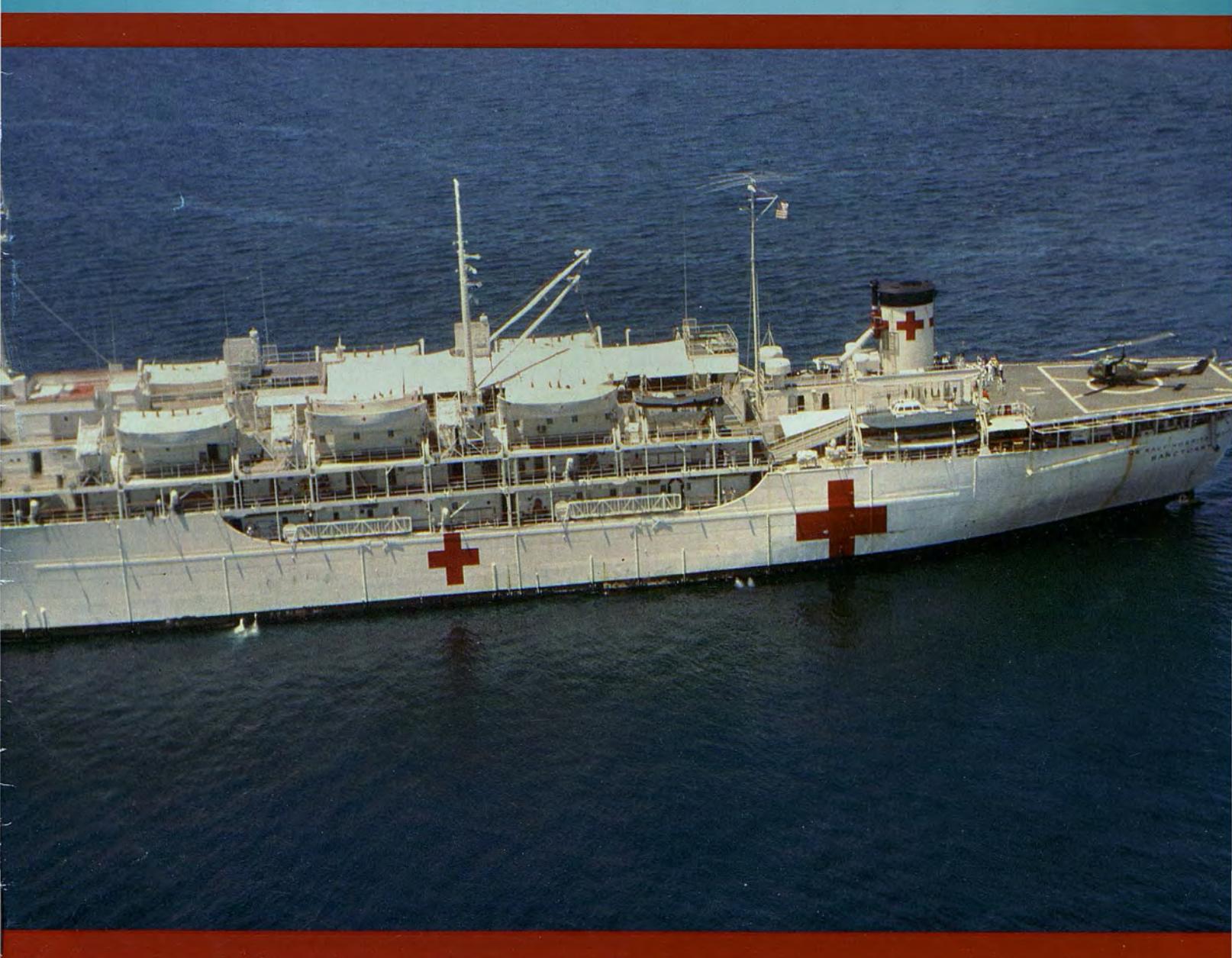




# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



*See page 24-25 for story.*

*See Page 2 ~ Table of Contents*

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## IN THIS ISSUE

COMBAT IN CHUMP VALLEY... PG 6  
THE EMUS THEN AND NOW... PG 10  
MOUNTAINS CAN KILL YOU... PG 14  
REUNION NEWS... PG 17  
THE VIETNAMESE BOY... PG 24  
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES... PG 27  
TAPS... PG 40  
BOOK REVIEWS... PG 47

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# From the President of the VHPA

## Fellow VHPA Members

As you read the last "From the President of the VHPA" message of my second stint as your leader, please allow me to thank you for the trust and support over the prior year and assure you that unless there are only six members remaining in our Association, I will not seek a third term. It's my opinion the organization has had a remarkable year capped off by the approval, installation and formal dedication of the PILOT AND CREWMEMBER MEMORIAL in Arlington National Cemetery. Other very important accomplishments I'm proud of are the financial support of The National Vietnam Archives at Texas Tech, an increase in our \$3,000 annual VHPA scholarships from five to seven starting this year and the changes in our handling of our financial assets. All this has, and will continue to benefit us as a group.

Two things I'd like to mention.

First, on the monthly EC Conference Call in February, the Executive Council decided that, effective August 1, 2018, VHPA will no longer solicit or raise funds for groups not directly part of VHPA. While we feel support for Huey 369, Army Aviation Heritage Foundation, National War Museum in Mineral Wells, Army Aviation Museum at Ft Rucker, the National Archives at Texas Tech and all the rest are worthwhile opportu-

nities and deserving of our member's support, it takes time for our Staff to handle these collections and costs VHPA money to write and mail the funds collected to the various organizations. In the future we, VHPA, will include a link on the VHPA website where you, as an individual, can contact these organizations directly and make donations. VHPA will continue to raise money for the VHPA Scholarship, VHPA Membership and other direct VHPA activities.

Second, my friend, Gary Roush, estimates the different Branches of service trained over 55,000 rotary-wing Aviators between 1952 and 1973 and over 44,000 of those trained flew one or more tours in Vietnam and Southeast Asia between 1961 and 1975. To date less than half of those "daring young men in their flying machines" have joined VHPA. If you know one of them, give him a one-year membership. We can still double our membership.

*Hope to see all of you  
in Atlanta,*

Mike Sheuerman  
Panther 15  
361 ACE/AWC  
Pink Panthers



## FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

*Don't forget to register for the 2018 Reunion in Atlanta. Tours are selling out quickly! VHPA has allowed free time this year for our members to enjoy things Downtown Atlanta has to offer on their own time and at their own pace. Many of these venues offer free admission to Veterans and other ticket discounts. Most are a walk of 4 to 5 blocks (some hills) or an estimated \$5 to \$8 taxi ride with taxis waiting just outside the hotel doors. So, get a group together or enjoy visiting these venues on your own and see what is waiting for you near the Marriott Marquis!*

### **THINGS TO DO IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA:**

- CNN Headquarters (Free Admission for Veterans)
- College Football Hall of Fame (Free Admission for Veterans)
- Coca-Cola Museum (Free Admission for Veterans)
- Georgia World Aquarium
- Children's Museum of Atlanta
- Civil and Human Rights Museum

Check out: <https://www.atlanta.net/things-to-do/> to get more information and maps for any of the items listed above.

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

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

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

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

*PLEASE LET US KNOW!*

*Sherry Rodgers, VHPA Office Manager*

## Dudley Do-Right Award Goes to...

I don't know about you, but I never got a decent haircut from a Vietnamese barber. They used those hand clippers that looked better suited for trimming grass than hair. I did, however, get a good idea from the Phouc Vinh barber shop that serviced our 1st Cav unit, Charlie Company (Crimson Tide), 228 ASHB, and it may have paid dividends during my tour as the Tide commander. And maybe even after, who knows. Our barber had a concession in his shop and sold uniform paraphernalia such as unit emblems, badges, epaulets, plaques, and that kind of thing. One metal badge caught my attention and triggered an idea. It was a depiction of a soldier with his head up his a\*\*. For the life of me, I cannot recall how it looked now, but there was no mistake about its characterization. It was definitely a soldier with his head up his a\*\*.

I got the idea that what if we, as a part of our safety program, discussed once a week the dumbest thing we did or saw being done while flying our aircraft. Then perhaps we could learn from someone's cheap (accident or incident avoidance) mistake. The winner, the person who had the biggest bone-headed deed, would be presented the badge with the guy's head up his a\*\* and would be required to wear it until the next safety meeting, one week hence. I bought the badge and discussed my idea with the

Company's Safety Officer. We agreed we would surface the idea at our next safety meeting. We dubbed the badge the Dudley Do-Right Award.

The Safety Officer presented the idea by explaining the confessions were not meant to belittle or demean, but to simply avoid repeating mistakes that could result in a serious aircraft incident or accident. Everyone liked the idea and agreed to adopt it and to begin holding an open court once a week. What followed was amazing. Some of the testimonials were downright unbelievable, most were hilarious, and all were scary and potentially catastrophic. Opportunity abounds to make judgmental or thoughtless errors during a twelve-hour flying day under perilous conditions. Many were caught and reported.

Catching the unit instructor pilot or aircraft commanders committing a flying faux pas deserving of the Dudley Do-Right Award delighted all. But then, seeing the same guy wearing the award in consecutive weeks, or as the habitual recipient, tended to make aircraft commanders a wee bit wary when that person's name appeared adjacent to their name on the next day's mission schedule. I had hoped our Dudley Do-Right program would influence the reduction of incidents and accidents. But unfortunately, the prevalence of blunders persisted throughout my tour with the Crimson Tide.

Bob Lanzotti, Tide 6

WHEN PATHS CROSS

A NOVEL

JAMES V. WEATHERILL

author of *The Blades Carry Me*

LOVE, HEROISM, INTRIGUE, REVENGE, HEARTBREAK, BETRAYAL, ...AND A FAITHFUL DOG

It's 1973, a time without cell phones, Internet, or microwave ovens. The Vietnam War shuts down, and young veterans come home carrying a personal war inside...

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VHPA Life Member

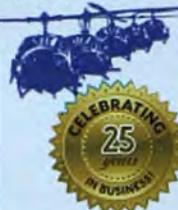
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# From the Managing Editor

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

*The long awaited goal – placing a monument on the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery has been achieved.*

Realizing this day was made possible by the determination of Bob Hesselbein, Legacy Committee chairman, the support of the Executive Council, the VHPA membership, Gold Star family involvement and legislative assistance.

On behalf of all of the above, the *Aviator* staff thanks every contributor of time, money, political support or all three.

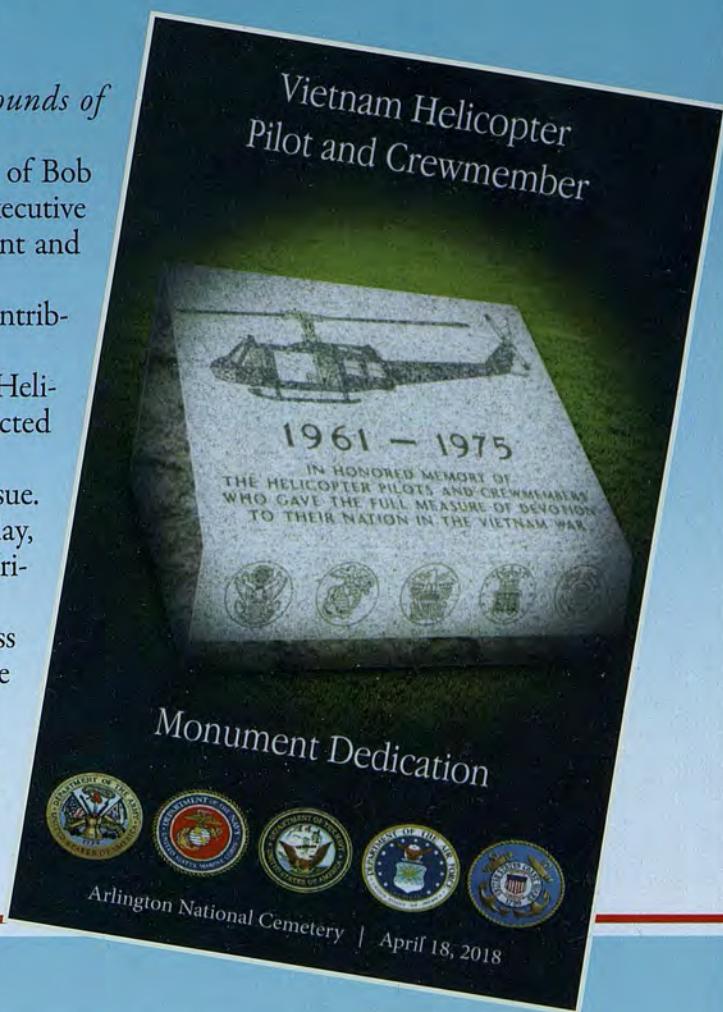
Shown adjacent is the cover of the program booklet for the Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument Dedication conducted on April 18, 2018 which was provided to over 3,000 people.

We will have many photos and a recap in our July/August issue. Briefly, however, the event occurred on a beautiful, sunny day, went precisely according to plan, and was a deeply moving experience for everyone present.

The ceremony concluded with the crowd cheering a flawless fly-by of four UH-1Ns provided by the United States Air Force graciously supporting their military counterparts.

Our organization can be justly proud of keeping faith with our fellow airmen by remembering their sacrifice and ensuring they will be represented by a fitting and lasting tribute.

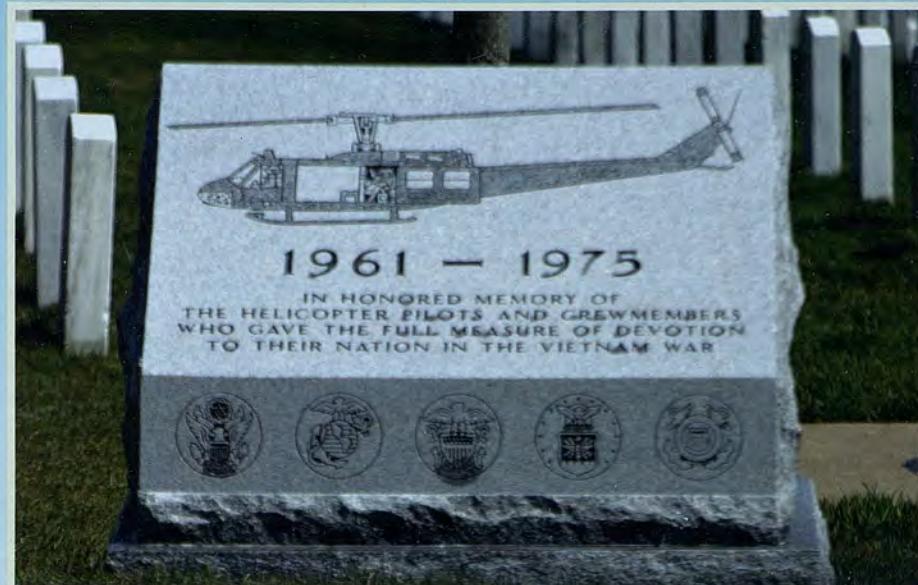
Tom Kirk



## From Tom Hirschler and Tom Kirk

The Monument Dedication is a signature event for our organization and many veterans who were helicopter pilots or benefitted from helicopter support.

Accordingly, many members, the Executive Council as well



as those on the legacy committee were taking photographs on the day of the dedication. It would be great to have the opportunity to have such a wide assortment to select from.

The reality is, however, that an open invitation to submit these could well result in a number that would overwhelm our ability to screen all.

To be fair, we do welcome any photos that are, in your opinion, unique or otherwise very well composed for consideration in our coverage of the event.

Because the gathering was larger than even a VHPA reunion, the stories generated will be considerable. They may not be article sized narratives, but none the less interesting and poignant.

We believe the "Letters to the Editor" section is appropriate for this purpose. Tom Hirschler plans to reserve additional space as needed to accommodate those who wish to share experiences of the day.

# COMBAT IN CHUMP VALLEY

It was 15 May 1967. My unit was the 176th Avn Co (Minuteman), 14th Avn Bn. WO Roy, SP Hawley, PFC Washington and I (CPT Long) were working insertions for soldiers of the 1st Bde, 101st Airborne Div (before the rest of the division came into the country). Just after a "C" ration break we were told to take our next load to an area about 25 kilometers nw of Duc Pho, in a valley heading west into the larger Song Ve river valley. We picked up the troops and put them in amidst a hail of machine gun, rifle, and mortar fire. WO Roy remembers we had to fly through a wall of green tracer fire going up in front of us. As I was at the controls on the first trip in, I was so focused I must have blanked out the tracers and concentrated on the touch down (good training did work). The soldiers off-loaded with many being shot a short distance away from the helicopter. At first, we thought they may have been running in front of our M60s, which we learned was not the case, but is an indication of how hot the LZ was. As soon as they were off, a full load of wounded was placed aboard for evacuation. Those of the wounded who were able were urging us with their hands, eyes, and voices to "go, go, go." At that point, we felt it was the normal reaction of a wounded soldier wanting to get to treatment as quickly as he could. Little did we know it wasn't "getting to" somewhere they were concerned with, but rather "getting away from" that valley. It soon became clear. As we departed, the door gunner and crew chief were calling out "machine gun 2 o'clock, machine gun 10 o'clock, machine gun left, right" etc... about eight in all, but miraculously we were able to keep flying. We weren't sure whether we were hit going in or coming out. After departure, our instrument check showed all were "in the green" so we kept flying. We took the wounded to the aid station, picked up another load of soldiers, and went back.

On our way back to the LZ, we saw the platoon leader's (Major Kettles) helicopter flying our way leaking fuel. He had been in the LZ right after us. He informed us his helicopter was badly shot up and the door gunner was severely wounded. He said the ground troops needed ammo brought in and more wounded taken out, and we were to team up with another ship (WO Marty was one pilot, 1LT Charles the other, not sure of the rest of the crew) which had ammo for the next approach to the LZ. We led the approach. WO Roy was at the controls for this trip in with the second ship at right echelon, so the unloaded ammo would be as close as possible to the troops in the tree line. After our soldiers dismounted, we noticed the soldiers who were supposed to put wounded aboard were not moving because of where we had to land in the LZ. They couldn't be blamed due to the heavy fire. Just as on the first trip, many of the soldiers jumping off to join the fray were being hit before making it to the tree line. Because of this, we had

to wait until the second ship had off-loaded the ammo, loaded wounded and departed before we could relocate. It seemed like an eternity with all the bullets and mortars. The second ship reported taking many rounds, some through the cockpit but again, miraculously, without injury to the crew. Finally, we were able to hover over closer to the tree line to minimize the soldiers' exposure, so they would load the wounded. In doing so, we maximized our exposure; all their firepower was now concentrated on our single helicopter. As could be expected, after lacing us with machine guns, just as we touched down they got us dead center with a mortar round, one of many falling around us. (Later, a fellow pilot who was there said he thought we were hit with an RPG round) After the bright flash was over, not being sure we were damaged, I checked the instruments, and all were "in the green" so I pulled pitch. That was a very big mistake since the round had made several alterations to the helicopter to include making one rotor blade somewhat shorter than the other. The pitch pull caused us to flip over on the left side, then bounce back the other way stopping upright on the skids. I believe we set a record at "un-assing" the aircraft. In fact, Ron, Roy, and I both went between the pilot and co-pilot seats at the same time and do not remember touching each other. I still had my flight helmet on, but the communication cord had disconnected and remained in the helicopter; I did not even feel the tug. SP Hawley and PFC Washington went to the far side of the LZ, and were able to dash back across later without injury. Fortunately, even though the helicopter was destroyed, I was the only one wounded. The adrenaline was working so well I didn't know shrapnel had hit my lower right leg until I hit the ground when I jumped out. All-of-a-sudden, we were infantrymen firing at the enemy from behind our burning helicopter.

It wasn't long before the flames got to our machine gun ammo which began spraying everywhere, forcing us to move to tree cover to continue to assist in the ground battle. Eventually our gunships had to depart, so fast-movers were brought in to drop daisy cutters and napalm. The bombs were close enough that some of the shrapnel was hitting the ground behind us. This went on for an hour or so and then they left. Then our C & C ship had to leave. As the "wop, wop, wop" of those Huey blades faded in the distance and there were no more gunships or fast-movers, we realized what silence really meant. It became so quiet, it was frightening. No birds were chirping, there was no wind rustling the grass or trees, and the water in the stream to our front seemed to run quietly. A tower of smoke was rising straight up from our helicopter marking its demise. The smoke changed colors as the flames devoured different colored smoke grenades - red, yellow, green - but eventually

changed to black when the flames found the fuel. There was a low haze hovering just above the ground which smelled of gunpowder, burning helicopter, and burned flesh, a reminder that while it may be quiet, it was not over. None of us was moving for fear of making a noise which would draw unwanted attention from the bad guys. We did not know it then, but later we were told including us, there were only 44 of us on the ground facing a much larger well-trained force on the other side of the stream. Someone also told us approximately 40 of us were wounded or dead. We saw at least one dead infantryman. (I know the hospital at Qui Nhon was filled up that day by the wounded soldiers because after my initial treatment, as I was being readied for evacuation from the 101st Medical Aid Station, I was told there was no room for me and I would be treated daily at the Aid Station.) It was clearly not a "win" day for our side.

Later, after continuous exchanges of gunfire, around 1830 we heard a faint sound in the distance which told us helicopters were coming. We looked to the east and there in the sky, as beautiful as could be, were six Hueys on approach to our LZ to get us all out. It was a memorable experience to know we were not forgotten because, as mentioned earlier, we were greatly outnumbered and helicopters on approach and in the LZ were, as we had proven, sitting ducks. Leading that flight was our platoon leader, Major Charles Kettles. Since he already had one chopper shot to pieces around him (over 40 bullet and shrapnel holes, plexiglass shattered, rotor blades badly ripped) and his door gunner severely wounded that day in the same LZ, he had every right not to be in the sky coming back to get us, but he was. Our helicopter and crew weren't the only ones hit that day, just the only ones hit by a mortar round and therefore, the only ones who did not leave the LZ. Besides the killed and wounded ground forces, there were also other wounded Minuteman personnel. I thank God Major Kettles argued for and got the helicopters needed to come back. Everyone knew what it meant to have been left in that area overnight with most people on the ground wounded and badly outnumbered. I'm sure no one in that LZ that evening at 1815, with the sun heading for the horizon, who was rescued because he came back, will ever forget it.

Everyone was extracted from the LZ that day, including the dead, amidst a withering hail of small arms and mortar fire. Because of what had happened before, WO Roy and I instructed the infantrymen around us to run with us to the farthest helicopter. It meant running through the small arms and mortar fire, but it was the only way any of them would go to any but the closest helicopters. Because of my leg, two soldiers had to get on each side of me while I carried their radio, etc. As we ran, we approached a wall of mortar and small arms fire but kept going. Amazingly, just before we got to the area where mortar and small arms fire was concentrated, it stopped for a few seconds. We ran

through that area to the helicopter and as we got through it the fire resumed behind us. I don't attempt to explain it but am thankful it occurred.

Five of the six rescue helicopters were so badly damaged they never flew again, too many repairs were needed. The helicopter flown by Maj Kettles, his second of the day, also suffered over 40 hits from small arms fire and other severe damage from the mortars. Amazingly, on this trip in, neither he nor any of his crew were wounded. Another amazing thing is that the one helicopter which suffered only minor damage while rescuing all of us was the one we were on and that, of course, was sheer luck. It was not a Minuteman helicopter. Because there were not enough of our own available, it was "borrowed" from the 161st (Pelicans) and flown by their crew. One of the pilots was Ed (Trip) Wilson. All in all, that day our unit had many wounded personnel. By the grace of God none were killed, though we lost 13 helicopters (temporarily or permanently) to battle damage. Our helicopter, which had performed brilliantly to the end, became a pile of ashes, a mechanical martyr marking the battle site. Later, as usually happens, the seriousness of the situation wore off, and our buddies began calling the area where we were blown up Chump Valley because only Chumps would be dumb enough to land on the enemy's mortar registration point. Our crew did take some ribbing about that. Since they hit us right on top, it would seem we had landed on their mortar registration point.

To put this in perspective, I don't believe the 176th ever had a day quite so bad after that. I know for a fact they had not had one even close to such intensity up to that point. The unit had been in country only three months. It was the unit's first big encounter and to that point the biggest battle participated in by 14th Avn Bn personnel and the Bn had been operational in Vietnam for approximately two years. Our helicopter (last 3 were 046) was the first one in the 176th destroyed in combat and I was the first unit aviator wounded severely enough to be grounded. Grounded approximately three months, mostly due to constant infection and not the initial wound. I guess some one and some helicopter had to be first. It may as well have been our crew and helicopter.

By any measurement this was by far my most memorable experience in Vietnam, one which I know is equaled by many others who served there. I'm thankful to be here to remember it. I'm very sure I would not be here or would have had years of my life taken from me if Major Kettles had not come back for all of us. Even though I'm writing this as a memorable experience, I'm only able to do so because of a memorable person, Major Charles Kettles, a great human being and valiant soldier.

Donald E. Long, LTC, IN, (Ret.)

# 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 19 New Members and covers the period -2-01-18 to 3-22-18*

Beasley Joseph E. Murrells Inlet South Carolina Army 69-27 21 ARTY in 66-67; 235 AHC in 69-70	Leathers James E ** Newnan Georgia Army 67-11 183 AVN in 67-68; 135 AHC in 71-72; CAC in 72	Ross Danny W 'Dan' ** Fayetteville North Carolina Army C/16 CAV in 72-73
Bright Michael R Prescott Arizona Army 68-1 C/158 AVN 101 ABN in 68-69, 2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 69-70	McMaster Arthur T. ** Denver Colorado Army 69-46	Sites Richard A. ** Killeen Texas Army 69-37 69-35 178 ASHC in 70-71
Conners Peter R. ** Sunset Beach North Carolina Army 68-40 195 AHC in 69-70; 240 AHC in 70	Newcomb James H. ** Chapin South Carolina Army 68-514 68-24 175 AHC in 68-69	Skaggs Charles E. ** Ocean Springs Mississippi Army 71-2 116 AHC in 72
Courson Donnie C 'Don' ** Douglas Georgia Army 61-8 81 TC CO in 62; 119 AHC in 63; A/228 ASHB 1 AVN BDE in 67- 68; HHC 228 ASHB 1 CAV in 68	Nobles John C. ** Colorado Springs Colorado Army 71-31 71-41 F/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 72-73	Sleeth Tim E. ** Jacksonville Florida Army 69-24
Dearing John P. Boise Idaho Army 69-27	Powell Raymond F. 'Ray' ** Woodstock Virginia Army 68-4 C/228 ASHB 1 CAV in 68-69; 159 ENG GRP in 71-72; 92 ENG BN in 72	Southwell Gary T. ** Enterprise Alabama Army 63-4W 63-4 145 AVN PLAT in 65; 281 AHC in 66
Godfrey Ray J 'Beachball' ** Banksia Beach AUSTRALIA Australian Navy RAN HFV-1 in 67-68; 135 AHC in 67-68	Ray Lewis D. Marietta Georgia Army 67-10 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF in 67-68; A/7/1 CAV in 70-71	<i>Editor's Note:</i> The following individual joined several years ago, but he was not included in a new member roster. We extend our apologies to Mr. Packer.
Jelinski Barry J. 'Bear' ** San Antonio Texas Army 69-20 187 AHC in 70-71	Rosengrant Larue R. 'Lash' Allison Park Pennsylvania Army 63-1T 48 AHC in 65-66; 4 AVN 4 INF in 68-69	Packer William G. Jr. "Bill" Wyoming Michigan Army 70-17 70-15 1/9 CAV in 70-71

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1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

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- 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

# The EMUs Then and Now



By Mike Law of the VHPA

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War began with a small commitment of 30 military advisors in 1962, and increased over the following decade to a peak of 7,672 Australian personnel. By the

time the last of their military personnel were withdrawn in 1972, the Vietnam War had become Australia's second longest war (only recently surpassed by Australia's long term commitment of combat forces to the War in Afghanistan). In total, approximately 60,000 Australians - ground troops, air-force and naval personnel - served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1972. 521 died because of the war and over 3,000 were wounded.

From a helicopter point of view, Australians served in just three Australian military units during the War: 9 Squadron, detachments that served with the 135th AHC, and 161 Independent. 9 Squadron was a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) helicopter squadron equipped with UH-1s assigned to the 1st Australian Task Force based at Nui Dat, Vung Tau, and Blackhorse in eastern III Corps. The 161 Independent Reconnaissance Flight (AKA the 161 Recce or Possums) was a Royal Australian Army aviation unit that flew fixed wing and helicopters in support of the 1st Australian Task Force from Bien Hoa, Nui Dat and Vung Tau. This article will briefly focus on the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) contingents or detachments that served with the 135th AHC at Vung Tau, Bearcat, and Dong Tam. Some RAN personnel also served with 9 Squadron.

On July 14, 1967 the Australian Minister of Defence announced that their Navy would form a new flight, Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight (RANHF), to deploy to Vietnam and integrate with the United States Army 135th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) flying the ubiquitous Iroquois helicopters in both the utility and gun-ship configurations. When the flight deployed to Vietnam, the military abbreviation was changed to RANHFV.

The first contingent of pilots, observers, naval airmen and support staff was assigned to 723 Squadron Naval Air Station (NAS) Nowra in July 1967 under the command of LCDR Neil Ralph, RAN. The VHPA uses the code RANHFV-1 in its database to identify individuals who served in the first contingent. The flight consisted of eight pilots, four observers, four aircrewmen, twenty-four technical sailors and six

support staff comprising of cooks, stewards, writers (clerks), medics and storemen. Since both pilots and observers were commissioned officers, the VHPA needed "inside help" to identify potential members and subscribers. Following an eight-week period of training the first contingent arrived in Vietnam on October 16, 1967 and was quickly integrated with the 330 personnel of the 135th AHC. The 135th also arrived at Vung Tau in October 1967 after forming at Ft Hood, Texas. Because of this unique relationship between the R.A.N and the US Army, the unit was officially designated 'EMU', for Experimental Military Unit. This was fitting, given that the Emu is a native Australian bird, and in some ways comical as the Emu cannot fly. Military historians will be quick to point out that the 135th Aviation Company equipped with CV-2 Caribou, served in Vietnam for all of 1966, and was deactivated in Vietnam on January 1, 1967 as part of the Johnson-McConnell Agreement wherein the US Army Caribou were transferred to the US Air Force. A little later in 1967, 135th Assault Helicopter Company was formed at Ft Hood.

The RANHFV-1 personnel integrated into the 135th AHC on a duty by duty basis from maintenance through administration to the flight crews and LCDR Neil Ralph became the company XO. LTC Robert Corey became the CO replacing Major Spurlock who had commanded the company in the States. Major Duane Smith was the company's maintenance officer. He remembers RAN Lieutenant Stafford Lowe was an outstanding maintenance officer and test pilot. US Army aircraft mechanic Ed "Andy" Anderson was on the Kula Gulf - the old WW II "jeep carrier" that ferried their aircraft from the States. After landing in Vung Tau he learned that many Army guys had been reassigned to other units to make room for the Australians. He worked alongside the sailors for the next 18 months (he extended). He mentions there was a language challenge - an American wrench is an Australian spanner. Additionally, the Australians had to learn to use all American equipment. Andy says, "However, all the Australians had a beer ration - Foster's in large steel cans. They shared it with us and seemed fine drinking American beer as well!" The flight crews were usually one pilot and one guy in the back from each Service. That said, the Australian pilots had much more experience than the US Army



guys just out of flight school. Lieutenant Ray Godfrey completed pilot training in fixed wing aircraft and jets, then learned to fly helicopters. 1LT Wendell Pieper roomed with Ray. They flew together often. He said, "Ray was real handy to have around when the weather got dicey." Wendell also mentioned the language issue again. "Ray would say, 'Turn to the Port side' and we'd say, 'Which way?'" Petty Officer John Macartney (signs his email 'Mac') was an aircrewman in RANHFV-2. He points out that there were slight changes in the numbers and skills in each Contingent. For example, they didn't have any storemen (supply or parts clerk) in his detachment. Some years back he and his wife, Sue, started maintaining a roster of all the RAN blokes that served in Vietnam ~ 196 total for all RANHFVs and at least 8 RAN pilots with 9 Squadron. And aren't we glad they maintain this roster for Legacy reasons alone!!

The First Contingent overlapped a little with the Second Contingent starting September 9, 1968. The Third contingent arrived September 10, 1969. The first group of the Fourth and last Contingent arrived on September 10, 1970. The second group on October 8th. On June 8, 1971 the RAN helicopter pilots ceased flying and the maintenance section stood down on the same day. Major Fred Dunaway was the 135th CO at the time. He said, "I remember 'putting them on the flight' home and thinking how well they had served with us. At that time most of the US soldiers were draftees or young volunteers. Most of our pilots were straight out of flight school. The Australian, on the other hand, were all career sailors – most with many years of service and experience in their fields. Not saying anything bad about the Americans, but the Australians were seasoned professionals and their work showed that."

As part of the VHPA's Legacy efforts, Mike Law set out to make certain we had at least all the RAN helicopters listed in our database. Lieutenant Mike Perrott was a pilot in RANHFV-2. At considerable personal expense, he has attended several VHPA Reunions and is registered for Atlanta. He provided several wonderful resources and introduced us to the other Australians mentioned in this article. Thanks to the efforts of Mike Perrott, Ray Godfrey, and John Macartney we have accomplished that goal. We believe 196 total RAN personnel served with the 135th. Now we are looking to collect oral histories from them to add to the Legacy history housed in The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech.

The RANHFV veterans held their first reunion in 2002. Fred Dunaway came from America to attend. 723 Squadron and RANHFV veterans had another reunion in June 2017. On October 16, 2017 as part of the 50th anniversary of the RAN involvement, an all-day seminar was held concerning RANHFV. Fred Dunaway pre-

sented at this seminar. The pod cast of the seminar is available at: <https://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/australian-centre-for-the-study-of-armed-conflict-and-society/naval-studies-group/australian-naval-history-podcast> The next Fleet Air Arm reunion will be October 25-28, 2018 at Nowra. There are now permanent monuments to RANHFV and the 135th AHC at both Nowra and Fort Rucker.

ANZAC Day, April 25th, is an annual solemn day of remembrance of those Australian and New Zealand Army Corps soldiers who fought and died for their country. It commemorates the Gallipoli Campaign in the First World War. Five members of RANHFV lost their lives in Vietnam, some 22 were wounded in action. They are remembered in a special way on ANZAC Day. Several RANHFV and 135 AHC veterans will gather with Fred Dunaway at Fort Rucker for the 2018 Australian national holiday.

There are dozens of individual EMU stories we could and most likely will tell in future articles. We will end with the following poem was written by Leo Petrie during the 80s some 15 years after an event that changed his life forever. Leo was a Leading Seaman Weapons sailor in RANHFV-3. On March 28, 1970 the company was stationed at 'Bearcat' Leo and several other 135th members were ordered to take a vehicle to the crash site of one of the company's helos. The crash occurred during a simulated hydraulics failure procedure at part of a standardization ride. The pilot lost control, the helo struck the ground hard and burst into flames. On arrival at the accident site all the group found was an area of burnt ground but no wreckage. Even so they searched the area finding only a toecap of a flying boot. During the search Leo almost stepped on a landmine which caused great consternation among the group as they slowly made their way back to the road. Recent review of US Army accident reports revealed the apparent cause of the accident and what happened to the crew. The co-pilot, WO1 Cook, was killed on impact while the aircraft captain, CW2 Clemons, escaped the wreckage with severe burns. He was later found by another helo some 500 meters from the crash site and flown to Long Binh Hospital. He succumbed to his injuries four days later. The lack of wreckage at the crash site can be explained by the standard operating procedure, where possible, of recovering the aircraft for analysis and to prevent the Viet Cong from using any remaining items. For the past 50 years Leo has had nightmares about the crash site and wondered about the lack of wreckage and no sign of the crew. He often wonders why they were even sent out to the site. This poignant poem is Leo's way of coming to grips with his horrific memories of a terrible war.

# “DISJECTA MEMBRA”

(Scattered Remains)

Two men down  
but who's to know  
Their lives burnt out, cut short  
What does this war achieve  
But pain and hurtful fear  
the mental taunt, with  
Bitter memories left to haunt  
Help is what we need  
our lives now twisted  
hard to straighten out.  
Two men down  
but who's to know  
Their duty's what they did  
Our war's now wrong  
and we're no good  
So, people in our faces spit  
But first we honour Flag  
We'll be here, till we're sent home  
No hero's welcome  
Marching in the street.

Two men down  
But who's to know  
That on that fateful day  
Machine in pieces, scattered 'er the ground  
But what is left, ne'er enough to tell  
of two young men no more to live  
The world is poorer now  
for life's a gift to treasure  
This memory hurts  
and aches my body so.

Two men down  
but who's to know  
Everlasting, now but peaceful  
with their blackened wreck  
No spit for them  
Their force now spent they'll know  
that on the altar  
Their blackened boots and helmets  
Moved hardened men to tears.

Two men down  
but who's to know  
“Bearcat” hard grown bare rock  
Devoid of foliage, trees now gone  
A piece of cloth its colour green  
with half a boot is all I see  
This horrid space a grave  
to mark their resting place  
Among the mines and scattered scrap  
The once proud flying ship.

Two men down  
but who's to know  
The pain they knew beyond  
In peace, they dwell  
Sweet Mothers' sons,  
who now live on  
In God's radiant light  
Shine out across the World  
That wars might cease  
and men will live in peace.

## A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



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

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## Letters to the Editor

### *Tom:*

As a long standing member of VHPA, I have been pleasantly surprised by the continual improvement of The VHPA Aviator. I look forward to reading each issue, when it arrives. I also enjoyed reading about our recently fallen brothers in the Taps Section; where they had been, what they had done in life and business, etc. I would think, and maybe I'm wrong, that most of the members also enjoyed reading the Taps Section - until a few months ago, when you shortened the length of each entry. **I don't like the shortened entries.** I recall you said the section was getting too long and getting longer as time went by, because more and more of us are dying. My recent March/April issue had a total of four pages in Taps. I don't think a couple more pages are going to break our bank account. I feel our members, who gave so much, years ago, deserve a decent obituary and memorial article in our magazine, and not some chopped up and shortened one, just so the organization can save a few bucks.

*Respectfully submitted,*

**Greg Bradley, Copperhead 31, 162nd AHC, 1971-1972**

**My reply:** Greg, you did not categorize this as a Letter to the Editor, yet I felt it appropriate to present your opinion, in the certainty others may question the newer format. The reduction in the size of "Taps" has not changed the total page count. It is not an economy-based policy.

Despite the earlier practice of printing full obituaries, continuing to do so, given the average age of the membership, would result in a very large section. There is also the difficulty of electing just how much detail to include. There are obituaries containing line upon line of extended surviving family, hobbies, multiple base postings, multiple career activities and anecdotes. Eliminating most of this information reduces arbitrary choices. Honoring our brothers is important. That process, however, must be accomplished in light of the fact we have administrative information to impart, chapter activities to report, articles to preserve our recorded legacy and an opportunity for supporters to help fund the Aviator with tasteful and informative advertising. Gary Roush, VHPA Webmaster realizes these limitations and has made the website available for the recording of full obituaries. Finally, as part of the job description, I make editorial decisions for every issue. My goal is to balance the needs of all and satisfy our membership to the best of my ability.

**Tom Kirk**

### **To the Aviator Editor,**

I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciate Mel Pollock's well written article H-21 Fun. I was assigned to the 121st Avn. Co. at Soc Trang RVN in May 1964 as they were transitioning from CH 21s to UH1Bs. Unfortunately, I did not get checked out in the 21

because being one of the few qualified UH1 pilots, the Operations Officer kept us in the UH-1 day and night. I was qualified in the H-19 and laughed thru Mel's article as memories of getting the H-19 going were revived. One protest of the H-19 I can add to Mel's CH-21 list had to do with the main gear struts. If struts were not properly and equally pressurized, as one slowly increased collective pitch called for more power from the engine, the helicopter could begin a foot stomping hissy fit and when joined in harmony with other shakes and vibrations would become violent. Without quick action by the pilot, the entire machine could shake itself to pieces in minutes if not seconds.

I agree with Mel's assessment that these early piston powered helicopters required skills, highly focused attention, and provided a sense of accomplishment not needed or provided by the more advanced turbine powered helicopters. On the other hand, I know that without these advancements, I could not have survived some of the situations we got into with the Hueys in Vietnam. We also know that most of our missions could not have been accomplished without the UH1s and CH47s. Thanks for the memories.

**Powell Sigmon December 13, 2017.**

### **To both Tom's the Editors**

I look forward to the magazine each month. The articles and information are great, and I always learn so much about our brave comrades.

Being an old H-21 pilot, I read the H-21 Fun article with a smile and even a laugh out loud. The author, Mel Pollock, nailed the startup procedure with humor and reality. However, my unit the 33rd Transportation Company, later the 118th Aviation Company, converted to the Hueys after my departure and I am sorry I never had the opportunity to fly one of these; let alone to start it.

Best regards and I am hoping to be in Atlanta in 2018.

**Jim Harvey - Life Member**

The Nov/Dec issue of the VHPA newsletter contained a book review of a book titled "19 Minutes to Live", which spreads the fake news that the life-span of a chopper pilot in Nam was 19 Minutes! Doesn't that work out to 27,500 deaths per year?

**James Sheridan, Member**

**Editor's reply:** Jim when I told my friends I had opted to become a helicopter pilot, I was told the lifespan of a helicopter pilot (in combat) was seven minutes. I would have felt much more confident knowing that number was only about a third of the "real number". Admittedly, though, the sight of an endless stream of WOCs arriving and leaving Fort Wolters seemed to me more than the number of helicopters in the Army's inventory could accommodate! T.K.

# THE MOUNTAINS CAN KILL YOU

BY DARRYL JAMES

KY HAI HELIPORT, CHU LAI, VIETNAM  
OCTOBER 1968

The aircraft's crew chief, Staff Sergeant Jenkins, walked over to help Lieutenant James with the preflight. A Jeep stopped at the edge of the tarmac and a Major, carrying an M-16 walked up, shook hands with James, and climbed in the helicopter's right front seat. The crew chief picked up the Lieutenant's M-16 and stowed it around the first aid kit. He then helped the passenger, Major Burns, get buckled in. He connected the wire on the Major's flight helmet to the intercom and gave a 'thumbs up' sign. James climbed in and strapped himself in the center seat. Jenkins picked up his fire extinguisher and signaled to the pilot that it was clear. The pilot pressed the starter button and the obsolete OH-23G's starter cranked like an old pickup truck. Lots of noise and smoke bellowed out of the big reciprocating Lycoming engine as it caught. James checked the magnetos, tuned the UHF radio to Ky Hai tower and received permission to hover out of the revetment.

He became tense when he pulled to a hover in the revetment. The revetments provided little clearance for the tail-rotor. They were formidable obstacles made from 55-gallon drums filled with sand and a three-deep-layer of sandbags resting on top. I know I am new, thought the pilot, but will I ever get used to hovering out of these damn revetments? A little over controlling and there could be a hell of a mess with me in the middle of it.

James broke into his first sweat of the day as he fought the controls of the chopper as it hovered out of the revetment. The Raven departed Ky Hai south over the South China Sea, climbed to 200 feet and turned left 180-degrees over the harbor. The harbor, as usual, had plenty of villagers fishing in little round reed boats, and the Raven soared over the fishermen at 200 feet. The pilot remained low to stay below the Chu Lai Approach Control airspace. He turned south over Highway One at the Chu Lai village. Smoke from cooking fires in the village trickled up in many places. It smelled musty to the pilot of the low flying helicopter. He wrinkled his nose. I'll never forget this damn Vietnam smell. This smell is, ah, a THIRD WORLD ... Yeah that's it ... THIRD WORLD, formed from a mixture of things: decay, marijuana, musty wood, mold, cook stoves and smoke.

Often, kites could be seen sailing in the village during the Vietnamese holidays reaching up to the low flying helicopters, but not this morning. The pilot looked below at the narrow streets of the village. The houses were mostly small, close together, one and two room huts; the larger ones had shiny metal roofs. An occasional house had a lawn, but most had dirt yards filled with junk. The pilot looked back up glancing at his instrument panel. Then he looked all around to clear the aircraft from other choppers following the highway. He reached forward with his left hand and switched the UHF frequency to Div Arty Operations. He hit the second trigger position on the cyclic switch and said, "Phoenix

One-Three, off Ky Hai heading south on One."

He recognized the Operations Officer's, voice reply, "Roger, Phoenix One-Three, we have you off, report, Quang Ngai, good luck, out."

James followed Highway One south and stayed below the fast movers' airspace until well clear of the airport. He eased back on the cyclic decreasing airspeed from 80-knots to 50-knots and began climbing. Switching frequency, he reported in with flight following.

"Salvation, Phoenix One-Three is with you 12-klicks south of Chu Lai heading south along Highway One. We are out of 500 climbing to 1600."

"Roger, One-Three, Salvation, out."

It is work to stay in touch with everyone with one working radio and one pilot, thought James. I heard the new Loaches we will be getting next month have four radios. That will make this job much easier by reducing the chores of us poor ol' solo Div Arty pilots.

He pressed the intercom trigger of his cyclic and said to his passenger, "It's a beautiful morning, Sir."

Major Burns answered, "Roger that, Lieutenant."

They made small talk for the next 20 minutes as the chopper flew south. They passed field after field of sugar cane and brown rice paddies with farmers tending their crops on water buffaloes. The countryside looked peaceful south of Chu Lai, but the new pilot remembered the Operations Officer, Captain Fuller, told him to avoid the peninsula seen off to his left. He glanced out his left door at what was called 'Indian country' by the pilots.

'Indian country' was the Batangan Peninsula, a flat coastal plain with intermixed patches of manicured fields and single canopy tropical forest. A gorgeous sandy beach to the east bordered the South China Sea.

Fuller had said weeks ago on James's orientation flight, "It's a bad spot full of VC activity where you are always apt to be shot at. You will want to avoid flying over it."

The pilot looked ahead and saw a sprawling capital city just ahead. He hit his radio switch and said, "Operations, One-Three is three klicks north of Quang Ngai, turning southwest toward Eagle Pass along the river."

"Roger, One-Three."

They climbed to 4,000 feet and the terrain changed from brown, muddy rice paddies to green rolling hills. The foliage on the hills gradually changed from trees and grass to dense jungle that hid the ground. A foreboding north south trend of large, rugged green mountains loomed dead ahead.

"The terrain reminds me of the movie King Kong," Major Burns said over the intercom.

"Yes, Sir," replied the pilot. "It looks like the movie's original version especially over there to our left with those volcanic spires and columns sticking up. It seems like you might see a pterodactyl fly off from one of those spires."

"I sure hope we don't see Kong," he chuckled.

Yeah like in VIET CONG, thought the pilot. I get more than a little puckered flying over these mountains. It is always bumpy

and there is no place to set down if the 'put-put' quits on this whirly-bird.

They entered the pass and mountains seemed to swallow them. The pilot shivered, suddenly felt naked, exposed to small arms fire from the slopes on either side as the Raven crept slowly through the pass. James felt his grip tighten on the cyclic. He flexed his fingers to lighten his touch as he rationalized to himself, No sane enemy, especially with a 51-caliber machine gun or a 23-millimeter anti-aircraft gun, would want to reveal their position and shoot at a small, puny helicopter like us. Would they? Nah, they would surely wait for a sexier target like an F4 jet-bomber.

The pilot tuned his radio to the tactical frequency of their destination, LZ Maryann, and transmitted, "Rebel Gray-One, Phoenix One-Three is 12 klicks out for landing."

"Good morning, One-Three, this is Rebel Gray-One, all is quiet on the hill."

"Roger, Rebel Gray-One, glad to hear that, out."

The LZ, a bald spot on the steep mountain peak surrounded by dense vegetation, was easily visible as they approached from the east. Its flanks were jagged and rocky, a difficult place for the VC to attack. The helicopter spiraled down over the mountain in a tactical corkscrew-landing pattern, preparing to land. James knew the final approach to the LZ was tricky because of the landing pad's position on the cliff edge providing only one direction to land regardless of the wind conditions.

The Raven flared, slowed, and then touched down gently on the sand-bag landing pad. The helicopter idled as Major Burns stepped off. A tall slender, Afro-American First Lieutenant and a stout ruddy-faced Buck Sergeant with red hair walked over. They nodded at the pilot and strapped in four water cans in the right-side seat of the helicopter. The Lieutenant got in on the left side and put on a headset. The pilot learned they were to ferry water and light supplies to the observation post on the top of an adjoining mountain some 1,000 feet higher than they were. James looked up at the peak and saw antennae and radar on it. Hmm, he thought, I have never been up there; it should be an interesting spot to land.

He stabilized the helicopter in a hover to ensure he had plenty of power with the load of water cans. It felt good. He checked his engine gauges and saw that everything looked normal. He glanced at his altimeter and read 2,800 feet on the instrument. The pilot made a hovering 180-degree turn on the pad and gave one last check of the instruments before accelerating off the cliff face into the thin air.

What a rush, thought James. One moment you are hovering, the next moment you are three thousand feet in the air.

James allowed the chopper to dive slightly to gain air speed. When 40-knots were indicated, he eased back on the cyclic and began climbing. He turned back over the LZ and spiraled up to the OP on the adjoining mountain. He landed on another sand-bag landing pad and was met by soldiers in dirty tee shirts and fatigue pants. They took off the full cans of water and replaced them with empties.

One soldier handed James a handful of mail, and said, "Will you mail these for me, Sir?"

"Sure."

James placed the precious cargo under his armored plated vest as the men loaded him up. He looked out to enjoy the spectacular view they had on the peak. To the north was a valley and river. The guns below on LZ Maryann provided tactical support to infantry controlling the valley and river.

This might be a nice, safe place to spend the war, thought the pilot.

The observation helicopter made four round trips with the passenger obviously only along for the ride. James learned the passenger had been in flight school at Wolters and had some flight time in the OH-23D. He indicated he quit school for some personal reason. Probably washed out, thought the pilot, cockily.

James lowered the collective to begin his fourth descent to the LZ from the OP when his approach suddenly became dangerous. Quickly, but not quickly enough, he noticed his descent rate was high and the landing angle too steep, a deadly flight condition in the mountains. The pilot corrected, but to his horror, the helicopter didn't respond. In seconds, the approach went from normal, to hairy, to dangerous, and then to impending disaster. As the passenger sat back, still enjoying the ride, oblivious to what was happening, James pulled the aircraft's nose back sharply, and yanked up hard on the collective, fighting to stop their descent. They continued down the steep, deadly flight path to impending oblivion in a high nose up attitude. WHY ISN'T IT SLOWING? He screamed to himself. They continued down steep and fast; the terrified pilot realized they were not going to make it. The helicopter, with its nose up and full pitch applied to its rotors, strained desperately to slow as it approached the cliff edge. The pilot could only hold on as the helicopter slid over the cliff edge with the rotor wash kicking dirt high in the air. The helicopter smacked hard on the sand-bag-pad, and with its tail low and full power applied, it bounced up and back in an uncontrolled hover. Now, with the rotors feeling full ground effect, and the cyclic held back in the novice pilot's lap, the OH-23G hovered backwards off the pad and off the cliff face into the thin air. "HOLY SHIT!" screamed the pilot!

The passenger, who had been enjoying the ride until now, found himself experiencing some of the pilot's abject terror. James fought for control, hovering at 3,000 feet in the thin mountain air with the helicopter below the cliff-face. After a struggle, he hovered higher, regained control and eased the helicopter forward. The Raven hovered smoothly back on to the mountain and landing pad.

The pilot lowered the collective and the helicopter settled gently on the pad. He sighed, happy to be alive. The passenger quietly got off and James watched him turn his back and walk quickly away. I wonder if he is thinking, 'And this guy made it through flight school and I didn't.'

All the pilot's cockiness, present just moments ago, was gone. James shut down and sat in the helicopter, shaken. That was close you dumb ass, real close. He let out a deep sigh, trying to drain away the emotion. Shit, my IP back at Wolters would have given me a pink slip on that approach.

The mountains can kill you; they almost did!

# ARMY AVIATION HERITAGE FOUNDATION & FLYING MUSEUM



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## Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO), Vietnam



FVSO helps support 850 Montagnard children living at 7 orphanages in the Kontum & Pleiku area. Founded in 2005 by servicemen who served in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, we are a small organization, proud that 100% of your donations go directly to the children & caregivers. FVSO is a non-profit organization & all donations are tax deductible. We provide food, medicine, dental care, shelter and education. Please visit our web site where the monthly newsletters tell the story of these special children. Thanks to VHPA for their continuing support!! Below are two new arrivals...TWINS!

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

### Friends of Vinh Son

Web: [FriendsofVSO.org](http://FriendsofVSO.org)

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# VHPA



## 35TH REUNION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA · JULY 3~7, 2018

# OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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

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

**TUESDAY, JULY 3,**

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

**MONDAY, JULY 2**

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm      Pre-registration

**TUESDAY, JULY 3**

10:00 am - 8:00 pm      Pre-registration  
11:00 am - 1:00 pm      HQ Registration Desk  
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm      HQ Registration Desk  
2:00 pm - 8:00 pm      T-shirt Pick Up  
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 #1  
10:15 am - 1:15 pm      BBQ Lunch @ Roswell Antebellum Home #1  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm      Writers Workshop  
11:00 am - 11:00 pm      O' Club Open  
11:45 am - 2:45 pm      BBQ Lunch @ Roswell Antebellum Home #2  
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  
10:00 am - 11:30 am      Atlanta City Trolley Tour #2  
11:00 am - 11:00 pm      O' Club Open  
12:00 am - 1:30 pm      Atlanta City Trolley Tour #3  
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm      HQ Registration Desk  
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm      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

# OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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

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

## FRIDAY, JULY 6

7:20 am - 3:30 pm	<b>Golf Outing - Stone Mountain</b>
7:30 am - 9:00 am	<b>Scholarship Breakfast - Mike Sheuerman &amp; Tom Payne</b>
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	<b>Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg &amp; T-Shirts</b>
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	<b>Welcome Desk</b>
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	<b>Vendor Room Open</b>
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	<b>Mini-Reunions/TOCs</b>
9:15 am - 2:30 pm	<b>Atlanta History Center</b>
10:00 am - 4:00 pm	<b>Roswell &amp; Antebellum Home Tour #2</b>
10:30 am - 1:30 pm	<b>Delta Museum Tour #1</b>
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	<b>Banquet Seating</b>
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	<b>O' Club Open</b>
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm	<b>Delta Museum Tour #2</b>
1:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg &amp; T-Shirts</b>

## SATURDAY, JULY 7

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

## REUNION CONTINUING EVENTS

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

See 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

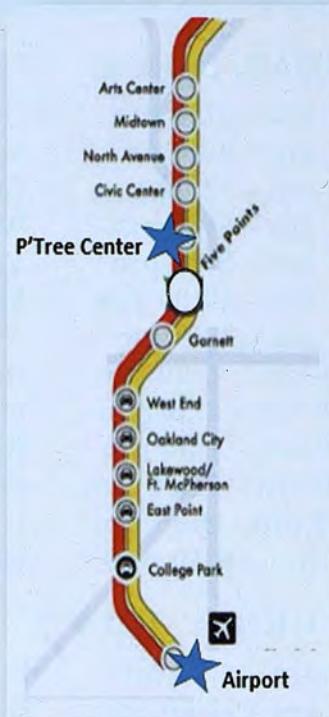
Inside the station you can buy or reload a Breeze Card or get a paper Breeze ticket at a vending machine. RideStores are also staffed during business hours if you want to purchase fare via a person. In most cases you will select "trips," which are one-way fares. If you plan to ride MARTA multiple times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



## WHERE partnerships DRIVE the difference!



**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 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Our partnership with Cooper Global will provide a special VHPA Airport Transportation Rate.

- Please call Cooper Global at 770-455-9600
- Rate: **\$22.50 Per Person**
- Mention Promo Code: **VHPA** for every reservation

You may also go directly to the link:

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

To book your discounted airport transfers.

# GOLD STAR FAMILY BREAKFAST - YOU ARE INVITED!

Government documents provide the date and the place, but for those of us who lost a loved one to a helicopter crash in the Vietnam War, that's only a small part of the story. Family members of the fallen often spend decades wondering what their loved ones did in the days or months before they lost their lives. Often, they have no means of connecting with men who served with their loved ones, to learn not only how they died, but more importantly, how they lived. This is especially true of Gold Star families from the Vietnam War.

VHPA Reunions provide an invaluable opportunity for those who lost family members in Vietnam to spend time with fellow unit members and flight school classmates who can pass along those long-ago memories. "It was hard to mourn or even talk about our lost loved ones for many, many years," said one Gold Star family member.

"My brother was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, killed in 1969 when he was 21 and I was 15. I grew up just enough younger than him that I did not get to know him very well . . . I have kept him and his memory in my life daily, have been in contact with his high school friends, and have so often wished I could talk to someone who knew him when he was in the service," said another.

The VHPA Reunion, and especially the Gold Star Family Breakfast, provides an opportunity for families and buddies of those who were lost to share memories with each other. "We came to the reunion with no expectations, just taking one moment at a time," said a

Gold Star sister whose family attended a VHPA Reunion in 2017. "Our short time there was filled with information and avenues for our continued search. The Gold Star breakfast was indescribable. How can one celebrate and grieve in the same breath? For so many years, families have carried that grief in silence. "With a room full of veterans, wives and families of those who were lost, it was now possible to find a voice and know that from that day forward, we were not alone."

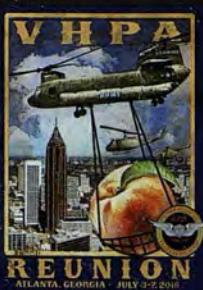
I encourage everyone reading this to attend the Gold Star Family Breakfast. Invite family members of your fallen buddies to come to the reunion and share the experience with you - or come by yourself. Either way, this is your chance to fulfill the promise, "Never Forget" and to help your buddies' families understand what their loved ones did in Vietnam.

Even if you didn't know a particular KIA very well, you can still help his family in their quest to learn more, by relating activities during your time in Vietnam. Typical things such as: where you stationed, types of missions, where you flew, types of aircraft, living conditions, and the local terrain are of interest to the families. Describing whether you had time off, average troop strength, some of the funny or not-so-funny experiences are also things that your buddy would likely have shared with his family, had he come home.

The Gold Star Family Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, July 4 during the VHPA Reunion this year. Sign up! If you need some encouragement or coaching on how to locate or interact with families of the fallen, let me know. I or another of our Family Contacts Committee members will be happy to help.

*See you in Atlanta!*

Julie Kink, sister of WO David Kink C Troop  
1/9th CAV, Killed in Action 8-3-1969



Don't forget to visit the vendor room where a number of our frequent advertisers are on hand to discuss their products/service/books.



Vendor room ready for opening

# Dining Discounts at the Reunion

Take advantage of the VHPA discount when dining at the various locations within the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. Any VHPA member displaying their reunion name tag will receive a **10% discount** for meals purchased in the hotel's restaurants.

## NEW EVENT ADDED

BBQ Lunch @ Roswell Antebellum Home #1:

4 July - 10:15am - 1:15pm - \$55

BBQ Lunch @ Roswell Antebellum Home #2:

4 July - 11:45am - 2:45pm - \$55

Kick back and enjoy barbecue and bluegrass music in the backyard of Barrington Hall, which is celebrating its 175th birthday. The King family, who built Barrington Hall, held a 4th of July barbecue for their friends and neighbors in the 1800's. Roswell plans to revive this tradition with live music, barbecue, and tours of Barrington Hall. Included in the VHPA price of this event is a BBQ sandwich, chips, water or a soft drink and an assigned VHPA seating area to enjoy your lunch. The Antebellum Home Barrington Hall will be open for walk thru tours on your own with docents located throughout to assist with questions and information.

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

# SKY SOLDIERS

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Rotors swirling, the UH-1 Hueys of the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion deliver Lt. Col. Hal Moore and his men of the 7th Cavalry into the Ia Drang Valley in our stunning new print by artist Larry Selman. Less than half remain so order yours today!

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# UPCOMING REUNIONS

D Troop, 1/1 Cavalry (Air)  
101st Airborne Division & 23rd Infantry Division (America)  
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: [dtroupreunion.org](http://dtroupreunion.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)  
[REDACTED]  
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](http://135ahc.net) ANZAC Day.com

**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]

**018 Air America Association Reunion**  
**When: May 30 - June 3, 2018**

Where: DoubleTree Suites by Hilton - Seattle Airport/South Center, Seattle, WA  
Information including agenda and registration form:  
<http://www.airamerica.org/reunion/currentreunion.html>  
Contact: Kathy Bruner - [REDACTED]

**Vinh Long Outlaws Associations Biennial Reunion.**  
**191st Assault Helicopter Company 2018 Reunion**  
**Boomerangs and Bounty Hunters**  
**When: September 13-16, 2018**

Where: Clarksville, TN  
Contact: [REDACTED]  
Website: <http://www.191ahc.org>

**Vinh Long Outlaws Associations Biennial Reunion.**  
**When: September 13-17, 2018**

Where: Charleston SC, Charlestown Marriot  
The Vinh Long Outlaws Association would like to invite all Outlaws, Mavericks, Bushwhackers and support units to its biennial reunion September 13 - 17, 2018. Reunion information, itinerary and registration form can be found on our website:  
[vinhlongoutlaws.com](http://vinhlongoutlaws.com)

Any questions contact Jim Donnelly at: [REDACTED]

**E Battery 82nd Artillery, 1st Cav Div. Vietnam Reunion.**  
All members who served with the unit in Vietnam are invited  
with their guest  
**When: September 17 - 21**

Where: Chattanooga Choo Hotel, Chattanooga TN  
Contact: Gordon Eatley [REDACTED]  
with E Battery in Subject line.  
Web site <http://ebtry.mysites.net>

**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]

# The Vietnamese Boy

Flashback to 1966: The UHF came alive as I approached the airfield at Dong Ha flying a Marine UH1E gunship with a newly arrived co-pilot and two crew members on an unusually crystal-clear afternoon in northern South Vietnam. *For helicopter pilots unfamiliar with I Corps, the town of Dong Ha is located at the intersection of the Cam Lo-Cua Viet River and Highway One, about 10 nautical miles south of the DMZ. As a further point of reference, the town is immortalized in the history of the Vietnam War. During the Easter Offensive of 1972, two US Marine Corps officers blew up the Dong Ha Bridge spanning the river while under intense small arms fire and prevented a North Vietnamese Division from seizing the town.* DASC (Direct Air Support Center) call sign "Land Shark" was on the radio wanting an update on position and fuel as we returned to our squadron's forward base at Dong Ha from our last mission near the Laotian border. Checking the fuel gauge, the copilot pushed the transmit button and let Land Shark know we were passing over the village of Cam Lo at 400 feet, a checkpoint on Highway 9 west of Dong Ha, and that

Bingo fuel was about one hour away. Land Shark shot right back: "Roger, Deadlock (call sign for Marine Observation Squadron Two pilots). New mission: Proceed direct to Charlie Med. Pick-up a shipment of blood and deliver it to the Repose." Charlie Med was a Navy Medical Unit located near the airfield at Dong Ha and the USS Repose, one of two US Navy hospital ships operating off the Vietnamese coast of I Corps, was usually found steaming several miles offshore to the east of our position. Shortly thereafter, Land Shark reported back with the ship's TACAN channel, radio frequency, and call sign.

Passing south of the Dong Ha airfield, I lowered the collective, banked to the left and dropped the Huey into C-Med's LZ, producing a huge cloud of dust and adding another layer of brown dirt to the already filthy dark green tents that comprised the medical facility. Almost immediately, a couple of sailors appeared and began loading the boxes of blood into the back of the helicopter under the direction of our Crew Chief.

Sitting at idle after the dust bowl subsided I noticed C-Med



C-Med was encircled by a deep ditch. I was surprised to see a small lifeless body lying in the trench about 30 feet away almost directly in front of our twin Emerson machine guns on the front of the helicopter. Curious, I got C-Med up on the FM. As I recall, the Petty Officer on duty advised me the body was a Vietnamese boy with head and chest wounds who had arrived the day before on a Marine Medevac helicopter. He had been wounded during Marine combat operations with North Vietnamese forces in his village somewhere near the DMZ. He looked to be about ten years old and according to C-Med, the facility was overloaded with Marine casualties, more were inbound and as cruel as it was, the boy was left to fend for himself in the ditch. I took that to mean he was left to die if he did not receive medical attention soon.

The co-pilot and I didn't like what we were hearing. So, as the last cartons of blood were being placed onboard, I ordered our Crew Chief to go get the boy, tie him down behind the

blood and keep an eye on him so he wouldn't somehow fall out during the flight to the ship as the helicopter's doors had long ago been removed. Shortly thereafter, the copilot lifted out of C-Med in the usual cloud of dust, climbed to 800 feet, and turned eastbound as I switched to the Repose's TACAN channel. Within about four minutes we had the ship in view. Always an absolutely-beautiful sight lying in the sparkling blue waters of the South China Sea, the ship was steaming into the wind in a southeasterly direction about five miles offshore. Contacting the ship, I advised we were inbound on the one-zero-five-degree radial for landing with blood and one WIA and would be onboard in two minutes. Moments later, approaching the ship from the starboard side instead of directly behind the ship to avoid the bad air the ship's super structure creates, I settled into a hover at about 10 knots forward air-speed a few feet above the moving ship's aft landing platform, touched one skid on the deck, then the other, pushed the collective down and rolled off the power and we were on. Instantly, several waiting sailors quickly unloaded the blood and then the Vietnamese boy was placed on a stretcher and carried away into the ship. Two or three minutes later, with another Marine Medevac calling inbound, the copilot quickly departed the ship and turned westbound as I switched to Dong Ha's TACAN channel and we lined up for the fuel cells at the airfield. About this time the voice of Land Shark was again barking in my helmet: "Deadlock. Position and fuel. New mission."

Unfortunately, the story of the Vietnamese boy has no conclusion. Like the black hole at the center of a galaxy, the identity of the boy and or what happened to him remains a mystery to me more than fifty years since that day in 1966 when my crew and I left him on board the USS Repose.

*Clutch (Richard) Hendrie  
Helicopter Pilot*

*Marine Observation Squadron Two, 1966-67*

*Editor's Note: While this story is centered on the hospital ship U.S.S. Repose, the photo on the cover is of U.S.S. Sanctuary. These two hospital ships attended about 20,000 service men during the Vietnam War. In addition to Repose and Sanctuary, the German Hospital Ship Helgoland treated some 11,000 Vietnamese civilians.*



# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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

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## Membership application/change of address

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Directory correction

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\*age 59 and below (\$450), 60-64 (\$350), 65-69 (\$250), 70-74 (\$150), 75-79 (\$100) 80 and above (\$75)

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Information about each Vietnam unit:

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

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

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

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

\*\* NOTE: Membership Directories are not available to Aviator-only subscribers.

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

Email: [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:)

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

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

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

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(*Celebrate Freedom*) Chapter  
Larry Russell, President

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Jim Davidson, President

UTAH CHAPTER  
Doug Drury, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER  
Mel Latham 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 Sorenson of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED]) or via E-Mail at: [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED]) Feel free to contact John concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## ALAMO CHAPTER

Our Alamo Chapter ladies met for lunch on February 2nd at Little Gretel in Boerne, TX, and at The Bread Box in San Antonio on March 9th. Chapter pilots met for lunch at Sam's Gulf Coast Kitchen and Sports Bar, also known as Sam's Boat, on February 13th. They lunched at the Little Red Barn Steakhouse on March 21st.



All of us had a grand time and dinner at our quarterly meeting at the Barn Door Restaurant on February 22nd. We discussed several ideas for future activities. This meeting saw the largest attendance ever at this location.

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

## ALASKA CHAPTER

Awww ... Nothing like a sunny day with 20-degree temperatures and sled dogs running through the streets. This set the tone for our winter gathering during the Fur Rendezvous Festival. A nice group of 22 folks enjoyed the hospitality of the Mountain View VFW. Chicken sliders, salad, chips, and a beverage. Does it really get better than this? We spent some time planning our Memorial Day event, our halibut fishing trip, and the summer picnic. Our discussion also included the possibility of a dinner train trip with an inlet cruise. Check our website for updates [www.VHPA-Alaska.org](http://www.VHPA-Alaska.org).

This past month we also had the opportunity to see John Schommer awarded his Quilt of Valor and since he could



Alaska winter gathering.



John Schommer With his Quilt of Valor.

not come to us, we went to him. Great visit with a special guy.

As usual, group things are a bit quiet in the Alaska winter with so many snow birds in the States, but it certainly looks like things are in place for another wonderful year, as soon as the snow melts!

Until next time, there is Pride in Knowing WE FLEW!

Lynn Kile

## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER



I missed the last report deadline for December and January, but, the chapter did have a Holiday party on 2 December 2017 at LZ Fritz. Ken and Marcia Fritz graciously hosted a Christmas party for members from noon to 1600 hours. About 15 members and significant others enjoyed lasagna, salad, bread, and of course, liquid refreshments. A good time was had by all, and we caught the few minutes of Army beating Navy in their annual football game. No pictures, but I assure everyone, we looked just fine!

In February, we kicked off our annual dues drive. We are all getting older and chapter participation may be difficult, but please try to be as active as you can.



Great turn out- thanks guys!



Eat first - Thom Gilbert took the picture.



Somebody has to hold the ladder!



George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and of course Curt Knapp!



# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Each one of the chapter events we participate in takes at least three members to transport the Huey. To date, the chapter has collected dues from 31 of our 88 members. Last December, our by-laws were changed to require at least 25 dues-paying active members to keep the chapter viable. So, thanks to those members who have sent their checks in, and for everyone else please check our website and your email for future events and instructions on where to send your dues.

On 18 February, we began the year with the HUEY unwrap. It had been cocooned for the winter. At noon, nine members met at LZ Fritz to wash the Huey and prep the pickup for a President's Day celebration. After Ken Fritz BBQ'd burgers in his workshop, the group began washing the pickup and uncovering the Huey. It was a real goat rope getting the tarp off the Huey as the winds increased to a velocity that went from limp flag to flag straight out. Special thanks go to Curt Knapp and Ken Lake for bringing the new pickup batteries out to LZ Fritz on wash-day, so we'd be ready to roll after Ken Fritz scraped the frost off the windshield. Ken Fritz and Thom Gilbert did the pickup maintenance while Tom Inks, Ken Lake, Al Doucette, Ed Morris, Jim Cunningham, Jim Clark, and Curt Knapp took care of the Huey.

On 19 February, VHPA-CCN displayed our Huey with 14 members plus two wives and one girlfriend attending. The group enjoyed the sunshine, classic cars, Mountain Men, pilgrims, American Revolutionary soldiers, a marching band, and two US Presidents: impersonators of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln at Mount Vernon Memorial Park in Fair Oaks, CA for "American Heritage Day". We had a dues-drive and collected \$640 in dues and donations - twice what the pickup parts cost us. Extra appreciation goes to Mike Whitten and Jim Stein for their dedica-



Huey 563 on Display at VFW Post 6158



Curt Knapp, Ross McCoy, Mike Whitten, Jim Stein, Al Doucette, Ken Lake, Tom Inks.

tion and friendship to the chapter, for driving all the way over from Marin County (about 90 minutes each way),

and to Will Gibbons for his two plus hour drive on windy two lane roads from Jamestown. Special thanks go to Ken Lake and Thom Gilbert, who volunteered as our Donut Dollies - for donuts and coffee on these chilly February mornings.

CCN's Huey 563 was displayed on 29 March at Fair Oaks VFW Post 6158 under beautiful California skies for National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Helping out were Al Doucette, Ken Lake, Tom Inks, Mike Whitten, Jim Stein, Mike Whitten, and Curt Knapp. But the big raffle winner was Jim Stein with 4 tickets to an upcoming Sacramento River Cats baseball game.

Looking forward to the rest of 2018. We have events lined up for April and May. We also are planning a couple of work days at LZ Fritz in May. Several thousand guests have enjoyed sitting in our Huey over the last several years. The Huey seats among other things have taken a beating and need repair.

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

Dave Anderson, VHPA-CCN webmaster

## GEORGIA CHAPTER



The Georgia Chapter continues to hold its Saturday morning breakfast meeting every other month.

On 24 March 2018, The GA VHPA Chapter

enjoyed fun and fellowship and a good hearty breakfast at its breakfast meeting at our new meeting headquarters, LZ Juliet Charlie (aka: J. Christopher's Restaurant located at 2100 Roswell Road, Marietta GA). Our breakfast meetings continue to be our principal activity. Unfortunately, (or fortunately), we found out our membership attendance has grown to the point that we've outgrown the small private room provided by the J. Christopher's restaurant. Accordingly, our next meeting will be a relocated to a new location, the Del Ray Diner at 2475 Delk Road, Marietta GA.

Again, the 35th Annual VHPA Reunion in Atlanta dominated our business meeting discussion. Many had already volunteered their services before this meeting, but several made commitments as a volunteer schedule was made available during the meeting. We still have some open slots and we'll likely be busy soliciting for

volunteers right up to the time of the 2 through 7 July Reunion.

In view of the fast approaching 35th Annual VHPA Reunion, our Chapter members voted to alter

our bi-monthly meetings and conduct to monthly meetings both in May (19th) and June (21st), 2018. We will resume our bi-monthly meetings after the July 2018 VHPA Reunion.

For the past several years, Newnan High School's Social Studies and History Department at Newnan GA, has been offering an advanced elective on the Vietnam War within its curricula. The course has become nationally known and is very popular among NHS students. On 29 March 2018, seven of our Georgia Chapter



Hunter Hill (L) with Bob Lanzzotti

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

members traveled to Newnan HS and participated in a daylong activity. The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation flew a Huey and a Cobra to NHS and landed on the football field during school hours. Joe Galloway was the guest speaker for the students. Army Aviation Heritage Foundation pilots and our Georgia Chapter members interfaced with about 300 students to field general questions regarding the Huey and Cobra as well as how they were employed in Vietnam. Our Chapter members furnish speakers to Georgia high schools and colleges, other youth organizations, as well as various civic groups who want to learn more about the Vietnam War.

Our guest speaker for our 24 March meeting was Hunter Hill. Hunter is a Georgia Native. After graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point, he chose to be an Infantry officer and went on to graduate from both Airborne and U.S. Army Ranger Schools. Captain Hill then led five different teams on three separate combat tours to Iraq and Afghanistan. Like his Army career, Hunter's business career is about leadership development. He is the President of Tommy Newberry Coaching where he leverages his military, real estate development, and security industry experience to lead and grow business. Hunter was elected to the Georgia State Senate in 2012 and served through the summer of 2017. During his time in the Senate, Hunter served as Chairman of the Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee and Vice

Chairman of the Finance Committee. Hunter decided to step down this past summer to pursue the office of Governor of Georgia. During his interface with our chapter members, Hunter laid out his values and principles for governing. The exchange during his question and answer session were lively and well received by about 30 old Army aviators. (Note: The Georgia Chapter, VHPA neither endorses nor opposes Hunter Hill's candidacy for the Governor of Georgia. He was invited to speak at our meeting because he is a veteran with a good story to tell about his service to our nation.)

Our next meeting will again be conducted at new LZ Delta Romeo at 2475 Delk Road, Marietta, on 19 May. Our guest speaker for this event will be one of our own members, Tom Anderson. Tom is going to tell us how he went from a college student to an Airborne Ranger qualified Field Artillery Officer, to a helicopter Scout Pilot in the OH-6 in Vietnam, to a Medical Doctor, to a Flight Surgeon, then on to a skilled Radiologist and still make a career in the Army. It is quite a story and one we will look forward to learning more about.

Former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots interested in joining and/or learning more about our Chapter may contact

For our scheduled meeting dates during 2018 go to our website, GA VHPA.

Bob Lanzotti, President

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter had continuous activity through the winter months. Member at Large Mark Benjamin continues to host lunch gatherings in Traverse City on the second Thursday of each month. In attendance for the February event were chapter members Bob Matlis, Walter Topp and Mark. Mark also invited Ron Martin who was a grunt with the 1st Cav in RVN. While he was not aircrew, he rode "a million miles" with us. Also in attendance was Ron Hoffmeister. Ron has recently been elected Vice Chair of the NW Michigan Veterans Council. He is quite knowledgeable about VA issues in the NW Michigan area as well as the VA clinic and facilities in Traverse City.

In March the attendees were Walter Topp, Barry Witt, Bart Halliday, Bob Matlis and Mark. Mark reported, "There still was no pool tournament. There was no time." We talked about what we did after the war. Barry Witt ran a construction equipment company in Traverse City. Walter Top worked as a pharmacist at Munson Hospital. Bart Halliday finished his 20 in the Marines and went "fishing."

Mark also has close contact with the U.S. Coast Guard at Traverse City and will head Ramp Night on Friday, 29 June at the CGAS there. Mark coordinated our chapter's participa-



March 8 at Traverse City L-R: Walter Topp, Barry Witt, Bart Halliday, Bob Matlis, Mark Benjamin.



L-R Bill Andrew, Bob Rich, Alan Saxton & Dave James



Dave James Making his Presentation



Dave James and Bob Rich at The Yankee Air Museum

tion there in 2017 and this will be our 2nd annual event with them.

Chapter member Alan Saxton headed up our Michigan Chapter participation at a Michigan Helicopter Association (MHA) event held on Feb. 15 at the Yankee Air Museum in Ypsilanti. We were invited to join them and four Michigan Chapter VHPA members joined the MHA members.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

In addition to providing pizza and soft drinks, the MHA invited an FAA Inspector who gave a safety briefing that included fixed and rotary wing topics. Other attendees were groups from the Detroit Police Dept. Aviation Division and local Michigan commercial helicopter operators. The evening concluded with presentations from Michigan VHPA members Alan Saxton and Dave James who presented slideshow reviews of their Vietnam experiences. After the meeting, everyone was able to tour the Yankee Air Museum exhibits. All Michigan Chapter VHPA members who

attended would like to thank Alan Saxton and Paul Boucher of the MHA for the invitation and gracious welcome. Member at Large Bob Rich provided the AAR for this event.

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

You do not have to join the Michigan chapter to be listed as an interested party.

Submitted by Richard Deer, President

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

It was a cold, harsh winter, by Alabama standards. But the North Alabama Chapter (NAVHPA) has persevered and has begun its spring activities.

The NAVHPA has taken ownership, management and updating functions associated with their website [www.navhpa.org](http://www.navhpa.org) from the defunct Kairosnetwork in September of 2017. We thank Kairosnetwork, Dodrick Smith and Darwin Oberlander for their pro bono development and management of the website during 2015 and 2016.

Current NAVHPA member and now Webmaster, Joe Stevens, has purchased a new URL for the web site [www.na-vhpa.org](http://www.na-vhpa.org) as the original website URL was turned off. Joe has also completed a total review, reorganization, and update of information on the website.

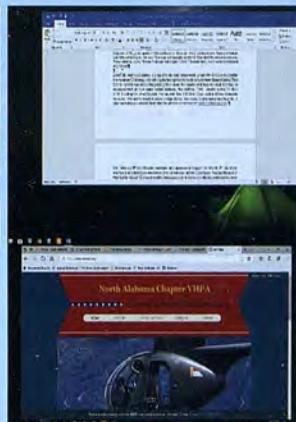
With guidance and supervision from the NAVHPA President, Marshall Eubanks, and the Board of Directors, the website has been reorganized to readily identify who we are and what we do for the local community.

- Individuals seeking more information or a link to join the NAVHPA are located under the **HOME** tab.
- History about the chapter and our UH-1C Huey Gunship Buccaneer 66-00623, or "Buc 3" are under the **HISTORY** tab.
- Under the **EVENT LISTING** tab are the important dates for member supported activities, updated quarterly.
- Under the **DISPLAY** tab we explain our interactive display and our Huey Gunship "hands-on" museum.
- Under the **AUDIENCE** tab we discuss the Veterans, Educational and Community events in which we participate.
- Under the **LIBRARY** tab are five videos of various Vietnam helicopter operations.
- Under the **INFO** tab are PDF files with the chapter By Laws, and other technical information on the helicopter and the Vietnam War.

As we support events over the next year we will continue to update the website with new information and photos. The website was developed and is hosted by Wix.com. Wix has been very helpful in the development and updating of website features. Because the NAVHPA is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization, Wix gave us a 2-year free hosting certificate. Wix has answered all emails for call-back assistance always within three minutes or less. Additionally, they have numerous on-line videos to assist with



Vietnam helicopter pilots meet while camping in GA.  
L-R: Sam Maki, Marshall Eubanks, Pat Will, Rick Davis, Don Callison



Homepage of the new and improved NAVHPA site. Go to [www.na-vhpa.org](http://www.na-vhpa.org)

some of the more difficult tasks. Wix is ranked number one as website developers, and they are number one on our list.

The March meeting was held at the Best Western Select, Madison, AL, just West of Huntsville. Maybe folks were tired of being cooped up from the cold, but we had a record turnout! There were 67 NAVHPA members and most had spouses at the meeting and dinner. We are used to large meetings, but this was great.

Three of North Alabama members went camping at the Georgia Veteran's State Park in mid-March. Chapter President, Marshall Eubanks; Member, Rick Davis and Chapter Secretary, Sam Maki, plus spouses, had their rigs lined up on the lake-front just enjoying life. In Sam's words, "Sam had hung our NAVHPA chapter sign out front by the road like he always does. One afternoon this gentleman and his grandson stopped by and ask who the Vietnam helicopter pilot was. Well, all three answered him. His name was David Fallin and he had been a pilot in Vietnam in 1969. He told us he had been with the 170th AHC. When we told him we had restored Buccaneer 3 (Buc-3), I thought the man was going to faint or cry. Marshall got out his book and showed him what we had done with one of his unit's aircraft. He was totally amazed. He told us he did his time and got out. Life went on for him, but he told us this brought back many memories and he was



The Aviation Challenge Cobra seems to be put together from spare parts. Please help us locate the parts to restore it. Email us at [navhpa@gmail.com](mailto:navhpa@gmail.com).

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

going home to Cordele, GA, and dig out his many 8MM films and look at them. He hasn't looked at them in over 30 years. He can't wait to show them to his grandson. We told him he should join the VHPA and a local chapter and let others enjoy his movies.

Now on that very same day, another individual saw Sam's sign and got ready to ask who the Vietnam helicopter pilot was but when he saw Rick Davis he almost fell over. His name is Pat Will and he and Rick were in the 3/5 Cav together. Well, that turned into an old home week. Pat tells Rick that there is another Cav guy camping with him and his name is Don Callison. Pat went back and got Don and then it all started. Talk about war stories and where was old so and so!!! They had years of catching up and a couple days to do it in. We even got Pat and Don to play a few games of Corn Hole. Sorry, that's what it's called. A few brews were consumed, and a few tossing of the corn bags and it was a great camping trip."

Sam has hung out that old NAVHPA chapter sign everywhere a group of us go camping and it always attracts some Vietnam vet to stay a bit and tell us his story. It worked at the VHPA reunion in Indy. If you happen to be at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, AL on October 15-22, 2018, go to spots 47-55 and look for the sign. All of us there are Vietnam Vets in our little camping cul-de-sac. The sign will be right out front. The staff knows who we are. They refer to us as, "those Vietnam helicopter pilots." Sometimes, even without deleted expletives!

Last Fall, members started a project to do restoration work on an AH-1 Cobra located in the Aviation Challenge aircraft display being the internationally known Space Camp. This Cobra, which has been kluged together over the years and has no real identity, is equipped with all four major rocket systems, the Hellfire, TOW, Javelin and a 17 shot 2.75" Folding Fin Ariel Rocket Pod as well the 7.62 Mini Gun and a 40mm Grenade launcher. We are in need of some cockpit items, such as seats, instruments and boards. If you have any you would like to donate, please contact us at navhpa@gmail.com.

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association held its Annual Vietnam War MIA Ceremony at the North Carolina Capitol Grounds and our Annual Business Meeting at the Sitti Restaurant on February 3rd, 2018. Thirty NCVHPA members attended the events. Special guests were Ben Gay, Jesse Dize and Bandy Turner. Jesse read the name of Fred Cristman, his Flight School stick-mate and Randy read the name of her cousin, Joseph Hargrave.

Quilts of Valor were presented by Lanakila Alexander.



Some of the NAVHPA members and spouses at the March meeting.

On February 8th, six Chapter members and spouses and again on March 8th, six more members and their spouses served the dinner meal at the Downtown Rescue Mission in Huntsville. About 150 needy and homeless people, to include children, were served over a two-hour period on both dates. 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.

More than 18 NAVHPA members and spouses will attend the dedication of the monument at Arlington National Cemetery. Look for the Yellow shirts to find the Yellowhammer State contingent. We'll be standing tall.

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

If you live in the North Alabama and Middle Tennessee areas, we want you to join our chapter. You can contact us at navhpa@gmail.com. Our new web site is [www.na-vhpa.org](http://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



Receiving Quilts of Valor were (L to R, Front): Jim Klopovic, USAF Retired; Walt Emery; Renee Hoffman; Jack Heslin; George Dyer. (L to R Back): Jesse Dize; Gerald Phelps; Robert Smith; Tom Braaten

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The 2018 Schedule was then presented:

- March 24 & 25 NC Museum of History, Vietnam Veterans Recognition, UH-1H and OH-6.
- April 17,18,19 Arlington National Cemetery, Dedication of Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument, UH-1H.
- May 4,5,6,7 Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station Air Show, UH-1H, UH-1H Medevac, UH-1M, AH-1G, OH-58, OH-6.
- May 25,26,27 Memorial Day Parade Myrtle Beach SC.
- May 27,28,29 Memorial Day Parade Washington DC.
- September 12 - 16 Wise Va., six aircraft.
- October 12,13,14 Mum Fest, New Bern NC six aircraft.
- November 9 -13 Veterans Administration, Washington DC six aircraft.

Elections were held for the 2018 Officers, Ed Hughes was reelected President and Jerry Phelps was elected Vice President.

I am often asked why I spend so much time traveling with these old Army Aircraft. For an easy answer go to NC Museum of History web site and look at the video made by Elizabeth Peluso, Sam Sanderson and Matthew Peluso for submission to the NC Museum "Tar Heel Junior Historian" program. These three home-schoolers interviewed six members of the NCVHPA and then filmed their presentation while sitting in the OH-6.

Five NCVHPA members and their wives made the March Sabbatical to Ocean Isle for Fellowship, fellowship, good



Elizabeth Peluso, Sam Sanderson and Matthew Peluso.



food, adult beverages and fun. Brock Nicholson and Jerry Seago were found doing what they do best. Use your imagination.

And to start the morning we all ate breakfast at the local diner: Ed and Claudia Hughes, Colleen and Brock Nicholson,

Jerry Seago, Allen and Barbara Hoffman, John and Barbara Hoffman and Jack Heslin.

Ed Hughes, President NCVHPA Chapter

## OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

The Ohio River LZ Chapter is less than one week away from our annual gathering. Each year the chapter moves from city to city within our four-state area of Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee and Ohio. This year we are meeting in Frankfort, KY. The last time we met in Frankfort was nineteen years ago.



The extended weekend starts on Thursday with a visit to the Kentucky Horse Park just outside Lexington, KY. The Horse Park is less than an hour away from the reunion hotel.

On Friday morning, part of the group will take a tour of the capitol and the Governor's Mansion and concludes the morning with lunch at the historic Meeting House and Kentucky History Museum prior to returning to the hotel.

The other part of the group departs in the morning for a day of racing at the legendary Keeneland Race Track in Lexington. We are attending Keeneland's opening day for the spring meet. Our group has been asked to participate in the

Opening Ceremony and National Anthem at noon.

The day concludes with a group dinner at a local restaurant in Frankfort.

On Saturday morning, the group tours the Kentucky State University Farm in Frankfort. We will receive a briefing on some of their latest grant-funded projects including hemp crop production in Kentucky. The group then continues to Buffalo Trace Distillery for a tour and tasting of everyone's favorite Kentucky's export.

Saturday evening features our final dinner. We expect the normal attendance of 120-130 for dinner. Our guest speaker for the evening is Lieutenant Governor Jenean Hampton. The Lieutenant Governor is an Air Force veteran of seven years. She also served overseas in Operation Desert Storm. Lieutenant Governor Hampton is a native of Detroit and has an amazing resume to her name.

In the next Aviator, we will post the selected site for the 2019 spring reunion.

Bob Hamilton,

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

On February 10th, members of the Old Dominion Chapter were escorted on a tour of the Virginia War Memorial. Our docent was Charlie Hunter, who was also a helicopter pilot. After the tour we went to Legend Brewery for Lunch.

On Friday February 16th, we attended the 4th Annual Viet-



nam War Memorial Luncheon. The ROTC Cadre and Cadets at James Madison University put on the luncheon. The guest speakers were two retired Generals, BG John P. Rose and MG Donald Constantine Hilbert. About 300 Vietnam Veterans and their wives attended. Six of us helicopter pilots were among the group.



L to R are: Zandy DePriest, Ray Powell, Dennis Ryan, BG John Rose, Don Agren, Warren Price, Richard Newell.



L to R are: James Holden, Ken Mick, Hugh Adams, Ken Paulson, Lou Burger, Charlie Hunter, Angelia Agren, Don Agren, Bill Baker, Joan Baker, Dennis Ryan, and Craig Clark.

## SOUTHERN MISSOURI CHAPTER

The Southern Missouri Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association met on March 24, 2018 at the Creve Coeur Airport in Maryland Heights, MO as guests of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation - Gateway Chapter.

All of the officers and many members attended and welcomed in some new members as well. The meeting was called to order by President Dick Elgin, who also led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Each member attending was asked to stand and give a brief introduction about themselves.

Mel Keith, President of the Gateway Chapter of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation was introduced, and later gave a presentation about the foundation. He told of their OH-58, which is nearing flyable condition, and Huey #70-60315. This aircraft was a former VIP aircraft which was destined to become a range target but will now be restored to original flying condition. He offered a tour of their hangar and an opportunity to see and feel both aircraft.

Mike Law, past president of the National VHPA (member #5) was introduced and gave a presentation about the VHPA calendar, the



Aviator magazine, and the Witness to War program. He urged members to submit photos for the calendar, stories for the magazine, and to give their stories to the WTW representatives present.

John Sorensen, former chapter president and now treasurer, told of the upcoming unveiling of the monument for Helicopter Pilots and Crewmembers which will take place at Arlington National Cemetery on April 18. He invited anyone who could to attend. He also told of another important event taking place that day at College of the Ozarks. This will be the dedication of the new Korean War Veterans memorial at the entrance to the college.

John also invited everyone to attend the VHPA reunion in Atlanta this year, and to volunteer to help with the national reunion in 2019 when it will be held in Kansas City MO.

There was also mention that this is the 50th anniversary of the Viet Nam war.

An excellent lunch was served by the host organization, and then a hangar tour was conducted.

The next meeting will be June 15 at Fort Leonard Wood.

Ralph McClurg, South Missouri Chapter Secretary

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

On March 15, 2018, the Upper Midwest Chapter gathered at the Coon Rapids VFW for our bi-monthly meeting. We were pleased to have guest speakers from the Minnesota National Guard Flight Facility in St. Cloud, MN. Warrant Officers Paul Adams and Bret Sutterland presented a talk contrasting the first helicopter war (ours) with the second helicopter war (theirs). They described how their Chinooks participated in both Iraq and Afghanistan and the differing tactics employed in the two theaters. It was a very interesting and informative talk. We were surprised that even though technology has changed, the way the aviation assets are employed hasn't changed all that much. Those fancy glass cockpits sure would have been nice in VN, along with the night vision capabilities!

We conducted a business meeting afterward and elected a

new Vice President. Tim Callister was gracious enough to volunteer for the position and we appreciate that very much. The Chapter also approved an amended dues schedule including a Life Member option.

Our next meeting tentatively will be at the St. Paul Downtown Airport in the restaurant in the terminal building on May 17th at noon. Hopefully, we can arrange a tour of the National Guard Flight Facility after the meeting. Stay tuned for details on our Facebook page. E-mail reminders will also be sent to our mailing list before the meeting.

If you are not already a member of our chapter and wish to join us for our next meeting, or if you want to get on our mailing list, contact our President Bruce Hunter at

or our Secretary Dick Anderson at

# Can a UH-1 whistle?

by Clyde Romero

We all know the distinct sound the UH-1 makes with the rotor blades, the distinct pounding beat as the blades rotate through the air, but whistle? A good question.

Over the years at VHPA reunions you come across individuals you haven't seen in years, old friends from flying days in Vietnam. You reflect and recall events--some funny, and some with tragic outcomes. We "rotorheads" share these stories at the reunions, year after year.

I remember one such reunion when fellow VHPA member Rus Janus (who serves on the VHPA color guard) walked up to me and said, "Clyde, do you remember coming into Tay Ninh Airfield one day, all shot up?" I remember Tim Horrell was the A/C (Aircraft Commander) of that sniffer mission in Cambodia. "Man, we could hear your helicopter whistling a long way off." I barely remembered the event.

Over the years, I tried to put that combat mission behind me. At the time, I was brand new to Vietnam and still pissing stateside water when then-President Nixon ordered US Army troops into Cambodia on 1 May 1970; I was assigned to A Company, 25th Avn Bn of the 25th Infantry Division, call sign Little Bears, operating out of Cu Chi. New to it all, I could not have been in-country more than 15 days, having arrived on 17 April 1970.

A sniffer mission was a strange experience. You strap this device onto your UH-1, which resembles a lie detector, with a rather large scoop under

neath, it's supposed to smell the differences in the atmosphere of troops on the ground, noting their location for follow on action.

A technician sits in your helicopter and monitors the machine while you are flying at tree top level over suspected locations. It's a single-ship mission, no gun cover, solo, by yourself, no one to come get you if things go bad!

If my memory serves me correctly we were well into Cambodia close to Phonon Penh at speed, low level when all hell broke loose. The door gunner on the aircraft left took a .51 cal to the chest; luckily it was at an angle and the chicken plate did an outstanding job of saving his life.

Our helicopter was raked with numerous AK-47 and .51 cal hits. Most hits were just behind where we were sitting, with some hitting the nose and instrument panel. To say it was terrifying would be an understatement. We were single-ship, did I mention that? Over heavily armed enemy troops with all the intentions of killing us. Oh, yeah. One more thing, we were over triple canopy jungle, with nowhere to put down, bonus!

Although it was just around 10-15 seconds of intense anti-aircraft fire, it felt like it was one hour. How we survived, I really can't say, we still had power and hydraulics, we didn't lose any major systems that I can recall, but I think the hydraulics were starting to go as we approached Tay Ninh. We could smell that we were leaking fuel at an alarming rate.

We somehow got back to Tay Ninh and our day was done.

The aircraft was totaled, I know I was, I can't remember if the crew chief was hit or not. I do remember a maintenance person telling me we took a round that nicked the cable to the tail rotor controls, when we got back to Cu Chi that night.

Tim you did an outstanding job of getting us back, considering what we had just been through.

So, in closing, yes, a UH-1 can whistle.

And Rus, no more stories please!



Our eye cataract surgery program supports elderly patients with financial hardship, patients without proper health insurance, savings or who are low-income earners from 10 provinces around Saigon and others in Central areas.



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ONLY  
**\$40 FOR 1 EYE**

**100%**  
OF EVERY DOLLAR  
DONATED GOES TO  
OUR PROJECTS



# Selections from Past Newsletters

*This issue's column is from August 1994*

## How Hornet's Corner Got Its Name

I was the CO of the 116th in late 1966. On Oct. 22nd, we inserted at least one infantry company from the 25th Division for a sweep operation in the Iron Triangle. We used about 15 Hornet (lift) ships, two teams of Stinger guns, plus our smoke ship on the morning insertion. About 4 p.m., we returned for the planned extraction. The infantry had made contact during their sweep and even changed planned PZs because things were a little hot.

I liked to fly tail-end Charlie and have the platoon leaders lead their flights, so that day I was flying the last ship in the second flight. The first flight received a little fire but got in and out with their troops without difficulty.

The PZ had rather tall grass and deep water. As the infantry pulled in their perimeter, they bunched up rather poorly for the second flight. They still had a few outposts to protect the eastern side of the PZ and the tempo of the VC fire was increasing. There wasn't enough room for my ship in the north end of PZ, so I told the flight lead to take them out.

When they left, I hovered over to the last bunch, picked them up and started to leave. Even with good gun cover we were a great target. We took several hits and at about 150 feet AGL the engine quit. I put it down in the south end of the PZ. No one was hurt in the crash, but the Huey was like a VC bullet magnet and we soon had a few wounded.

I laid on the floor of the Huey to use the radios. I asked for one of the Hornet ships to come to the west side of my ship to medevac the wounded. This ship was hit and shot down a little northwest of us. It also had some wounded. At this point, I knew we needed some troops back on the ground with us, as the VC were trying to overrun the PZ. The infantry outposts had fallen back and what few people we had formed a line to the east of the Hueys and our wounded.

The next effort to reinforce us consisted of two ships from the second lift. They put some of the troops we'd

just extracted back into the PZ. My XO, Capt. Bill Bournes, was flying one ship and it was shot down. Bill received a very serious wound and, fortunately, was later evacuated.

The other Huey was able to pick up several of the wounded before doing a pedal turn and exiting back over the river on the west side of the PZ.

Counting Bill, I'd guess we had eight wounded. We were low on ammo, it was raining very hard and getting darker by the second. Capt. Earl Hyers was the Stinger platoon leader and I really can't say enough about the support they provided from the beginning to late into the night. Earl and his Stingers flew a cap for us and answered every call we made to them.

I still felt we needed to medevac the wounded, so by radio I asked if any Hornet would volunteer. With three ships down and several others shot up, the odds were not on our side. I personally don't know why the VC didn't overrun us - they certainly could have without too much trouble.

Capt. Rolla Breed responded to my call. He and his crew volunteered to perform the medevac. That night, they returned three different times to fly the wounded back to Cu Chi. They took lots of fire even with the gun cover.

Bravery and guts plus, I'm convinced an American spirit of camaraderie and desire to help his buddies epitomized Rolla Breed. He and his crew saved several lives that night at great risk to their own - true heroes. Great warriors!!

Spooky, an Air Force gunship, arrived overhead and that helped a lot. About 10 p.m., the VC fire let up. We pulled what little perimeter we had in tight and hunkered down for the night with one Stinger over-head all night.

In the morning, the VC were gone, and we were all extracted without difficulty. During the next couple days all three of our ships were retrieved, but two were a total loss. I still have a clear picture in my mind of Rolla's ship. I don't see how it flew at all, it was so riddled with holes!

No one died from the 116th, though several, including Bill, were evacuated back to the States. That bend in the river became known as the Hornets' Corner from that time on. Rolla Breed received a Distinguished Service Cross, the rest of the crew Silver Stars.

I'm so proud to have been a part of a unit that had so many Rollas, Bills, Earls and others who just did what had to be done. God Bless them! Thanks for the privilege of letting me tell you their story!

James Patterson, 1966-67, Hornet 6 (DAT)  
Selections from Past Newsletters

# VHPA Gear Online Store

You can now purchase VHPA shirts via the new VHPA Gear Online Store at <https://gear.vhpa.org>. The store initially will offer four different shirt styles: moisture wicking polo, cotton blend polo, button down dress and denim shirt. The shirts are generally available in Navy, Royal, Dark Green, Maroon, and Steel Grey. The Denim shirt will be available in LIGHT BLUE, DARK BLUE and TAN only. Color availability may vary by style and colors may be added in the future based upon customer demand. The polo shirts will also be available in styles with pockets or long sleeves

Prices will vary by size, style and alternate wings options for the VHPA logo. There will be a shipping and handling fee and for Texas residents, sales tax will be

added. You must be a Vietnam Rotary Wing Aviator to get a set of wings other than VHPA wings.

Keep checking back as we will be adding or rotating shirt styles, jackets, and accessories to the store. Be sure to check your issue of the "The Aviator" for announcements regarding new store offerings. If there is an item you would like to be made available through the store, let us know. If there is enough interest, we may be able to add it to the store.

Once the online store is up and running we will add hats, jackets and ladies shirt styles. Be sure to check for your gear online at <https://gear.vhpa.org> or call 817-860-2430 if you have any questions. We plan a full ad with helpful clothing art in the near future.

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# GCA: “You are at 75 feet, 6 Inches Left of Center, and Correcting.”

I was stationed in Phu Bai in February of 1970. I was the Second Flight Platoon Leader for Pachyderms, A Company 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion - Chinooks.

We were flying back from Da Nang one night with a load of candles (flares). The weather was quite bad, so we could not follow Highway 1 over the Hai Van pass. There was a peninsula (AU) just north of Da Nang that went out into the South China Sea for about one-half mile. I thought I could fly around it and pick up Highway 1 on the far side of the Hai Van pass.

The ceiling was getting lower as I flew out to sea. I could not see my rotor blades since they were in the clouds. At that time, the flight engineer asked me to stop our descent since we were taking in water over the ramp in back. I looked at the pilot and said I was going on instruments. I pulled pitch and started to climb and broke out at 3500 feet.

The pilot turned the radio to Phu Bai NDB. I turned the aircraft from east to west and started to track in to Phu Bai radio. I called Phu Bai tower and asked for a GCA approach. They came back and stated that due to the bad weather the GCA was down. I reported I was at 3,500 feet, about 15 miles out tracking in on the NDB. The tower came back and told me to descend to 2,500 feet. I told them that if I descend I will be in the clouds. The tower came back and ordered me to “Descend, descend, descend, now.” There must have been some oil burners coming back from the north going to Da Nang Main. It was hard to descend to 2,500 feet looking at 5,000-foot mountains 20 miles in front of me as I was descending into the clouds.

We tracked into Phu Bai beacon. I started the ADF approach and reported beacon inbound. The tower came back and said the GCA was up and did I want a GCA. I said, “Yes” and they started to talk me down. During the approach they asked my air-

speed. I replied “20 knots” (normal would be 60).

As we got down to 500 feet minimum, GCA asked if I had the airfield in sight. I replied, “No.” GCA asked if I would accept a below minimum approach. I replied, “Keep talking.” And they did. Their last instructions were: “You are at 75 feet, 6 inches left of center, and correcting.” I replied, “Airfield in sight.”

Needless-to-say, two cases of beer appeared at the GCA shack the next day. I will never forget those words - You are at 75 feet, 6 inches left of center and, correcting. God Bless them. I will never forget those other words either “DUE TO BAD WEATHER THE GCA IS DOWN.”

*By David M. Hudyma*

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

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# TAPS

## 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

**Berthot, Hugh V. USA, CW4, Ret., Flight Class: 62-5; RVN: 63-64 UTT-68, 69-70 25 AVN 25 INF; PH (2); Callsigns: Buzzard 10/Raider 24/Red Carpet.**

Hugh V. Berthot went to be with the Lord September 26, 2017. Hugh was born in Chanute, KS, March 1, 1931. He joined the Army in 1948 and served his country for 30 years as a pilot. Upon his retirement from the US Army, Mr. Berthot moved to Seguin where he worked for the Sheriff's Department, Seguin High school as a bus driver, and Bus Barn supervisor for Navarro High School.

He lost his wife, Wila, and is survived by his second wife, Dee.

**Brunelle, Pierre V. USA, COL, Ret.; Flight Class: 59-5; RVN: 62-63 81 TC CO, 62-63 545 TC DET, 70 330 TC CO, 70 56 TC CO, 71 765 TC BN; LM, BS (2), MSM, ACM; Callsigns: Checkmate/Good Nature/Straight Arrow.**

"Pete" Pierre Victor Brunelle, a resident of Port Orange, FL, passed away February 4, 2018. Pete was born October 4, 1936 in Lowell, MA. He was a graduate of Lowell High School, 1954, and the University of New Hampshire, 1958. After graduation, Pete was commissioned in the U.S. Army, and served our nation admirably throughout a 28-year career.

Pete was survived by his adoring wife of 57 years, Karen, who subsequently passed February 20th, 2018.

**Clenney, Roger L. USA; Flight Class: 67-17; RVN: 67-68 117 AHC; Callsigns: Beachbum/Warlord/Pink Panther.**

Roger Clenney, 72, died December 5th at Mass. General Hospital after a heroic three-year battle with cancer. He was born in New Orleans, LA and raised in Revere, MA. He received his education in Revere, and earned a Master Electrician's license at

Coyne Electric in Boston. He was the owner and president of Clenney Electrical Services, Inc. in Medford, MA.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Pamela.

**Coletta, Mark P. USA; Flight Classes: 70-45/70-43; RVN: 71-72 162 AHC; Call signs: Vulture 18/Vulture 48.**

Mark Coletta died from stroke/pneumonia February 2, 2018. He did not wish an obituary.

He is survived by his wife Mary Kay.

**Cook, Daniel P. USA, MAJ, Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-25/68-501; RVN: 68-69 176 AHC; BS; Callsigns: Musket 31/Musket 6.**

Daniel Cook passed away with family by his side at Penrose Hospital, November 5, 2017. He was commissioned in 1970 and continued his career as a helicopter pilot and an Air Defense Artillery Officer.

After military retirement, Dan began a career in the telecommunications industry and spent many years working for GTE and ultimately Verizon before retiring fully in 2003.

He is survived by his wife Ann.

**Dugger, Jay L. USA, CW4, Ret.; Flight Class: 55-F; RVN: 62-63 39 SIG BN, 64-65 73 AVN, 67-68 1 CAV DIV.**

Jay, a "remarkable man", passed away peacefully at Madigan Army Medical Center (MAMC), where he had been a Red Cross volunteer for eight years, September 6, 2017. Jay was born in Dalton, NE.

Jay joined the Army Air Corps when he was 18-years old with the full intention of becoming an airplane pilot. He had planned to serve his time, get out of the service and become a commercial airline captain because as everyone knows, "They

make lots of money." After basic training, he was sent to Randolph Field, TX for primary flight training and most of his class was told, "WWII is finished and they have a surplus of pilots so what else would you like to do?" Jay chose to remain with the Army and went to paratrooper training. He got married and started a family at Ft. Bragg, NC. After five years of jumping out of perfectly good airplanes, Jay got the chance to go to helicopter pilot training.

Jay is survived by his wife Frances of Tacoma, WA.

**Elliott, Ralph P. USMC/USA; Ret. (rank unk.); Flight Classes: 69-41/69-37; died February 25, 2018 (no other data).**



Ralph Porter Elliott, Sr. of Louisiana, MO passed away February 25, 2018 at the Pike County Memorial Hospital in Louisiana. Ralph was born November 28, 1941 in Pike County, MO. He was a life-long resident of Louisiana.

He served his country in the United States Marine Corp. and the United States Army where he served as a helicopter pilot. He served and was injured during the Vietnam War and retired.

He is survived by his wife Linda Sue.

**Hall, Larry C. USA, LTC, Ret.; Flight Class: 70-38; RVN: 71-72 A/229 AHB 1 CAV; Callsign: Black Bandit 10.**



Larry Charles Hall, a resident of Gillham, AR, died January 20, 2017, in Christus St. Michael Health System in Texarkana, TX. He was born November 13, 1945 in De Queen. He was an electrician, and a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army. He served in Vietnam, Desert Storm, and in the Army Reserves.

Mr. Hall is survived by his wife, Dana Tracy Culp Hall.

# TAPS

**Hofstetter, Robert E. USMC, LTC, Ret.; Flight Class: 56; RVN: 69-70 HMM-263.**

Robert E. Hofstetter of Salem, died Sunday, June 25, 2017 at Doctor's Nursing Home in Salem, IL. He was born April 28, 1930 in Sparta.

Bob retired from the Marine Corps after 25 years where he served as a Jet Fighter Pilot and Helicopter Pilot. He served one tour in Korea and three tours in Vietnam. After retiring from the Marines, he worked 11 years as the maintenance manager at Means Industries.

He is survived by his wife, Juanita (Spangler) Hofstetter of Salem.

**Kelly, Kevin M. USA; Flight Classes: 70-47/70-45; RVN: 71-72 C/3/17 CAV; Callsign: Crusader 34.**

Kevin Michael Kelly passed away May 9, 2017 at his home in FL. Kevin served in Vietnam as a Cobra Pilot and was the unit Flight Instructor/Examiner for the Crusaders gun platoon.

Kevin flew with Leonard G. Anderson flying corporate jets for the same company, from their discharge from the Army until Kevin's death.

**Logsden, Lawrence E. USA; Flight Classes: 66-15/66-17; RVN: 67 48 AHC, 67 A/4 AVN 4 INF, 69 121 AHC; Callsign: Blackjack 21.**

Lawrence Logsden passed away December 23, 2018 surrounded by his family. Larry was born November 23, 1942. Larry graduated from Klamath Falls High School, class of 1960. He enlisted in the United States Army shortly after high school and was stationed in Korea. After re-enlisting, he qualified for Warrant Officer Candidate School, graduating to become a helicopter pilot.

He is survived by Charlene, his wife of 49 years.

**McKinnon, Steven L. USA; Flight Classes: 70-31/70-29; RVN: 70-71 114 AHC; Callsign: Knight 20.**

Steven Lester McKinnon passed away

March 14, 2018 at home unexpectedly due to illness. He was born December 20, 1950 in Bethesda, MD. He grew up in Daytona Beach, FL after his father retired from the Navy. He graduated from Mainland High School and earned an Associate degree from what is now called UCF. Upon returning from the war he became an EMT, and then one of the first paramedics in Volusia County. He worked in EMS for almost 40 years.

**Mitchell, Richard R. USA, COL, Ret.; Flight Class: 64-5W; RVN: 65-66 197 AHC; DFC, BS w/OLC; Callsign: Hawk 66.**

Richard R. Mitchell "Dick" formerly of South Riding, VA, passed away May 18, 2017 in Florence, AL. He was born in Indianapolis on Christmas Eve 1939.

He received a direct commission to Second Lieutenant in May 1966. After multi-engine fixed wing transition, it was back to Vietnam in 1969 to fly RU-8 aircraft with the 224th Radio Research Battalion. From then on, Dick was an acknowledged expert and pioneer in Army Special Electronic Mission Aircraft. From 1993 to 1999 he was manager at Raytheon and SAIC.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Kathy Mitchell.

**Naglehout, Maynard A.**

In the Mar/Apr issue, we posted notice for this member, but there was no obituary. Maynard passed December 21, 2017 at his home in Alexandria, VA. He was born in South Dakota. He graduated from Castlewood H.S. He attended South Dakota State College and joined the ROTC. He retired from the Army as a LTC earning the BS with Oak Leaf Cluster.

After his military career, Maynard started, and served as CEO of, Applied Resources Inc. Rosslyn VA, a defense contracting company.

He is survived by his wife Sharon.

**Nelson, Clinton D. USA, CW3, Ret.; Flight Classes: 70-49/70-47; RVN: 64-65 119 AHC, 68-69 123 AVN AMERICAL DIV, 71-72 60 AVN; LM, BS, MSM; Callsign: Ghost Rider 43.**



Clinton Nelson of Universal City, TX passed away November 22nd, 2017 after a long struggle with lung cancer, leukemia, and COPD. He was born April 2, 1942 in Chapman, NE.

Clinton retired after 26 years of service serving as an enlisted member and as a Warrant Officer. Out of his 26 years, Clinton spent a total of 6 years with the 507th Med. Co. better known as MAST Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic.

He is survived by his wife Sul.

**Newcom, Kenneth E. USA; Flight Classes: 68-515/68-27; RVN: 101 AVN 101 ABN, 158 AVN 101 ABN, dates not supplied; Callsigns: Comanchero 69/Phoenix 69.**



Kenneth was born October 3, 1946 and passed away December 20, 2017. He was born in Bay and lived much of his life in Jonesboro, AK and was a 1966 graduate of Nettleton High School. Ken was a member of Calvary Chapel in Jonesboro, Nettleton Masonic Lodge, and was a past member of the Civil Air Patrol.

**Newton, Donald E. USA, CW4, Ret.; Flight Class: 67-9; RVN: 67-68 A/229 AVN 1 CAV; SS, DFC, BS.**



A decorated Vietnam helicopter pilot, Donald Emery Newton, passed away March 11, 2018, at his home in Katy, TX. He was born October 26, 1943, in Sikeston, MO. Don grew up in the Boot Heel of that state, graduating from Lilbourn High School.

Don spent years selling advertising jingles, many for which he did the voice over. Later, Don and Linda owned and operated Showcase Enterprises, a highly successful television advertising and production studio in Houston.

Don is survived by his wife of nearly 40 years, Linda Newton.

# TAPS

**Ross, Vaughn R. Sr. USA; Flight Classes: 68-16/68-26; RVN: 69-70 57 AHC; DFC, BS, PH; Callsigns: Gladiator 16/Gladiator 3.**

Vaughn R. Ross, Sr. (Bobby) passed away March 5, 2018 in Baton Rouge, LA. Ross was born in Kansas City, MO February 2, 1944. Bobby started school in Louisiana and remained there for the rest of his life. He attended Southdowns Elementary, Glasgow Junior High and was a member of the first graduating class of Robert E. Lee High School in 1962. Ross later earned a degree from LSU, and in 2015 was inducted into the LSU Corp of Cadets Hall of Honor. He was inducted into the US Army in 1966 and commissioned a Second Lieutenant at Fort Benning, Georgia's Infantry School.

After separating from the Army in 1971, he worked for his brother for several years before co-founding Commercial Helicopters Inc, based in Lafayette, LA. Ross left CHI in 1984 to take an appointment as an undersecretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development-a position he held until 1988-whereupon he began an aviation safety consulting firm that he continued until his death.

**Roughen, Albert H. USA, COL, Ret.; Flight Class: 57-9; RVN: 66 162 AHC, 66 173 AHC; BS, PH; Callsign: Vulture 6.**



Albert Roughen passed away March 13, 2018 at Erlanger Hospital, Chattanooga, TN. He was born in Savannah September 14, 1932. He attended Marist School and graduated from Benedictine Military School. In 1950, he enlisted in the army during the Korean Conflict and rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant before being selected to attend the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA where he gained his officer's commission in the infantry. After Officer Candidate School, COL Roughen graduated Airborne School and the prestigious Ranger School as part of Ranger Class #5. Soon after, he attended the U.S. Army Aviation School

at Fort Rucker, AL gaining both his rotary and fixed wing qualifications. He graduated from the University of Nebraska with a B.S. in History. After retirement, Albert attended John Marshall Law School in Savannah. He graduated from Savannah State College with a B.S. degree in Industrial Arts and went on to teach at the college.

**Schoenauer, Gerald K. USA; Flight Class: 70-42; RVN: 71-72 A/7/1 CAV; Callsign: Apache 29.**

Gerald "Jerry" Schoenauer of Pottsville passed away Wednesday at Arden Courts Nursing Home, Linglestown, PA. He was born in Pottsville, PA, August 26, 1947.

Jerry graduated from Nativity B.V.M. High School, Class of 1965. He then earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Penn State University in 1969. After Vietnam; he earned his master's degree from the University of Tennessee. He then worked for the Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C., until retiring in 2007.

He is survived by his wife Barbara.

**Slye, William T. USA, LTC, Ret.; Flight Class: 57-6; RVN: 63-64 121 AHC, 67-68 1 TOW DET, 71-72 330 TC CO, 67-68 34 GS GRP; Callsign: Wrecker 6.**



William Tom Slye, Jr. passed away February 28, 2018 at the Creekside Terrace Rehabilitation Center after a long, courageous struggle with Parkinson's disease. Tom was born June 12, 1935 in Washington D.C.

Tom served 28 years primarily in the Army as a highly decorated helicopter pilot, Master Army Aviator and transportation logistics officer. He served three tours in Vietnam as a combat helicopter pilot; and flew in the Presidential Helicopter unit for both President Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon administrations. His career also included commanding a Cobra helicopter company and the last active duty unit of the CH-54 Skycrane helicopter unit in Germany.

He is survived by his wife Wanda.

**Whigham, Charles E. USA, CW3, Ret.; Flight Class: 65-3W; RVN: 65 1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 68-69 18 AVN, 70-71 11 CAG 1 CAV; DFC, ACM.**



Charles (Chuck) E. Whigham, a resident of Dothan, died March 13, 2018 at his residence following multiple illnesses. Chuck was born April 9, 1936 in Columbia, Alabama. He was a 1954 graduate of Houston County High School and later graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University at Ft. Rucker with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Professional Aeronautics. He served in the U. S. Army, Air Force and the National Guard, retiring after 21 years of military service.

After retirement, he worked as a Safety Manager (civil service) and was a pilot for several commercial organizations. He was a member of the V.H.P.A, First Cav. Association, A.O.P.A. and the D.F.C.

He is survived by his wife, Joan.

**Wilkerson, Timothy E. USA, Ret. (rank unk.); Flight Classes: 68-15/68-23; RVN: 68-69 A/4 AVN 4 INF; Callsigns: Blackjack 19/Blackjack 17.**



Timothy Eugene Wilkerson, 69, of Sullivan, passed away peacefully at home March 16, 2018 in Sullivan, IL. Tim was born in Hamilton, OH.

He was a gifted "computer techie" as he was completely self-taught and had no formal computer training. He is retired from the U.S. Army National Guard and from Eastern Illinois University. He enjoyed writing, and he has several self-published books.

He is survived by his wife, Julie Ohm Wilkerson.



# TAPS

Records of the recent deaths of the following potential members of the VHPA were gleaned from internet searches within the last two months. All the information VHPA has for these pilots may be found at VHPA.org 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.

Allen, David J. USA BG, Ret.; Flight Class: 59-4; RVN: 65-66 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; died March 17, 2018.

Balfour, William T. USA; Flight Class: 69-34; RVN: 70-71 187 AHC; died August 3, 2015.

Bredthauer, Howard G. USA; Flight Class: 68-508; RVN: 68 C/7/17 CAV, 68 192 AHC; DFC, BS; died November 28, 2017.

Cilley, Donald O. USA; Flight Classes: 67-25/67-23; died November 13, 2017 (no other data).

Dickey, Leas D. USAF; died November 21, 2017 (no other data).

Florian, John V. USA; Flight Classes: 68-24/68-42; died December 4, 2017 (no other data).

Gilsdorf, Ronald B. USA, Ret., (rank unk.); Flight Class: 57-7; died December 5, 2017 (no other data).

Hauser, Thomas H. USA; Flight Classes: 69-35/69-33; died March 2, 2018 (no other data).

Hutchison, Ross F. USA; Flight Class: 61-8; died February 27, 2018 (no other data).

Jaquish, Michael F. USMC; RVN: HMM 262; died December 16, 2017 (no other data).

Johnson, Stevan M. USA; died March 1, 2018 (no other data).

Menig, David B. USA; Flight Class: 66-4; RVN: 66-67 128 AHC; died January 6, 2018.

Miller, Kenneth E. USA, MAJ, Ret.; Flight Class: 68-21; RVN: 69-70 281 AHC; DFC, BS (2); Callsign: Wolfpack; died March 2, 2018.

Moore, David N. USA, CPT, Ret.; Flight Class: 69-22; died March 3, 2018 (no other data).

Murphy, Kevin E. USA, LTC, Ret.; Flight Class: Unk; RVN: 66 145 AIR-LIFT PLAT, 65-66 281 AHC; LM, DFC, MSM, PH; Callsign: Mardi Gras; died December 8, 2017.

Oxenreider, George USA, CW3, Ret.; died December 15, 2017 (no other data).

Palmer, Johnny D. USA; Flight Classes: 68-512/68-12; RVN: 68-69 71 AHC; Callsign: Rattler 3; died January 15, 2017.

Paul, Milton E. USA; Flight Class: 68-7; RVN: 69: 326 MED 101 ABN; Callsign: Medevac; died February 5, 2018.

Peterson, Dean T. USA; Flight Class: 69-47; RVN: B/229/ 1 CAV; died August 8, 2012.

Swilley, George R. USA died March 16, 2018 (no other data).

## INTERESTING URLs

### WW II American Spitfire footage

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/ie3SrjLlcUY>

### Early Vietnam era door gunner training film

<https://taskandpurpose.com/army-training-video-door-gunner/>

### Huey built in 1968 rescues hiker

<https://www.facebook.com/colliersheriff/videos/1718928754833566/>

# ~ LOOKING FOR ~

## The Rest of the Story -the iconic Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, November 14-17, 1965.

John Rea is looking for those participants in this legendary campaign who have as yet not come forward with their stories. "I don't have nor will I pretend to have the knowledge of the author of the forth coming, three volume "Slicks at War." My total effort here will be vindicated in opening an on-going dialogue into probably the sole legendary battle of that late, great Southeast Asian War."

I am looking for anyone in contact with the families of Sgt. James E. Bailey 118 AHC KIA 1964 or Cpt. Donald Fillers 118 AHC KIA 1965. I have photos they want.

Contact John Islin

I am looking for those with knowledge of the death of my brother, James Doyle Eisenhour, on August 18, 1968. James was Aircraft Commander of 240th AHC, UH-1 630 which was shot down by hostile fire west of Cu Chi. Individuals who may have knowledge are MAJ Garry Farmer, Warrant Officer Terry Morris, Ridge Smith, and Co-Pilot and Door Gunner of the tail # 630 involved in an extraction 18 Aug 68.

Please contact Mark Eisenhour

An earlier request for information yielded the name Robert "Bob" Preston. If anyone is in contact with him please advise him of my contact information I am gathering information for a book manuscript about E Company Rangers, which were attached to the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division.

LaMar Bryan

I am working on a book project with my dad who served with the 1/35 25th Inf. Div. in the fall of '66 to the fall of '67. They started out near Pleiku and ended up near Duc Pho during the switch the 25th and 4th Divisions.

I am interested in information on the air support and the unit(s) that would have supported them -in particular, a battle on 4-25-1967, near Duc Pho. LZ OD (Olive Drab) comes up, if that helps. I just recently came across information that the B 1/9 was part of the action. I would like to speak with anyone from the B 1/9 for information.

Adrian Stumph

My name is George Timmons; I was assigned to F Company, 25th Infantry LRRPs at Cu Chi, Vietnam in 1968. On 24 June 1968, several LRRP teams were transported to Nui Ba Den (near Tay Ninh) by a Chinook. On 25 June, I was wounded, but they couldn't evacuate me

since we were on a mountain at night, and it was a hot zone. On 26 June, about 0700, I was retrieved by a medical helicopter, using a hoist, along with another member who was also wounded. We were transported to the 45th Surgical Hospital at Tay Ninh. Basically, I'm trying to find the pilots who flew me out, so I can thank them.

George Timmons Cell:

I am looking to see if I can make contact with Razorback 35. I was with a Target Acquisition Arty detachment west of Saigon (5/70-2/72) and flew with you guys many occasions, mostly on Night Hawk missions. Our seven-man team was in the village of Cau Xang/Chau Hiep located about 7 km east of the Duc Hoa airfield. We were the village 1 km north of the huge Buddha statue in the northern Pineapple area. I am seeking any aerial photos of the area and our village. Also looking for Razorback 35 who I flew with on my last Nighthawk mission on Feb. 12 1972 when you guys took out a VC patrol including a VC major just west of our village. I am always looking for information and photos of our old AO as I am compiling information pertaining to this area commonly known as The Pineapple Plantation for some historic docs I am writing.

I am also curious as to the time frame that the Razorbacks flew in this area. Our unit stood down on 28 Feb 72 some two weeks after the above engagement. I would especially like to know when the Razorbacks left Vietnam or at least when they left this area west of Saigon. I would be especially interested in any other aerial photos of our village, as well as Duc Hoa and the wastelands in between. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Mark D. Raab 277th FA Det. 23rd Artillery Grp.  
(CMAT)

## Needed: UH-1 Dual Tachometer.

I've gotten somewhat involved with the folks at the Arizona Military Museum. One of the board members I met noticed the tail rotor bracelet I was wearing. He also had one on and happens to be an ex-Vietnam 1st Cav pilot. He's been diligently trying to complete the restoration of a non-flyable Huey gunship.

Apparently, the Huey is missing one instrument gauge (who would notice this but a pilot), so I told him I would contact the Aviator to see if you could put him in contact with other people that might have access to what he's looking for. Maybe he has something to trade. The museum is well stocked with an immense variety of Vietnam War artifacts.

Anyone who can assist, please contact me. Thanks a lot.

George Abernathy

## Looking for AircREW

I have a very good friend that was a Ground Pounder and served with D, 2nd of the 7th, 3rd Brigade, 1st cavalry Division. He served with D Company from late 1967 to late 1968. He has two questions about Helicopter Operations near Khe Sahn just before the siege was lifted.

1. He and his buddies had just finished loading wounded on a Medivac from the edge of a bomb crater. Each of the casualties had to be lifted out of the crater by sling. The last of the wounded had just been loaded and the helicopter had begun its ascent when it took heavy enemy small arms fire, (if one can call everything from AK to 51 Cal. Small arms fire). The Pilot did a 180 and headed back to a small 1st Cav. Artillery Compound. My friend believes the Pilot was losing altitude and ended up auto rotating, landing just inside the Compound Perimeter. He was wondering if everyone on board that bird made it Ok.

2. He was on a Slick, part of what was to be a large 1st Ca insertion near Khe Sahn when the AC

took a round through the leg. The Pilot took control and they ended up landing at a Marine Outpost hoping it had a Medic. He believes the crewmembers and grunts stayed at the Compound at least one night before someone figured out where they were and "rescued" them. He remembers a Marine 2nd Lieutenant, who had to be the "Out Post OIC", being extremely agitated about having a "Big Huey" parked inside the perimeter. Evidently he was sure that the Helicopter was going to make his little "fiefdom" a magnet for NVA artillery. My buddy is interested in knowing if the AC was OK.

*If you know anything about these two incidents, please let me know.*

Greg Ross, Founder, Past President VHPA

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# BLACK MARIAH

By Newt Ronan, Infantry Platoon Leader, 1968-1969

*The colonel's arm was hanging by a tendon at the bicep and his radio was missing. So, I had no radio and no idea what frequency the colonel had been using. I took the nearest radio from one of the platoon leaders and began calling "Mayday" in the open, dialing through frequencies, listening for a response.*

*"Atlas 36, this is Black Mariah. I hear you and will assist. First, I need to find you. I'll flash my landing lights. When you see them, talk to me."*

*The chopper flashed lights for 5 seconds. I couldn't find him. He'd flash, I'd scan the sky and then tell him to try again. And again. After several minutes, though, we had each other.*

*"Atlas 36, this is Black Mariah. Okay -- now, look straight at me and don't move. What is my clock position from you and am I coming towards you or away from you?"*

*"Black Mariah, Atlas 36. You're at nine o'clock and going away from me."*

*The chopper changed course until we were lined up and then flew to me, using my voice and his blinking lights to find me.*

*"Atlas 36, you'll need to talk me down through the canopy - if I use my landing lights here, they'll light me up with RPGs. I'm coming in dark and blind."*

*"Black Mariah, you're passing over me now."*

*"Atlas 36, I'm coming back around."*

*"Black Mariah, you're directly overhead. Come straight down."*

It's night inside the DMZ, where we'd been in running fire fights for almost two weeks. The NVA had withdrawn the previous night and we were dug in on two hills separated by a 100-foot valley and a small stream.

Both hills dropped off steeply into the stream bed. It was probably 250 meters between the tops of the two hills. My hill was densely wooded; the other hill had a 50 to 100-foot diameter clearing just below the top. The clearing was surrounded by tall trees; to avoid them, earlier resupply choppers had pitched their cargo from above the trees into the middle of the clearing.

I had one boot off and was drying my foot. The battalion commander was on the other hill, calling in defensive target marking rounds for the night. He'd have been smarter to leave that to our attached Artillery FO. The FO was better, and it was his job, anyway.

The colonel got careless that night. I could hear the calls over the PRC 25 followed by HE rounds landing at 3 o'clock, 9 o'clock, about 500 meters out. Then, he called for one at 12 o'clock, with us sitting on the gun target line. It was a short round - a round that lands short of its intended target.

On my hill, we heard the round coming and dove into our holes. We heard it hit - crack into the other hill. There was a

split second of silence and then, screams. We tried the radio but got no response. I struggled to get my boot and sock on, forcing myself to go slow and lace it tight; I didn't want to lose it running to the other hill.

I asked the platoon sergeant to keep my radio and to take over my hill. Then, taking Herman, my RTO, with me, I ran across the valley and stream to the other hill in the dark.

When I got there, I found about a dozen of 25 troopers wounded, half of those in serious or critical condition. The colonel had put the troops on the GT line - without recognizing what he was doing - and had blown them up with an 8 inch HE short round.

The colonel was out of commission, arm already torniqued and bandaged. Doc and some of the GIs were working on the rest.

We were deep in the DMZ; I wasn't sure of our grid location and I needed to find a way to medevac the wounded out of there without waiting all night.

Herman found the colonel's radio and an emergency frequency, and I started calling in the open - this is Atlas 36; emergency; men down; need medevac. I was sure I'd get no response, and I didn't for a few minutes, then, Black Mariah, flying a dark mission above the Ben Hai river, caught the call and came on. When I first saw his flashing lights, he was a spot on my horizon, five to 10 miles distant.

Black Mariah had a quiet, calm voice. I gave him a sitrep and he took over:

"Atlas 36, I'm going to hover until you tell me that I am directly above you. I can't see the trees, so I'm going to have you guide me straight down until my front skids are almost on the ground. You get your wounded ready and start loading them on as fast as you can. Roger?"

"Roger, Black Mariah. You're right above me. Come on in."

The chopper descended, its rotors frighteningly near the trees. Working with the unwounded grunts on the hill, Herman and I had laid out the wounded just inside the tree line, near where the chopper would have to hover. The worst of wounded would be first out: the other wounded GIs would likely have to wait for daylight and a medevac chopper.

"Atlas 36, get moving - we can't hold here much longer."

"Black Mariah, we're loading six wounded now."

Speaking to Black Mariah, I looked directly at the soldier with the worst wounds and said, "I've got one KIA." As I spoke, I saw that soldier's eyes widen and realized he was alive and listening to me pronounce his death sentence.

"Black Mariah, wait one, we have seven wounded to load."

"Atlas 36, just make it fast. We gotta go."

Epilogue:

Black Mariah left that hilltop and flew straight to the Good Ship Repose just off the coast. All the medevaced survived, including the trooper I'd thought dead.

On and off over the years, I tried to find out who Black Mariah was, with no success.

# ~ 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.*

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## Book Review by Author & Life Member Marc Liebman



### Review of *The Adventures of a Helicopter Pilot*. ISBN 13: 978-1500936136. Retail price - \$20.00

This is the story of a Marine Naval Aviator who flew H-34s in Vietnam in 1966 – 1967. If you don't know, the H-34 was a piston engine helicopter that first entered the inventory in 1954. Sikorsky used a magnesium/aluminum alloy skin to

save weight to increase its payload and as Bill points out, if an H-34 caught on fire, it would be a pile of ashes within thirty seconds. Bill's story is much like the rest of us

– hairy scary flying interspersed with boredom and hilariously funny antics. During his tour, he lost more than a few friends and the experience scarred him for life. Bill Collier became an adrenalin junkie and went on to fly for the CIA (that story is in another book by Bill called CIA Super Pilot Spills the Beans, Flying Helicopters in Laos for Air America). After flying for Air America, he flew commercially until he hung up his helmet. Underneath it all, he battled PTSD and it wasn't until 1993 that with the help of a woman he loved, did he begin to deal with the demons that plagued his life. For those of you who want to know what it was like to fly an H-34 in or out of combat, this book is for you. It tells a spell-binding story about Marines

## Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

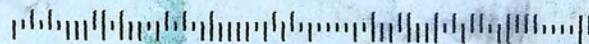
If you flew helicopters in combat – in any US service, any conflict – you should be a member of CHPA.



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