hospital and needed to return to his unit in Quang Tri, plus a Jeep with a water buffalo trailer that also needed to go to Phu Bai. OK-it's a deal! Carl and I could file out of Da Nang IFR and make it back just about dark. All loaded and fueled up, we received our IFR clearance and took off. Shortly, we were in the clouds climbing slowly and were not able to gain much airspeed with this internal load. Air Traffic Control took us out toward the South China Sea on a heading of about 075 degrees. Climbing to an altitude of 5000 ft. we were being flown around their ILS approach from the northeast. After about 45 minutes, we were notified that radar contact was lost 55 miles to the northeast over the South China Sea and to contact Phu Bai approach.

Phu Bai could not find us on their radar!!!! SOB!! We tried GCA at Camp Evans and we were not on their radar screen. Now the old CH-47A had only had 1 hour and 30 minutes of fuel. We started receiving the radio beacon the North Vietnamese had set up in Laos to lure pilots over there. So, we began to track on that beacon and continued to maintain radio contact with Camp Evans GCA. It was now dark, pitch black, with 50 kts of airspeed and at 5000 ft we were unable to punch off our internal load and fuel was very low. We droned on into the night not sure of where the mountains were and all we knew was that we were somewhere over the South China Sea. Not Good! Finally, the Battalion Commander came over the GCA frequency and assured us they were searching for us. Then the controller announced he showed us just approaching his radar screen and that we were 55 miles out. The wind had blown us out to sea and the Air Force at Da Nang just did not care. Guess they assumed we had 100 hours of fuel.

Slowly, we made our way toward the shore line picking up a little tailwind. Finally, they called "feet dry", over land; we were relieved, but our 20-minute fuel light just came on. GCA advised the ceiling at Camp Evans was less than 100 ft with 1/8th mile visibility. We intercepted the glide path and the controller began to vector us along the course and down the glide path. After passing 200 ft and nothing in sight, we continued. The camp was in total darkness because of recent mortar attacks. At 75 ft, still nothing! We were not supposed to turn on our landing lights. Finally, Carl said turn it on - my thumb had already begun to move the switch. Suddenly, there was the landing pad with less than 50 ft ceiling and no visibility. Coming to a hover we made our way to the parking area and shut down on fumes. The Battalion Commander came over and said he was glad we made it. Sweaty palms and gritted teeth - so were we!

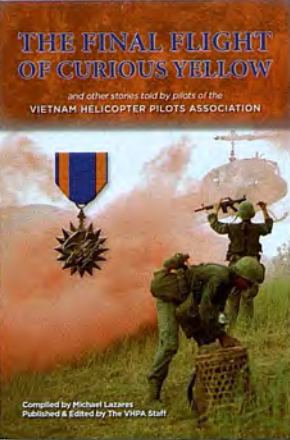
Carl and I dragged ourselves over to the Transient Tent, found some cots for us and the Marine. The Marine did not have a clue as to how close we came to not making it. All's well that ends well! Well, not quite! About midnight - WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

I thought the mortars were landing right on top of our GP Medium Tent. I rolled off my cot toward Carl and he rolled off his toward me, landing on top of me, both still in our sleeping bags. I began to squirm my arms out to grab my helmet at the head of the cot. Carl thought I had been hit. Everyone in the tent began to shout for a medic-most had sat up in their cots and took shrapnel hits.

The Marine we brought in went running down the aisle and out the door flap. A large open bunker had been built just out the doorway. The Marine made it about half way across airborne, crashing into the opposite side at the bottom breaking his left leg. Back to China Beach for him.

Ten minutes after it was over, all quiet and peaceful. Carl and I laid in our cots in a shredded tent, looking at the flares dancing in the sky through the holes in our tent top. The next morning the Battalion Commander blamed the mortar attack on Carl and me for turning on the landing light. SOB! To this day, Carl still asks me if those damn socks were really worth it.

John R. Fox, MAJ, USA (Ret.)



THE FINAL FLIGHT OF CURIOUS YELLOW
and other stories told by pilots of the
VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Compiled by Michael Lazares
Published & Edited by The VHPA Staff

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

~ John L. Penny

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For more information or to make a contribution, see our contact info below.

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Letters to the Editor

To the VHPA Aviator Magazine:

I have been a life member of VHPA for many years, and really enjoy this magazine. Keep up the great work!

The article in issue 36-06, the article H-21 Fun brought me to tears laughing about what I had the 'honor of doing', flying the round engines. I'm well along in years, but the H-21 was before me. I did however, fly the UH-19 C&D, the CH-34, and the CH-37. My class, 65-11 did fly the H-19's and I had the honor of flying the H-34 and H-37 while in Europe. Later, I owned a modernized H-19D, identified as the S-55; still a handful to fly. To those that flew the H-19, can you imagine eight passengers plus two pilots up top as well as two hours of gas, making a normal take-off?

The article was terrific! The experience was so well written, and so true. Guess the only part left out were the instructions for the fire guard: Just don't use the fire extinguisher until the fire might get to the cockpit! A little fire just warms up the engine for a quicker start.

I hope that some of the 'old guys' will enjoy the article as much as I did! The men that missed this experience, really missed a real part of flying! The days of two fuel trucks meeting a single aircraft on the ramp, one with oil and the other gas, are nearly gone. Articles like this one are very special. I extend my special thanks to the author, Mel Pollock, for his fantastic writing. Thanks also to the staff of the Aviator, keep up the great work!

*By Peter Frazier,
class 65-11, RVN 1966, 6th Airlift Platoon.*

Dear Tom,

Since The Aviator had an article about the Master Pilot Award, I thought you should know the rest of the story. Last year one of the members of our EAA 240 Chapter was awarded this Master Pilot Award at one of our monthly meetings which caused me to become interested in applying for it when I had 50 years (which was last summer). I contacted Eileen Landola at the local Philly FSDO and started the paperwork. There didn't seem to be any problem until they saw that I was counting 27 years of my military flying

towards the 50 years. I was told that only 20 years of military flight time was allowed and to try again when I had more non-military time. I even called them for clarification and was told only 20 of 27 years of military flight time could be counted. They even asked if I had any civilian flying time during those 7 years that could be counted, which I didn't. I tried to explain to them that after flying Chinook missions for the Army all day I didn't see the need to fly a 150 around the pattern and didn't know I needed to in order to meet their requirements. Anyway I thought you should let the membership know that the FAA only recognizes 20 years of military flying and pilots like me who stayed in for 27 years with no civilian after 20 years loose 7 years of qualification. It boggles my mind that they don't count more than 20 years but only the people in the FAA can come up with such a stupid rule. Maybe we can some legal eagles on this and get it corrected.

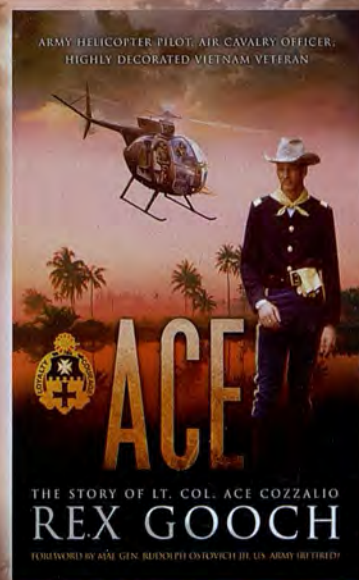
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FINAL AVIATOR UPDATE

The countdown is on for the April 18th Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument Dedication Ceremony and Grand Reception, both being held at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). A great deal of work is still ongoing as you read this update, but the most important details are complete.

The dedication ceremony will be held at the ANC Memorial Amphitheater next to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and adjacent to the monument located a short walk south on Memorial Drive. The ceremony will commence at exactly 4:00 PM on April 18th, and it is important all guests be seated by 3:45 PM.

The Legacy Committee strongly recommends all attendees arrive at the ANC Visitors Center by 2:30 PM to allow time for the required airport-style screening at the cemetery entrance and travel to the site. Private vehicles are not permitted in the cemetery. The Committee is coordinating bus/trolley transportation from the Visitors Center to the amphitheater at this time for those unable to walk the distance to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

At 4:50 PM following the retiring of the colors, a wreath-laying ceremony will commence with flowers carried from the amphitheater to the nearby monument located on Memorial Drive in Section 35, a short 75-meter walk. Those wishing to honor their unit's casualties with flowers are welcome to join the procession with their wreath or bouquet.

Following the dedication ceremony, the Grand Reception will be held at 5:30 to 7:00 PM at The Women In Military Service For America Memorial (WMSAM) located near the Visitors Center at the west end of Memorial Avenue. All VHPA members and their families, Vietnam Veterans, Gold Star Families and distinguished visitors are invited to attend the Grand Reception.

The WMSAM is a museum-like setting that can accommodate 1,000 guests and is routinely used for functions of this nature. The location minimizes security issues and is convenient to the cemetery parking lot and Metro subway station. The reception was initially planned for Fort Myers, but we concluded the post facilities were too small and hampered by security restrictions.

The VHPA North Carolina Chapter will provide a



combat UH-1 for display in front of the WMSAM for the April 18th ceremonies. The helicopter is the perfect symbol to complement the event and will remind all visiting ANC of the courage and sacrifice of those who operated rotary-wing aircraft in the Vietnam War. Our thanks in advance to the North Carolina Chapter for this worthy contribution.

Funding for the April 18 activities must be paid for with private donations and contributions. Although the VHPA has paid for the construction and installation of the monument, the day's events still need funding. We ask for your financial support. Please consider donating to cover the expenses of complementary souvenir programs, transportation, and reception expenses. All donations are tax-deductible, and any funds remaining after expenses are met will go to the VHPA scholarship fund.

As of this writing, no specific hotel venue is arranged by the VHPA Executive Committee. Accommodations in the immediate area of Arlington National Cemetery are likely to be expensive due to cherry blossom season and Congress being in session on April 18th. For those on a tight budget, we suggest considering hotels away from the downtown district having access to the great Washington Metro system (ANC has its own station stop).

On April 18, 2018, we will conclude the four-year effort to build and place the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument in the nation's most hallowed ground: Arlington National Cemetery. Please join your friends and VHPA family as we honor those young men who gave "...the full measure of devotion." Join us at Arlington.

For up to the minute updates, check the VHPA website at: vhpa.org or contact Bob Hesselbein, Legacy Committee Chairman, at bobhesselbein@vhpa.org.

Please send your tax-deductible donation to the VHPA Monument Fund, at VHPA HQ, 2100 N Highway 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050.

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 -12-04-17 to 1-29-18

New Members:

Adams James A ** Union Kentucky Army 67-3 1 SQDN VNAF in 67-68; 183 AVN in 69; 18 AVN in 69-70	Birt Bobby L. Taft Tennessee Army 69-33 196 ASHC in 70-72	Grathwohl John M. ** Ponte Vedra Beach Florida Army 68-511 68-19 B/101 AVN 101 ABN in 68-69	Robinson Ben T. ** Oklahoma City Oklahoma Army 69-43 69-45 132 ASHC in 70-71
Bankston Danny R 'Dan' Bonita Springs Florida Army 69-49 A/7/1 CAV in 70-71	Doherty John J ** Honesdale Pennsylvania Army 71-2 C/3/17 CAV in 71-72	Nichols Keith R. ** Fredericksburg Virginia Army 68-19 68-33 C/7/1 CAV in 68-69; A/2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 69	Sailer Paul M. Wadena Minnesota Army 70-15 70-2 20 ENG BDE in 70-71; 159 ENG GRP in 71
	Fritz Raymond G. 'Gene' ** Yuma Arizona Army 65-9W 117 AHC in 65-66		

A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

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

DFCSociety.org/membership




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

Our guests start each day with a hearty country breakfast and are also invited to join us in the living room each evening to enjoy a glass of wine and a light snack. The Cub Inn is the life-long dream of husband and wife team, Piper Cub owner and pilot Charleen Beam and VHPA Life Member Joe Riley.

Come see Yosemite's Waterfalls!




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



REUNION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA · JULY 3-7, 2018

QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

Everyone is invited to attend the Presentation of Quilts for Our VHPA Veterans and to have a chance to congratulate the quilt recipients. If you plan to attend the Presentation, please sign up for the Quilter's Show and Tell, when registering for the Reunion so we can arrange for a large enough room. Eleven quilts will be presented to randomly-selected veterans at the 2018 Atlanta reunion. Thanks to all our VHPA Quilters and other association friends who support this important program. I'm always fascinated by the various blocks presented/donated for next year's quilts and seeing other on-going quilt projects of attendees.

A selection of quilts will be on display at the Quilter's Table in the Vendor's Room, July 3rd from 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m. and July 4th from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On July 5th, the quilts will be on display in the Quilter's Room at 9:00 a.m. (see information packet for room designation). If you have any questions, we would love to discuss them, or just meet and visit with you. Remember, there is still time to stitch blocks for next year's quilts.

For requirements see:

www.geronimos.org/Quilters/Requirements.htm

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

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

WANT TO GO BACK TO RANGER SCHOOL?

Did you attend Ranger School in the North Georgia Mountains? Would you like to visit Camp Merrill during the upcoming Reunion in July? If so, contact Mike Sheuerman at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

I attended the Ranger Course in January, 1970 in Class 70-1. I thought it would be fun to visit Camp Merrill just north of Dahlonega on Friday, July 6. I have contacted the Camp and they would welcome our visit. We would leave Atlanta around 9AM Friday morning, arrive about 10:45, receive a tour, visit the Museum, eat in the Chow Hall, possibly observe some training and return to the Marriott around 4PM. Understand, this is a side trip and not an official part of the Reunion. Depending on the number of guys wishing to go, we would secure a vehicle or two, drive up and split the costs for the vehicles and gas. Once we have an idea of interest we'll be better able to figure individual expenses.

Remember -
RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!

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

Hi-Tech Helicopters, Inc



Email: Info@HiTechHelicopters.net

- Want Some Stick Time?
- Can you still hover this trainer?
- Call Us for special VHPA Member reduced rate

Great idea for a spring vacation stop!!

If you live near Mt. Pocono, PA or Elkin, NC or may be passing through,

Call us at [REDACTED] in PA or (336) 366-3563 in NC.

Logged Time with rated IP in fully insured aircraft

♪ Come Fly With Us! ♪

REUNION NOTES

Things to do in Atlanta and vicinity:

The Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville...The only museum of its kind in the Southeastern United States, with 80,000 square feet of contemporary Western art, Western illustrations, Western movie posters, Civil War art, Presidential portraits and letters, and authentic stagecoaches. Now at 120,000 square feet, Booth Museum is the second largest art museum in Georgia housing the largest permanent exhibition space for Western art in the country, with examples of early Western artists such as George Catlin, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, and others.

Six Flags...Scream your head off on the Scream Machine or cool down in Hurricane Harbor, the new waterpark at Six Flags Over Georgia. From heart-pounding rides for the most adventurous to live entertainment for the whole family, Six Flags has you covered for a fun family day.

Atlanta Braves...Get your chopping arm ready! From Spring to Fall, head out to the Ted to catch the Atlanta Braves and cheer on our home team. The schedule is not yet published. Delta Flight Museum...Experience aviation history at the Delta Flight Museum, where future pilots and frequent flyers alike can enjoy interactive exhibits, state-of-the-art simulator technology, and last-of-their-kind aircraft from eras past. Take a guided tour or cruise the 68,000-square-foot premises at Delta's Atlanta Headquarters with friends, family, or your copilot of choice.

The Varsity..."What'll Ya Have?" The famous question at The Varsity! Try the chili dogs, onion rings, Frosted Orange milkshake and homemade fried pies. The Varsity has been serving Atlanta's favorite hotdogs and hamburgers since 1928. Not your cheat day? Try a delicious garden salad with grilled chicken. Enjoy the fun retro atmosphere and city skyline views inside, or pull into the drive-in for quick service with a smile. Visit the gift shop for cool t-shirts, hats and other collector's items. You didn't come to Atlanta if you didn't make a stop at The Varsity! Nipsy Russell was the head carhop at one time.

Monastery of the Holy Spirit...now encompasses a church, cloister, visitors center, retreat house, and several workshops—including the Bonsai Nursery, which evolved out of Father Paul Bourne's hobby and is now known for remarkable examples of the craft. You can purchase your own bonsai plant for about \$25 (the monks' religious order requires them to be self-

supporting, and this is one of their businesses) and get hands-on tips from experts like Abbot Francis Michael Stiteler.

The list goes on and on...Chamblee Antique Row, College Football Hall of Fame, Grant Park, LITTLE FIVE POINTS, Inman Park, Sweet Auburn district, Virginia Highland, CNN, Georgia Aquarium, Peachtree Trolley, Marietta Square, or catch a show at the famous Fox Theater.

Excellent restaurants are close to the hotel:

Revival: After bringing something completely unique to Atlanta when he opened Gunshow, Kevin Gillespie's latest venture is a shrine to traditional Southern cuisine. Gillespie and executive chef Andreas Müller are turning out fried chicken, cornbread, pole beans, and more, all with the intention of reminding diners of meals from their grandmothers. The building where Revival is located was originally a home owned by the Campbell family of Decatur in the early 1900s – a home where couples courted one another in the parlor, where children were born and where generations of memories were made. It has since housed everything from law offices to restaurants, but the Revival team has restored the space as closely as possible to its original condition to reinstate that homey atmosphere.

Fox Bros BBQ: It's all about the gut-bombs at the icon that proved great Texas-style barbecue is possible in Atlanta. Tater tots covered in chili and cheese, massive short ribs, and Frito pie are staples that make this the only spot you should go for the morning — OK, afternoon — after.

Busy Bee Café: In business since the '40s, this Vine City staple serves some of Atlanta's best fried chicken alongside an assortment of other meat-and-three staples. It's always packed, so be prepared to rub elbows with fellow diners. And don't be surprised if you run into a famous face or two.

Home Grown: Home Grown is a breakfast favorite among Atlanta's eaters and chefs alike. And if it hosts Senate campaign events that feature former presidents, it must be important. Best breakfast in town.

For Steak lovers: Bone's, Kevin Rathbun, McKendrick's, Ray's in the City, and of course, Ted's Montana Grill.

From John Powell, National Reunion Chairman

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

See our Website at: 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 for the latest details and to register for the reunion.

TUESDAY, JULY 3,

THURSDAY, JULY 5 & FRIDAY, JULY 6 **America's Mart Shopping Pass (Must purchase a ticket for entry)**

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 #1
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	Golf Outing - Stone Mountain
7:30 am - 9:00 am	Scholarship Breakfast - Mike Sheuerman & Tom Payne
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	Atlanta History Center
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Roswell & Antebellum Home Tour #2
10:30 am - 1:30 pm	Delta Museum Tour #1
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Banquet Seating
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Delta Museum Tour #2
1:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts

SATURDAY, JULY 7

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

REUNION CONTINUING EVENTS

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

Visit ...

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

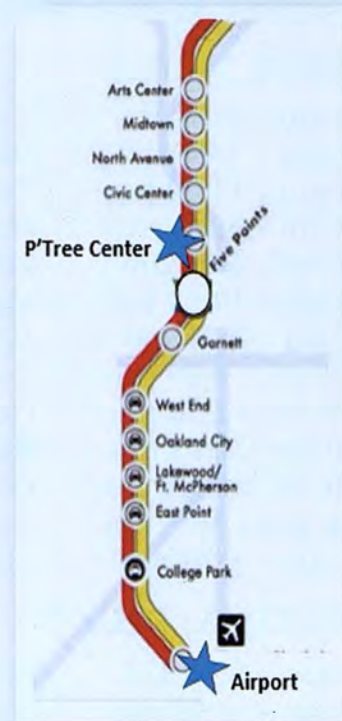
Inside the station you can buy or reload a Breeze Card or get a paper Breeze ticket at a vending machine. RideStores are also staffed during business hours if you want to purchase fare via a person. In most cases you will select "trips," which are one-way fares. If you plan to ride MARTA multiple times 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 for full train schedule times.



WHERE **partnerships** DRIVE the difference!

COOPER GLOBAL
Chauffeured Transportation.

WELCOME to the Cooper Global difference. **VHPA** is pleased to announce that Cooper Global is our "Preferred Transportation Provider" for the VHPA Annual Meeting & Expo in Atlanta July 3rd-7th, 2018. Our partnership with Cooper Global will provide a special VHPA Airport Transportation Rate.

- Please call Cooper Global at [REDACTED]
- Rate: **\$22.50 Per Person**
- Mention Promo Code: **VHPA** for every reservation

You may also go directly to the link:

www.cooperglobal.com/vhpa

To book your discounted airport transfers.

"I BELIEVE THAT EVERY HUMAN MIND FEELS PLEASURE IN DOING GOOD FOR ANOTHER."

I begin this article with a quote from one of my personal heroes, Thomas Jefferson, since it is once again time to consider volunteering your time, energy and expertise to sit on the Executive Committee (EC) of your VHPA. The EC is a group of volunteers who have been elected by the membership to essentially manage the organization. Each year during the Business Meeting portion of the Annual Reunion, two positions, the Vice President and the Junior Member at Large, are elected. The requirements to run are quite simple: one must be current on their dues for the year prior to the reunion, and notify the current Junior Member, of your intent, including a short summary of your qualifications, 45 days prior to the reunion. Last, but not least, is a desire to give back to an organization that exists solely for the fellowship of its members, as well as perpetuate its legacy...your legacy. During the election, each candidate will have a two-minute oppor-

tunity to introduce themselves and deliver a very condensed statement.

We are likely all aware of the old military adage "never volunteer for nothin'". Within this organization, however, that axiom clearly does not apply. In the 50 plus years since graduating flight school, including 30 years in the system, I have never met a Vietnam aviator who was forced to do what they did. The bottom line is - they did what they did because they wanted to, period! So...if this is something you would consider: working with a great bunch of fellow aviators, helping the organization continue smoothly on its journey to the last man, give it a go and contact me. Time's a wastin'!

By Don LeMaster Junior Member at Large,
[REDACTED]

ARMY AVIATION HERITAGE FOUNDATION & FLYING MUSEUM



VHPA MEMBERS & GUESTS - COME FLY WITH US!

- Ride in UH1s and AH1s actually flown in combat! during the VHPA Convention in Atlanta, GA, 2-6 July.
- Over 40,000 Passengers flown since 2014!
- We are located at the Henry County Airport (KHMP), next to the Atlanta Motor Speedway, Hampton, GA
- Additional information at www.armyav.org

The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation & Flying Museum provides Military Veterans with a historical platform to tell their story and share their legacy of devoted service to a grateful nation.

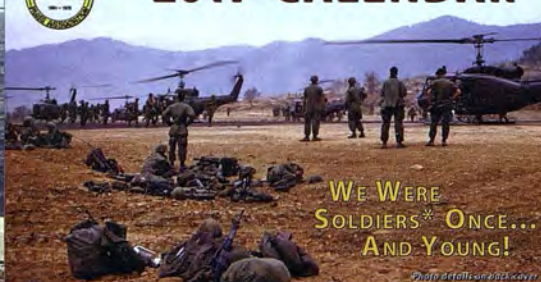


Hampton, GA 30228
[REDACTED]

2016 CALENDAR



2017 CALENDAR



2019 CALENDAR



An Update on the VHPA Calendar Project

by Mike Law

Each issue of the VHPA Calendar requires 15 photos or photo collages. The cover, one for each month, and two bonus pages total fifteen. For those who know the “behind the scenes effort,” it takes about three working days to get one photo ready to submit to the publisher, Acclaim Press. Sometimes 35-mm slides or high resolution digital scans come in the mail or people hand us a memory stick or photo DVD at a Reunion. Sometimes we have had to “go out and get ‘em” or at least go with the owner to their local FedEx Office to get them scanned.

As is our tradition, each January the Calendar Committee sends Acclaim Press the digital files and layout instructions for the next issue. We are happy to report that the 2019 VHPA Calendar, our 26th issue, is now in the production pipeline. Again, as per our tradition, everyone will be able to see and purchase production copies of the 2019 Calendar at the 2018 Reunion in Atlanta. Each Reunion has an “unveiling ceremony” that is especially fun for those who contributed to the issue as we gather around Acclaim Press’s table in the Vendor Area.

Since we rarely republish a photo, we need more than a dozen new contributors each year. For the 2019 issue we had ten first time contributors plus four new photos from former contributors. We used two photos from one first timer. Thanks to some of our long-time friends, VHPA Member George Reese and Subscriber Ray Wilhite, we were able to use parts of collections from deceased VHPAers.

We are especially happy with historic details that appear in each issue in addition to our traditional tribute to all the Southeast Asia helicopter pilot KIAs. By way of example, VHPA Member Bob Janes provided some interesting photos from the 188th AHC – the Black Widows and Spiders while they were at Dau Tieng. The 188th was only in Vietnam about one year before it was reflagged Charlie Company, 101st Aviation Battalion. Thanks to Bob’s efforts, the rest of us can “see” the 188th at Camp Rainier in late 1967.

Here comes our standard plea! If you want to contribute

photos for a future VHPA Calendar, please contact Mike Law at calendar@vhpa.org or [redacted] or Bennie Koon at [redacted]

And remember the golden rule ~ your 35-mm slides don’t do anyone any good stored in the back of your closet!! Contact Bennie – he has an excellent digital slide scanner!

Status Report on back issues at Acclaim Press:

2011, 2012, and 2016 – completely sold out. 2013, 2014, and 2015 – available at \$5 each. 2017 – available at \$7.48 each. 2018 – still available but forecast to sell out in March 2018.

You can obtain back issues from VHPA HQ:

Printed pages (11” x 17” in color, double sided) of any single issue from 1994 through 2017 for \$10 each. Printing, shipping and handling included.

CD containing EVERY issue from 1994 through 2017 in PDF files for \$8 each. CD burn, shipping and handling included.

Bonus when you contribute to the Calendar Project!

First, your material can be used in other VHPA publications such as the Aviator and the Membership Directory. Second, with your permission, the material will be added to the extensive VHPA collection at The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX.

What does the VHPA get out of the Calendar Project?

It is important to remember the Calendar Project is NOT a money-making effort. The VHPA receives annual royalty payment from Acclaim Press based on sales and the Executive Council uses this to off-set any Project expenses. The VHPA Calendar is a commercial success for Acclaim Press who does the actual printing, warehousing, advertising, order taking and delivery. The primary goal of the Project is recording, preserving and displaying details of the events and activities that were important to those who flew in and worked on helicopters in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era. The by-product is we all get to “refresh our memories” of that history.

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: [REDACTED]

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

Hotel Reservations: www.greatwolf.com/williamsburg -800-551-9653

(Insure they know you are asking for the Williamsburg Lodge). Use

Group Code 15THMED for either web or phone reservations.

Reunion Coordinator: Dan Toothman (Fang) [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

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

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

D Troop, 1/1 Cavalry (Air)

101st Airborne Division & 23rd Infantry Division (Americal)

50th Anniversary Reunion - D Troop invites

all troopers, family & friends

Date: May 13-15, 2018

Location: Flamingo Resort Hotel & Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada

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

or [REDACTED]

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

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

Reunion website: dtroopreunion.org

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 [REDACTED]

Also: Dennis Beckler
or Larry Gordon [REDACTED]

Notice for 135 AHC (Emus/Taipans) veterans,
friends, family and interested parties:

ANZAC day, **April 25** will be recognized at Fort Rucker with a dawn
service. This has become a tradition in honoring the co-operation of the
United States and Australia during the Vietnam War.

There will be a reception on the evening of April 24. Since the April
25th ceremony is at dawn (5:30 a.m.) most check in at the Fairfield Inn
by April 24th. If you do not have a military ID it is recommended you
get a pass on the 24th at the Daleville Gate entry on or before April 24th.

The ID facility will not be open early enough on the 25th
Additional Details: The majority of the attendees are staying at the
Fairfield Inn and Suites, [REDACTED] Enterprise, Alabama.

[REDACTED] Group rate code: ANZAC.

Contact Information:

135ahc.net ANZAC Day.com

Fred Dunaway [REDACTED]

D TROOP, 1/10th CAV 'Shamrocks' (1966-1971) Annual Family Reunion

When: May 1-3, 2018

Where: Atlantis Casino Resort and Spa Reno, NV.

Contact: Ron Adams [REDACTED]

Note: All members of D Troop are invited to attend including: pilots,
crew members, headquarters personnel and ARP's. For reunion
information and hotel reservation details *Most important* - If you've
never been to a Shamrock reunion you owe it to yourself to attend. Trust
me when I say you won't regret it, and that's a truism from Old Deadeye.

UTT, 68th AHC, 197th AHC, 334th AHC, Sabers, Reunion
We were the first with Guns! A proven history beginning with
the UTT in RVN 1962

When: May 17-20, 2018

Where: Saber Reunion Branson, MO.

Contact Ken Rubin, [REDACTED]

B Troop/7th Squadron/17th ACR Reunion

When: May 16-19, 2018

Where: Grand Plaza Hotel, Branson, MO.

POC: Buddy Harp; [REDACTED]

119th AHC Fourth Annual Reunion

When: September 18-20, 2018

Where: Branson, Missouri Radisson Hotel Branson

Contact: Spencer Gardner at [REDACTED]
for details and registration info

155th AHC (Ban Me Thuot, Camp Coryell) Reunion

When: October 3-8, 2018

Where: Atlantis Casino Resort and Spa Reno, NV

Contact: Jim Cunningham, [REDACTED]
cell: [REDACTED]

LZ OVERLOOK

On the evening of January 10, 1970, 1LT Bill (Skip) King and I were assigned the mission to extract an observation and firebase by the name of LZ Overlook, located on a mountaintop overlooking Happy Valley.

At 3,100 feet (MSL), this observation/firebase was situated on one of the highest peaks (14 degrees, 14' 46.22" N; 108 degrees, 48' 06.22" E) of a mountain range sandwiched between Happy Valley to the west and an area known as The Crow's Foot to the east, the southern-most point of the Kim Son Valley. This area was aptly named because when looking at a map of the area from above, seven tributaries flowing from the mountains along the southwest end of Kim Song Valley merge forming a river flowing northeast to the Bong Son River and creating what appeared to be the foot of a crow.

Just four years before, in January and February 1966 this area had been a part of one of the early major battles of the Vietnam War...the Battle of Bong Son, with the 1st Cavalry Division facing off against the 22nd Regiment of the North Vietnamese Army's 3rd Division. This battle took place over several weeks beginning in the An Lao Valley and concluded in the Kim Son Valley resulting in an American victory.

The history of this area had been relayed to me by a fellow pilot, CW2 James Pratt, who served with the 1st Cavalry Division, (B/1/9) during 1967-68, before transitioning into the CH-47 and returning to Vietnam for a second tour. Because Jim was a seasoned pilot, very familiar with the entire II Corps area, I was intent upon listening

and learning everything I could from him about the area we were assigned to support. Jim and several other second-tour pilots were a treasure trove of information about Vietnam, tactics used in battles that had been fought throughout the country and the lessons they learned about flying in combat in this tropical and mountainous country. Other stories and songs they shared made great entertainment at the O-Club at night.

Happy Valley got its name from the fact that it was "happy" with supplies headed to the various NVA and VC units in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. This was part of the main supply line running from Hanoi to the Mekong Delta through Laos and Cambodia. Reconnaissance seldom turned up movement during the day. But at night, the trail was a beehive of activity. Where they could, the NVA used trucks to move the supplies. Ultimately, they used whatever motor vehicles were available, plus bicycles, elephants, and raw manpower to move the supplies needed to keep their forces to the south supplied.

The route started in North Vietnam and used many different valleys and trails throughout North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Due to the constant bombardment by US. Air Force and U.S. Navy fighter-bombers, the Communist forces moved virtually everything by night and hid during the day.

It could take six months or more for an individual NVA soldier to walk the entire distance to join the war effort. These soldiers carried their weapons, ammunition and most times some mortar rounds or extra ammunition to resupply those already engaged in combat. They were also issued two sets of uniforms with the expectation they would last until the end of their tour...without knowing when that would be.

We tried many ways to slow the flow of material and supplies. In addition to the Air Force and Navy air power, the U.S. Army established artillery firebases on mountain tops along the route, from which the 105 mm howitzers could rain death and destruction upon the supply lines. Patrols were sent out regularly from bases like LZ Overlook to set up deadly ambushes along the trail or call in air strikes and artillery.

The observation/fire bases would also send out infantry scouts and Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP Teams) to find the enemy trails and watch for activity. When they were successful, they would then call in a fire mission and attempt to destroy the enemy column using the trail. Naturally, this did not make the NVA happy and when they had the opportunity, the NVA would attack these firebases and attempt to overrun or destroy them completely.



Author Darrell Jagers, 196th Flippers



These firebases were effective much of the time but were limited by two things: weather and the ability to keep resupplied by helicopter, the only way in or out. Consequently, when the monsoon rains and low cloud ceilings began to move in, it was absolutely imperative to pull the observation and firebases off the tops of the mountains before they were socked in by the clouds and impossible to support by air.

In the Central Highlands, we learned the weather was complicated. There are two seasons, rainy or dry and, unlike North Vietnam and the extreme southern areas of Vietnam, these can and do change from year to year, never occurring at the same period in different years. The rainy season typically started from August to January with rainfall averaging 100 to 120 inches per season. Thus, when the meteorologists of the U.S. military forces determined the rainy season was about to begin, it became a scramble to pull in all the remote bases as quickly as possible. This was the situation that dictated the mission given to the 196th and specifically Skip King and me on January 10, 1970.

LZ Overlook, the base we were assigned to extract was situated about 20 nautical miles on a straight line southwest of LZ English, the largest American base in the area and the headquarters of the 173rd Airborne Brigade "Sky Soldiers" at Bong Son, near the coast of the South China Sea. On a straight line, it was also located about 45 nautical miles north of Lane Army Helipoint, our home base. However, because of tactical situations and weather conditions, it was necessary to navigate through the valleys, making the actual distances flown somewhat longer.

Our drop off zone for relocating the troops, supplies and artillery located on LZ Overlook was to be LZ Uplift, a small base about 14 nautical miles south of LZ English and along Highway 1, the main north-south highway running along the picturesque coast of Vietnam from Hanoi to Saigon.

The extraction was to be fairly simple. Two Chinooks from the 196th were assigned the mission with the first load to be picked up at 0800 Hours on the morning of January 10. Most of the loads were external sling loads. This saved time in loading and unloading the aircraft at both the PZ and the LZ. Instead of having the aircraft set down on the ground and lower its ramp to load 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of equipment and supplies, it was more efficient to have the loads prepared in nets or large, steel Conex-containers while the helicopters were enroute from the previous load.

It was also safer for two reasons. First the helicopter crews had to hover for only a few moments in the LZ before they were back in

the air again. Second, if there was a malfunction or emergency situation within the complex electrical, mechanical or hydraulic systems of the Chinook, the load could be released immediately giving the aircraft greater maneuverability.

This also helped save time in completing the overall mission, which had recently become very important. Prior to and for most of 1969, there were no limits placed upon CH-47 units in completing missions. While the average number of hours flown on a mission might be six to eight hours, it was not unusual to see much longer days of 12 to 14 hours.

However, in late 1969, a directive was issued from the 1st Aviation Brigade, our parent unit, that limited the number of hours for CH-47s to fly on daily missions to six hours. This included the time to fly to and from our base at Lane AHP. To fly longer than six hours required the approval of a General-level officer. This was part of the new effort to control costs of the Vietnam War and the CH-47, at that time cost an estimated \$2,500 per hour just to operate the aircraft. The consequences of this directive meant some missions could not be completed in one day and would require additional days to complete.

Each round trip from LZ Overlook to LZ Uplift, the drop off point, took approximately 45 minutes. This meant the large helicopter could carry only two loads before having to refuel and top off its tanks to its maximum capacity of 4,000 pounds which lasted only 2 hours and 15 minutes of flight. It was a slow process. But it beat walking in the jungle and mountains for the troops. Plus, there were no roads or trails into this area. This went on until twilight approached and it was decided to leave one Chinook load and a security force of 17 men on the mountaintop overnight.

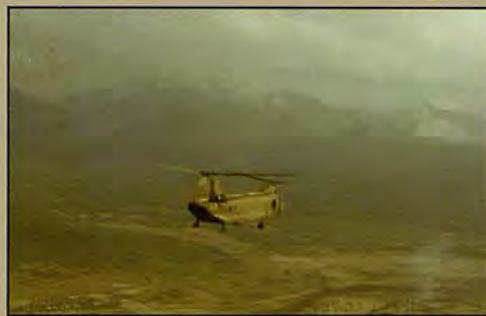
With the limited capacity for instrument

flight of Army helicopters combined with the limited instrument approach facilities in Vietnam, flying at night in the Central Highland mountains was considered only for extreme tactical emergencies. During the twenty months of my duty in Vietnam, I logged a total of 10 hours of night flight due to the extreme hazards of flying in the mountains. When the sun set, there were no lights from cities or towns and none of the tactical military bases had lights on their perimeters. It was so dark, especially during the cloudy monsoon season that most times you could not see your hand in front of your face. Using landing lights or position lights at night only invited ground fire from the enemy.

However, even if we had the capacity to fly at night to get the last load out, we had to manage our mission time to six hours. By the time our wheels touched down at Lane AHP, we were at our



Jim Coleman, 196th Flippers



mission maximum of six hours of flight for the day.

Unfortunately, during the night, the worst thing happened. The clouds dropped and the dreaded monsoon season was setting in. It was impossible for any aircraft to get into the mountaintop base. All the passes and valleys we used to get in to the base were socked in by clouds and rain. There was little we could do except wait for better weather and keep trying to complete the mission.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade Sky Soldiers based at LZ Overlook could not walk out. The mountain, with its steep cliffs and jungle-covered sides that helped to protect them from being heavily attacked also served to imprison them. To try to march out to the nearest American base would have meant a very dangerous and difficult climb down the mountain followed by a long march through the jungle. It would also have taken more time than they had supplies to support. In addition to possibly dealing with enemy forces they had been harassing with constant artillery fire for several weeks, they would also be leaving behind 8,000 pounds of equipment and ammunition that could be used by the enemy for their own needs.

For the next five days, I was assigned to missions in the area that allowed me to make attempts to fly back through the valleys to reach the firebase. However, each day we were blocked by the weather conditions. Even though we could talk with the men on the AN PRC-25 field radios they carried, it was impossible for us to penetrate the weather and reach the men.

After several days, the situation had become desperate for the entrapped unit. They were getting low on food and water. I called them by radio every day to check on their condition. I could hear their voices become more desperate each day as they asked if we were coming to get them. It was gut-wrenching to hear them respond each time I radioed that I could not get through..."Roger Flipper 25, we understand you're trying. We're not going anywhere. Hope to see you tomorrow!"

It reminded me of a mission I had been on in early December when a similar situation happened. A unit we had inserted and supplied in the jungles between Cam Ranh Bay and Ban Me Thuot had become encircled and attacked. We could fly over the top of clouds and talk to them, but we could do nothing to assist them. Finally, this base was overrun and dozens of men were killed or wounded. I would never forget the screams of the men on the radio. I heard and would continue to hear them in my dreams for years! I did not want that to happen again.

On the morning of January 16th, I had just completed a mission for another unit of the 173rd and decided to attempt another run through the valleys and jungle to get to the trapped men. This day I was flying with a new pilot in the unit, WO1 James E. (Jim) Coleman. Jim had just been assigned to the 196th Flippers the month before and had only recently completed his "in-country orientation" with the unit Instructor Pilots. This was to be one of his first missions flying with someone other than an instructor.

We were assigned to fly Flipper #052, a well-respected aircraft maintained by a seasoned Flight Engineer, SP6 Rodney Yates, who kept his Chinook in immaculate operating condition. We also had a crew chief and door gunner on board, the normal crew of five. I was very confident we had the best equipment to complete any mission.

As we flew further into the maze of valleys that day, the ceiling

began to lift, giving us some encouragement. When we finally made radio contact of the unit we were told the mountaintop was clear of clouds and we could come on in! We could hear the excitement in their voices!

While we began preparation for the approach to pick up our load, we also began trying to contact the 61st Assault Helicopter Company (Lucky Stars and Star Blazers), the Huey unit assigned to this area and to this ground unit. It had been their assigned responsibility to bring out the final element of security troops after all equipment, supplies and M102 artillery pieces had been removed by Chinooks. As we approached the top of the mountain, we were unable to make radio contact. We were not concerned; we knew we could contact them as we left the mountains blocking the radio signals. The Hueys were only a 30-minute flight away and I knew they could launch their aircraft quickly, having flown numerous missions with them before.

After we picked up the last sling load and got about half-way back to the drop off point at LZ Uplift, we finally made contact with the Lucky Stars. I explained the situation and that we were on our way out of the mountains with the last Chinook load. I asked them to launch their aircraft for the 17 men on the mountaintop. I was told their base was socked in with fog and rain and could not launch any aircraft. They asked me if I could go back in to pick up the men. However, we were too low on fuel to attempt this.

As we dropped off our load at LZ Uplift I considered our options. We maneuvered to the hot refueling point and, while the crew chief and door gunner were topping off the fuel tanks on each side of the ship, I discussed my thoughts with Jim Coleman and Rodney Yates.

By regulation and our unit SOP, CH-47s were prohibited from making initial insertions to or final extractions from combat LZs. At nearly two million dollars each, Chinooks were considered too valuable to risk for these missions. Additionally, Chinooks were large targets by themselves and not as maneuverable as the smaller Huey.

I reasoned that nobody else was available for the mission. I knew the way in and out like the back of my hand. We would have a full load of fuel to work with and the weather had been fine going in and out. Besides, I knew if I were in their position I would be expecting someone to come back to pick me up. Finally, I could still hear the screaming in my mind of the unit we had not been able to assist. I could not let these men down.

Even though Jim had been in country only a few weeks and was still learning the missions and getting the feel of the Chinook, he was ready to take on this mission. He had no second thoughts about making the attempt.

I was the Aircraft Commander and had final authority on whatever we did, but I wanted to give the entire crew a chance to voice their thoughts. To a man, they were all ready to go back to LZ Overlook, especially Yates.

I will always remember this mission with SP6 Yates. He would recall it every time we flew together afterwards. He was extremely proud of what we accomplished that day. Knowing now that he would be terribly wounded a few months later as he was doing his job in the rear of the aircraft, I will never forget his enthusiasm and

Continued on pg 44

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER
Charles 'Chic' Carter

ALASKA CHAPTER
Lynn Kile, President

ARIZONA CHAPTER
Bill Sorenson, President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH
Ken Fritz

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER
Tom Mc Millen, President

FLORIDA CHAPTER
Don Welch

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER
Herb Koenig, President

GEORGIA CHAPTER
Bob Lanzotti, President

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER
Victor Lent, President

MICHIGAN CHAPTER
Richard Deer, President

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER
Bruce Hunter, 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
Mike Sloniker, President

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
Don Agren, President

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

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

In December, Alamo Chapter ladies met for lunch on the 7th, Pearl Harbor Day, at McAlister's Deli in San Antonio, and at Pompeii Italian Grill on January 12th. Chapter men met for lunch at the County Line Restaurant on December 12th, and at the Flying Saucer on January 9th.

Our 2018 officers all assumed their duties on January 1st:

Chic Carter, president; Mike Clark, vice president; Al Flory, secretary; John Deer, treasurer; Jim Martinson, senior member-at-large; Mike Law, intermediate member-at-large; and Fred Lyssey, junior member-at-large.

As always, members should watch for e-mails and check our Chapter website www.vhpa-alamo.org for scheduled events and details.

Chuck Oualline

ARIZONA CHAPTER

Before it gets too HOT, join us at an Army Aviation picnic!! The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation, Arizona Chapter and the local AAAA have invited the Arizona VHPA chapter to join in the festivities.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, April 14th, 2018 at the Falcon Field Picnic Area in Mesa, AZ, the same location as last year. It will be starting at 1100 and go until the afternoon.

The AAHF will be giving rides in their AH-1F for a donation. They will also have their UH-1 Gunship on display which is in the middle of restoration. There will also be an A-10 simulator and an F-16 simulator and possibly an OH-13, OH-23, and a H-19. A UH-60 and OH-6A is also possible along with vehicle displays.

The estimated cost for the BBQ meal is \$10.00 per person. I hope by the time this is out you will have received an email from me with more information.

Hope to see you there!

Bill Sorenson, AZ VHPA President

The AAHF AZ Chapter is always looking for new members. If you're bored and don't have anything to do you can look up



their web site at <https://armyav.org/arizona-chapter/>. They also have a Facebook page. You can help restore the Huey, help in flight operation, or do both.

Sitrep: I am still trying to get my computer back to running. It dumped my address book and I have to re-load it all. If you haven't received info for the picnic by the time you receive this, please contact me using my contact info.

VHPAF CHAPTER

Our 25th annual reunion, November 29-December 3, 2017 was no doubt one of the best ever! It was the culmination of a quarter-century of food, fun, and fellowship shared as only combat comrades of helicopter aircrews can! It was held once again at the beautiful Ramada Kissimmee Gateway Hotel, located just one mile from the magic of Walt Disney World, and the hotel's complimentary scheduled shuttles offered easy transportation to Disney theme parks, SeaWorld Orlando, and local shopping. This relaxing resort-style hotel, which is one of Central Florida's most vibrant and beautiful destinations, rolled out the "Red Carpet" for our very notable 25th annual reunion.

Even though 2017's annual reunion was rescheduled because of Hurricane Irma, we still had a great turnout and enjoyed a wonderful time together. One of the highlights was the Opening Ceremony when the Mayor of Kissimmee, Jose A. Alvarez, presented the VHPAF with the following:

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida was organized in 1992 through the efforts of Richard Antross, Timothy Bliss, Gary Bortolus, Judd Chapin, Edward DeFreitas, Fred DeLoach, Richard Doty, Stephen Foster, Lance Ham, Marty Heuer, Robert Johnson, Don Joyce, Ray Kingsbury, John Parcels, Richard Peters, Howard Smith, Barry Speare, and Joe Tosolini; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida's mission is to enhance and accredit the cohesiveness, esprit de corps, and traditions of valor of helicopter aircrews that flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era; and

WHEREAS, These men demonstrated their patriotic commitment and sacrificed themselves for the preservation of the Republic of South Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, More than 45,000 helicopter pilots fought and served in the Vietnam War from 1961 until 1975, many of them killed in action, making the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam; and

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

WHEREAS, The City of Kissimmee is pleased and honored that members of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida have served this great nation with such distinction, both in peace time and in war; and

WHEREAS, our community has a continuing sense of gratitude to those who have given so much in the defense of the freedoms which we all continue to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida has had annual reunions in several locations throughout Florida, but most recently in Kissimmee for the past two consecutive years; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jose A. Alvarez, Mayor of the City of Kissimmee, Florida, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 30, 2017, as:

"The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida 25th Anniversary Day" in the City of Kissimmee, and urge all citizens to join with me in congratulating and celebrating with The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida as they remember their past and look forward to the successes of the future.

PROCLAIMED this 30th day of November 2017.

The highlight of our final day was the evening Banquet.



2017 25th Annual Reunion Opening Ceremony - Presentation of the Colors. Kissimmee, FL



Mayor Alvarez presents Proclamation to Chapter President Dr. Joe Ponds

Our guest speaker was Mr. Steve Andrews, Senior Investigative Reporter for WFLA TV, Tampa, Florida which is Tampa Bay's most recognized and honored Investigative Team. Among his numerous awards, Steve has won seven Emmys and in 1990 took home the medal from The Investigative Reporters and Editors Association, the nation's most coveted award for investigative reporting. Steve is a very strong advocate for Veterans' rights and for the fair and just treatment of disabled Veterans. His presentation was encouraging, enlightening, and given with much enthusiasm!

Our newly elected Chapter officers for 2018 are: Don Welch, President; Gary Harrell, Vice President; Mike Waugh, Secretary; Tom Tomlinson, Treasurer; and Dr. Joe Ponds, Chairman of the Board.

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, Chairman of the Board.

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Our next Chapter meeting will be Saturday, March 3rd, at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst. The Executive Council will meet at 11 AM with General Membership meeting at 11:30 (or whenever the EC finishes its meeting.) Lunch, which includes coffee, tea, or a soft drink, is \$20 per person from a special 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. Address is

Hurst, TX. Phone is GPS data: 32°49'32.43"N, 97°2'03.69"W.

At our last meeting we had a very interesting speaker. She was B.J. Elliott Pryor, a MAC Stewardess (modern day Flight Attendant) from 1969-1971. She had very interesting stories about her time on the ground in Vietnam albeit they were short times: mostly, the time to unload the new troops and pick up those going home. Her first time on the ground was the hardest for her when she came to the realization that not all the soldiers she was dropping off would make it back alive. She also had some lighter "coffee, tea, or me" stories. In addition, she is the author of a book titled "Behind My Wings, the Untold Stories of Vietnam Vets."

On another front, the Ground-Breaking Ceremony

for phase I of the Main Building of the National Vietnam War Museum was a success. The Phase I building will be an 18,000 square foot two story museum complete with three major galleries and a few full-time staff members. The galleries are planned to be "The Home Front" featuring LBJ's Oval Office, "Fort Wolters Information" with an OH-23 on display, and an exhibit that includes a large tactical map of the Vietnam region.

The Keynote speaker was particularly interesting. He was B. G. Burkett, author of "Stolen Valor, - How the Vietnam Generation was robbed of its Heroes and its History". He explained how he has investigated many individuals including active military personnel for falsely claiming service or exaggerating their heroics. He gave one example of a serviceman who served prison time for falsely displaying awards. He exposed other men who claimed to be ex-service members and were in the VA system, yet had never even served in the military.

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>.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



GEORGIA CHAPTER

On 20 January 2018, The GA VHPA Chapter enjoyed its first bi-monthly breakfast meeting of the new year at our new meeting headquarters, LZ Juliet Charlie (a.k.a. J. Christopher's Restaurant located at 2100 Roswell Road, Marietta, GA).

The 35th Annual VHPA Reunion in Atlanta dominated our business meeting discussion. Most of our members present for this meeting had already received the VHPA HQ January 16 blast email message addressed to all 2,219 GA VHPA regular and life members and were aware of the scheduled reunion events as well as our support obligations as the host chapter. Our discussion centered around our support responsibilities as volunteers. Many readily volunteered their services during this meeting. Our task to fill in volunteer names to time slots and specific jobs will continue to evolve over the coming months.

Our guest speaker was Donna Rowe, who served as head nurse at the 3rd Field Hospital Emergency Room/Triage Area in Saigon during 1968-1970. Donna was featured in "The Kathleen Story" segment of the World Film Festival's award-winning Vietnam Film, In the Shadow of the Blade. Donna showed us a trailer of that film during her presentation. In the Shadow of the Blade has been shown repeated-



ly on the Military Channel as well as Discovery Channel. The Kathleen Story segment of this film has been selected by The Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. to run during the permanent display on the Vietnam War in their American History Museum. Donna has been a keynote speaker at many important Vietnam Veteran ceremonies for the past two decades.

Our next meeting will again be conducted at LZ Juliet Charlie on 24 March. Our guest speaker for this event will be Senator Hunter Hill. Hunter is an Atlanta native. After graduating from the United States Military Academy, he went on to graduate from Airborne, Air Assault, and Ranger Schools. He was deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq during 2002 and 2003 where he commanded rifle platoons. In addition to his combat roles, Hunter served as a General's Aide in Iraq. Hunter was elected to the State Senate for Georgia's 6th District in 2012. During 2017, he decided to run for Governor of the State of Georgia and is now devoting full time to that effort.

Former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots interested in joining and/or learning more about our Chapter may contact [redacted] or mobile [redacted]. For our scheduled meeting dates during 2018 go to our website, GA VHPA.

By Bob Lanzotti, President



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

While winter weather has settled in, the Michigan Chapter remains active with regular lunch gatherings in two parts of the state. Mark Benjamin continues to host a monthly gathering and submitted AARs for the December 2017 and January 2018 events. For December he wrote: Great time at Brady's Bar in Traverse City on Thursday the 14th. Attending were Bob Potvin, Scott LaBarre, Walter Topp, Bart Holiday, Mark Benjamin, Bob Matlis, Fritz Barrett. All are Army guys except Bart who flew H-34s with the Marine Corps. Also, Fritz Barrett was with the Air Force flying C-47 Spooky gunships. Funny thing! -- Still no time for pool. Bart talked about the H-34 in endearing terms as well as his helo



December 2017 Traverse City group from left to right: Bob Potvin, Scott LaBarre, Walter Topp, Bart Holiday, Mark Benjamin, Bob Matlis, and Fritz Barrett.



January 2018 Ann Arbor group L-R: Rich Deer, Bob Rich, Jim Alford, Sandy McLeod, Roland Leeds, and Tom Zatkovich



January 2018 Traverse City group left to right clockwise: Bob Potvin, Fritz Barrett, Ron Reinhold, Mark Benjamin (holding pic of the OH-6), Walter Top, Bart Haliday (hiding behind Bob Potvins Awards shadow box in the red Marine hat), Bob Matlis, Barry Witt, and Ed Canright.

instructor days in Pensacola prior to finally returning to his beloved A-4. Bob Matlis talked about his H-19 and H-34 time in the Army including in Germany after his long grounding and recuperation due to severe wounds suffered in his dramatic 17 days spent in Vietnam. Fritz discussed the C-47 and what that was like flying mostly at night. As Fritz discussed Spooky, I heard Walter Topp say, "you guys saved our A...s a bunch of times"!! All great stuff guys. But still not a single pool game.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Mark wrote a short and sweet AAR for the January 11th lunch gathering:

Another successful event held at Brady's in Traverse City. Lots of good stories and fine fellowship was enjoyed by all. Everyone was so busy talking and trading lies, still no time for pool!

To spread out the opportunities, Bob Rich hosted a lunch gathering at Metzger's German Restaurant just west of Ann Arbor on January 10th. He was joined by five other members including Jim Alford, Roland Leeds, Tom Zatkovich, Sandy McLeod and Rich Deer. Bob set up this gathering as an opportunity for members in southeast Michigan to get together similar to what Mark Benjamin has been doing in the Traverse City area. Most of the attendees had not met each other before but many shared common bonds from flight school and unit assignments in Vietnam.

The interaction was spontaneous, continuous and – dare I say – enthusiastic. Lots of war stories flowed. We found several had worked with the ROK troops (Koreans) and two had been stationed at the same 9th ROK White Horse Division compound in different time frames. Sandy McLeod brought photos and other memorabilia which prompted more conversation. We even found some time to talk about sports – briefly of course – then back to war stories.

Metzger's proved to be a very accommodating location. It

had a good selection of food on the menu that naturally favored German delicacies along with other choices. The wait staff was friendly and efficient. Other Veterans were there – including an Army Vietnam Veteran grunt - that we interacted with as well.

Bob intends to host more gatherings if there continues to be interest in them – please give him feedback. He is considering an every-other-month type of schedule. Location may vary to other spots in the southeast Michigan region. Stay tuned for more details.

Because our chapter membership is scattered all over Michigan, each member is encouraged to host an event in their area. Just let Rich Deer [REDACTED] know the date, time and location and he'll put it out to all the members. The offerings by Mark Benjamin and Bob Rich have been well attended and even small groups have enjoyed the camaraderie.

Chapter members should watch their emails for details on our annual spring meeting. Very tentatively set for Saturday, May 5, 2018 in Grand Ledge.

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

By Rich Deer, Member and President

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The winter months are normally the time to spend with family and friends. In the North Alabama Chapter, many of our friends are in the community helping to make the season bright. So, we joined them. The NAVHPA made unprecedented efforts to honor veterans and to begin restoration of a Vietnam Veteran AH-1 Cobra.

In Nov and Dec, members started a project to do restoration work on an AH-1 Cobra located in the Aviation Challenge aircraft display area at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center (USSRC) in Huntsville, AL. This Cobra has been neglected for a long time. NAVHPA members, led by Bob Stewart, have taken on the challenge to clean, repair and paint the outside of the aircraft and clean, repair, find and replace items in the cockpit.

Aviation Challenge is a three-tiered aviation training program that is one of the main USSRC programs, the other significant program

being the internationally known Space Camp. Aviation Challenge trainees are aged 9-18 broken into three age-based tiers, each lasting for a week. Trainees are immersed in the fascinating realms of flight appropriate for each age level. As part of the program, NAVHPA members are working with the Aviation Challenge

program to conduct classes at the AH-1 and talk about gunship operations and the weaponry. Additionally, discussions about the Vietnam War and Army Aviation in Vietnam is planned to be included in these presentations.

Klugged together over the years, the Cobra has no real identity. It is equipped with all



NAVHPA member (Buffalo) Bob Monette power washes the Aviation Challenge Cobra.



NAVHPA members celebrating Christmas. The walls are lined with door prizes.



The Aviation Challenge Cobra seems to be put together from spare parts.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

four major rocket systems, the Hellfire, TOW, Javelin and a 17-shot 2.75" Folding Fin Aerial Rocket Pod as well as a 7.62 Mini Gun and a 40mm Grenade launcher. We need some cockpit items, such as seats, instruments and boards. If you have any you would like to donate, please contact us at [REDACTED]

On 11 December, we held our annual Christmas Party and a short monthly meeting. We had a record 72 members, spouses and guests in attendance. Held at the Best Western Plus Hotel in Madison, AL, members enjoyed a social hour, a great buffet dinner, a short business meeting, a great presentation, all followed by a huge door prize raffle of 72 items. This hotel does a great job of meeting our requirements and their staff is always very gracious to us. Sandy and Carol Weand did a great job working with the hotel to set the evening up.

Our evening presentation was by Dr. John Omenski, a Navy veteran who served on board the ballistic missile submarine USS Alexander Hamilton, SSBN 617, and is a volunteer at the Veterans Museum. He talked about the history and working of the U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum in Huntsville, AL. While most of our members have toured or attended functions at the museum, (such as BUC-3 displays during Armed Forces Week), most of us did not know the background and behind the scene workings of this wonderful museum dedicated to all veterans.

After John's informative presentation, the drawings for the 72 door prizes commenced. NAVHPA member Steve's wife, Linda Pflanczer, worked for the better part of the year making 32 Christmas baskets and decorations – these were a huge hit. Everyone very much appreciates Linda's thoughtfulness and skills at making these lovely prizes. Additionally, baskets were donated by Emily Mettler, Illah Rosher, Ruth Maki, Anne Davis and Sharron Eubanks. In addition, Bob Monette, Sam Maki, Sandy Weand and Marshall Eubanks collected over 30 door prizes from local businesses. This permitted every person in attendance to receive a door prize. A wonderful evening indeed!

On 16 December, we attended the formal Wreath Laying Ceremony conducted by the Huntsville Wreaths for Veterans organization at Valhalla Cemetery. This ceremony takes place at noon Eastern time to coincide with the annual Wreaths Across America ceremonies. Wreaths are laid by former, retired, and active service members honoring those who served and those still serving in the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine. On their web site is a saying, "A person dies twice: once when they take their final breath and later, the last time their name is spoken." Since each veteran's name is read aloud, their memory continues.

If your chapter would like to participate in Wreaths Across America, go to <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/#join-us>.

December 21st found seven members and spouses serving the din-



The last box of the 3700 wreaths is packed at Valhalla Cemetery.



Reading the names of veterans aloud at Valhalla.

ner meal at the Downtown Rescue Mission in Huntsville. About 150 needy and homeless people, to include children, were served over a two-hour period. Some of these people reside at the Mission as part of one of the resident programs, others are there needing shelter on a temporary basis, and others come in off the streets for a free meal. NAVHPA serves the dinner meal at this facility one day each month – a very worthwhile cause and time well spent.

Many members and spouses participated in the picking up, packing and loading, unloading and stacking of what turned out to be over 3700 wreaths from Maple Hill and Valhalla cemeteries on 9 and 10 January 2018. This wraps up the Wreaths for Veterans program in Huntsville until the process starts all over again in November 2018. Support for this program is our Chapter's largest community service program each year with 10 days of support provided over the period early November to early January.

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 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Our new web site is www.na-vhpa.org. Come on out!! We'll give you a chance to get all those war stories out of your system. We have each heard all of ours. We need new war stories! "There I was..."

Ralph Weber

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NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The North Carolina Chapter of the VHPA (NCVHPA) sends Christmas Greetings from the beautiful, snowy south. Five inches of snow, ice and below freezing temperatures, just isn't normal in North Carolina. Oh well, hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and your 2018 is a great year.

Santa finally returned our OH-6 so we will have it available for the 2018 season. Thanks Santa!

2017 was a busy year for us, fourteen major events including two trips to Washington, DC, and trips into PA., and SC plus many within our home state. We keep saying, "We



Santa in his "ride".

are getting older and the routine has to slow down", but 2018 looks to be just as busy: Back to DC and PA; a trip into western VA and SC; two airshows and a few more potentials. Oh well, it keeps us off the streets and out of the bars.

We are looking forward to our annual yearly meeting in Raleigh, NC on February 3rd. We will start the day at the Capital Grounds with the MIA/POW Ceremony and then off to lunch and our meeting. We will have approximately sixty members and their spouses/significant others attending.

We are looking forward to seeing all our friends in DC on April 19th for the Dedication of the Crew Members Monument, we will be bringing one of our UH-1Hs for the occasion.

Ed Hughes, President, NCVHPA, "Hornet 24"

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

OKVHPA 3RD QUARTER, 2017 MEETING

At its monthly meeting held in June 2017, the Oklahoma Chapter of the VHPA elected new officers for the coming year as follows: Mike Sloniker, Edmond, President; Jim Mitschke, Owasso, Vice President; John Gaines, Bartlesville, Secretary/Treasurer. With membership of the chapter covering the whole state, and in the effort to generate more interest in the Chapter, the decision was made to begin holding quarterly rather than monthly meetings and alternate those meeting sites between Tulsa and Oklahoma City. This arrangement should allow members from the fringe areas of the state to attend the meetings closest to their homes without having to make long cross-state trips. In addition, there will be a greater emphasis to provide more substantive meetings to encourage participation by more of the membership. As an example, the first of the quarterly meeting was held at the Tulsa Air & Space Museum, Tulsa, on Saturday, September 23, 2017 with a nice catered lunch. During lunch, Lee Hubby, a TASM Director and supporter of the OKVHPA, presented a brief report on the history of the museum along with future plans and their efforts to restore a Huey, that when complete, will be on static display on the grounds. After lunch, docents showed the members around the museum to include a nice presentation in the Planetarium and a walk thru of the American Airlines MD-80 now on static display. This first attempt at quarterly meetings was well attended with very positive comments.

OKLAHOMA VIETNAM HELICOPTER WAR MUSEUM

One project the OKVHPA is working on is the idea of helping establish a Vietnam Helicopter War Museum in the State of Oklahoma which highlights the participation and activities of those Oklahoma residents who served as helicopter pilots and are veterans of Vietnam. After reviewing several location options statewide, the best possibility is the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. <http://www.okhistory.org/historycenter/>. Opened in 2005, it's a very nice facility located across from the Governor's Mansion near the State Capitol. After the OKVHPA Board met with its Director, Dan Provo, the determination was made to hold our 4th Quarter



meeting of 2017, a Holiday Luncheon, at the Center to introduce our members to the museum and help promote the idea.

OKVHPA 4TH QUARTER, 2017 MEETING

The Fourth Quarter Meeting, styled as a Holiday Luncheon, was held at the Oklahoma History Center in its Board Room on December 9, 2017. Great turnout and lunch and outstanding speakers! With a goal of the OKVHPA of establishing a Vietnam Helicopter War Museum, Dan Provo, the Director, first speaker, presented a brief report on the history of the museum in that one of its missions or goals is to highlight the history of the State of Oklahoma and its residents and their desire to work with the OKVHPA with its proposal to establish a Vietnam War Exhibit. As of this writing, the first meeting with the Director and the OKVHPA Board has been held and definite ideas and plans are now being formulated. The membership is excited and looking forward to getting this project under way.

Next, Mike Sloniker made arrangements for our next speaker, LTC Chuck DeBellevue, Air Force Ace of the Vietnam War, to give his up close and personal account of flying F-4 Phantoms to shoot down 6 North Vietnamese MIGS between April and September 1972, over North Vietnam and Laos. He provided detailed descriptions of each of the actual aerial combat encounters with the MIGS to include the detailed mental environment required of the pilots to achieve that accomplishment. Because of this air superiority provided

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by the Air Force and Navy fighters, North Vietnamese MIGS were prohibited from coming south into South Vietnam and harassing all of us Army helicopter pilots. With the assist of a Power Point presentation and some animated arm waving (as pilots are known to do), he offered some GREAT stories!!!

Further, one of our members, Bob Ford, a University of Oklahoma graduate and Vietnam helicopter pilot, was recognized for his efforts to assist the Museum in having a Huey hung from the ceiling as part of a permanent display. Bob wrote a book, 'Black Cat 2-1', about his tour as a helicopter pilot while serving with the 282 Assault Helicopter Company in I Corp in 1967-68 to include his participation in the Battle of Hue during Tet '68. He also held a recent book signing at the Museum with proceeds from sales of the book going to support the Museum. A big hand SALUTE to Bob for not only these efforts but his many other volunteer accomplishments throughout the State of Oklahoma.

OTHER OKVHPA ACTIVITIES

Mike Sloniker, being an alumnus of Oklahoma State University and ROTC graduate, has become very active in working with the

current ROTC Programs in the States of Oklahoma and Kansas (specifically Oklahoma State University, University of Oklahoma, Kansas State University, & University of Kansas) by sponsoring 'Meat Burns'. To state it another way, these are events where he arranges to cook burgers and hot dogs for members of ROTC units on their campuses. The purpose is to provide the opportunity to introduce the future officers in those ROTC programs to older military veterans and hear their war stories and other experiences while on active duty. Very worthwhile project and Mike always welcomes volunteers.

Finally, in an effort to keep all members timely informed as to the upcoming meetings, events, etc., a 12-month calendar was prepared and is periodically updated with an objective of having all events and notices posted with at least 30 days' notice to help in planning purposes. The Calendar is posted on the OKVHPA website at www.okvhp.org/ and its Face Book Page at www.facebook.com/groups/okvhp/

Submitted by Jim Mitschke



OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

This past month we met at Legends Brewing in Richmond, VA. We are planning our next meeting either there or at the Virginia War Memorial just up the road.

Many of our members have been helping with the many issues involved with the Legacy Committee and the placement of our Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. Here is a picture of Frosty Price taken shortly after the monument was delivered to the installation company.

One of our members Bill Baker, who was my Platoon Leader as Emu 16, just had his son Ben Graduate from Parris Island, SC Marine Boot Camp. I know that Joan and Bill are very proud of their New Marine.

By Don Agren



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

We held our first monthly meeting of the year at the American Legion Post #1 on Wednesday, January 17. We continue to

have a good turnout. Holding our meetings midweek has improved our attendance, plus, comradery at lunch is a bonus.

Our Christmas Party, hosted by chapter member Greg Mann, was held December 9, 2017. Last year there were approximately 40 attendees, however only half that number were able to attend mostly due to the influenza.



The Helicopter War Museum



Dalat, Vietnam



Thang 2 Street

Chapter member Bill Robie has started an "open" Facebook Group named "Dalat Historic". The city of Dalat, is in the Lam Dong Province, within the Central Highlands area of Vietnam. Bill was stationed there during the Vietnam War in 1968-69 with the 92nd AHC. He took a personal interest in this city and has been back several times since his tour. What's interesting is you

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view the changes over the years. For those with an interest in the history, geography, and culture of Dalat, both military and non-military, Check out "Dalat Historic" Facebook page.

Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

Planning continues for the 2018 season. We have a tentative Helicopter War Museum schedule with appearances scheduled for the Colorado Freedom Memorial, Longmont Aviation Expo, July 4th celebrations in Golden, The Erie AirFare, and again at Aspen Crossing for Veterans Day celebrations.

Meeting Schedule and other Information:

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Wednesday of the month, at 10:00 hours at the American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so

contact us at the address below to verify 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

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum; among these items are a chicken plate with the cloth holder our visitors can put on and see what it was like to wear a chicken plate. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: [REDACTED]

By Dale House

UPPERMIDWEST CHAPTER

On January 18th, we had our bi-monthly meeting at the Bloomington, MN VFW with 13 members attending. We elected Bruce Hunter to be this year's president. His e-mail is [REDACTED]

The Helicopter Conservancy was able to secure hangar space adjacent to Dave Schmitz's Huey which is hangared at the New Richmond, WI Airfield. This will allow us to work with both units easily.

We are a relatively small chapter, but we have had several new members join and we are seeking others. If you flew helicopters in Vietnam and live in Minnesota or western Wisconsin, we urge you to join us for great fellowship and camaraderie.

Our next meeting will be March 13, 2018. Anyone interested in joining us, contact Bruce Hunter at [REDACTED] or Richard Anderson at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] for further information.

By Richard Andersen



UTAH CHAPTER

The Utah Chapter of the VHPA is enjoying a beneficial surge in establishing our educational presentations to various groups here in Utah. We were pleased to have a booth at the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Ride last year and participation in the Veterans day celebration at Utah Valley University in November.

The new year stated off with a bang as we presented at one of the many CAP squadrons here in Utah we hope to visit this year. On the 4th of January we were hosted at the Phoenix Cadet Squadron in SLC. Over 25 cadets, their leaders and family members turned out to hear Vietnam helicopter experiences from four of our members and enjoy a slide show on Army Aviation in Vietnam. Our members were honored for their service with an Honor Guard salute by the cadet honor guard and presented with



CAP honor guard unknown name



UTVHPA members Ralph Newberry, Doug Drury, Leon Thurgood, Steve Jackson, CAP members unknown during honor guard ceremony



UTVHPA members as outlined above & CAP unnamed CAP cadets



Phoenix CAP patch and CAP challenge coin

squadron patches and a challenge coin for the chapter. On January 30th, we will be presenting to the CAP Composite squadron in Ogden at their annual awards banquet. Because our members are located throughout the state it is hard for us to meet as a group more than two times a year for a get together and a dinner, but we have

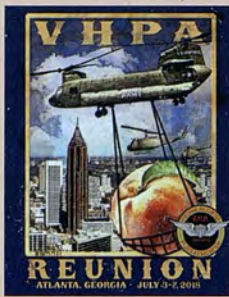
VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

strong support from our members. We recently established a Facebook page (VHPA Utah) to keep our members better informed and a place to share experiences and memories of our time in aviation. We're looking forward to presenting at many other groups this year and hopefully present the true aspect of our part in Vietnam.

Doug Drury, Past President UTVHPA,
Education Coordinator



UTVHPA members as named and CAP sqd members group photo



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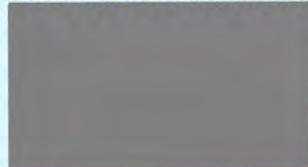


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Selections from Past Newsletters

This issue's column is from December 1992

NVA Spoils Last Flight in Loach

LAI KHE, South Vietnam: September. 1, 1970, was an awe-inspiring day as the personnel selected to form the all new E Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile) gathered around at the disbanded D/229th company area. All the other units in the squadron had been tasked to provide pilots, air crew personnel, support personnel, equipment and aircraft to form this new "search and destroy" troop.

MAJ Herbert Chole had a "Black Sheep Troop" on his hands, but he rolled up his sleeves and went to work. By September 8th, we were putting up five teams a day. That increased to seven by September 12th, after we raided every unit in III Corps for parts, equipment, ammo and anything else that wasn't tied down. Two of the Cobras were delivered on lowboy flatbed trucks and were flying within days.

I was proud to be an original member of this elite, rag-tag, no name, no AO, Red X aircraft, 70 percent strength, 1st Real Cav unit of short-lived, great-fame-to-come. Our immediate mission was to support the other three 'regular' troops. You can guess what missions they gave us: Convoy escorts, last-light checks, first-light checks, sniffer hits, and electronic detection hits. But the 1st Infantry stood down and we got our very own turf – the Iron Triangle. Boy, did we ever have a party over that.

My activity with the unit ended on January 18, 1971, in the Iron Triangle.

I came to Vietnam a Cobra pilot out of flight school, but wanted the OH-6A. I ended up flying both. I would fly the Loach until I took a mess of hits and then jump back into the Cobra until I got bored with 1,500 AGL and AFN's Saigon Sue while the Scouts had all the fun, and then I'd jump back into the Loach.

I was a two-digit midget getting ready to extend when I went back into the Loach for what would be the last time. I had found a sampan docking point and, after destroying the sampans, flew low-level cover for a Korean team we put in to check out the bunker complex the docking point trail led to.

I was down to about 30 minutes of fuel when the "down bird" call went out. We were the closest team, as most of the other teams had already broken to refuel and rearm.

CPT Paul "Red" Dagnon was my high-bird, with the

XO, CPT Retterer, in the front seat. CPT Retterer had also just taken over as troop commander; MAJ. Chole had gone to a headquarters assignment.

We arrived on station and found the low-bird had been hit, but had flown out of the area before having to set down. His high-bird Cobra had to leave due to low fuel and no munitions, as he had shot everything up when his Loach had taken fire. The Loach pilot was a brand new First Lieutenant who hadn't been in the unit more than a week or two; this was the first time he had taken fire.

I arrived at his location and found him outside the aircraft counting bullet holes. He gave me a sign count of more than 10 hits in the engine doors. I knew right off we weren't dealing with Viet Cong, but with NVA and they wanted him down and alive, otherwise they would have put all those rounds in the pilot's compartment. He pointed the direction from which he came and we headed out.

Red said everyone was in refuel and rearm, but CPT Larry Brown, my scout platoon leader, and his Cobra were almost refueled and armed and it would only be a few minutes before they took off.

Both of our 20-minute warning lights were on. I told him we needed to check the area to ascertain what was in there so we would know what it would take to terminate the bad guy situation, and that I would do it at 60 plus knots. Red could see where the other team had been firing and guided me there while I was low level. I went in at 60 knots, but was up to 90 knots within seconds.

I had bunker openings, uniforms hanging out to dry, campfires with food cooking, stacked AK-47s, heavily used trails. NVA equipment and gear was every-where. I had my Torque start "recon by fire" with his M-60 just to keep the bad guys' heads down.

I had flown the entire Cambodia campaign and had learned a lot of the unwritten tactics you use to survive as a Loach pilot but still get the body counts and kills. We had been out of Cambodia for quite a while and my edge wasn't as keen as it had been for Cambodia; I made an error that would cost me dearly.

I was on fumes and getting ready to split when a group of about five or six NVA packing full fatigues, gear and AK-47s came out of nowhere and appeared to be running away from us. I fell for it and stood the Loach on its tail and started hovering sideways as the Torque started putting them down. Just as the last NVA went down, I heard or felt the rocket coming.

I went nose over and pulled 102 pounds of torque to get out when the rocket hit the tail. I learned later from Red that all he remembered seeing was a gray-black cloud and my tail boom section flipping through the air.

Everything went into slow-motion. The aircraft was

nose over with a ton of torque to the blades, and the rocket blast flipped the Loach into a full forward flip. While it was upside down, I took one .30-caliber round through my right hand. It came through what would have been the top of the aircraft. The round entered my hand between the thumb and index finger and exited out my ring finger where it was attached to my hand. My thumb and little finger were the only thing letting me hang onto the cyclic. I remember the aircraft finishing the flip and heading down, as parts of the dash, instruments and radios started flying everywhere from rounds coming through my side of the cockpit. I felt several tugs at my left leg and then a whack in the chest and head.

Just before impact, I pulled the collective and rolled the nose forward and to the right to impact on my side, nose down to help keep my crew alive. Just as I was getting a good look at the ground, my left leg fell over and the cyclic (or part of) came out of the floor and a lot of stuff hit my face.

I recall the aircraft hitting, bouncing and rolling several times before it came to rest on its left side. During this part of "controlled" crash, I remember getting a good rap on the head from something. After stopping, I saw it was one of the rotor blades that came into the cockpit.

Everything was still slow-motion as the dust and debris was settling into the cockpit. Then everything returned to normal speed. I was hurt bad and knew it. I braced myself and had my observer reach up to unlatch my seat belt as I started to crawl through the "greenhouse" roof window. A bucket of blood landed on my observer as I moved my left leg up. That is when I saw it and knew it was blown in half and I was bleeding to death.

I stuck my head through the window and saw the damn rotor head still turning and clanking and grinding. No tail boom, no skids, no rotor blades and a smashed-up bird - and the engine was still running at flight idle. I had to turn back around and shut the engine off before I could get out.

I could hear my Torque shooting the M-79 grenade launcher. I rolled out of the aircraft, my observer right behind me. I could smell burning grass and hear AK rounds hitting the top of the aircraft. Red was really working out with the Cobra, but I could also hear return fire after he broke off his run. They were shooting .30- and .51-caliber at him.

My left foot was turned the wrong way and I flopped it over the right way, knowing my flight suit and blousing rubbers were the only things holding it on.

I saw a bomb crater and told the observer to get any guns he could find and head for it. I dragged myself into the crater and then realized all kinds of dirt and bamboo were falling on us from Red's shooting to cover us.

Damn, he could shoot. During what must have been their third gun run while I was in the crater, I remember how awesome it sounded hearing the rockets fire, then break the sound barrier and then impact, and you'd hear a split second of the thunder the Cobra made in a dive run. As the sound of the Cobra left us, the enemy guns opened up and the debris from the gunship would start floating down on us. We even heard shrapnel flying through the air. It was fantastic!

Then I got scared for the first time. I couldn't hear Red. My Torque was shooting his M-79 and I had been shooting left-handed with my handgun. The observer had lost his rifle in the crash and I gave him my empty handgun to reload when I heard the sweetest sound there was in the world: The high-pitched whine of another Loach as it made one pass over us and went on his tail in a right-hand circle, coming down on top of us. He half-landed and half-hovered over that bomb crater while my Torque and the observer picked me up and tossed me into the back of the aircraft.

My rear landed in the frag grenade box and my legs were pointing out the gunner's door. I looked around and saw a full load of ammo and my Torque and observer standing on the left skid. No way could this Loach take off with six people and a full load of ammo, weapons and fuel. I had maxed a Loach before and knew this would be too much.

I was still cringing when I felt the wind blowing after all the shuddering and vibrating the OH-6A went through to get us airborne. I do not honestly believe that takeoff could be repeated. Being scared can get all kinds of things done.

Something was wrong with the aircraft, as it would not maintain trim and the wind coming from the gunner's door was blowing blood all over my face and helmet.

We tried to get my visor down, but it was history as two .30-caliber rounds had gone through it from front to rear and there was a crack on the right side of the helmet from the rotor hit. We landed at 15th Medical at Phuoc Vinh, and I was carried inside. The smell inside these places was one you would never forget. I gave my name, unit, blood type, etc., and then watched my flight suit disappear into pieces from all the scissors being used on it.

The doc asked me where I was hit and I told him my left leg and right hand, but he had a funny look on his face.

They removed the front chest plate and that's when I saw the damage to it. I tried to raise my head up and look down, but I was getting weak. The doc then asked me what I thought was a funny question: "Can we remove your helmet now?"

Of course, I couldn't see the bullet and rotor blade damage on the helmet, plus all the blood and parts of my leg splattered all over it, and they must have thought part of my

head was gone. I said, "Sure," and reached up with my left hand, grabbed the lower rear of the helmet and pulled it off. They all gasped, but there was nothing but my black, sweaty, dirty hair underneath.

All of a sudden, I heard: "Hey, Rocket! How's it going?"

I looked up and saw Red Dagon. He was holding his shoulder and chicken plate, both were covered in blood. He had taken a round through the shoulder and had a mess of plexiglass stuck in his face. They had taken more than 20 hits in the cockpit area, losing the No. 1 hydraulic system on the last run they made. As he was setting the Cobra down several clicks away, the No. 2 hydraulic system light came on and the controls froze. He rolled off the throttle to get it all the way on the ground. That made three birds and eight people down within a ten-minute period.

When they started to cut on my left boot, I went through the ceiling and learned I hadn't had any pain medication. I went to sleep and woke up three days later at the 93rd Evac, already having had two operations, plus they had lost me twice on the operating table - once from loss of blood and another from shock.

I had one bullet hit in my left heel that took off a small chunk; one bullet put a six-inch cut across my left thigh; one hit in the right hand and took off my ring finger, but it

had been reattached; one or more rounds hit the chest plate, broke six or seven ribs and gave me a 14-inch wide, one-half inch thick bruise across the chest; one or more rounds in the helmet that didn't hurt anything, just as the rotor strike only thumped me real good; and the biggie, a .51-caliber round just below the left knee that literally blew the leg in half. I had one artery still pumping blood to the foot, so they left it on to see if it could be saved. Seven-plus hits and still kicking!

I wouldn't have survived if it had not been for my scout platoon leader, CPT Larry Brown. Division had really been coming down on us for not wearing flight gloves, having our Nomex sleeves rolled up, wearing jungle boots and not wearing our armor chest plate - or chicken plate.

Brown caught me walking to the flight line and asked me where my plate was. He was new to the unit, but we had hit it off great, as he and I had finally found someone else just as flamboyant, cocky and self-assured as the other. So, I told him I didn't have it with me, instead of saying it was in the aircraft when it wasn't. He handed me his. Less than two hours later, it had several hits dead in the center.

I only wish I knew the name of the Loach pilot who came and got me and my crew out.

Louis J. Roachat III, DAT, Headhunter 16

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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

Bernard, William H. USA;
Flight Class: 69-3; RVN: 69-70 A/229 AVN 1 CAV; BS.

William "Billy" Howard Bernard, 69, of Mandeville, LA passed away January 17, 2018. He was the beloved husband of Sharon DiFatta Bernard. He was a 1967 graduate of Martin Behrman High School. He was a former welder with Avondale Shipyards, a Flooring and Siding Contractor and was also a Consultant for 7K Metals.



American Airman Combat Hall of Fame. After his service, he worked in the oilfield in sales.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Linda.

Carmack, James W. II USA;
Flight Class: 69-4; RVN: 69-70, C/101 AVN 101 ABN; DFC (2), BS, LM, MSM (3), ACM (2); Call-signs: Black Widow 42 / Black Widow 3.



Jim Carmack passed away in his Conifer, CO home August 10, 2015, from prostate cancer.

Jim was born in Clovis, NM, December 24, 1945. Jim graduated from Clovis High in 1964 and received a BA from Texas Tech University, and MS in Psychological Counseling from Kansas State University. He Graduated with Honors from the United States Air Force Command and General Staff School and U.S. Army Organizational Effectiveness Center and School.

After retiring from the Army, Jim worked at Martin Marietta on the Titan Four project.

He is survived by his wife, Leslie Carmack.

Clapp, Randolph B. USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Classes: 62-7Q/61-8FW; RVN: 63-64 114 AHC, 68 B/7/17 CAV & A/7/1 CAV, 68-69 HHC/164 CAG; Callsigns: Cobra 5/Cobra 3/Delta 3W.



Randolph Clapp was born March 29, 1938 in Houston, TX and went to his Heavenly home December 16, 2017.

In March of 1955, Randy joined the U.S. Army and upon completing basic training at Fort Carson, CO, he returned home to Texas and married his High School sweetheart, Jo Evelyn Stephens, who survives Randolph after 62 years of marriage.

Fox, Albert D. USN CPT (Ret.); Flight Class: 1-48; RVN: 66-67 HS-6; Call-signs: Big Mother/Double Nuts.



Additional SE Asia deployments: USS Kearsarge (66-67) HS-6 (67-68) CVSG-56 (68-69) USS Bennington (68-69)

Albert (Al) Fox, of Odessa passed away at Medical Center Hospital July 31, 2016. He was born January 2, 1928 in Columbus, OH.

His 28 years of military service included WWII, Korean War and Vietnam. After retiring from the military, he worked 29 years as a self-employed CPA. He graduated from Ohio State with a BA and graduated from UTPB with a BS.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn E. Fox.

Gawkoski, Harry USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 62-7; RVN: 63-64 114 AVN, 67-68, 68 AHC, 71-72 B/3/17 CAV; DFC (3), BS (2), PH (2), MSM (2); Callsigns: Blue Knight 14/Mustang 6.

Harry, Gawkowski, 75, passed suddenly September 4, 2017 at his home in Wellington, FL.

Post-military Harry became the Director of Operations and the Chief Pilot, flying helicopters on the AUTC Naval Base in the Bahamas for 37 years. He was the Recipient of the NBAA Pilot Safety Award for over 10,000 Accident Free Hours.

Guy, Leroy E. USA (Ret.); Flight Class: 63-9; RVN: 67-68 48 AHC, 70-71 11 CAG, 71 173 AHC; DFC, BS (2) MSM, ACM; Call-signs: Joker 25/Robin Hood 6.



LeRoy Earl Guy of Leavenworth, KS passed away at his daughter's home in McKinney, TX October 26, 2017 after a 2 1/2-year battle with bladder cancer. Leroy

Boswell, Michael R. USA;
Flight Class: 70-3; RVN: 70-71 3 BDE 101 ABN; BS; Callsign: Thunderbird.



Mike, a native of Pensacola, FL, attended Pensacola Technical High School. After high school, Mike enlisted in the military and honorably served his country. He was awarded the Broken Wing Award for safely piloting a helicopter damaged in a training exercise.

After the Army, Mike ran many businesses and eventually returned with his family to his native Pensacola and worked for the Navy before returning to his true passion of flying. Mike worked for Atlantic Southeast Airlines, then Airborne Express, where he was a Captain on 767s.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Brenda (nee) Hall

Brown, Norval G. USA (Ret. rank unk.); Flight Classes: 67-21 / 67-23; RVN: 68-69 C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV.



Norval Glenn Brown, of Haskell, TX passed away January 8, 2018 at Hendrick Hospice in Abilene.

Glenn was born August 22, 1947 in Odessa, TX. On July 1, 1966, he married the love of his life, Linda Williams in Odessa, TX. He was inducted into the

TAPS

was born in Amberg, WI February 18, 1935.

After graduating from Amberg High School he secured employment at the Oster Manufacturing Company in Milwaukee, WI. In 1955 he made the "best decision of his life" and joined the Army. LeRoy spent the next 20 years in the Army; the last 13 years as a pilot both fixed wing and rotary wing culminating his career as a Rotary Wing Instrument Flight Instructor. Prior to attending flight school, he enrolled in Airborne school and obtained his paratrooper badge. LeRoy's second-best decision of his life was marrying Katharina Jaud of Ellbach, Germany. He and Katharina spent 52 wonderful and interesting years together until she passed away in 2010.

Haglund, Ronald L. USAF LTC (Ret.); Flight Class 57-C; RVN: 68-69 ARRS.

Ronald Haglund entered eternal rest January 15, 2018 in his sleep.

He was born and raised in Jamestown, NY and attended Grove City College in PA. Upon graduation, he entered the USAF becoming a helicopter pilot. He proudly served in Vietnam where he flew rescue missions as part of the Jolly Green Giants squadron.

Upon completion of his 20-year career, Ron returned to school earning his MBA before beginning his second career with the USPS.

Heath, Herman S. USA COL (Ret.); Flight Class: 69-24; RVN: 69-70 134th AHC, 70 268th AHB; BS (OLC), ACM (V); Call-signs: Demon 13/Demon 16.

Herman S. Heath passed away January 4, 2018 due to chronic medical conditions. Herman was born in Canton, GA, November 23, 1942 and graduated from Cherokee High School in 1960. He attended Marsh Business College in Atlanta, GA later entering the Management Training Program with F.W. Woolworth Co. In August 1966, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Following Army Basic and Advanced Individual Training, he attended Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, OK.

In his post-Vietnam career, he served in various Army Aviation command and staff positions from company to brigade level during his 28-year career in the Regular Army.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Elma Lou.

Kelly, Bruce N. USA; Flight Classes: 68-43/68-523; RVN: 69-70 235 AWC; Callsigns: Death Dealer 24/Viper 34.

Bruce Kelly age 70 of Waleska, passed away on December 13th at Northside Hospital in Cherokee. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Kelly of Waleska.

Kidney, John USA CW4 (Ret.); Flight Classes: 63-4W/63-4; RVN: 65-66 121 AVN; Callsign: White Tiger.

John Kidney of Enfield, went home to his Lord and Savior January 1, 2018 with loved ones at his side in the comfort of his home. He was the beloved husband of 19 years of Patricia (Closson) Kidney. He was born on April 1, 1940. He was a graduate of The Morgan School, Clinton, CT. He then attended Duke University and left to serve his country in the US Army. He received his Associates Degree in Criminal Justice from Springfield Technical College in 1974.

He was a 27-year veteran of the Connecticut State Police.

King, Dewey M. USA, LTC (Ret.); Flight Class: 58-9; RVN: 65-66 2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 71 359 AVNDET, 165 TC CO.

Dewey King, of North Little Rock passed away January 18, 2018. He was born in Quitman, AR August 17, 1930. He was preceded in death by his wife (Sally) of 54 years, and is survived by his wife of 10 years, Mary Alice.

He attended fixed wing flight school at Gary Air Force Base TX and at Fort Rucker where he received his wings, then transitioned to a 'Q' course for his rotary wing rating.

Mancusco, Vincent P. COL (Ret.); USA Flight Class: 66-12; RVN: 66-67 B/1 AVN 1 INF, 67-68 HHC 10 CAB, 68-69 HHC 1 AVN BDE; LM, DFC (2), BS (2-V), PH; Callsign: Rebel 36.

Vincent Peter Mancuso, Sr., 77, of The Harbor Club, died at Saint Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital in Greensboro, GA. He is survived by his beloved wife of over 53 years, Camille.

Vincent was a highly decorated Master Aviator who was shot down four times in combat. During his military career, he earned several BA Degrees, one from Auburn University, a MS Degree from Central Michigan University and a Ph.D. from the University of California. He is also a graduate of the New Jersey Military Academy. His final two Army assignments were with helicopter research and development and finally as an Inspector General with Forces Command.

Marks Harold E. USA (Ret.); Flight Class: 54-F; RVN: 66-67 1 AVN 1 INF, 69-70 120 AHC.

Harold Edward Marks went on to his eternal reward November 28, 2017. He was born October 7, 1927, in New Edenburg, AR.

Harold graduated with a BA in Business Administration at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. He proudly served in the United States Army for 29 years. He served in the Korean War, where he rapidly made the rank of Warrant Officer. Harold's wife, Johanna passed away July 28, 2006. Eight years later he married Denise Carla Oldenburg who survives him.

Nagelhout, Maynard A. USA; Flight Class: 62-8; RVN: 66-67 HHC/11 CAB, 67 HHC/12 CAG, 70 1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 72-73 HHC/1 AVN BDE; died December 21, 2017 (no other data).



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Parthemer, Lloyd L. USN
CMDR (Ret.); Flight Class-
es: 50 (FW)/57 RVN: HC-
7; Callsign: Seadevil.

Lloyd Parmether was born August 23, 1926. He died in Rowan County KY January 20, 2018. (no additional information provided).



Pixton, Marvin F. III USMC
MAJ (Ret.); Flight Class: 65;
RVN: 67-68 VMO-2, 68
HML-167, 72-73 VMA-
311; Callsigns: Dead
Lock/Hostage.

Marvin was born March 18, 1939 in Johnson City, TN. He died January 15, 2018 in Fredericksburg City, VA. (no additional information provided).



Rodowick, Leonard J. USA; Flight Class:
58-1; RVN: 67 162 AHC, 67-68 191
AHC, 70-71 540 TC CO; DFC (3), BS
(5), PH (2), MSM; Callsigns: Vul-
tures,/Boomerang,/Wicked Escort 6.

Leonard was born March 2, 1929 and passed away December 16, 2016.

He was a resident of Caliente, NV at the time of passing. He held an Associate Degree from University of Maryland.

During his 28-year U.S. Army career he served in WW II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Leonard is survived by his wife, Alice.

Santoro, Alfred E. III USA CW4 (Ret.);
Flight Class: 69-23; RVN: 69-70 ACT 11
ACR, 70 HHT/11 ACR; DFC (2), BS,
PH (3); Callsigns: White 11/Black Horse
6A.

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

Following high school and while attending Temple University, he attended Officers' Candidate School in Quantico, VA

before joining the United States Army.

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

Share, Louis L. USA MAJ (Ret.); Flight
Class: 55-F; RVN: 67-68 1 TC BN, 70-71
34 SP GRP.

Lorenzo Share passed peacefully December 18, 2017 with his devoted wife and loving family at his side. Major Share is survived by his wife, Clarice Share.

Louis was a proud veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars and of note, served with distinction as the youngest NCO with the 17th Artillery Battalion during the Korean War. He retired in December 1972 after being assigned to the USA Agency for Aviation Safety and aided in writing several flight manuals. He was dual-rated and qualified in every Army helicopter except the OH6. After retiring from active duty, Major Share was employed as a Contractor Aircraft Maintenance Test Pilot for the Army Aviation Test Board. In 1977, he was employed at Ft. Rucker as a Contractor Primary Flight Instructor and retired as Assistant Flight Commander, Primary Flight Division and retired in 1993. His total flight time was in excess of 11,000 accident free hours.

Shiffer, Jon USA MAJ
(Ret.); Flight Class 69-
10QC; RVN: 66-67 56 TC
CO, 71-72 F/4 CAV; BS;
Callsigns: Good
Nature/Centaur 4.

Jon M. Shiffer was born February 8, 1939 in Wieser, ID. He passed away peacefully on December 11, 2017, surrounded by family and friends in his home after being ill for many years.

As a young man, Jon joined the military and served in Vietnam. Several years after retiring, Jon volunteered for reenlistment during the gulf war, and severed as a liaison officer.

Upon retiring from the Army, Jon and his beautiful bride of 60 years moved to Star, ID. There, he eventually became a Captain for Cascade Airlines.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen Shiffer of Brier, WA.



Segraves, Clinton L. USA
LTC (Ret.); Flight Classes:
69-42/69-44; RVN: 70-71
937 ENG GRP; BS, MSM,
ACM; Callsign: Castle.

Clinton Segraves passed away November 20, 2017 at the age of 71, due to complications following surgery to remove a massive pituitary brain tumor. Clint is survived by his wife and soul mate of 48 years, Cecelia Kirby.

Clint graduated from Harrison Central High School in 1966. After high school, Clint joined the Mississippi National Guard. Clint graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1974.

In 1990, he retired from Army Reserves with 23 years of service.

Snyder, Forrest B. USA; Flight Class 71-30;
RVN: 71-72 361 AVN; Callsign: Panther
19.

Forrest B. Snyder, Jr. also known by his friends in the 361st Aerial Weapons Company as "Fearless" Forrest, passed away January 14, 2018 in Sterling, VA.

Forrest was a bright light in the world and a true warrior. Here is a link to one of his memories from the Battle of Kontum. <http://www.thebattleofkontum.com/>.

Stockinger, Darrel V. USA; Flight Classes:
66-5W/66-5; RVN: 66-67 173 AHC, 70-
71 173 AHC; died January 15, 2018 (no
other data).

VanSchoick, Robert E.
USA; Flight Class: 70-29;
RVN: 70-71 B/7/17 CAV;
Callsign: Scalp Hunter.

Robert Van Schoick Jr., 68, of Ann Arbor passed away with dignity on January 11, 2018 after a courageous fight against cancer and complicating health issues. Robert was born in Albion, MI. He is survived by Jan his wife of 47 years. Robert was a highly decorated, yet humble veteran.

He founded The Deburring Company, American Metal Finishing and Toledo Deburring.



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Whitehouse, Randall S. USA; Flight Class 68-511 (no other data).

Randall S Whitehouse died from natural causes after a lengthy illness January 2, 2018.

Randall was born January 9, 1948 in Ashford, CT and graduated from the University of Connecticut.

After College, he joined the Army and became a helicopter pilot. Later he relocated to Birmingham AL, working for Bill Woods Beechcraft, where he was a flight instructor. Thereafter, he became involved in aircraft sales and became VP of Hangar One/Beechcraft/Raytheon.

He is survived by his wife Susan.



Baker, Owen C. USMC COL (Ret.); DSSM, DFC, BS (V); died January 23, 2018 (no other data).

Beekman, Gerald R. USA COL (Ret.); BS, PH, MSM (*); died December 17, 2017 (no other data).

*Multiple awards

Brown, James H. USMC; SS; died November 25, 2017 (no other data).

Connelly, John J. Jr. USN CMDR (Ret.); RVN: 68-69 HA(L)-3 DET 7; DFC, BS (V), PH; died January 12, 2018 (no other data).

Connor, Michael D. USA; Flight Class: 67-13; died January 19, 2018 (no other data).

Conrad, Richard J. USA LTC (Ret.); Flight Class 69-30; died October 22, 2017 (no other data).

Cunningham, William COL USMC; LM (V), DFC (2), PH, NCM (V); died December 24, 2017 (no other data).

Curley, Thomas M. USA; Flight Class 71-5; died December 27, 2017 (no other data).

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.

Doyal, Benny G. USA CPT (Ret.); Flight Class: 65-21; died December 26, 2017 (no other data).

Eisenbarth, Francis L. USA; Flight Class: 69-40; died December 29, 2017 (no other data).

Garrett, Joe W. USA; Flight Class: 64-3; died January 13, 2018 (no other data).

Godfrey, Edward J. USMC LTC (Ret.); DFC (2), BS (V); died January 7, 2018 (no other data).

Gustafson, Roger L. USAF; died in the month of January 2018 (no other data).

Hicks, William R. USA; Flight Class: 66-21; DFC, BS; died December 26, 2017 (no other data).

Hughes, John D. USA LTC (Ret.); died October 21, 2017 (no other data).

Lindberg, Larry P. USA CPT (Ret.); Flight Class: 69-6; died April 28, 2017 (no other data).

Lyons, James C. USA; Flight Class: 69-45; RVN: 70-71 187 AHC; Callsign: Lancelot 18; died November 13, 2017.

Martin, Sherrill D. USAF LTC; SS, DFC; died January 6, 2018 (no other data).

Mecum, Carl USA CW2 (Ret.); Flight Classes: 66-17/66-19; RVN: 67 240 AHC; died January 16, 2018.

Menig David B. USA; Flight Class: 66-4; RVN: 66-67 128 AHC; died June 6, 2018 (no other data).

Megna, Phillip E. USMC LTC (Ret.); died October 29, 2017 (no other data).

Myers, Richard E. USA; DFC, BS; died January 16, 2018 (no other data).

Pfaff, Kenneth K. USA; Flight Class: 68-6; RVN: 68 174 AHC; BS; died November 4, 2014.

Pritchard, Allen N. USA; Flight Class: 65-7; died July 30, 2017 (no other data).

Purdy Robert J. USA; Flight Classes: 66-20/66-18; RVN: 11 ACR; died December 31, 2017.

Sheridan, Donald T. USA; SS, BS (2); died September 4, 2017 (no other data).

Shirley Fred E. Jr. USN LCM (Ret.); died November 6, 2017 (no other data).

Silvia, Charles P. USN CPT (Ret.); RVN: HS-8; died September 4, 2017 (no other data).

Skinner, Charles S. USA; Flight Class 66-4; RVN: 66-67 C/1/9 /1CAV, 67 RECON SQ 25 INF; Callsigns: White 19/Brave Fighter; died October 31, 2017.

Stewart, James R. USMC LTC (Ret.); RVN: 69-70 HMM-364; died January 19, 2018 (no other data).

Tyler Charles W. III; Flight Class: 69-37; RVN: 69-70 173 ASHC; died December 26, 2017.

confidence in my ability to accomplish the mission as he said, "I'm with you, Mister Jaggers!"

We took off immediately and began winding our way back through the valleys until we reached the base of the mountain upon which LZ Overlook was situated. In the time it had taken to refuel and drop off our load the weather conditions had quickly deteriorated, and the top of the mountain was in the clouds again!

I decided to fly to the base of the clouds to see if I could figure out a solution. I was not going to give up that easily. Thanks to the power of the massive Lycoming turbine engines, I had plenty of power to hover far above the jungle floor, as we crept up the side of the mountain.

Reaching the base of the clouds, I determined from my altimeter we were only about 200 feet from the top of the mountain and the men. Even though I could see only a few feet into the clouds, I made one of those decisions that was more instinctive and a reaction to the desperation of the situation. I decided to slowly climb into the clouds and hover up the side of the mountain.

Keeping the rocks and jungle trees away from the rotor blades but staying as close as possible so I could maintain our reference to the mountainside and using our attitude indicator to keep the aircraft level, I inched my way to the top. I simultaneously called for the troops on the ground to illuminate some incendiary flares at their position to help me locate them through the dense clouds.

Within minutes we were at the top and could barely make out the flares burning brightly through the clouds. But it was all we needed. We hovered forward to the flares, landed and Yates immediately lowered the rear ramp and 17 men scrambled on board!

As the ramp was being raised, I was preparing for an instrument takeoff into the clouds. It was not what I wanted to do because we had only received very basic instrument training in flight training, flying a Bell OH-13 for a few hours over the state of Georgia out of Hunter AAF. Fortunately, a few weeks before I had made some practice GCA (Ground Controlled Approach) radar approaches at Phu Cat Air Force Base, just 40 miles south. Our new commander, Major Harold Zumbro, a seasoned aviator on his second combat tour in Vietnam, had flown with me on a mission and, with many more hours of flight time than me, loved instrument flying and wanted to make some practice approaches under the hood (a device attached to the flight helmet used to limit the pilot's vision to the instrument panel). Consequently, I was more proficient and comfortable with this possibility than I would normally have been.

As I began applying power to the engines, I could see a small break in the clouds on the north side of the mountaintop. I immediately picked up the aircraft and dove for the hole that had just been provided to us. I continued the dive all the way to the deck of the valley below us. However,

the valley led to the northwest and the area was not friendly at all. We were in the middle of Happy Valley at treetop level!

I thought I could hear gunfire below and kept watching for tracers arching through the sky indicating the enemy had us in sight. Fortunately, at that altitude and at 100 knots we were a difficult target to hit. While they might be able to hear the loud engines and rotors, this noise bounced from tree to tree in the jungle, making it almost impossible to tell exactly where we were coming from or going to. As we sped along, my main concern was how we were going to be able to get out of this valley and either fly south or east to the coast and friendly bases.

Turning to Jim Coleman, I asked him to try to find our position on the map and let me know if there were any routes out of the area. However, with no marked roads, no navigational radio aids and dense jungle covered mountainsides, every valley and ridgeline looked the same. Accurate navigation was impossible!

It was one thing to pluck the men off the mountain. But now I was worrying it was going to be futile and I had possibly put us in the position to have the men we were attempting to rescue as well as our own flight crew killed.

After several more minutes of flying to the northwest deeper into enemy territory, I decided it was time for another decision and a different course of action. I turned to the east (toward the coast and the nearest friendly bases) and flew to the top of the ridge line, coming to a hover and looking for a saddle or a pass or anything that might give us a chance to get out of Happy Valley.

Finally, finding a point that looked promising, I edged the giant helicopter forward. Dragging the landing gear through the treetops while the rotors and cockpit remained in the clouds, we inched our way along until we were in the next valley and clear of the clouds.

Finding success with this maneuver, I decided to try it again...and again. After several more ridge lines and valleys we came to an area that looked familiar. It was the An Lao Valley...another dangerous valley that continued to see many ongoing battles between the NVA and the 173rd throughout the war. We wasted no time in crossing this valley and the last ridgeline before we began to see rice paddies and villages instead of jungle. I knew we were close to the coast!

Finally, I could determine we were just a few miles north of LZ English. Turning the helicopter south, I turned the controls over to Jim and let him fly the remaining 30 minutes to LZ Uplift.

As we touched down, I started to relax and allow myself to breathe more easily. I turned to the rear of the cargo compartment to watch the men leave. Just as I turned around a gaunt, grizzled, unshaven staff sergeant stuck his head in the cockpit. Tears were in his eyes while he was

was laughing, shaking my hand, hugging me and Jim and slapping us on the back, while thanking us over and over! I could also see his men celebrating, jumping up and down and laughing as they exited the rear of the Chinook. It was a great moment I will never forget!

After the last of the happy soldiers left the aircraft and we were on our way back to our home base at Lane AHP, the crew laughed and talked about the mission we had just completed. It was nervous laughter and I knew there would be more than a few drinks tossed down that night. I knew how close we had come to making our last flight. I believe our crew had the same thoughts. We talked about it as we flew back, thankful we would be around to fly another day.

Because I was concerned over my decision to break regulations and ignore our SOP, I cautioned the crew to not talk about the mission to anyone else. In most helicopter units we would have been written up for commendations or medals. But I was more afraid of the consequences if Major Zumbro, whom I respected greatly, found out I had risked the

lives of my crew on a voluntary mission of mercy. In retrospect, as I got to know him better, I really believe he would have done the same thing...except he probably would have made the instrument take off instead of plowing through treetops!!

However, it was enough for me to know we had made a difference and 17 men were walking around their base camp that night when they started the day wondering if they would live to see the sunset.

I wish now that I had been able to get medals for Jim Coleman, Rodney Yates and the other two crewmen. I feel I owe these men a tribute for being brave enough to follow me into what could have been our "valley of death." Their confidence in me gave me the courage to try. I will never forget the satisfaction and the warm glow of just being alive at the end of the day and knowing 17 other men were also alive and in their own bunks instead of sitting alone on a far-off mountaintop overlooking Happy Valley.

By Darrell L Jagers, CW4 USA (Ret.)

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TSgt, USAF, Ret

USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74

USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83

Tours of Duty:

1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca



VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION SATISFIED CLIENTS

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

KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

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

Our Lucky Day?

Late May 1969 the 101st Airborne sent an infantry brigade down from Camp Eagle Hue – Phu Bai, I Corps, to Chu Lai to assist the Americal Division. The 101st sent their own aircraft, primarily Hueys, some Cobras, as well as four Chinooks to support the brigade. I was a "peter pilot", quite new in country, and as the only commissioned pilot (1LT), I was the assigned Section Leader for our four CH-47 Chinooks along with 7 WOs and three crewmembers per aircraft, all from B/159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion – Call Sign: Varsity.

The four aircraft and crews were hosted by the same Chinook company that supported the Americal Division. Our aircraft were maintained and kept on the tarmac at the Chu Lai airbase, while the crews were housed at the 178th ASH Co, the Box Cars, in quarters in the sand dunes overlooking the South China Sea. With a fleet of four aircraft, we needed to have one of them down every day to perform routine maintenance. Daily, I provided the Box Car flight operations the tail numbers of the three we had available, and from that we received our missions for the day.

About a week after arriving at Chu Lai, I was the right seat pilot of aircraft 143, flying to firebase Professional some miles west of Chu Lai. When we had flown into that fire base during our Area of Operations (AO) orientation flight with a Box Car pilot, we Varsity pilots couldn't help but notice the outline of a burned-up Chinook near the landing pad. A Box Car Chinook had been shot down there a couple of weeks before we arrived. I believe the entire crew had gotten out, OK. This particular fire base was surrounded by higher terrain. The preferred, "lessons learned" technique, therefore, passed onto us by the Box Car pilots, to get into and out of this fire base to avoid anti-aircraft fire (primarily dual .51 Cals), required steep spiral approaches and ascents.

We used the "spiral" pedal decent to get down, dropped off our internal load, passengers and gear as I recall, then without event performed an almost vertical climb as we had been coached. We proceeded to head on a more northerly route which kept us parallel to and further from Chu Lai. At approximately 3,000 feet AGL, our right engine, the engine that turned out to be the newer, stronger engine of the two, began losing power. We beeped up the left engine as far as we could without going over red line, yet we were descending at about 100' per minute. As post-analysis of the engine would reveal, we had taken a single AK-47 round in the bleed band of that right engine, causing it to lose power. Believing we could not make it all the way back to Chu Lai, and that we were over Indian territory and thus a bad place to set down, we began looking for alternatives. Continuing more northerly, I found the nearest friendly location on our map, a Special Forces "A" compound located right on a river bank, and that is where we headed.

A Special Forces Captain, quite surprised and excited about our unannounced visit, was very insistent that we get the hell out of his compound. After explaining our situation, he was somewhat sympathetic, but we had to be out before dark or he'd "blow us up in place!" He felt a Chinook would be a very attractive target come sun down and he didn't want to be subjected to 122mm rocket fire all night. Reluctantly, he had some of his soldiers set up a defensive perimeter outside of us / the Chinook and the compound.

Upon landing at the Special Forces compound, we contacted one of the other two Varsity Chinooks and told them of our predicament. It



Varsity Chinook A/C 143 on the pad at Chu Lai.



Corkscrew / spiral approach technique.

just so happened that particular aircraft had an operational high frequency radio and antenna, so they climbed to higher altitude and made a call. They reached another Varsity aircraft flying back in the 101st AO and that aircraft made a call back to our company maintenance. Monitoring our radios, we received a call back that a Chinook was on its way from Varsity Valley with a replacement engine for us.

From having had to inventory and sign for it and the other three Chinooks before we left Varsity Valley, I knew we happened to have all that extra "billie" gear, as originally supplied from the factory, to include the manual engine hoist, on board A/C 143. The other three did not have any of that type of gear.

SP5 Paul Sparrell, who has urged me to write and share this story, was the Flight Engineer and probably SP4 Ole Olson the crew chief on that flight, but we cannot remember for sure. Nor do we remember the door gunner, nor the CWO Aircraft Commander.

We, primarily in the form of Sparrell, Olson and the door gunner, had the engine completely disconnected and dangling on the hoist when the replacement engine arrived. The new engine was rolled off the back ramp of the maintenance Chinook, and swapped for the downed one. The crew made good time in putting the replacement engine in and re-attaching all the hoses and controls.

Meanwhile, that Special Forces Captain had become more and more insistent that we get the hell out of his compound, to prevent their having to endure those perceived incoming rockets.

We did not need too much convincing as it was, so we bypassed a few required maintenance and pre-flight run up procedures, especially those for a new engine. We cranked up both engines, lifted to a hover, and didn't see any significant leaks. With all gauges normal, we then flew back to Chu Lai and the Box Cars' hangar. How are a convenient Special

Forces Camp, an operational HF radio, and an aircraft with 'billie gear' for luck?

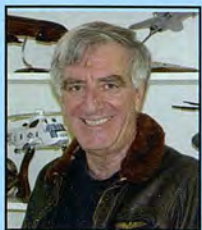
John Hendrickson
Life Member
LTC, Aviation
US Army (Retired)
Epithet / Epilogue:



Author in front of Varsity A/C 443.

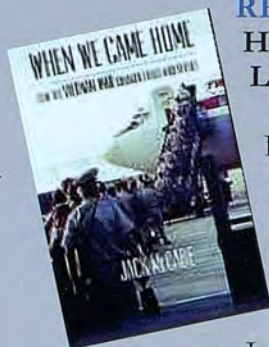
We were "lucky" indeed that day. Unfortunately, a year later, and within weeks of my DEROS, Varsity lost two Chinooks and all ten crew members, while operating in Northern I Corps close to the DMZ. These past 48 years, I've often reflected back on us and them.

~ BOOK REVIEWS ~



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

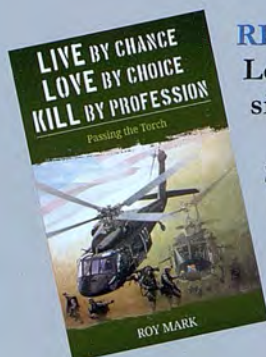


REVIEW OF When We Came Home – How it Changed Our Lives by Jack McCabe.

Published by OddInt Media, 337 pages, ISBN number 978-0-9797-8686-0. Available through Amazon and the cover price is \$19.99.

It took fellow VHPA member Jack McCabe three years to track down and interview 150 American and Australian Vietnam vets about their Vietnam experience. During the publishing process, he winnowed it down to 47 – seven officers, seven women and two family members and three Aussies and tell the stories of what happened

when they came home and how the war affected their lives. Their experience, to say nothing of the thousands of others – needed to be told. The vet's own words make you want to shout for joy; or cry as you share their sadness; or throw something at the wall in anger. To write the book, Jack organized the stories by service. He included the often forgotten women who served as nurses and “donut dollies.” Woven throughout the books are quotes from the Vietnam vets whose tales were not included in the final manuscript. Jack didn't focus on the officers. Instead, the majority of the men interviewed were E-9 and below. Their stories are often more poignant and important than those of us in the officer ranks. Jack, thanks for writing this book and documenting what happened after we came home!

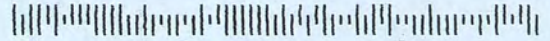


REVIEW OF Live By Chance, Love by Choice, Kill By Profession by Roy Mark.

Self-published by Roy Mark.
ISBN 13: 978-1534947597.
Retail price - \$16.99

Once you get past the intriguing and eye catching title, any Army, Navy or Marine Aviator or Air Force Pilot will know after reading the first few pages that this book should have started with, “No s - - t, you wouldn't believe...” Roy Mark does a great job telling the story of LTC Sterling Cody and members of the 229th Air Assault Battalion in Vietnam during 1970. We get to meet the courageous leaders and pilots, many of who didn't survive their tour. What's great about the book is that the story

of leaders like Captains William Lorimer and Gerald Swayze who are not known outside their unit is told in detail. Unfortunately, these men's names are on the wall in D.C. because they didn't make it home. Their stories and their deaths, as told by Roy Mark, will bring a tear to your eye. You also get to know then Warrant Officer 1 Cody and his buddy Ozzie Daniel. There are a couple of chapters at the end about Cody's post Vietnam career that every one should enjoy. He's the typical maverick the liberals like to put in a glass box with the label, “open only in case of war.” When Live By Chance, Love By Choice, Kill by Profession was written, Sterling Cody was a pseudonym for VHPA'r Gary Fowler and Ozzie Daniels is in reality, Dan Tyler. The book is a fun read and anyone who is interested in learning more about what it was like to fly an Army helicopter in Vietnam will love this book.



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Brian and Marilyn Paine

3 D CUSTOM Crystals

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and laser etches it into a crystal block*

