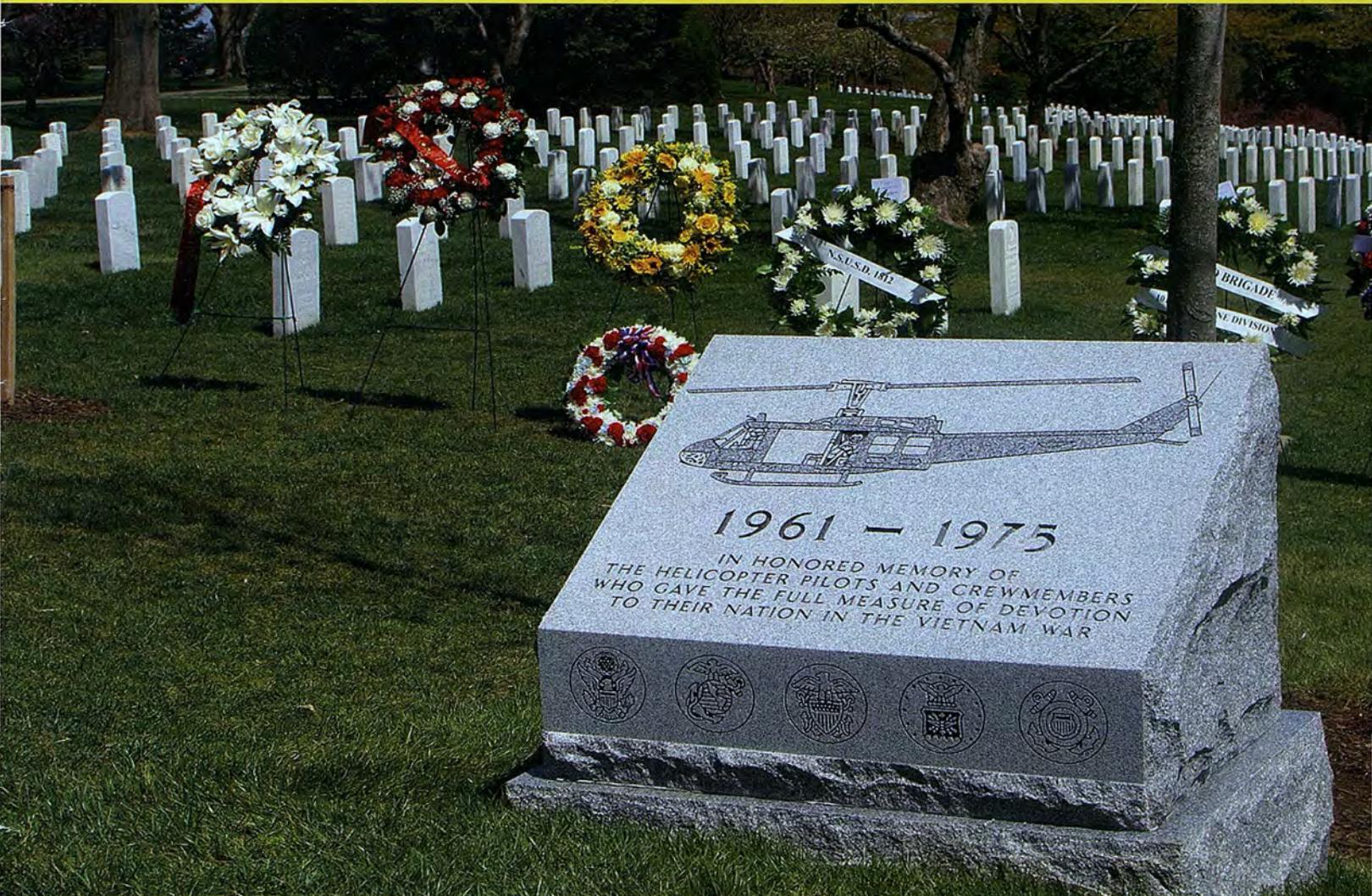




The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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Photo courtesy of Lisa McAndrew

A headstone for thousands

VHPA Officers, Members of the Executive Council and National Committee Chairman - 2017-2018

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Vice President	Art Jacobs
Past President	Mike Sheuerman
Senior Member	Art Price
Midterm Member	Donald Le Master
Junior Member	TBD
Secretary/Treasurer	John Powell
Founder	Larry Clark



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National Committee Chairmen and Committee Assistants



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From the President of the VHPA

If you attended the Annual Reunion in Atlanta, I certainly hope you enjoyed yourself. Hats off and special thanks go out to John Powell, National Reunion Chairman, committee co-chairs Art Jacobs and Don LeMaster, Sherry Rogers and Ashley Bird from our HQ staff, and to all who volunteered their time beforehand, during, and after the reunion to bring about all the success we witnessed.

If you were unable to attend the reunion this year, I certainly hope you will plan to be at next year's reunion in Kansas City. It will be earlier in the year than any of our previous reunions, May 27th through May 31st. Because it's several weeks earlier than what we might be used to, our Reunion Committee and HQ staff had to overlap reunions to ensure decisions were made with all the proper planning and due diligence. Now it's your turn to do your part, and that is to be looking out for the announcement that reunion registrations are open and underway. Register early and sign up for any capacity controlled event in which you would want to participate.

Following the Change of Command, in my opening remarks as President, I recognized several of our Past Presidents. For those who were there, please overlook the redundancy, as this is for those who were not there:

Bob Hesselbein was recognized for his dedication and leadership of our Legacy Committee. A beautiful monument was dedicated earlier this year in Arlington National Cemetery honoring our brother pilots and crew members killed in action during the Vietnam War.

I recognized John Shafer and Clyde Romero for developing



a plan whereby we could completely fund an endowment at Texas Tech University, ensuring the perpetuation of our legacy, without endangering the solvency of our association.

Bob Smith was recognized for his leadership of our Investment Committee, turning a few hundred thousand dollars into nearly two million dollars, ensuring our ability to provide for our membership for many years into the future.

Tom Payne has overseen our Scholarship Committee since its beginning. What began with the awarding of one scholarship of \$1,000 has grown to where we now award seven scholarships of \$3,000 each. This has benefitted our children and grandchildren and will continue to do so for generations to come.

Mike Sheuerman works tirelessly as membership Committee Chairman and that has led to unprecedented growth. However, there are still those out there that have never heard of the VHPA and he can't do it all by himself!

Mike Law and Gary Roush were recognized for more than 65 years (combined) of volunteer efforts on behalf of the VHPA. I simply do not have the space, or the knowledge, to list all of their accomplishments.

Through the years, since VHPA was founded by Larry Clark, thirty two men have served as VHPA President. It is men like those listed above, and those who have served as President, who have made the VHPA the organization it is today. I am honored to be YOUR President. I look forward to working with the Executive Council, the HQ staff, and committee chairmen as we continue what we've undertaken and move into the future.

John Sorensen

FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

We hope everyone enjoyed the reunion in Atlanta! If you did not make it to Atlanta, we hope to see you May 27 – June 1, 2019 in Kansas City, MO.

Be sure to check out the new VHPA Gear store on line. Visit <https://gear.vhpa.org> or <https://www.vhpa.org> and click on the "VHPA Gear" link to view the shirts available now. New items will be coming soon.

Remember – the deadline for ordering our 2018 directory is August 15th, 2018. A copy of the paper directories is \$15 and CD copies are \$10. Directories will be delivered in October 2018. The on line directory is free at <https://directory.vhpa.org>.

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

PAINT JOB

When the 1970 Christmas cease fire rolled around, I was flying with the Bandits, the gun platoon of the 118th AHC Thunderbirds out of Bien Hoa. I had made PC in the first platoon slicks but was then asked to join the Bandits in their Charlie models. After one last recon of the Bien Hoa perimeter before the cease fire, I realized I didn't have much to do. A buddy of mine J.D. (Dan) Badgley had made AC in the First platoon and was assigned a pretty-ratty looking H model as his bird. His crew chief had scrounged up a couple of gallons of "factory" paint (The real nice flat finish, light OD color stuff that the new birds were sporting when they arrived in country). The plan came together: we would repaint Dan's bird during the cease fire. I had worked on several car paint jobs in my high school days, so I expressed my interest in the project. While everybody else was getting ready for the Bob Hope show being staged in Bien Hoa, we were rounding up equipment for the transformation from "rag" to "show car." After a good bath, a lot of sanding and masking, we were ready. People crossing the flight line kept asking "AREN'T YOU GOING TO THE Bob Hope Show?" and we replied we had more important things to do. We started the painting process and after a few hours we realized we were hungry. The gunner who was assisting us volunteered for a pizza run and went to the Air Force snack bar and returned with a couple of what I remember as pretty-good Christmas Dinner pizzas, accompanied by a couple of cold beers. We finished with the exterior and then turned our attention to the interior. We decided the plain gray floor needed some pizzazz, so we masked off and painted some black walkways on the floor. It was truly impressive; Dan now had the jewel of the fleet. Although we had missed Bob Hope, and potentially some 1970s "sex bomb" like Ann Margret or the latest Playboy Bunny, we were proud of our work.

A couple of weeks later, JD had the opportunity to take a two week leave in the land of the "big PX." While he was gone on that well-deserved break, his aircraft wasn't just sitting there waiting for him to return, it was hard at work doing our usual CAs (combat assault) and Ash and Trash missions. On one of those days, my roommate, CPT Williamson, the 1st Plt. Leader, drew JD's aircraft for a routine CA with the 25th Inf. Div. We worked a lot with the 25th and had a good working relationship with them.



Williamson and another of my roommates, CPT Wash were flying C&C for the assault just west of Xuan Loc in the rubber plantation I believe was owned by Michelin. The rubber plantation was a problem for us; we couldn't just fire willy-nilly into the plantation, we had to restrict our "prep" to areas outside the rubber trees.

The CA was routine, with C&C flying orbits around the area, directing the lift platoon to the LZ and watching for signs of enemy activity. A loud bang from the aft of JD's ship re-focused the crew's attention. A sudden loss of power accompanied by flame wrapping around the right side of the aircraft made this routine CA an emergency for the crew. Collective reduced, instruments cross checked to confirm the engine failure, a forced landing area selected - autorotation was accomplished by the book. There was a clearing within reach and Williamson set up for his autorotation. At 100 feet, progressive deceleration, 15 feet initial pitch pull and cushion the landing was interrupted by the ground

commander bailing out of the left side of the aircraft. This was caught out of the corner of Williamson's eye and fearing he would land on the ground commander, Williamson drifted to the right. Unfortunately, a stump caught the right skid of the aircraft causing a rollover to the right. During the autorotation, the gunner was forced to move from the gunner's seat to the bench seat forward of the transmission to escape the flames. Of course, he didn't have a seat belt on and he was ejected to the right once the aircraft hit the stump. Wash, the copilot, was of short stature, and typically flew with his seat adjusted high. The force of the rollover caused his seat to "stroke" which resulted in a compression fracture of his spine. The ground commander suffered a fractured collar bone and a few scrapes, but was pretty much intact. Williamson and the crew chief were unscathed except for a need for laundry by the hooch maids. When I visited CPT Wash in the hospital, I also stopped by and visited the ground commander, who was a little sheepish over his actions, which were completely understandable given that they were engulfed in flames. The real miracle of this accident was the door gunner. He was ejected during the rollover, hit the ground and looked up to see the aircraft rolling over on top of him. He curled into a ball and when he opened his eyes he saw he wasn't dead and he scrambled up through the cargo compartment.

ment, jumped to the ground, and got away from the aircraft. Too bad we didn't have the lottery back then, because he should have bought a ticket based on that stroke of luck.

The cause of the conflagration was determined to be a catastrophic compressor failure that blew the fuel control off the side of the engine. This resulted in the one-half inch fuel line spraying pressurized fuel into the gaping hole in the engine. This completed the three legs of the fire triangle (air, fuel, heat) resulting in the fireball that consumed the "show car" we took pride in creating.

I wasn't flying gun cover for that assault, but got a good after action report from my roommate. The next day, I got the pleasure of blasting a full load of flechettes into the ashes and 90-degree gearbox which was almost all that remained of the "show car", so our maintenance people and the accident investigation board could check out the remains without worrying about booby traps.

JD was a little disappointed upon his return from the U.S. that his "baby was gone", but he was grateful things had turned out as well as they did, and also a little grateful he didn't have to do the paperwork for the incident.

CW4 Don Abrams Ret, Bandit 38, Crusader 27

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!! Please help us help them...THANKS!

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

Friends of Vinh Son

Web: FriendsofVSO.org

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THE AFTER ACTION REPORT

By Mel Pollock

It was the early days when four transportation companies were operating H-21s along with UTT operating UH-1 A & B gun ships. We were still trying to get a grasp of exactly why we were there, especially those of us who were armor officers assigned to transportation companies. I was a 1st Lieutenant in the 57th Transportation Company (air mobile light) evaluating the Air Mobile concept of gaining tactical advantage by moving troops quickly from place to place, arriving well-fed, fresh, and rested for combat.

The concept of rapid helicopter mobility was, of course, determined to have merit. As usual, success could not be left alone, and Air Mobility began its transformation into Air Assault. We were soon to become the 120th Assault Helicopter Company.

While replacing the truck with a helicopter to move troops from place to place was one thing, replacing the armored personnel carrier with a thin-skinned, vulnerable, aerial vehicle to assault an objective was quite another. The H-21s were approaching obsolescence and, for the most part, considered expendable. (When operating a flying machine, expendable is not a word the operator cares to hear bandied about.)

In his book, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara finally admitted he had no idea what was happening, and he was considered a genius. Since he admitted to sharing my ignorance, my twisted logic allows me to share his genius. I also had no idea then, and I still have no idea as to what or why anything was happening. To record these predetermined successful military events was the familiar and annoying bit of paperwork known as the "after action report." The task of creating the official account of an event was, and probably still is, accepted with varying degrees of gravity.

It was the responsibility of the mission commander to chronicle the history of the event. Some viewed it as a career advancing thesis whereby he had the opportunity to record his superior ability to command in an adverse combat situation which resulted in an unprecedented success with minimum expenditure of resources. Others saw it as a part of being in command and made the best of it. Most simply viewed it as a pain-in-the-ass. Whatever attitude the author might have had toward this creative bit of text it was eventually forwarded as the official history of the day's effort. To those of us who had participated in the action, the official report was occasionally identifiable. Our first clue was perhaps the date.

I recall late one evening we were headed "home"

after having spent the day in an assault operation south of Ca Mau in the Viet Nam Delta. It had been a long day of chaos and noise. We had made a number of troop lifts into a landing zone where we were greeted with gun fire. We returned the greeting with guns that were a lot closer to my ear.

This racket was punctuated by rockets from our UTT escort gun ships which, at times, impacted alarmingly close. In addition, we were entertained with randomly dropped bombs from Vietnamese-flown, prop-driven AD-6 Skyraiders, leaving us wanting a quick review of our briefing notes. All in all, it had been a very noisy day.

My platoon leader, a gregarious Captain and West Point graduate, was the designated mission commander for this operation. His relaxed, enjoyable, and effective style of leadership grated more stiff-necked officers who had a tendency to take things much too seriously. It was a pleasure to work for him and fifty-odd years later we are still friends. I won't use his name for simple privacy, certainly not to protect any nonexistent innocence.

Late that evening, we gathered into our formations for the flight home. He had me in the lead aircraft with my flight of four helicopters followed by four or five formations of four. He was in the second or third flight behind me.

Rather than go all the way to our home base after such a long day, we were traveling to Soc Trang to spend the night with the 93rd Transportation Company, a sister Helicopter Company who called themselves the Soc Trang Tigers. That would get us about half-way to our home base at Tan Son Nhut.

Darkness was overtaking this weary gaggle of helicopters. We were slumped in our seats relaxing and feeling pretty good about the day. We were returning with all our aircraft, very little damage, and the worst casualty required only a band-aid. We were enjoying the solitude of no gun fire. As a matter of fact, we were about half asleep and looking forward to our first beer that was just a few miles ahead.

We had elected to cruise at about five hundred feet or what we called "zap altitude" (because of the vulnerability to small arms fire). However, we considered that with darkness closing in and crossing over a reasonably secure area we would be alright in breaking the rule.

I saw three or four hooches coming up on the left front. As we came abeam of the hooches a tracer round came across our nose. Instantly, every gun in my flight opened up. Using all tracers, we lit up the night sky. What an amazing sight. There were ricochets off the

ground and the trees, going in all directions, leaving the impression they were coming from everywhere. Even my door gunner on the right side began to fire – the one closest to my ear again. I remember thinking, “What is he shooting at? The round had come from the left.”

The sights and sounds were magnificent. All that was missing were cannons from The 1812 Overture. We were unwittingly practicing the art of employing overwhelming and decisive force – and on the verge of shooting ourselves down.

Deciding almost immediately it was very likely an annoying “One-Shot-Charlie,” I was in the process of trying to stop our guns, especially that one in my right ear. One-Shot-Charlies were scattered around the country. Like a bunch of Barney Fifes, they had only one bullet at a time. I don’t recall them ever hitting anything – they would just startle the hell out of us when least expected.

I had almost managed to get our guns under control when the gregarious mission commander radioed to “return that fire up there.” My intelligent response was, “Roger, we are.” The guns were nearly quiet but with that bit of encouragement from the boss they almost started up again – including that gun in my right ear.

Finally, all was again quiet. Now wide awake, we continued toward Soc Trang. That beer was getting closer.

Sitting in the Tiger’s company lounge, finally enjoying the beer, the Captain called me over and asked, “Mel, where were we when we received the ground fire?” While sipping his well-earned libation, the process of drafting the after-action report was underway.

I hastily produced my traveling map, traced my finger over the approximate route we had flown and guessing at a spot, concluded “It was right about there.”

He perused the map, deciphered the grid coordinates, approached the paper with his Government Issue ball point pen and said, as if dictating to himself, “OK, at grid coordinates such-and-such we received heavy ground fire.”

Somewhat hesitantly, I corrected, “Captain, it was one round.”

“One round?” turning my statement into an astonishment steeped question.

“Yes Sir, one round.”

“My God, I saw bullets flying everywhere,” he insisted. “They were all over the sky.”

“Yes Sir, they were all ours.”

“All ours?” There was that tone of astonishment again.

“Yes Sir, all ours.”

Shaking his head in half-disbelief, his Government Issue ball point pen approached the paper a second time. He stopped again, chuckled, and muttered half to himself, “Return that fire up there.”

“Yes Sir, we appreciated the encouragement.” I noticed the ringing in my ears was beginning to subside and I was feeling better about keeping my lofty position as assistant platoon leader.

“One round?” he asked again – not really wanting to believe so much ammunition had been expended defending ourselves against a One-Shot-Charlie.

“Yes Sir, one round.”

Again, that same ball point in his right hand approached the paper. He hesitated, looked up and with a smile and asked, “Would you buy sporadic?”

“As you said, Sir, there was a lot of lead flying around and I’m sure I couldn’t account for them all. It well could have been sporadic.”

“Very well, Lieutenant, sporadic it is,” resembling a line from a tired old British movie.

He commented, as his ball point began to move across the paper, “I need to get this pain-in-the-ass finished so I can devote my full attention to the Tiger Lounge hospitality.”

As I said, working for him was a pleasure.



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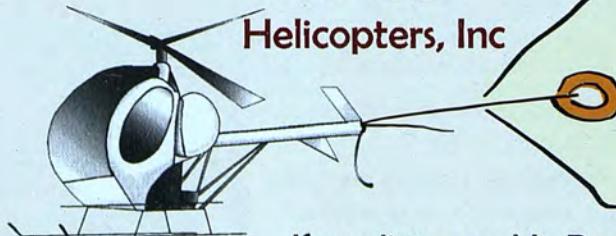
Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA.

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 17 New Members and covers the period 4-02-18 to 6-01-18

Bair Michael L. Gallatin Tennessee Army 69-30 D/3/5 CAV in 71-72	Damonte Carlton R. 'Carl' ** Albuquerque New Mexico Air Force 58-F 38 ARRS in 67-68	Sabre Randolph E. ** Denton Texas Army A/501 AVN in 65-66
Bevilacque Alfred J. ** New City New York Army 68-18 68-30 129 AHC in 69-70	Hoffman Paul P. Reno Nevada Army 70-48 B/7/17 CAV in 71-72	Smith Duane N. ** Sierra Vista Arizona Army 63 66-QC 135 AHC in 66-67; 614 TC DET in 66-67
Boggs Garry L ** Albion Iowa Army 69-34 USAASC in 70-73	Holt Robert W Statham Georgia Army 67-13 191 AHC in 67-68	Tucker James A. ** Springville Alabama Army 68-520 68-36
Bowes Graham E. ** New Bern North Carolina Army 70-45 70-43 68 MED DET in 71; 571 MED DET in 71-72	Kennedy Lowell L 'Butch' ** Mountain Home Idaho Army 71-13 117 AHC in 71	Wall John W. 'Warren' ** Enterprise Alabama Army 66-15 174 AHC in 66-67
Braa Robert J ** Quartzsite Arizona Army 67-1 66-21 C/228 ASHB 1 CAV in 69-70; B/229 AHB 1 CAV in 67-68	Marcy John Hudson Ohio Army A/3/17 CAV in 67; 190 AHC in 68; 1 TC BN in 71	Warden Beryl E. 'Jack' Nisswa Minnesota Air Force 56-R HQ 3 ARRG in 63-64
Brem Homer L Sun Lakes Arizona Army 173 AHC in 66-67	Roemer Steven F. 'Steve' ** Livonia Michigan Army 68-22 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV in 69-70	

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Ned Crimmin

TSgt, USAF, Ret

USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74

USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83

Tours of Duty:

1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx

1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England

1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION SATISFIED CLIENTS

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

KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

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

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Assault - Cavalry - Trans - Medical Rescue etc.

Fair Prices Paid. Not for profit.
References available.

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



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Harrowing Day at LZ Professional

This story is an attempt to tell about a harrowing day at America's LZ Professional in the mountainous jungle west of Chu Lai. Only the names of my fellow Divarty Air pilots are real. The events and other characters are as I remember. Darryl James, Loach Driver, America's Divarty Air, Chu Lai, '68-'69.

0730 Hrs. 1969

DivArt Operations

Captain Birmingham spoke hurriedly on the phone as the new Assistant Operations Officer, Lieutenant James, walked into the Operations hooch. James wasn't scheduled to fly today. Birmingham wanted him to sit in and learn the Operations business.

Birmingham hung up the phone and said, "James, sorry, but I need you to get to the Admin pad and pick up Lieutenant Colonel Stakowski and another passenger and take them to Professional. The LZ was hit hard last night and yesterday afternoon. Shit, we lost a Hook from mortar fire on the hill, and the place has been hit hard and is crawling with NVA. Sorry about the unscheduled mission. Be Careful, Darryl."

"Always careful," said the pilot. He went to the door, turned back to Birmingham, and said, "Which ship, Amigo?"

He checked his paperwork and said, "Ah, take 245."

"The Whale?"

"Yeah."

James grabbed his gear and walked down to the flight line. Spec Four Wallace met him and saluted.

"Morning, Sir."

"Good Morning, Whale. How's it going?"

"Great, Sir. You taking my ship?"

"Roger, that?"

"She's all set, Sir."

The crew chief helped James preflight and helped him strap in. He held the fire extinguisher as James started up the helicopter with the blue whale painted on it. He smiled at the Lieutenant and gave him a thumbs-up as the 'Whale' hovered away.

The Loach departed Ky Hai and turned south for the three-minute run to the Admin pad. An odd-looking pair stood hatless leaning against a quarter-ton jeep. One figure was short, slightly built with gray hair and wore the insignia of a Lieutenant Colonel. He held a steel pot in his hand and had a 45-calibre automatic strapped to his waist. An M-16 rested on his leg as he stood in a classic contrapposto pose like a Greek statue.

Colonel Stakowski was 42-years old and on the Full Colonel's promotion list. It was his second try to make the list, his final chance, but he made it. Not making this list would have been a career-ending event for the 1957 West Point graduate.

He watched the Loach land, then said to his companion, "This has to be it, Bob."

The Colonel climbed out of the jeep followed by a bear of a man wearing the stripes of a Sergeant Major. The man was over six feet tall and weighed 250 pounds - a man few would want to

upset. The Sergeant Major, about the same age as his Colonel, was nearly bald. He, too, carried a steel pot, an M-16 and had a sidearm strapped to his side.

Both men walked up to the helicopter and stowed their steel pots and M-16s in back. Their driver brought them flight helmets from the jeep. The two waved a noiseless "Hi" to the pilot and climbed in. The Colonel climbed in front and the Sergeant Major struggled putting his large frame in the left rear seat.

"Good morning Colonel," said the pilot over the intercom, "I'm Lieutenant James."

"Hi James," replied Stakowski. "They told me you are driving today."

"That's Sergeant Major Bob Stevens in back holding down the fort."

"Good morning, Sergeant Major."

"Morning, Lieutenant."

The pilot turned to his left seat companion and said over the intercom, "Are you ready to go to Professional, Sir?"

"Roger. It's our first trip out there, Lieutenant, but we don't have time for a tour. We lost 34 men last night. I need to be there as soon as possible. How long will it take?"

"About 30 minutes, Sir. We lost a Chinook on that hill yesterday."

"Yes, I know. It's bad out there."

The Loach lifted off from the Admin pad and departed north along Highway One. After about 15 minutes, the Loach turned through a pass in the mountains and steered toward LZ Professional. The lonely aircraft followed a valley partly obscured with a morning ground fog. As they ventured west, the morning sun broke up the ground fog revealing a green, lush valley. A valley dotted with peaceful appearing mountain villages. The peaceful look was misleading for this valley was territory infested with NVA activity.

On Professional a Chief Warrant Officer and Spec 5 were exhausted from lack of sleep. They spent a harrowing night enduring an onslaught of mortar, small arms, and heavy caliber fire. Technically guests, the two had joined in for an all-out defense of the perimeter last night. The guests were artillery technicians, not combat soldiers, but they held good account of themselves.

The hill's advanced new counter-fire radar had been down for several days. It was used to direct counter fire from enemy artillery and mortars. The two techs came out three days ago to get the advanced radar going again. Although the hill had been under heavy fire, the new system wasn't a high priority to the battery commander. The radar was more effective against conventional artillery, not the highly-mobile light mortars that were bringing misery to his men on the hill. The two technicians had the radar working this morning. It was time to get off this hill. They sat on cots in the operations bunker, dirty and tired drinking black hot coffee. Their duffel bags and spare part cases sat at

their feet. They declined breakfast. The men planned to eat a hot, quiet meal in Chu Lai. The two had been promised an early ride off the hill.

At the moment, LZ Professional was the hottest spot in Americal Division. The mountain firebase took heavy casualties during the night and was licking its wounds in the early morning sun. Two Dust-off helicopters braved the mortar fire and darkness to evacuate some of the wounded. The dead soldiers would be removed today if helicopters could land.

The FM radio clicked alive in the operations bunker. "Tiger Two, Phoenix One-Three, over." The two radar men, sitting in the radio hooch, looked over at the olive drab radio as the Battery's XO picked up a mike and answered, "Go ahead Phoenix One-Three this is Tiger Two."

"Phoenix One-Three is approaching your position from the east. We are about zero eight miles out. Be advised I have an Oscar five on board."

"Roger Phoenix One-Three, we currently have a fire mission pending. We have our guns in a check fire in for you to land. We will hold the check fire for your immediate departure. We have two PAXs for you. They will be waiting at the West Side pad. Be advised we have been taking mortar rounds periodically."

"Roger Tiger Two."

"THAT'S OUR RIDE, replied the Chief Warrant Officer.

In the approaching Loach, Lieutenant James pressed his intercom switch and said to his front seat passenger, "Sir, that's LZ Professional out ahead."

"Roger," said the Colonel as he studied the smoking hill.

Even in the distance, they sensed the significant damage on the hill. Smoke drifted slowly up from various points along the hill. The east side of the hill seemed the worst. A dark outline of burned debris was all that remained of the CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

James slowed to 60-knots and began a tight left descending turn.

Below an NVA soldier watched the Loach descend in a graceful spiral, turning to the left. It reminded him of an eagle circling to dive in to catch a fish in the marshes. A scene he witnessed many times at his homeland to the east. He studied the helicopter. It seemed to tighten its turn and descended more rapidly.

He caressed his motor tube and whispered to his ammo-bearer who was holding the rocket in his hand, "Soon."

The chopper passed in front of them at an altitude of 300 feet. Suddenly, machine gun fire opened up well off to their left reaching up to the turning helicopter. Shit, he thought, don't fire and scare it off, Comrades. It is my kill today.

As sparks erupted out the Loach pilot's open right side door, James tightened the turn and dropped lower to fall away from the gunfire.

James transmitted, "TIGER, ONE-THREE IS TAKING FIRE!" he paused, then continued, "No hits, we are OK."

"Roger, Phoenix, our grunts are returning fire."

The Loach continued down and flattened its descent on

short final. Fifty feet in the air, James slowed the Loach to 30-knots to land. The pilot noticed soldiers moving toward the landing pad carrying bags.

He thought to himself, Shit, I know you're anxious to leave, guys, but back off and let me land this thing.

The pilot blinked, as a burst of white light erupted in front of the Loach's windscreens. Gray dirt and debris leaped into the air hiding the landing pad from view. A loud crackle and shock wave buffeted the Loach.

Adrenaline rushed through the Loach driver as he added full power from his collective. The nimble Loach abruptly nosed forward past the pad and rose quickly as another explosion erupted behind the helicopter. He felt the tail buzz from another shock wave. The helicopter climbed swiftly to the safety of the sky.

Shit, thought the pilot that was close, real close.

"Phoenix One-Three, Tiger Two, Are you OK?"

"We're OK, Two," James said with a shaky voice over the Fox Mike radio.

"Roger, One-Three, stand by." Seconds later, the radio crackled with, "One-Three, we just took two casualties by the pad."

"Colonel," James said over the intercom. "Did you hear that, Sir?"

"Roger," he asked, Lieutenant can we evac those casualties?"

"Not if they're serious; not in a Loach"

The radio interrupted, "One-Three, I am afraid your PAX are Kilo-Indian-Alpha," said a shaky voice.

"Sir," replied the pilot in a shaky voice over the intercom, "They're gone. I saw them out front waiting for me. I, I, ah, I suggest we abort, Sir, and could try to land later. The Gooks, they were, I mean ARE, THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY WAITING FOR US TO LAND AND HAVE ZEROED IN ON THE PAD."

"Lieutenant," replied the Colonel in a calm, casual voice. I really need to be there. "These are my men; they're hurting. They need me. Let's try again."

The radio crackled, "Phoenix One-Three, this is Tiger Two. Stay east of the hill. We have a fire mission west."

"Roger, Two-Six."

One 105-howitzer fired three rounds to a close in target to the west of Bronco. The rounds left the guns in a high-arching flight path.

"One-Three, be advised our guys are firing machine guns to the west and east."

"Sir, OK," James replied over the intercom, "I am willing to try again, but I can't hover or stay sitting on the pad. I'm going to bounce in. You'll both need to jump off IMMEDIATELY."

"No problem, Lieutenant. Let's have a go as soon as they give us another check fire."

"Roger, Sir we'll give it our best shot."

"Phoenix One-Three, this is Tiger Two; we have a check fire again for you. State your intentions, over."

"Roger, Two we're coming in."

The Colonel removed his flight helmet. The Sergeant Major handed him his steel pot from the back seat. The Colonel put it on and fastened the chinstrap. In the back seat, the Sergeant major did the same and then carefully strapped down both flight helmets on the vacant rear right seat.

The Loach spiraled out of the sky in a steep, aggressive diving tight turn as if daring the enemy to shoot at them. The pilot looked left and saw tracers flash by the Colonel's profile in the left seat. He was about to transmit this information to the hill, when to his amazement, the Colonel unfastened his seat belt and shoulder harness and deftly climbed over the collective and stood on the skids looking back at the source of the machinegun fire. The Loach dove in the steep left turn as the Colonel held on. The Colonel glanced up briefly at the pilot, smiled and then stared back down. This guy is Effing John Wayne, thought the pilot. Unbeknownst to the pilot, the Sergeant Major also climbed out on the left skid holding on with one hand. His other large meaty hand was inside the cabin balancing the two M-16s on the seat. The Loach spiraled in jerkily to land. A few feet from the pad, the Colonel and Sergeant jumped off the skid and fell into a paratrooper's roll. The oversized Sergeant Major amazingly rolled instantly to his feet holding the two M-16 rifles and helped pull the Colonel up away from the landing pad. The Loach bounced off the pad into the air and with full power applied, swiftly took off.

Two minutes earlier, the high-tech radar that was repaired by deceased techs painted the mortar rockets' arcs and back calculated their firing position. These data automati-

cally fed into the FADAC computer. The Battery Commander immediately gave authority to shoot three-105 millimeter HE (high explosive) rounds with radar-controlled airburst fuses. Everything worked as it was designed. Data fed into the computer was correct and accurate. The gun settings obtained from the computer output were correctly set by the gunner to gun #1 and then rechecked by their Second Lieutenant. The fuses were properly set and worked as the manufacturer said they would. The first round exploded 75-feet directly above four camouflaged men dissembling the mortar. Shrapnel from the exploding warhead rained down on the brush that so effectively hid them from sight. Now it provided little protection from the steel pouring down. By the time the second round came down, they were already dead.

The Commanding General sent reinforcements to Professional. Slicks brought in fresh infantry to relieve the weary perimeter troops and pull out the American KIA. Fresh supplies and hot chow were sent. Gunships and fast movers peppered the hillsides around Professional all day. The sky above was filled with aircraft.

Later that day, Captain Dotson was to witness yet another tragedy on the hill. He came out in the late afternoon to retrieve the colorful Colonel and Sergeant Major when directly ahead of him he saw a helicopter pilot's worst nightmare, a midair collision. Two Slicks carrying supplies to the men on the hill collided, explosively killing everyone. Debris rained down on the west side of Professional. It was a chaotic debris of metal and men- a debris of death.

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Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

I just became aware of your organization recently. As an infantry staff sergeant with the 101st I worked from Birmingham, Evans, and other Firebases in I Corp Hue and Phu Bai. I and many others owe our lives to the work of you pilots from Cobras to Hueys.

I was medevaced once; air assaulted many times and often called in air support from you guys - just wanted to say thanks.

Those were hard times for all of us but we persevered!

Gorden Townsend

Gorden, you are welcome. Both Tom Hirschler and I appreciate your thoughts on behalf of our member and nonmember helicopter pilots. Tom Kirk

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July 8, 1970

In July 1970, I was the Operations Officer of C Troop, 2/17 Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) located at Phu Bai. I had arrived in Vietnam in September 1969 when the Troop was located outside of the city of Hue at LZ Sally, before it moved to Phu Bai Airfield in January 1970. The Troop's primary area of interest was the Ashau Valley. Troop A was located at Quang Tri, south of the DMZ; Troop B was located at Camp Eagle along with Squadron headquarters. The Squadron Commander was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Mollinelli, who was a dynamic personality and whose personal bravery and skills as an aviator were legendary. He led the "Out Front" Squadron from the front and he may have been the most decorated Aviator of the Vietnam War. LTC Mollinelli was chosen as the 1971 AAAA Aviator of the Year.

When I arrived in-country, the Ashau was a challenging Area of Operations. It was an avenue of approach into the southern part of South Vietnam and fed off of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. However, in the Spring of 1970 the level of vehicle traffic and anti-aircraft weapons in the Valley had significantly intensified. The North Vietnamese, who were operating in the Ashau, were not fighting a guerilla war. They withstood Arc Lights by B-52s, regular air strikes by fighter aircraft and everything we could throw at them, but still the NVA persisted; they accepted the casualties while intensifying their operations. The nature of the air cavalry mission frequently resulted in flight crews reacting to the NVA's initiative, simply meaning, the NVA shot at us first. This vignette is about one day of the war, July 8, 1970.

The Troop Operations received a call from Cheyenne Phantom, LTC Mollinelli's call sign, to immediately get as many Cobras as possible in the air and to head for Quang Tri. He also needed a command and control aircraft. The C Troop commander was on R&R, so I grabbed a Cobra and a scout and we launched while leaving instructions for the rest of the guns, scouts, and slicks to follow us as soon as they could. We had to divert our other assets that were on missions. I was flying with Rockets Ridenour who was competent, very conscientious and an all-around good guy. The Cobra aircraft commander was CW2 John Baron who was a cool, level-headed, highly-skilled Cobra jock and was mature beyond his years. I knew I could count on John. CW2 John Judge, LT Gary Swift, and Specialist Steven Carr were flying the OH-6 while conducting the scout mission. This crew's accomplishments while flying the aero scout mission during their tour of duty is worth a separate article. The problem is, no one would believe it. However, on this day all of us were in for a long, eventful day.

While in the air, LTC Mollinelli told me to head to the south of Khe Sanh because he needed to break

station and refuel. I was to send my gun and scout to Quang Tri where they would be briefed. He told me A Troop had jumped a large number of NVA in the open and there were two A Troop Cobras and a scout on station. July 8, 1970 was a busy day in South Vietnam and I Corps. The siege of Fire Base Ripcord was ongoing and was only a few clicks from where we were headed. Also, Fire Bases O'Reilly and Kathryn were receiving a lot of attention from the North Vietnamese Army. I do not know where the A and B Troop Commanders were, but I am sure they were gainfully employed. Cheyenne Phantom ended up with me, Rockets and crew as his relief C&C. As we approached the area of operations south of Khe Sahn, we saw LTC Mollinelli's Huey pass under us headed towards Quang Tri.

When I arrived on station, the two A Troop guns and the scout were engaging the NVA. It took a little time to wrap my mind around what was taking place. To the best of my knowledge no one had taken fire and they were coordinating their gun runs to put down as much ordnance as possible, as quickly as they could. The scout would mark the target and pop smoke and the gun would be inbound. Soon after we arrived on station, the A troop team had to break station to refuel and rearm and another team of guns and a scout had arrived on station. John Barron, another Cobra, and I believe the C Troop scout arrived with them. There was a small stream we used as control measure. The scout would pop smoke center of mass of a group of NVA and scoot immediately to the other side of the stream and mark the targets on that side. At the same time, the Cobras would make a run and climb so as to roll in on the targets on the other side of the stream. We came close to having continuous fire on the targets. From my vantage point, in orbit as a C&C aircraft, it looked like a well-choreographed dance. The radio traffic was short and focused although much of the time it was quiet. There really wasn't much to say other than "smokes out," "inbound," and "going hot." John Barron reported he wasn't firing center of mass of the smoke, but frequently engaging individual targets and there were a lot of targets.

Cheyenne Phantom arrived on station to relieve me and told me I needed to make a quick turn-around. When we arrived back in the Area of Operations, the pace had let up. The scout reported the NVA had broken up into small clusters and were hiding in the elephant grass and he had to find them and mark their specific position. We had lost the rhythm and the Cobras were no longer making continuous gun runs; however, I believed they were still being effective. While I was on station, none of our aircraft reported taking fire, which was unbelievable. The NVA seemed to be completely disorganized. In less than an hour, Cheyenne Phantom arrived to relieve us and told me we were going to insert our ground cavalry troop, D Troop. We departed the area and headed for Quang Tri to refuel.

When I arrived at Quang Tri, I went into the tactical operation center (TOC) where Squadron had collocated a jump TOC from Camp Eagle with A Troop's operations. I had become vested in the operation and thought I had something important to say. I wanted to talk to the Squadron S-3, Major Mason, about inserting D Troop, since I believed our Cobras were still being effective. I wanted to tell him it may be a good idea to delay putting in D Troop for an hour. I walked in talking loudly when someone grabbed me by the arm and escorted me out the door. I was told one of the Assistant Division Commanders, a Brigadier General, was in the TOC being briefed. I was to stand outside, and they would talk to me later. I stood there until someone told me my aircraft was running and the Squadron Commander wanted me to relieve him. I was ready to go...I no longer wanted to be there anyway.

When we arrived on station, LTC Mollinelli briefed me that D Troop was on the ground and moving and he gave me call signs to contact. We now had a lot of Cobras from several units involved in the operation. Once inserted into the fray, the guns were able to brief and relieve each other like the pros they were. Almost immediately after Cheyenne Phantom departed, a scout reported an NVA soldier was standing in the open with his hands up and was surrendering. We had inserted D Troop to capture POWs, maps, weapons, etc. but this NVA soldier wasn't close to D Troop. I was surprised he was not shot by the NVA, but he somehow managed to isolate himself. I told the team working in that sector that I would extract him. I had the LZ and scout in sight and was on an extended final approach when LTC Mollinelli dropped in front of me and cut me off and simply said, "I'll get him." He told me if we had picked up the POW we would have to fly with him in our aircraft for an hour and a half and it made more sense for him to extract the NVA soldier since he was headed back to Quang Tri. Cheyenne Phantom called taking fire going into the LZ and coming out. Once out of the LZ and gaining altitude and with the POW on board, another aircraft escorted him back to Quang Tri. He thought he might have a fuel leak or other mechanical problems. LTC Mollinelli didn't have to make the pick-up, but he chose to for operational reasons.

Soon after extracting the POW, D Troop reported a patrol was separated from the rest of the unit with two wounded soldiers. The main body was able to reach the patrol but only after several more soldiers were wounded. Of course, the total focus was on supporting D Troop and evacuating their wounded. The ground operation was very successful and a large number of enemy documents were taken along with three captured POWs. D Troop was inserted around 2 PM and extracted around 6 PM. Cheyenne Phantom was quick to get a different Huey and relieve me around 4:00 PM.

While flying back to Quang Tri, I looked up and

noticed our aircraft was in a shallow descent and if we didn't level off we would eventually crash. I looked over at Rockets who had a firm grip on the controls and his eyes were closed. Obviously, it was a long day and it was my turn to fly. When we arrived at the Quang Tri airfield, refueled and shut down, we were told to fly a POW to the 1st ARVN DIV HQs, or the headquarters of the 1st Division of the Army of Vietnam, at the Citadel in Hue.

Two of C Troop's soldiers, who were assigned to our infantry platoon, escorted the POW on board the Huey and they got on board as security. The POW was wearing a belt with a really-cool belt buckle. I wanted it, but I figured everyone wanted it, so none of us said anything. The NVA soldier appeared to be healthy and his uniform looked new. As we followed QL1 back to Hue, the crew chief said the POW was squirming around and he might get loose and jump out. I couldn't help but think that it would not be good if he were to jump, primarily because I would be in a lot of trouble. I told the crew he couldn't be allowed to do anything dangerous to us or to himself and that they had to ensure he didn't. I decided not to look back over my shoulder and nothing else was said. We were met at the pad of the 1st ARVN DIV in the Citadel and the POW, who still appeared to be in good condition, was escorted to a waiting jeep. After landing at Phu Bai, one of the guys told me they gave the POW a cigarette and he didn't cause any more problems. I wondered if the POWs belt played a role in all of this.

My story is mostly told from my memory and the memory of others and there probably are some factual errors. Certainly, all involved have a different perspective on a fight that took place 48 years ago. However, I found on the internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/515469.pdf> a copy of the 101 ABN DIV journal that tells that we engaged elements of the 9th NVA Regiment and killed 139 NVA soldiers and captured a large number of enemy documents, in addition to the POWs. On July 8, 1970, we had the initiative and the NVA were reacting, as best they could, to us.

I wrote the summary to this story in 1970 in an after-action report to Squadron. Sonny Coughlin, who was an OH-6 crew chief and M-60 gunner in the scout platoon while I was platoon leader, shared this document that he found in the Library of Congress:

I want to thank John Barron, Gary Swift and Sonny Coughlin for sharing their memories with me. Their input was valuable. Also, I would like to recognize all the Brave Troopers of C Troop, 2/17 Cav, "The Condors."

General Molinelli was a great commander, warrior and Army Aviator and was a Major General when he died of cancer in 1987.

Danny C. Cox, L10086 - VHPA



I just need to give it to you straight ~ April and May, 2018 should go down in VHPA history as EPIC ACCOMPLISHMENT months. 18 April ~ dedicating the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument in Arlington National Cemetery. WOW! 3 May ~ 100% of the VHPA's published Newsletters and Aviator Magazines available for anyone in the world to view online for the first time. WOW!

But wait!! There is really much more to celebrate!! Literally the hopes and dreams for many VHPA Past Presidents, Executive Council members, plus committee chairs and members were accomplished in April and May. These results came after many years of work and dedicated effort ~ much of it hardly visible to the membership at large.

Let me back up for a moment. It is a well published fact that under Tom Payne's leadership in 1998 the VHPA adopted the Vietnam Center and Archive (VNCA) at Texas Tech as the Official VHPA Repository for all things related to the Vietnam War. Over the next dozen years only a few VHPAers "got it" by shipping (in some cases) boxes of material to the Archive. When Jack Swickard transitioned the Aviator magazine to David Adams, he wisely shipped two large boxes - literally a gold mine of Newsletter and Aviator history. More on that in a moment. When Phil Marshall needed to "downsize;" he sent several boxes of Newsletters, Calendars, Directories and VHPA Presidential papers. When Mike Sloniker retired from Active Duty he sent MANY boxes of unit orders and histories. Finally, by way of example, when Pappy Jones passed away, his wife Susan sent LOTS of stuff. About 2010, I dropped off almost a complete set of VHPA Calendars and asked for a tour of the Archive. While trolling through rows and stacks of material waiting to be processed, I see Jack's red box (most are white or maybe just nondescript old copy paper boxes); so I ask, "How long has that been here?" "When will it get worked?" Answers - At least five years and based on our current high priority backlog ~ maybe another ten years. OUCH!!

Fast forward the movie to 2016. The Executive Council approves a \$9K "non-endowed gift" to the Archive to hire a student to begin working on the "VHPA backlog." Since we are paying, we get to set the priorities for the collections to be worked. Priority #1 is the Newsletters and Aviator. Priority #2 is Jack's

collection. #3 Phil's. #4 Sloniker's. The short version of the story - during 2016-2017 some success but they really had a hard time getting and keeping a trained student for scanning. However, the Archive figured out what they wanted the table of contents for the Aviator to look like and we "solved" the copyright road block. Also, more VHPA collections start coming in. Another \$9K for 2017-2018 (we had a large credit from unspent 16-17 funds), BINGO! The Archive hired the first ever "student processor" named Rebecca V. and a really good "student Aviator scanner" named Matthew F. Two students working VHPA stuff at the same time. The VHPA backlog was something like 35 Collections containing more than 41 linear feet of documents if you stacked them one page on top of the next! Rebecca pretty much "cleared" the Processing queue, so today we have a LARGE scan queue. Matthew worked just Aviators! To show you how bad things were; even in mid-2017 the VHPA was NOT ABLE to produce a complete roster of issues. OUCH!! (Gary Roush maintains he has a complete roster on the secure side of www.VHPA.org.) Now Jack's and Phil's boxes had many but not all of the issues. VHPA HQ had a "pretty good" set but still there were gaps. OK, send in the Cavalry!! John Shafer (and a couple of others) "filled in" the blanks and the Archive was able to scan 100% by April 2018.

See the long article starting on page 17, for how you can access all the Newsletters and Aviators on-line in the Virtual Vietnam Archive (VVA).

So why am I so happy for the Archive and the VHPA? Simple, all four of our top priority items are DONE and are online!!! MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!!

Stay calm! We have already "reloaded" and have a new "plan of attack" for the 2018-2019 school term. The VHPA Membership Directories, VHPA Calendars, several important photo collections, moving media, oral histories, and unit histories plus most VHPA Collections will be addressed. We are prepared to have three students working on VHPA tasks this Fall.

Visit www.VHPA.org, then the "Our Legacy" for more details, tutorials, and the PowerPoint Presentation we plan to show during the Atlanta Reunion on the VNCA.

By Mike Law, VHPA liaison to the VNCA

Searching old VHPA Newsletters and Aviator Magazines

by Mike Law

Last updated 28 May 2018

Assume, for a moment, that you have either of these two questions on your mind. “How can I find the TAPS the VHPA published for my friend, Ed Fickes?” “I remember reading a neat article the VHPA published on Dustoff aircraft in Vietnam that were painted white – how can I read that again?” Thanks to the VHPA’s multi-year efforts with the Vietnam Center and Archive (VNCA) at Texas Tech University (TTU) in Lubbock, you can read the answers to your questions online. 100% of the VHPA’s printed Newsletters (first in 1984) and Aviator magazines (name changed in July 2005) have been digitized and are now available in the VNCA’s Virtual Vietnam Archive (VVA). Here is how you can read those pages again without spending time looking through all your back copies.

Step 1 – Open the Virtual Vietnam Archive (VVA) home page in your browser by entering <https://vva.vietnam.ttu.edu> in a new browser window. You should see something like the following:



Now, don’t get too concerned that you can’t read the details in this image. We won’t be here long!

However, the [Click here to view Searching video guides](#) under the Years: boxes can help you understand the power of the VVA Search Engine.

Click on the words Advanced Search. This is actually a link that activates the screen for Step 2.

Step 2 – The Advanced Search screen looks something like the following:

This screen is your “home base” for VHPA Searches. It will be your “best friend” or tool to access the VHPA’s Archive subset within the VVA.

Again, the [Click here to view Advanced Search video guides](#) at the top left of this screen can be a big help.

However, this document will help you get to your questions **QUICKLY**. In Step 3 you will see which fields you need to use and which check boxes in the right column you need to use.

Step 3 – For the “Ed Fickes TAPS” scenarios mentioned above, it is important that we spell, especially, his last name correctly. Pretend, by way of example, that you are NOT CERTAIN how to spell his actual name. OK, we will use the VHPA’s ODA (Online Directory Application) to help us here.

Step 3A – In a new browser window, go to www.VHPA.org. Then Membership Directory * from the left column and then complete the Member Login. Finally, click the By Person’s Name tool under the Search column. You will see something like the following:

Status Name	City	State Zip	Service	Flight Class
POT: FICHTEL DON S	Aurora	IL 60506-7919	AR	68-51968-35
DAT: FICHTER THOMAS A	Fort Worth	TX 76126	AR	67-15
POT: FICHTNER JOHN STCLAIR	Elkhorn	WI 53121	AR	69-26
DAT: FICK DANIEL J	Duncan	OK 73533	AR	68-52468-44
POT: FICK ROY T	Roswell	GA 30075	AR	69-35
POT: FICKEL STEPHEN P		MO	MC	
DAT: FICKES CHARLES EDWARD	Greeley	CO 80634-5700	AR	69-22
MEM: FICKETT JOHN T	Savannah	GA 31404	AR	70-28
LIF: FICKLE THOMAS H	Colorado Springs	CO 80917	AR	59-3
POT: FICKLIN MARVIN D				

Just to be certain we can search the VHPA’s Membership Directory for the person we want, we will input “Fic” in the Last Name box (and leave the First Name box empty); then click SEARCH command button below these input text boxes.

ODA returns the display on the left. We easily see our friend “Fickes Charles Edward” of Greeley as a DAT (Died After Tour). So now we know for certain how to spell his name. We can view Ed’s record by mouse clicking on his **name** in this display.

When we view Ed’s record, we see that the VHPA believes he passed away on 7 June 2012. Therefore, his TAPS must appear after that date.

Step 3B – Returning to our “home base” in the VVA browser, please code the following four items:

- Keyword(s): “fickes”
- Item Title: aviator
- Association: VHPA
- Newsletter (in right column) Check

It is a good idea to use the quote “” marks around words in the Keyword(s) field. Capitalization can be important but not in this case. We are taking advantage of the fact that relatively few people are mentioned in The Aviator with this somewhat rare last name.

Then click the large red **Search** box in the upper right of the screen. The Showing Results: screen looks something like the following:

Notice that the Search Engine found 19 Item Numbers (physical items) in the VVA. This means that “fickes” appears at least 19 times. Since we know that the issue we want will be one of the last by date, we will sort the 19 results.

Use the “pull down” arrow on the right side of the Showing Results: screen. Change the “Relevance” value to “Item Date Descending” as shown to the left.

Then click the large red **Sort** box. The updated Showing Results: screen looks something like the following:

Showing Results: 1 - 19 of 19

Filter Results

Search

Additional filters:

+ Century/Decade/Year

The VHPA Aviator - Volume 30, Issue 5
Item Number: 2841Newsletter611038 (Click To View)
Newsletter
[Number of Pages: 40]
FROM JOHN SORENSEN, PRESIDENT OF THE VHPA BY John Sorensen

FEATURES:
New Aviator Delivery Options Now Available
Membership in the VHPA is Growing to Record Levels BY Mike Sheuerman
Tales of Flying an "Old Smokey" Smoke Ship in 1966.... BY Michael Hershey
VHPAers in the News BY Kevin Spear
It Was a Dark and Stormy Night BY Steve Bookout
"The Night Our Night Hawk Went Down" BY Bill Thomason Sr.
Divany Air Unit Reunites After 43 Years BY Daryl James
Return to Vietnam BY Stephen Willett
The V.C. Were Predictable Too BY Ed Carrington
Return to Vietnam BY Richard Dipboye
Welcome to the VHPA!
The Last Checkride
Riding the Air in Vietnam BY Jim C. Parker
Business Cards from Vietnam
Ozark Honor Flight BY Ralph McClurg
Mineral Wells Honors Fort Wolters Medal of Honor Recipients BY Edward T. "Edd" Luttenberger

LETTERS:
To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator FROM Bill Zierdt
Looking For two Cobra crews involved in a CCN mission on 23 July 1970 FROM Tom Yarborough
Looking For Vietnam photos of OH-23's FROM Dave Hill
Looking For anyone who knew my father, Cecil Blanton FROM Dusty Blanton
Looking For members and friends of crew chief Richard Garcia FROM Helen and Dale Kueter
Looking For - a set of Charlie Model blades and hub FROM Ken Fritz
Looking For anyone who might have known Jan Franklin Wilson FROM Ron Miller
Looking For contact info for Ricky Farnsworth and Karl Pflitzer FROM Mac McMillan
Looking For aircrew Nearly Shot Down by a B-40 Rocket FROM Jack Galany
Dear Bob FROM Gary Roush
To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator
To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator FROM Robert Lyle
We received this e-mail about the cover art for our last three issues FROM Janet-Anne Boykin
To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator FROM John E. Barron
To the Editor of the VHPA Aviator FROM Larry Russell
To the organizers of the 29th Annual Reunion of the VHPA FROM George Vaniper

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES:
Alamo chapter BY Chuck Qualline
Fort Wolters chapter BY Mike Sheuerman
Georgia chapter BY Bill McRae
South Missouri chapter BY Russ Emory
North Carolina chapter BY Robert Inglis
Rocky Mountain chapter BY Phil Lanphier
South Dakota chapter BY Jim Miller
Old Dominion chapter BY J.T. Severin
Michigan chapter BY Charlie Martin
VHPA-CCN chapter BY Ken Fritz

Step 4 – For the “white DUSTOFF helicopters” scenarios mentioned above, we will take advantage of the three keywords we know. Returning to our “home base” the Advance Search screen in the VVA browser, please code the following four items:

- Keyword(s): “white helicopters”
- Item Title: aviator
- Association: VHPA
- Newsletter (in right column) Check

This coding of the Keyword(s) field will find every Aviator issue that has the two words “white” and “helicopters” printed sequentially ~ that is next to each other and in that exact order.

Volume 30, Issue 5, the Sept/Oct 2012 issue is, indeed, the Aviator we are looking for. We will show you how we know this before looking at the pages in the publication.

First, we will expand the table of contents for this issue by clicking on the red **Read more** at the end of the FEATURES: area.

Second, we will scan the results looking for Ed's name.

The resulting display looks something like the following:

TAPS:
Bernard Bruno "Bernie" Quedens - C. Edward "Ed" Fickes - Charles Vincent Masick - Clifford E. Reese - Daniel James Fick - Donald E. Sullivan - James R. (J.R.) Thomas - Jason "Chick" Bridge - James E. Duncan - Jerry Lee Butts - Lewis Eugene "Buck" Buchanan - Mark L. Jensen - Peter Edward Laux - Ralph W. Penniman - Richard Lee Lambert - Robert "Bob" Charters - Robert L. Vecchio - Thomas E. Heydinger - Tim Stott - Timothy Francis Doreen - Zane Bell Fisher - Clyde J. Emery - David A. Redel - Charlie Gossett

BOOK REVIEWS:
Discovery Of Flight 19 BY John Penny
I Was A Pilot For The Mob BY John Penny
Vietnam War Helicopter Art: U.S. Army Rotor Aircraft BY John Penny
...And Sometimes The Bear Eats You BY John Penny

REUNION:
Reunion Scrapbook
Volume: 30
Issue: 5
Publication Date: September/October 2012
Collection: John Shafer Collection
Association: Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA)
Added: 08 Nov 2017 [Updated: 15 Nov 2017]

By the way, this “expanded Table of Contents” was custom built by the VNCA for the VHPA. We can easily see “C. Edward “Ed” Fickes” listed in the TAPS: section.

We could now click the red **(Click To View)** at the end of the Item Number line to see the entire issue online. Ed's TAPS is on page 31.

Then click the large red **Search** box in the upper right of the screen. The Showing Results: screen looks something like the following:

Showing Results: 1 - 1 of 1

Relevance

The VHPA Aviator - Volume 21, Issue 2
Item Number: 293Newsletter611051 (Click To View)

Newsletter [Number of Pages: 24]
FROM THE PRESIDENT BY Joe Bilitzke

FEATURES:
Eliminating the bylaws confusion BY Joe Bilitzke
VHPA briefs
Membership grows to 12,000 pilots
Why does our association exist? BY Mike Sheuerman
Library of Congress to tape at reunion
Seeking national office? BY Mike [Read more](#)

Volume: 21
Issue: 02
Publication Date: March/April 2003
Collection: Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Collection: General Files
Association: Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA)
Added: 16 Nov 2017 [Updated: 16 Nov 2017]

The VHPA Aviator - Volume 21, Issue 2
Item Number: 293Newsletter611051 (Click To View)

Newsletter [Number of Pages: 24]
FROM THE PRESIDENT BY Joe Bilitzke

FEATURES:
Eliminating the bylaws confusion BY Joe Bilitzke
VHPA briefs
Membership grows to 12,000 pilots
Why does our association exist? BY Mike Sheuerman
Library of Congress to tape at reunion
Seeking national office? BY Mike Sheuerman
White Medevacs BY Mike Law

REUNIONS:
Time running out
Special shuttle bus available at reunion
Driving to reunion?
Annual 5K run/walk set for July 5
Display of Vietnam through reunion BY Dave Rittman
Reunion Schedule
UH-1 available for rides at reunion
Mini-reunions BY Mike Sheuerman

LETTERS:
Captured Vietnam pilot discusses POWs in Iran FROM Mike Sheuerman
Program features crew from chopper company FROM Gil Ferrey
Information about program FROM Natalie Miller
Husband's death attributed to diabetes, 'rare' tumors FROM Sandra A. Sullivan
Pilot saves crew chief, others' lives in rescue FROM Craig Tonjes

TAPS:
Stanley E. Cagle - Wayne Lawrence Crocker - Jim Cunningham - Tony Ward Miller - Michael Raymond Redding - William E. Savedge

Volume: 21

With only one "hit" we need to look a little deeper to make certain we have something of real interest. So we will expand the table of contents as we did in the previous scenario by clicking on the red **Read more** at the end of the **FEATURES:** area.

The resulting display looks something like the following:

We hope you understand by now just how useful the expanded table of contents is when researching Aviator items.

The author added the large blue arrow to the VVA display just to make certain you don't miss it.

When we click the red (**Click To View**) at the end of the Item Number line, we see something like the following:

The VHPA Aviator - Volume 21, Issue 2

Item Number: 293Newsletter611051

Newsletter

Vietnam Center and Archive > The VHPA Aviator - Volume 21, Issue 2

Language English
Number of Pages 24
Type Newsletter
Information removed ... true
Physical Location Stacks Newsletter Collection

We need to click on the PDF icon to start reading the VNCA's digital scan of this Newsletter.

Warning: the VNCA redacts personal information such as mailing address, phone numbers, and private email address. Should you need a non-redacted copy of the issue, please contact VHPA HQ.

Clicking the red **PDF icon** actually launches the Adobe Reader program on the VNCA Server and presents the following screen.



Clicking **Ctrl+F** instructs Adobe to open a small Find Window. Click in this Window and start typing "white hel" (no quotes) and suddenly the following appears:

white hel

21 / 24

nts relating to the
icopter Test Pro-
might find this
ersion of these
test and evalua-
ine whether

asted for three months, was extended in order to gather more meaningful statistics and experience.

Eventually the test involved 21 white helicopters operating throughout South Vietnam and terminated on March 31, 1972.

Employment of the white helicopters was preceded by a PSYOP program designed to explain to the enemy via posters, leaflets, and sound tapes, the use and purpose of white helicopters. The program also appealed to the

The large blue arrow points out the Adobe tools for you to download or print this file to your computer. However, we want Adobe to find the "white helicopter" keyword for us.

Notice the large blue arrows. We now see the article we want is on page 21 of the 24 page issue and there are 7 "white hel" references in this PDF. Adobe is kind enough to "backlight" the first occurrence of "white hel."

We are preparing a series of PowerPoint Presentations for the Atlanta Reunion that will provide even more details about accessing VHPA Aviators, Membership Directories, Calendars, photos, organizational history, oral histories, and much more within the VVA. The plan is to have copies of this document and the PowerPoints posted on www.VHPA.org.

Selections from Past Newsletters

This issue's column is from June/July 1996

Walter E. Pinkerton, Jr. DAT

Marine Corps Cobras in Vietnam

The 1996 VHPA calendar included a picture of a "real" helicopter in its 1996 Calendar for that month and I love it!

The text under the picture said the first Marine AH-1G Cobras arrived in Vietnam during April 1969. Initially, they were assigned to the VMO squadrons, which at that time had only Marine Corps helicopter gun ships, the UH-1Es.

On December 16, 1969, HML-367 was officially commissioned as the Corps' first true helicopter gunship squadron. The squadron's name was "Scarface" and our two-letter aircraft identifiers were "VT." All Cobras were consolidated into that squadron, which initially was stationed at Phu Bai. In 1970, it relocated to Marble Mountain.

I joined HML-367 in October 1970, shortly after I completed Cobra training at Hunter Army Airfield. On my arrival at Marble, I was assigned to the "enviable" collateral duty as embarkation officer. I refer to this as enviable because generally such a billet is a "no brainer."

However, in July 1971, the Marines were relocating back to the world and I was fortunate to assist in the embarkation from Danang harbor. In fact, not only did I oversee the embarkation of my squadron and its property, but additionally the 5th Marines showed up on embarkation day and I assisted them with their 105s and 155s. It was a real treat!

Like almost everyone in the VHPA, the memories of my tour in Vietnam are still important to me. I'd like to share two of them:

First, I was involved in the incident in which 1st Lt. John Las sitter died on December 4, 1970. I was in the front seat and John in the back. Our section (flight of two for the Army readers) was assigned to morning Medevac, and was returning to Marble from an earlier Medevac extraction. As we punched up Marble tower, we were asked to check out a bunch of suspicious boats low in the water, which were moving north off the coast. I'm sorry I don't know more details about the boats, other than they were low in the water and numbered about 20-25. I remember we flew 180s around them at about 1,000 feet AGL for about 10-minutes, awaiting clearance to commence hot runs.

Finally, approval to fire was given and John and I were starting a gun run when the engine torque went to zero, presumably from hostile fire. In the Cobra, you couldn't hear the hostile fire except when the ground FM was keyed.

We were in an approximate 35-degree dive and at about 170 knots when we impacted the South China Sea. Upon impact, the water imploded the canopy; the Cobra went belly-up and commenced sinking. I was struggling to get out of my harness and lap belt, but my bullet bouncer (I think the Army called it a chicken plate) had positioned itself over the release toggle of the lap belt. We were sinking fast and I remember looking up through the canopy at the sunlight as it streaked through the water like ribbons of light.

At about 80 feet, based upon my later scuba diving experi-



ence, my bullet bouncer became buoyant. I was able to release the harness and get free to the surface. But, I was hardly out of danger. Since then, I've told my friends my rescue was something out of a Three Stooges cartoon!

First, a CH-53 came to the area. Despite the crew's good intentions, the rotor wash for that huge machine nearly drowned me. I still had on my boots and clothes, but no water survival vest. It was during this time, I observed John bobbing in the ocean about 35 yards from me. Next, came a UH-1E; the crew threw out a life vest which helped me float. I pointed the flight crew in the direction of John. Needless to say, even the Huey's downwash was enough to produce typhoon conditions at the surface of the water.

Later, a CH-46 landed near me, lowered the side door and the crewman pulled me on board. I was transported to a medical unit near Da Nang, where I fully expected to see John. Not so. A few days later his body washed ashore near Chu Lai.

The second thought I'd like to share concerns the AH-1J Sea Cobra. HML-367 flew AH-1Gs exclusively, except for a three-month period when a four-aircraft AH-1J detachment joined us. This detachment of nine officers and 23 enlisted arrived on February 16, 1971. The four AH-1Js arrived a few days later and started flying combat missions in early March.

The AH-1J's chin turret mounted the XM-197 three-barrel, 20 mm gun which fired up to 750 rounds per minute. It had a rotor brake for ship board operations, standard Navy avionics, and twin engines.

Naturally, the Marine Corps was very interested in testing it under combat conditions. They were flown in Lam Son 719 on escort missions and on Black Hammer missions (a searchlight equipped UH-1E covered by two gunships carrying "nails" with four-foot V.T. fuses).

I am certain the official Marine Corps report presented the Sea Cobra as vastly superior to the AH-1G, but I loved to fly the AH-1G. I thought the 7.62 miniguns and 40 mm grenades in the chin turret gave us a lot of flexibility, firepower and was really a great support helicopter.

Photo from July 1996 VHPA Calendar is by Doug Orahood who flew with HML-367 from Marble Mountain in 1970. In April 1969 the first Marine AH-1G Cobras arrived and on December 16, 1969 all Marine Cobras in Vietnam were assigned to HML-367 whose radio call sign was Scarface. With "Scarface" and "Cobra" the Marines had wonderful material for aircraft nose art.

~ LOOKING FOR ~

Looking for anyone who served with my brother:

My late brother, WO1 Gary David Thatcher, was a Dustoff pilot killed on Feb. 6, 1970 in Vietnam. He was part of the 326 MED 101 ABN. His flight class was 69-29.

While doing research on my brother for a book I've been working on, I ran across the VHPA in my brother's crash report and subsequently reached out to Julie Kink because no crash coordinates were listed in the report. Julie has been an incredible source of information and suggested I go to the Gold Star Breakfast at the VHPA Reunion in July in Atlanta. I will be there.

I just wanted to reach out to you and perhaps make contact regarding your experiences as a Dustoff. Of the four chopper pilots I have recently communicated with by email and phone that Julie put me in touch with, Don Breelart, John Kiel, Bob Monette and now Robert Fury, none were Dustoff, but a couple, Don and John, went to flight school with my brother. I'm also hopeful of perhaps meeting and visiting with someone at the VHPA Reunion who actually served with my brother when he was in Nam. His last assignment prior to his death was at Phu Bai.

I'm also hoping to go to Nam next April as part of a tour with John Powell and see the site where my brother's chopper crashed. Two other guys that Julie put me in touch with, Rob Weeks and Jim McLaughlin researched my brother's crash and believe they have found the coordinates – just south of a white church, about a kilometer off Hwy 1, south of Hue. Jim said they will be providing me with maps and supporting documentation on a CD that will be given to me at the Gold Star Breakfast.

Kind regards,

**Jeff Thatcher ~ Director of Communications
Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/
Associated Industries of Arkansas**

www.arkansasstatechamber.com

I am seeking information on the possibility of someone within the organization who may have information on any VHPA members who actually flew Huey's in Rhodesia in the 1980 time frame, or know of someone that did fly there.

I sure would appreciate any links or anyone that can provide anything that would help us in our research. Guys that flew for Air America after their military tour (s) might be a good resource too.

Thanks, hope you have some ideas.

Sincerely, Keith Turner, VHPA member

G'day US Huey drivers,

I wish to somewhat belatedly thank a US Huey pilot. The gentleman in question, landed on a roadway and evacuated some of our wounded. The details are as near to as I can recall, with the assistance of some research: Date was 08 May 1970, it was prior to midday. Location was approximately 80k SE of Saigon, and about 30k North of Vung Tau, 2k East of what is now H Tan Thanh on what is now QL51.

In 1970 according to my old 1:50,000 grid maps, it was 2k East of Route 15 between Phu My and Thai Thien on map Xa Binh Ba.

Best guess as follows: Lat/Long - 10 Degrees 39.089 min North. 107 degrees 03.645 min East. Grid - 7 25 400 E 11 78 100 North.

One other memory of the evacuation was the pilot was a man of few words.

His only radio communication with me was whilst on approach, it was clear and concise, asking where do you want us? I replied "on the road" - and without further ado he landed, we loaded several wounded, he then took off and I assume headed for the hospital in Vung Tau. If you are the man, or know of him, please contact me at [REDACTED]

Regards and Thank you,

Bobby Taylor ex Crew Commander, M113 APC 31A, 1 Section, 3 Troop, B Squadron 3rd Cavalry Regiment, 1 Australian Task Force, Nui Dat RVN.

Looking for medevac crew member(s)

I am trying to help a fellow college classmate locate a helicopter crew that medevaced him and saved his life. He was in Delta Company, 4/3 11th Brigade American Division. His platoon was a Recon unit - kind of an odd ball unit. The rest of the company was actually a mortar company although they had nothing to do with them. They were totally independent.

They were based on San Juan Hill. He was pretty sure that he was wounded between March 20th and 24th, 1970 but not positive. He was on patrol a distance from San Juan Hill by a stream. He may have imagined it, but he thought they took fire after leaving the ground and took him to Duc Pho.

He didn't think that it was a medevac ship as they were too far away and thought it was a slick which happened to be in the area. He believed it was a supply chopper going in or out of San Juan Hill artillery base. He realizes that this is a shot in the dark, but he would love to link up with any of the pilots who pulled him out.

Contact Chris Towne at [REDACTED]

I am taking a stab at locating a helicopter pilot who my father served with in Vietnam.

My father bragged that Mr. Boutineer (not sure of the spelling but it is pronounced somewhat phonetically this way) was "the best ever". Of course there were thousands of superb pilots but I would like to locate Mr. Boutineer if he is alive. I'm guessing he is probably around 72 now.

They served together in the HQ, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division (AMERICAL) and flew together out of Chu Lai from May-October 1970. Any assistance you might give would be very much appreciated.

My father-in-law few H-21s with the 57th Transportation Company (Light) in 1961-1962 as part of the Advisory Group.

We have a very active group of Vietnam helicopter pilots here in Huntsville, AL and I frequently set up Vietnam exhibits with them and their helicopters.

Regards,

Ed Kennedy US Army (Retired)

County Pa that were killed during the war; he is my last man to find. I have been looking for 2.5 years.

Our book is currently published online on the Bucks County Courier Times. We ran an event last year called The Wall in Bucks County, below are some links to it, to show that I am legitimate. I have spoken to three of his fellow crewmen and none have a picture. Is it possible you can ask your members if maybe some served with him and provide us with his image? Feel free to contact me here by phone at [REDACTED] Monday-Friday.

Regards,

Ed Preston, Chairman ~ The Wall in Bucks County

My name is Johnny Byard and I am a member of Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1036 at The Villages, Florida and I am working on a project to help find photos of soldiers from Florida for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall of Faces.

We still need a photo of Johnnie Lee Williams from Jacksonville, Florida part of the 71st AHC killed on 22 September 1969.

If anyone has a photo of Johnnie Williams would you share same or post to the Wall of Faces. Johnnie was killed along with Barry Alexander and six other infantry soldiers on that day.

My contact information is email: [REDACTED] or Phone [REDACTED] home or [REDACTED] Cell We would most appreciative of any assistance you could provide.

Thanks in advance,

Johnny Byard
Vietnam 1966-1967 and 1969-1970

Need help with a photo.

I am looking for help if possible. I am looking for a picture of Raymond M. Reeves. He was Spec.4th Class, a member of 1st Cavalry Division's Chinook Battalion, the 228th ASHB. He was killed in action on 3/3/68 while aboard a CH-47A tail number 66-19080. I am working on a book of the 136 men from Bucks

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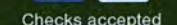
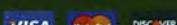
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A Long

For many, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crewmembers Monument seemed like a unicorn – many details; but no sightings.

The VHPA envisioned a non-government funded, logical, appropriate and well-deserved symbol for the men who left our ranks while flying in the “Helicopter War”. Bob Hesselbein was appointed chairman of the Legacy Committee and immediately entered a world where logic (if used) was skewed. Due to his efforts, the support of the members of our organization, some legislative benefactors, and officials supportive of the project, all of the challenges were overcome. The long-awaited monument was dedicated on April 18, 2018 with suitable ceremony and in the presence of several thousand people.

I attended as a member of the Legacy Committee, not a reporter. The print and electronic coverage has been widespread and comprehensive as well as available well in advance of this issue's printing. I can add, however, what the cameras may not have revealed. Many in the audience honoring our fallen brothers were Gold Star family members, friends, currently serving members of our Armed Forces, and even a contingent of veteran VNAF pilots. The emotions they displayed were as varied as their status.

There are too many names to list as participants on this long journey to that sunny April day. I hope those who went before us had a “sky box” for the event.

Tom Kirk, Legacy Committee member.



Photo by Carolyn Kirk

Journey Completed



Photo by Carolyn Kirk
Congressman Amodei.



Photo by Lisa Mc Andrew
Beauty and Honor.



Photo by Lisa Mc Andrew
Bagpipers play during the wreath laying procession.



Photo by Lisa Mc Andrew
Awaiting admission to the amphitheater.



Photo by Lisa Mc Andrew

A packed ampitheater minutes prior to the dedication.



Photo by Lisa Mc Andrew

Speakers and Honored guests.



Photo by Carolyn Kirk

A full Ampitheater.



*TAKEN ON MEMORIAL DAY
by Carl McNair*

*Retired MG Carl McNair and COL Herrick
at the monument on Memorial Day.*



*Photo by Lisa McAndrew
North Carolina chapter's UH-1 gathers much attention.*



*Photo by Lisa McAndrew
The NC contingent greets a steady flow of visitors.*



*Photo by Lisa McAndrew
US Army Brass Quintet played the National Anthem.*

*Photo by Robert StLouis
Vietnam veterans attending the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument Dedication Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on April 18th included (R-L) BG Jack Nicholson, CO 2/503 Inf., 173rd Abn Bde., COL Bob St. Louis, Master AA and CO, 173rd AHC and CO, 4/77th ARA Bn., 101st Abn Div; COL Paul Winkel, Senior AA, 229th AHB, 1st CAV, and MAJ Frank Moreno, Senior AA, 229th AHB, 1st CAV.*



*Photo by Lisa McAndrew
The beauty of ANC.*



*Photo by Lisa McAndrew
The US Air Force providing the finale.*

Small World

As most of you know, as Membership Chairman, I attend Helicopter Associates International and Quad A every year, looking for potential members, NEW and NON-CURRENT. Here are a couple of interesting anecdotes from this year in Las Vegas.

I was at our booth when a happy-go-lucky guy walked up with his wife and started to talk. His name was Daniel McMahon (Big Mac). Seems he was a CH-47 Driver in Vietnam, May/June of '71 to mid-April of '72. We began the "trip down memory lane" that we Aviators like to do and found out we were in II Corps at the same time, he based on the coast flying Chinooks with the 180 ASHC "Big Windy" and I flying Snakes out of Pleiku with the 361st AWC in support of CCC and points west. The name "Walt Zutter" came up. The two of them flew in the same Unit. Zutter was shot down at Fire Base Delta on March 30, 1972; avoiding being captured, he was able to get into the Firebase with his VNAF Co-pilot and crew.

On April 3, three Cobras from our unit, along with a Slick and three Cougar Guns from the 57th AHC, were assigned the opportunity to rescue Walt and his merry crew from Delta. On the three previous days, numerous attempts to get them off had met with no success. A rather large bunch of bad guys had the FB surrounded and weren't in favor of allowing it to occur. We arrived on station about 5 AM to pick up the downed crew with the element of surprise. At 5 AM two Battalions of NVA Regulars arrived to capture the FB using the element of surprise. To say the least, both groups were surprised and lost the element.

Six Cobras, two with nails in the outboard rocket pods, and some damn fine leadership by the American Advisory team on the ground were able to hold the hill and save the day for our side. It was one good fight, one for the history books. Sadly, Walt and his crew had to spend several more nights on the hill before they were rescued.

I forgot one small, fairly significant piece of

trivia concerning Big Mac and me. As I started my second pass the American advisor on the ground let us know the "bad guys" had breached the wire and were in the compound. He calmly said in a rather loud voice "SHOOT THE COMPOUND, THEY'RE IN THE COMPOUND." I calmly replied calling "I'M INBOUND WITH 7 PAIR NAILS, ARE THE GOOD GUYS IN THE BUNKERS?" He replied "YES, SHOOT THE COMPOUND." I lined up and at a 16 degree slant range, approximately 2,000 feet out, punched off 14 flechette rockets all at once. I was told later it really ruined the day of many of our foes. I didn't see anything because my MASTER CAUTION LIGHT had grabbed my attention. Seems some lucky guy on the ground was able to put a single round into my hydraulics system. After settling down, I told Lead my situation and headed to DakTo for a running landing. Dragon Six told me DakTo was under heavy assault, was a very bad option, and suggested Kontum would be a much more prudent choice. My front seater, Ronnie Lewis, got out the manual and informed me to touch down above 35 knots; I chose about 75 knots just to be sure.

Maintenance tried to replace some hoses but the hydraulics system needed more attention, so a "Hook" was called in to get me back to Pleiku. I believe that was the only time I rode in a Chinook the whole time I was in Vietnam. The ride back was uneventful and, when the Snake was on the ground, the Pilot landed and let us off his Bird. I remember thanking him for the ride.

Fast forward to the HAI meeting, I mentioned this incident to Daniel. He looked a little stunned. He said he had picked up a Cobra and its crew from Kontum airfield that day. Walt and crew was rescued on April 6. This was the first battle of the Easter Offensive in the Central Highlands.

Small world, indeed.

Mike Sheuerman

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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Charles 'Chic' Carter

ALASKA CHAPTER
Lynn Kile, President

ARIZONA CHAPTER
Bill Sorenson, President

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NORTH
Ken Fritz

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER
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GEORGIA CHAPTER
Bob Lanzotti, President

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER
Victor Lent, President

MICHIGAN CHAPTER
Richard Deer, President

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER
Bruce Hunter, President

MONTANA CHAPTER
Todd Brandoff, President

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER
Marshall Eubanks, President

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER
(currently inactive, seeking members)

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER
Ed Hughes

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER
Keith Allegre

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER
Mike Sloniker, President

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
Don Agren, President

www.vhpavirginia.org

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER
Jim Miles, President

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER
Dr. Dick Elgin

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER
Dale E House, President

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
Jim Davidson, President

UTAH CHAPTER
Doug Drury, President

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER
Jim LePenske, President

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional
Ken DeHoff - POC

Notice to all Members of the VHPA

For a limited time, liaison between the National HQ of the VHPA and the Independent Chapters has reverted to John Sorenson of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. John can be reached at [REDACTED] or via E-Mail at: [REDACTED] Feel free to contact John concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER

Our ladies continued their tradition of monthly lunches on April 13th when they met at Los Patios in San Antonio. We lunched together as couples at The Grill at Leon Springs on May 8th.

Our quarterly meeting was a dinner at the Barn Door Restaurant on June 19th, and generated a large attendance. During a short business meeting after dinner, we discussed the new opportunity for an Alamo Chapter life membership, which was recently established by

our directors.

A number of us will have attended the VHPA Reunion in Atlanta by the time you read this. The Alamo Chapter arranged for its own set of tables at the banquet.

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

By Chuck Oualline



ALASKA CHAPTER

It was a beautiful, glorious, Alaskan spring day, perfect for celebrating Memorial Day with friends and fellow veterans.

Our group of Alaska Vietnam Helicopter Pilots started the weekend off with a breakfast Saturday morning at the Denali Restaurant on the Parks Highway north of Wasilla enroute to the Memorial Site. Terry Vraniak, Vic Micol, David Buirge, Garland Dobson, Tim Kavanaugh and special guest Suelllyn Novak, from the Alaskan Veterans Museum, enjoyed the reindeer sausage and King Salmon skillets. Next stop was the McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge for an over-night stay. The Memorial site is at Mile Marker 147, about half way between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Our group mixed in with Princess Cruise tourists and enjoyed the spectacular view of Mt. Denali and facilities at the lodge. During the stay at the lodge, Suelllyn conducted and videoed a Library of Congress interview of some of our members. This has been an ongoing project of our group to record experiences and history for prosperity. The next day we all departed to the Alaskan Veterans Memorial site for the ceremony. About 200 motorcyclist and various veteran organizations participated. Our member, Col, USA Ret Vic Micol, addressed the group highlighting the necessity of generations to honor and remember the sacrifices of all veterans in America's history. He elaborated on examples of towns and families that had lost so many to conflicts and wars and the still ongoing struggle we face. US Senator Lisa Murkowski also spoke to the gathering and was eloquent in her praise and respect for veterans and their families.

Afterward, Terry Vraniak put on a BBQ for the members at the site. The day could not have been more beautiful, especially for a time of tribute to those who gave all.



US Senator Lisa Murkowski, Alaska.



Terry Vraniak, Tim Kavanaugh, Jane & Vic Micol, & Suelllyn Novak, Princess Lodge Restaurant.

Timothy Kavanaugh



CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

CCN's Huey 563 has taken a beating from thousands of young perspective pilots over the years. The pilot and co-pilots seats had holes big enough to fall into! Tom Inks and Dave Anderson met Ken Fritz on 14 Apr at Ken's barn. It took all day to repair the seats. Fortunately, we had two spare armor-plated seats and several newer nylon mesh covers. We were able to make two better seats (at least without holes) from the old material and scrapped the remaining leftovers. We now have two decent



Huey 563 parked at LZ Fritz.



The Prep Crew at LZ Fritz.

looking and functional seats in the Huey and Ken has about 500 pounds less of old spare junk in the barn. Just in time to display 563 at the McClellan Aerospace Museum.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

This was not a VHPA-CCN event, but we did loan our Huey to the McClellan Aerospace Museum for the Red River Valley Rats reunion in Sacramento. This was a total success with about 300 members and guests in attendance. Their BBQ/Flight Suit Party at the Aerospace Museum of California on 20 Apr with all the pilots and wives enjoying a perfect weather evening. Bud Anderson, WWII Ace was there and so were four VN-era POWs. CW2 Mike O'Connor, Army B-Model pilot, shot down and captured near Hue, was also there. Mike spent 5 years as a guest of the Commies. Huey 563 was a hit; the museum doesn't have a Huey. Our Huey looked very good sitting near an H-3 and an F-86 outside by the BBQ buffet lines. Inside, the A-1E looked pretty imposing sitting there aimed at the dinner crowd. Jim Cunningham and Ken Fritz moved the Huey into place on 19 Apr, before the River Rats showed up.

After the event, Jim, Tom Inks, Ed Morris, and Ken moved the Huey back to LZ Fritz on 22 Apr, covered her up nicely, and admired the freshly done gravel driveway. The Huey and truck were causing big ruts in the driveway. Ken had another 13 tons of gravel delivered, then he spread it and packed it with a rented vibrating roller machine, he packed it and smoothed it out properly. This work was accomplished while the Huey was visiting the museum.

Ed Morris, Al Doucette, Ken Fritz and Jim Cunningham met at



Memorial Day - 563 On Display.

LZ Fritz for a 0745 departure to the Memorial Day celebration at Mt. Vernon Memorial Park in Fair Oaks. This was a well attended ceremony with about 1,000 people in attendance. Ken Lake, Barry Fitzpatrick, Curt Knapp, and Dave Anderson joined the group at the event. Barry wore his Dress Blues and added a little class to the affair. Curt left early when his old flight suit malfunctioned (major rip in his pants!). A short ceremony was held, followed by a flyover of two privately owned T-38s and a pair of skydivers dropping in. As usual, Huey 563 was a popular attraction after the ceremony.

For more pictures and information, please check our website: wwwvhpacn.org.

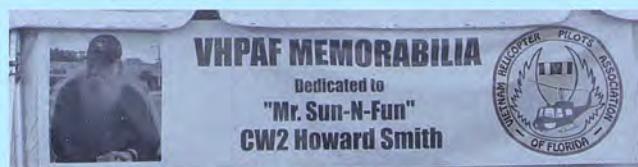
Dave Anderson, VHPA-CCN webmaster

FLORIDA CHAPTER

From April 9th – 15th we participated in the annual SUN 'n FUN Air-show whose mission is to preserve and enhance the future of flight through world-class events, inspiring and educating people of all ages. Very noticeably absent and sorely missed from our presence at SUN 'n FUN this year was retired Warrant Officer Howard E.

Smith, Vietnam UH-1C HUEY Helicopter Gunship Pilot, Mustang 55-68th AHC, who passed away May 8, 2017. Howard was instrumental in the VHPAF's inaugural participation at this event more than 20 years ago and, as 'Memorabilia Curator' of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida, Howard kept Vietnam alive.

The annual SUN 'n FUN Air-show was started in 1974 and has grown into the second largest event of its kind in the



SUN 'n FUN - Lakeland Linder Regional Airport in Lakeland, Florida. The VHPAF Memorabilia Tent that was manned by Howard Smith for more than 20 years.



"Honoring our Heroes" - Marion County Veterans Park, Ocala, Florida. More than 12,000 attendees visited this e-Vietnam Wall on Memorial Day!



"Honoring our Heroes" - Marion County Veterans Park, Ocala, Florida. The LOACH is always a crowd-pleaser!



31st Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. The COBRA on "final" approach.



"Honoring our Heroes" Marion County Veterans Park, Ocala, Florida. The little LOACH (kiddie ride), and Sales Tent in the background.

world and is Florida's largest annual convention. Held at Lakeland Linder Regional Airport in

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



"Honoring our Heroes" - Marion County Veterans Park, Ocala, Florida. The COBRA is always a major attraction!

Lakeland, FL, air traffic movements for the event elevates the airport to the 'busiest in the world' for one week. For the other 51 weeks of each year, activities on the SUN 'n FUN Convention Campus include public and private events in the facilities on nearly 200 acres. The Aerospace Center for Excellence (ACE) has introduced Aerospace Discovery at the Florida Air Museum in a dynamic fashion as it incorporates aviation history into hands-on interactive learning stations for students of all ages.

From April 18th – 22nd, we participated in the 31st Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park in Melbourne, FL. It's one of the largest All Veterans Reunions in the State of Florida. Average daily attendance easily exceeds 10,000. This is another event the VHPAF has supported for more than twenty (20) years. This year, we showed up with our LOACH static display, little LOACH (kiddie ride), Sales Tent, and COBRA gunship which flew in and landed to the delight of all. The presence of the Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall always draws people from throughout the State. As expected, the COBRA was a big hit and the 'talk of the town' among the attendees, especially the Vietnam veterans. Upon its departure, the COBRA made several low-level passes over the area as part of its aerial 'exhibition' and 'saluted' the Wall as it left the event. We received many very positive comments and words of appreciation from veterans and non-veterans alike.



"Honoring our Heroes" - Marion County Veterans Park, Ocala, Florida. The VHPAF COBRA was the first aircraft ever to land in this Veterans Park!!

From May 24th – 29th, the VHPAF participated in the "Honoring our Heroes" event at Marion County Veterans Park, Ocala, FL. This was the first Veterans event of its kind and magnitude ever! ALL veterans of ALL military services of ALL U.S. wars were recognized! The event began the first day with a parade that started at the intersection of Interstate 75 and State Road 326 in the beautiful countryside of Marion County through the streets of the city of Ocala to the Marion County Veterans Park, in downtown Ocala approximately 15 miles away. The parade was escorted by the Marion County Sheriff's Office Motorcycle Unit and the Ocala Police Department. Immediately following the approximately 20 Law enforcement motorcycles was the Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall, then the VHPAF LOACH, and 250-300 Bikers!

Despite the threat of Tropical Storm Alberto, and a daily forecast of 50-90% chance of rain, thousands of people attended each day and even during the times when it rained. As usual, we participated with our LOACH static display, little LOACH (kiddie ride), and Sales Tent. On Memorial Day, our COBRA flew in to an estimated crowd of 12,000 people! It was the first time any aircraft had landed at the Marion County Veterans Park. The media was well represented (local TV, radio, and newspapers, etc.) to record this tremendous event of historical significance.

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, Chairman of the Board

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

Our quarterly Chapter meeting was held on June 2nd. We collected another \$1,300 in donations leaving us only \$2,700 short of the \$25,000 needed to get the Fort Wolters Chapters name as the sponsor of the museum's OH-23. Our next Chapter meeting will be Saturday, September 8th, at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst. The Executive Council will meet at 11 AM with General Membership meeting at 11:30 (or whenever the EC finishes its meeting). Lunch, which includes coffee, tea, or a soft drink, is \$20 per person from a special menu. The beer is on you. Guests eat if you or



The Slab foundation for phase 1 of the Museum Visitor Center.



Jim Messinger welcoming the attendees at the Honoring of the Wall Update.

someone pays.
Peanuts are free
and you can throw
the shells on the
floor. Address is [REDACTED]

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

On the museum front, the museum is negotiating the procurement of a display ready UH-1H. It is targeted to be displayed in the phase II building addition.

Also, on Saturday, May 26th, the museum held its 9th Annual "Honoring of the Wall" in which its half-scale model of the Viet Nam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. had three names added that were added to the Wall in Washington D.C. last year. They are: USMC Cpl. Kenneth R. McGuire to panel 34W line 42, US Army Sgt. John T. Whitson to panel 32W line 58, and US Army Sgt. Edward L. Wilmers to panel 62E Line 7. The museum wall lags a year behind the wall in D.C. for updates. The featured speakers were Mark Byrd, USMC and Lt. General Jack Woodmansee, US Army (Ret).

As for the Phase I Building, the slab has been laid. Additionally, a three dimensional graphical presentation representing a back side view of the phase I museum housing the first three Galleries is shown.

To see more about the museum, go to the museum website at <http://www.nationalvwnarmuseum.org/>.



Rear view model of Phase 1 of the Museum Visitor Center.

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

Herbert Koenig, President

GEORGIA CHAPTER


The Georgia Chapter held its May bi-monthly meeting at its new home base, the Del Ray Diner in Marietta, GA. Our business meeting always begins at 0900, but most of our members prefer arriving earlier and having breakfast before rather than during the business meeting.

Unfortunately, there was a miscue between the scheduled guest speaker and myself. He graciously agreed to speak at a future meeting. Sans guest speaker, we opened the floor to our members to tell war stories. The Del Ray Diner also serves as a Comedy Club for North Atlanta and during this meeting the comedy stage environment certainly served as the perfect setting, for many of the war stories we heard throughout the morning were hilarious. I am certain some of these stories received more belly laughs from our audience than the professional Comedy Club comedians get from their weekend night audiences. We also were treated with Vietnam-era music throughout the meeting, a hilarious short film piece of Robin Williams during the filming of his movie, Good Morning Vietnam, and finally a short film clip of the recent Monument dedication at Arlington National Cemetery. Bill McRae will always have a job with our chapter as he is a superb DJ.

Again, the 35th Annual VHPA Reunion in Atlanta dominated our business meeting discussion. Many had already volunteered their services, but several commitments were made at this meeting. To date, we have filled 99 of the 112 volunteer slots and we feel comfortable all remaining slots will be filled before July 2.

In view of the fast approaching 35th Annual VHPA

Reunion, our Chapter members last month voted to alter our bi-monthly meetings and conduct an additional meeting next month on June 23rd. We plan to resume with our bi-monthly meetings after the July 2018 VHPA Reunion.

Gary Earls, our Secretary/Treasurer has put together a list of all restaurants (30 plus) as well as attractions within walking distance of the Marriott Marquis hotel. The list includes directions, hours of operation, and phone numbers. Gary will make the list available at the Registration Desk during the reunion.

Our guest speaker for the June meeting will be COL Patricia Blassie. COL Blassie is currently serving on active duty at Robbins AFB in Georgia. Her brother, 1st Lieutenant Michael Blassie, an Air Force Academy graduate, was shot down and killed in Vietnam while providing close air support in his A-37 aircraft. While some remains were recovered, a positive identification could not be made. The remains recovered were placed in the Unknown Soldier's grave for the Vietnam War at Arlington National Cemetery. A quarter century later Lieutenant Blassie's remains were confirmed through DNA testing and he was given a military burial with honors in his home state of Mississippi.

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

By Bob Lanzotti, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter is off to a good start for 2018 and more activity is being planned.

Chapter member Ed Canright hosted the monthly Traverse City lunch gathering on April 12th while Mark Benjamin went AWOL or on R&R or TDY or some other acronym. Ed capably handled the meeting and filed this AAR:

"We had our meeting today at Brady's and had seven (7) other members attend. New people in attendance included a guest, Maury Dennis, who was a finance officer during his tour in RVN. No, he didn't bring any military pay certificates with him. I believe he was a guest of Bob Potvin. Also, a former pilot with the 129th AHC, Lee Miller from, I believe, Marquette in the U.P. came in. It was neat to hear from him since his unit was located at An Son, which was home station for my unit. Our tours slightly overlapped.

Those in attendance were Bart Halliday, Walt Topp, Ron Hofmeister, Bob Matlis, Bob Potvin, Lee Miller, Maury Dennis and Ed Canright."

The April 18th dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crewmembers Monument at Arlington National Cemetery was attended by at least three Michigan chapter members and two spouses. Lee & Carol Luck, Gabe & Nan Hudson, and Bob Rich sent back some great photos from the event.

Besides the obvious connection with all of us, the Michigan chapter was proud to have helped with the effort by a contribution made to the VHPA legacy fund toward the monument. Gabe Hudson spoke with Bob Hesselbein, the chairman of the Legacy project and former Guard mate of his from the 1970s, about the monument and he thanked the Michigan Chapter VHPA for our financial help.

The Michigan chapter's spring meeting was held May 5th in the Back Room of the Log Jam Restaurant in Grand Ledge with 20 members, spouses and guests in attendance. Several had traveled considerable distances to attend. Many brought memorabilia and set up displays while socializing commenced and camaraderie quickly developed. A plaque of our chapter logo made by Bob Rich



Nan & Gabe Hudson, Lee & Carol Luck At VHPCM Dedication Nan & Gabe Hudson, Lee & Carol Luck.



Lee Luck "Capt Lucky" Salute at VHPCM.

had been provided the year before and we found it prominently mounted in the dining area. The Log Jam staff performed their usual great service in arranging seating, taking care of our beverage and meal orders, and assisting with equipment needs for the guest speaker.

The business meeting covered upcoming events that were in the works:

-Lest We Forget at the St. Joe River Basin June 22-24 is being coordinated by Vice President Dave James.

-Ramp Night with the U.S. Coast Guard in Traverse City is being coordinated by Mark Benjamin on June 29th.

-The VHPA Reunion in Atlanta July 3-7 shows at least four chapter members attending on the reunion's Morning Report.

-While not in Michigan, there is considerable interest among members in going to the EAA Airventure in Oshkosh, WI July 23-29. Dave James will organize ride sharing and housing for those interested.

Also not in Michigan, but a good opportunity is the 12th Annual Gathering of Veterans and Patriots at the American Huey Museum in Peru, IN August 11 & 12.

-Mason Aviation Days on August 18th will be coordinated by Dave James.

-Thunder Over Michigan on August 23-26 at the Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti is a huge event for the state and great opportunity for our chapter. Sandy McLeod is coordinating the event and is asking for volunteers to help man our display there.

-Dawn Patrol at the Maple Grove Airport near Fowlerville will be in early September, believe Sunday, September 9th. This has become a traditional early fall activity for our chapter. Dave James will coordinate and it will include a lunch gathering afterwards.

Treasurer's report and membership roster were presented. 19 new members have been added over the last year.



May 14th Traverse City Lunch L-R Mark Benjamin, Barry Witt, Bart Halliday, Jack Bergman, Ron Hofmeister, Walter Topp, Fritz Barratt, Bob Matlis, Rich Deer.



May 5, 2018 Michigan Chapter Meeting at Grand Ledge.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

A group photo was taken and then Rod Offhaus gave a presentation about Lam Son 719 which covered great detail about the operation. Several of the chapter members present had participated in the operation and added many personal stories.

Member at Large Mark Benjamin hosted a special edition lunch gathering on the 14th at Brady's in Traverse City Special guest and new chapter member Jack Bergman, LTG (Ret) USMC joined the gathering. Jack is a Congressman for the 1st District but no politics were discussed. This was a gathering of Vietnam veterans who flew in Vietnam and aviation stories were the theme for the day and everyone joined in. Jack shared details

of his extensive career and Vietnam service and he and fellow Marine Bart Halliday covered several common experiences. Mark noted the many success stories of those present in their careers both in and after military service.

Mark recruited Jack as a new member of the chapter. Fritz Barratt who flew C-47s in Vietnam and Ronald Hofmeister who served in non-aviation units in Vietnam were recruited as associate members. On behalf of Bob Rich, Mark distributed the new chapter challenge coins that Bob has provided. Jack presented custom dog tags to everyone present as well.

Submitted by Rich Deer, President



NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

More than 12 members of the North Alabama Chapter (NAVHPA) were able to attend the dedication of the Vietnam Pilots and Aircrew memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. Our yellow shirt uniform stood out proudly in the crowd. The Chapter was asked by the Legacy Committee to help with pre-ceremony tasks. Attending and tasks assignments were: Placement of wreaths (not VHPA official wreath) at the monument site - Bill and Renee Binkley, Jim White, Tom Houser; Helping handicapped people get into amphitheater - Teresa White, Rick and Anne Davis; Passing out programs to attendees - Clair Parr, Doug Madigan, Sharron Eubanks, Ruth Maki; Identifying and Escorting VIPs to seats - Bob Monette, Ed Gruetzemacher, Sam Maki, Marshall Eubanks. Two other NAVHPA members who live out of Alabama were spotted - Chuck Canfield of OH and Mike Nord of CA. Honorary Chapter member Julie Kink talked about the meaning of the memorial to Gold-Star families; there were few dry eyes by the end.

On 7 April we participated in the 50th Anniversary Vietnam Veterans Celebration/7th Annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans presented by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 1067 and held at the Huntsville/Madison County Veterans Memorial. This is an outside event and we have always taken our restored UH-1C/M gunship as the "front and center" display. This year inclement weather forced the event indoors. Our members were able to enjoy the hour-long program (normally we are conducting Docent duties during parts of the program). Teen members of the local 1st Patriot Support Corps dressed in Vietnam period uniforms filled the venue and Donut Dollies passed out donuts. The speaker was GEN Gustave F. Perna, commander of the Army Material Command from Redstone Arsenal.



Yellow-shirted members of the NAVHPA standing proud at the dedication of the helicopter pilots and crewmembers memorial.



Even in the face of Subtropical Storm Alberto, the NAVHPA honors heroes on Memorial Day.

May 19th found the NAVHPA crew supporting the Huntsville US Veterans Memorial Museum. The annual Armed Forces Celebration allows locals to visit the museum for a visual and hands-on experience regarding military history. Our C-Model (BUC-3) is always an added attraction.

23 May was another great day to support the Sonnie Hereford Elementary School in Huntsville. As part of our chapter mission, we give students an introduction to Army Aviation and a small dose of the Vietnam experience. From our mannequin in full aviator attire, to our M-60 (reproduction) machine guns, to sitting in the pilots & gunners seat, we present an image for 'future aviators'.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Bill Binkley's Corvette, painted in patriotic colors, accompanies Buc-3 to many NAVHPA displays.



The Aviation Challenge Cobra is coming along. NAVHPA members are refurbishing it for the US Space and Rocket Center.



This year one of our members Bill Binkley accompanied us with his 2002 Yellow Corvette that has patriotic themed paintings adorning the vehicle. He and his wife, Rene, take the car to numerous Car Shows to educate the public about our Vietnam Veterans and the Vietnam War.

A hand-selected team of the NAVHPA members were blindly selected by BG (RET) Bob Stewart to fix and paint the Huntsville Rocket Centers 'Aviation Challenge' AH-1S. This weather-abused Cobra required some much-needed TLC to allow it to be part of the educational tour of the center. With much needed adult supervision, the Cobra was washed, body filled, primed/sanded and painted over the course of a few months. Next will come the Army decals and shark's teeth on the front. Just one more labor of love as the Chapter continues to give back to the community.

Every year the North Alabama Veterans & Fraternal Organizations Coalition(NAVFOC), the City of Huntsville, and AUSA sponsor a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Huntsville Veterans Memorial. Thirty-six organizations laid their respective wreaths last year. This year, forecast bad weather caused the cancellation of the event. A couple hours after the cancellation notice went out, Clair Parr (honorary NAVHPA member and widow of Bernie Parr), asked Marshall Eubanks (NAVHPA president), if we could lay our wreath and why did rain stop this event? So, a call went out to our membership giving an hour's notice that we would lay our wreath - no matter the weather. Ten of us met at the Memorial, organized our laying ceremony and proceeded to honor our deceased veterans. The bagpipe player was still there and he played "Amazing Grace" as we marched to the laying location and then "Taps" as we all presented arms and thought of our loved ones and friends who were not with us. As you can see in the photo, the rain paused long enough to allow us to honor our heroes.

The NAVHPA is offering assistance setting up a website to any chapter that does not currently have a site or wants something better. Please look at the NAVHPA site (www.na-vhpa.org) to see if that's the kind of site you need. If your chapter wants a site like ours, your Chapter President can start the process by sending an email to [REDACTED] with a phone number and Point of Contact. We will validate that you are an active chapter; then our webmaster, Joe Stevens, will call

you and discuss details and issues. Then Joe can help you set up your Wix account and walk you through the processes of getting on line. You will need to

have a Gmail email in order to set up a Wix account. Your cost would be about \$15.00 to purchase a Domain name for one year. Additional cost will be hosting the website on Wix, which would be about \$60.00 per year. This cost can be deferred if your chapter is registered as 501c3 Public Charity organization and apply to Wix for recognition as a 01c3. Please email us if you would like our help.

Our summer is scheduled to be full of activities. Here is a look at the next four months. If you need more, it is on the NAVHPA website at the Schedule tab.

2 Jun: BUC-3 at Madison County Military Heritage Open House

11 Jun: Membership Meeting

21 Jun: Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

3-7 Jul: VHPA Reunion – Atlanta

No Membership Meeting in July due to VHPA Reunion

19 Jul: Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

13 Aug: Membership Meeting

16 Aug: Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

10 Sep: Membership Meeting

15 Sep: BUC-3 at Moontown Airfield for EAA Fly In

20 Sep: Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

22 Sep: BUC-3 at Yulista Family Picnic – Tate Farms

The Chapter continues to meet at the Schnitzel Ranch in Huntsville, 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 [REDACTED] Our web site is <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..."

By Ralph Weber



50 years later, Vietnam helicopter pilots still hang out with Donut Dollies.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Hopefully you remember reading about Elizabeth Peluso, Sam Sanderson and Matthew Peluso in the May/June issue concerning their entry in the Tar Heel Junior Historian competition conducted by the NC Museum of History. Their joint efforts paid off; they won first place in their age group. This article was about Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and why we participate in the VHPA.

It is hard to believe we have participated in seven events/parades/displays in the past two months. Here is a brief synopsis: April 3rd Jerry Seago took a UH-1M to the Lowe's in Mebane (he just can't stay away from there). April 18th a large group of us attended the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crew Member Monument Dedication in Washington, DC. Brock Nicholson "flew" the UH-1H Bluestar up I-95 for display at Arlington. April 21st found the OH-6 and the UH-1H in Walstonburg, NC for their Annual Community Patriots Day. This is a great community event. On April 28th a group of us, Jerry and Barbara Seago, Brock and Colleen Nicholson and Ed and Claudia Hughes, traveled to Norfolk, VA for the Virginia Arts Council International Tattoo. If you get the opportunity to attend a military tattoo please do, it is great military music and marching performed by some of the best military bands in the world. May 4th, 5th and 6th found us in Cherry Point for the Cherry Point Air Show. Friday night's airshow was fantastic and the flight demonstrations performed by the Blue Angels and the Canadian Snowbirds on Saturday were great. Then came Sunday, it was fun if you like rain, rain, and more rain. The show finally got started around noon and finished with the Blue Angels at 1600. We displayed the OH-6, OH-58, AH-1G, two UH-1Hs and one UH-1M at the show. On May 26th the OH-6 and UH-1M were in Myrtle Beach for their Memorial Day Parade. On May 28th the UH-1H Bluestar and OH-58 were in Washington, DC for their Memorial Day Parade.

The remainder of the summer will be fairly quiet except for



Jerry Phelps, Barbara Seago, Jerry Seago, Phil Keith, Claudia Hughes, Ed Hughes and Bill Dornan at Dinner in Myrtle Beach on Memorial Day.



Brock Nicholson eating his breakfast dessert, bun topped with cream cheese, peanut butter, jelly and honey. He is just a growing boy.



left to right: Ed Hughes, Ben Gay, Jerry Phelps, Terry Lanier, Brock Nicholson and Bill Doran. In the background is Bob Inglis.



OH-58 being pulled by Joe Armstrong in Washington DC Memorial Day Parade.



Joe Armstrong is talking to a veteran.

individual aircraft displays until we take six aircraft to Wise, VA in September, five aircraft to New Bern's Mum Festival in October, and six aircraft to Washington DC for Veterans Day.

The following Members participated in one or more of the events: Jerry Seago, Brock Nicholson, Joe Armstrong, Jerry Phelps, Terry Lanier, Mike Edelman, John Leandro, Bob Inglis, Walt Emery, Sam McLamb, Allen Hoffman, David Reno, Mik Milulan, Phil Keith, Bill Doran, and Glenn Klutz.

By Ed Hughes

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER

Our 31st Annual Reunion took place in Frankfort, KY on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of April 2018. The Reunion was a great success due to the hard work of the Reunion Committee. Activities included: a tour of Keeneland Race track, Hero's Tour, Kentucky State University Tour, Kentucky History Center, Kentucky Horse Park, Tour of the Kentucky State Governors Mansion, and the Buffalo Trace Distillery. Our guest speaker was Lt. Governor Jenean Hampton who was at our dinner on Saturday night. During our dinner we had our Missing Man ceremony.

By Bob Blair



Members who served in the Air Cav with Lt. Governor Hampton.

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

This spring has been quite busy for our Chapter: On March 10 we had a meeting at Legends Brewing in Richmond. On April 14 we had a meeting at the Invitation of Marine Major General Retired Richard Phillips at his winery, Generals Ridge Vineyard in Hague, VA. We had a free wine tasting and enjoyed discounted hors d'oeuvres and wine purchases. General Phillips discussed his participation in the Lam Son 719 Battle in early 1971. Some of us spent the night at one of the two Bed and Breakfast homes on the property.

Many of us were involved in the Legacy Committee over the last several years and attended the Memorial Dedication at Arlington National Cemetery on 18 April.

On the weekend of May 4 to 6 we had a gathering in Norfolk, VA that included: a dinner cruise on the Spirit of Norfolk, a visit to the MacArthur Memorial and Museum, a meeting with the Mayor of Norfolk and his Veterans Advisory Committee, and tours of the WW2 Battleship USS Wisconsin and the Nauticus.

Our Chapter takes the summers off but many of us plan to attend the National VHPA Reunion in Atlanta this year from 2 to 7 July.



Front and Center is Norfolk Mayor Kenneth Alexander :Left to right is Bob Pritchard, Chip Brown, Don Agren, Richard Gray, Jim Squyres, Warren Price, Ken Paulson, Jim Holden, Hugh Adams, Mel Anderson.



Ten wives and significant others attended and Mrs. Linda Phillips, was a willing and personable hostess for the ladies.



The MacArthur Museum: Left to right is Bob Pritchard, Chip Brown, Don Agren, Richard Gray, Jim Squyres, Warren Price, Ken Paulson, Jim Holden, Hugh Adams, Mel Anderson.



Left to right, Lou Burger, Jim Kane, Jim Squyres, Fletch Flemer, General Richard Phillips, Warren Price, Don Agren, Ben Conrad.

Spirit of Norfolk Harbor Cruise vessel.



Our next Chapter meeting is set for Saturday September 8, 2018 at 13:00 hours at Legend Brewing Company, Richmond, VA 23224, just south of the James River. I Hope you can join us.

Don Agren, President, Old Dominion Chapter VHPA

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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

At our Chapter meeting in May we accepted nominations for Chapter Officers. Elections will be held at the American Legion Post #1 on Wednesday, June 20, 2018.

Our Chapter once again hosted the returning honorees of the Northern Colorado Chapter of "Honor Flight". A total of 123 veterans representing three different eras of conflict were honored as they deplaned. Five WWII Veterans, 22 Korean Veterans, and 96 Vietnam Veterans. This is the largest Vietnam-era veterans group to participate in Honor Flight. This has come about as a result of Stan Cass's efforts. Chapter members Bill Bates, Rick Beaver Cliff

Lawson, Terry Olson, Doug Neil, Phil Lanphier, Dale House and organizers Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi were on hand to welcome the Veterans home.

Our first Helicopter War Museum event of the year was held at the Colorado Freedom Memorial <http://coloradofreedommemorial.com/>, in Aurora, CO. The Memorial is dedicated to Colorado native Veterans since Colorado became a state in 1876, who are not buried on US soil. Since it was a Memorial Service for Memorial Day, we were expecting a nominal turnout. The event turned out to be a huge success for the Freedom Memorial and our Museum. We estimate we had approximately 700 visitors. Docents for this event were Doug Neil, Mike Silva, Rick Beaver, Bill Bates, Dale House, Phil Lanphier, Carl Cavalluzzi, Bill Robie, Ben Prieb, and Cliff Lawson who provided photography.

We recently opened up conversation with Texas Tech University, Vietnam Archive Department, to discuss end of life options for our traveling Helicopter War Museum. Stay tuned for developments on this subject.

One of our own, Colonel Stan Cass, passed away since the last publication. A Memorial to his life and military career is available in the "Taps" section of this magazine issue.

Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

Our next event for the Helicopter War Museum will be the Longmont Aviation Expo, at the Vance Brand Airport in Longmont, CO on June 23, 2018. Next Chapter meeting to be held at the American Legion Post #1 on Wednesday, June 20, 2018. Other chapter activities are announced on our Web site.

Meeting Schedule and other Information:

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third



Children in the Museum-Lots to Learn.



George Mayl instructing a visitor how to fly the Huey.



Our Docents at the Freedom Memorial event.



Visitors in the Museum.



Colorado Freedom Memorial.

Wednesday of the month, at 10:00 hours at the American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have a holiday get together in December. The Museum committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays. Visit our Web site at www.RMCVHPA.com

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

By Dale House

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

On May 17th, The Upper Midwest Chapter held their meeting at Holman's Table restaurant, located at the St. Paul Downtown Airport. This airport was also known as Holman Field and currently is where the Minnesota National Guard Aviation Unit is headquartered.

At the meeting we had several speakers who addressed the members. Joe Harris, the current St. Paul Downtown Airport Manager, gave us a quick update of past and current activities at the airport. He also gave recognition to Tim Callister, the past airport manager and a current member of the Upper Midwest Chapter.

Our second speaker was Katie Carpenter of TPT-Twin Cities PBS and Special Project Lead for Minnesota Remembers Vietnam. On June 21st thru June 23rd there will be day-long programs and events concerning the Vietnam War on the Minnesota State Capitol grounds. Also on display will be "The Wall That Heals", a 1/4 scaled replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, and a static Huey helicopter display. Several of our members will be attending this event. Finally we had several of our members who attended the Washington DC dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crew Member Monument speak about the event and how well it went over.

After our lunch we were invited over to the National Guard Aviation Unit Headquarters. We toured the hangar areas and spoke with several members of the unit. Then we



had the pleasure of a "Hands On" inspection of a Blackhawk helicopter. Needless to say, we were all impressed. We had many questions that were fully explained and answered. During the tour some of the unit's members were also interested in hearing some of our "experiences" with the helicopters in Viet Nam.

Up coming events include: Minnesota Remembers Vietnam, a July lunch or dinner cruise on Lake Minnetonka, and several events later this summer that will include the Static Huey and/or the Flyable Huey.

Our Chapter includes Minnesota and Western Wisconsin and we are always looking for new members to join us.

By Bruce Hunter, President 2017-2018

UTAH CHAPTER

The wreath laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the Utah State Capitol was very well presented by the Vietnam Veterans volunteers. Tributes to all 45,000 Vietnam Vets living in Utah was acknowledged as well as the 1,600 Utah Vietnam Vets who were KIA in Vietnam and have their names inscribed on our Utah wall. Several of our UTVHPA members were in attendance and I personally thank them for their support.

Some members of the chapter were at the



Scott Shupe Purple Heart Ceremony.



Elks Day, Drury and Summer.



Tom Melville, retired working dog Mazzie, Doug Drury. Mazzie spent five years as an explosive detection dog in Kuwait.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

April 7th Veterans event at the Provo Elks Lodge. There was good turnout despite the on-and-off rain throughout the day which hampered the car and motorcycle displays outside but we stayed dry and active inside. Several Veterans groups besides ours were in attendance and had information tables to answer questions and recruit new members. Our thanks to the Elks Lodge for their hospitality, generosity to Veterans, and a welcome lunch.

WO Scott Shupe was awarded the Purple Heart by U.S. Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) at the Utah State Capitol Building. Senator Lee's office staff spent 18 months tracking down the medical records and documents that supported this award. WO Shupe flew with A Troop 7/17 CAV and was shot in the foot and the head on December 14, 1971.

By Tom Melville, President.



CWS Higgins, Jones, Drury, Newberry, White, Blackburn, Rodreiquiz.

WASHINGTON CHAPTER

In May, several of us were asked if we could bring the Huey to Saint Marten's College to take part in the Lacey Spring Festival. A lot of kids enjoyed sitting in the Huey as parents took photos.

Just a quick reminder that our June Meeting is about ten days out. We're set for Saturday, June 16 at 1100 AM at the Olympia Airport. We'll be in the hangar to the east of the museum. Look for a door in the left corner. Several of us will be there early to set up and get the coffee going. I plan to bring four dozen donuts.

From Chris Farwell: I was at the Vietnam Wall in Olympia on Memorial Day, met this guy and told him I would pass this on. This is on the same day as our meeting, but it may be of interest to the guys in the future. C Chris.

Good to meet you today. Attached is an invitation to the Vietnam War Memorial dedication ceremony:

*11:00 am, Saturday, June 16 at Les Glove Park
910 9th St. SE, Auburn, Washington*

Hope you and other helicopter pilots can come.

Another member reminded me that we should be sending



Lacey Spring Festival at Saint Marten's College.

Chapter updates to our Aviator Magazine. I agree and confess this is something I should have picked up on accepting the job of serving as our President.

I wish to pass on a special thanks to Steve Lodwig for providing me with our email addresses and the protocol in sending out messages.

See you in Olympia.

Mel C Latham, President

Unit Insignia or Logos on:
Coins, Caps, Shirts, Knives, Awards,
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Richard Yood, MAS
Vietnam
67 - 68 & 70 - 71
Master Army Aviator, Ret

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Chapter meeting in Olympia.

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

Due to limitations of space, most of the obituaries in Taps have been reduced in size; some slightly, some considerably. Often there are extensive details of more interest to a neighbor or other acquaintance. If you wish to obtain more information it is available on vhpao.org.

Borland, James M. USA; MAJ Ret; Flight Classes: 69-37/69-35; RVN: 70-71 C/4/77 ARA 101 ABN; Callsign: Griffin 92A.



Michael "Mike" Borland passed away peacefully on May 3, 2018. He fought hard the last few years without complaint, but finally succumbed to the affects of several Agent Orange related diseases.

Mike was born in Indiana, PA on November 15, 1947. He spent his childhood in the same hometown as actor Jimmy Stewart, graduating from Indiana High School in 1965. His journey in military service initially began at the U.S. Naval Academy. Mike left the Academy in 1968 and enlisted in the Army for the Warrant Officer Flight Training Program. He excelled in Flight Training and was selected to fly the AH-1G Cobra Attack Helicopter.

He was injured in a Cobra crash and medically evacuated back to the United States. Mike recovered from his injuries and returned to Cobra Hall, Hunter Army Airfield, GA as a Standardization Instructor Pilot.

Mike understood the value of education and completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Embry-Riddle University and a Master of Public Administration from Pepperdine University.

Mike is survived by his loving wife of 48 years, Julie.

Boostrom, David A. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Class: 71-38; RVN: 72 361 AVN/72 129 AHC; LM, MSM, ACM (3); Callsign: Panther 24.

David Boostrom passed away quietly at home, March 9, 2018.

Foreseeing this event he wrote the following: "I hope that I have been a good husband, a good father, and a good soldier. To be sure, I loved my sweet wife and my children, and I loved my country. I always attempted to do

that which I thought was right, and to do my duty. I leave this world with few regrets, and with the conviction that if I had my life to live again I would likely live it in much the same manner as I have. I beg pardon for any wrong I may have done to anyone, and forgive any wrong that may have been done to me. To all who knew me, especially my wife and family, I bid you farewell, wish you the best of luck, and hope that you find contentment in life. My last wish is to be with you all again."

He received his Bachelor's Degree from California State University in San Bernardino and his Master's Degree from Ball State University in Muncie, IN. He was also a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS, and the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, PA.

David is survived by his wife of 51 years.

Browne, Robert R. USA; Flight Class: 67-5; RVN: 67-68 117 AHC; Callsign: Beachbum 11.

Robert Rollins Browne passed away on May 4, 2018 in Reno, NV after a long illness. "Bob" was born on September 25, 1945 in Kansas City, KS.

He was a 40+ year resident of Nevada and worked for many years in Carson City and Reno. He was known by his clients as an effective sales professional and as their own personal advocate in the auto sales industry.

Robert is survived by his wife, Laurie Niclary-Browne (Lurline).

Buchman, Craig L. USA; Flight Classes: 68-511/68-17; RVN: 68-70 173 AHC; Callsign: Robinhood 20.

Craig Buchman passed away February 18, 2009 at the Seattle VA Hospital. He was born on August 12, 1947, in Tacoma, WA. He graduated from Puyallup High School in 1965. He joined the

Army in 1968.

After being discharged from the Army he worked as an electrician and built his own website: outdoorfocus.org. He enjoyed camping, taking road trips (with the top down), building things, listening to talk radio, eating chocolate-covered cherries, working in the yard, playing with his bird Cyrus and loved playing and talking to his grandchildren.

Craig is survived by his significant other, Sarah Matz.

Cass, Stanley D. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 60-6Q/58-13; RVN: 66-67 B/2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 72-73 HHC/11 CAG; Callsign: Red Hawk 6.



Stan Cass passed away peacefully after a brief illness, surrounded by his immediate family, on April 14, 2018, in Greeley, CO. He was born in Greeley on July 29, 1933.

After his military retirement in 1986, he operated Cass Farms in Briggsdale with his son, Randy, and his family. He was a proud veteran, the President and Founder of Honor Flight Northern Colorado.

He attended Colorado A&M (CSU) for two years before going to West Point in New York and received a Master of Science in Meteorology from Texas A&M.

He was a life member of the VFW; a member of the American Legion; and is past President of the Northern Colorado Military Officers Association.

As a co-chairman of the Weld County Veterans Memorial Committee, he played a significant role in getting a Veterans Memorial built in Greeley, dedicated in 1997 that has become a standard for other cities/towns.

He was a past Mayor of Ault and was very active with the Community Foundation, Legacy Land Trust, Colorado State University Beef Club and the West Greeley Conservation

TAPS

District. He was an active Mason and Shriner, Occident Lodge #20 member, AF&AM, and was Past Master three times. He was president of Colorado Tillage Association and was president of Ault Sertoma Club, as well as District Governor of a three state area.

Stanley is survived by his wife of 43 years, Cecily.

Claiborne, Max R. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Classes: 60-3/60; RVN: 63-64 120 AVN, 70-71 240 AHC, 71 HHC 1 AVN BDE; BS (OLC), LM; Callsign: Greyhound 6.



Max Claiborne passed away on April 4, 2018 at his home in Leesburg, VA. He was born on August 8, 1934, in Hollis, OK. Max graduated from Hollis High School in 1954. He attended the University of Oklahoma on an athletic scholarship and received a B.S. degree in Business Education in January 1959. As a Distinguished Military Graduate, he was commissioned in the U.S. Army through the R.O.T.C. program.

He spent most of his 23-year Army career flying both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and was involved in the test and evaluation of helicopter programs.

He is survived by the love of his life, Rose C. Claiborne, his wife of over 53 years.

Covey, James D. USA; Flight Class: 67-4; RVN: 67-68 192 AHC, 71-72 187 AHC; Callsign: Rat Pack 36.



James "Jim" D. Covey passed away on August 16, 2015 at his home. Jim was born on April 30, 1937. His focus in life was his faith and his family – a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Jim is survived by his wife, Mary Covey.

Cujdik, Andrew J. USA, CW3 Ret; Flight Class: 58-3; RVN: 67-68 243 ASHC; PH, ACM; Callsign: Freight Train.



Andrew J. Cujdik passed away on April 10, 2018. Andrew was born on June 1, 1931 in Philadelphia, PA. He was a 20 year veteran

(1948-1969) who served in both the Korean War as an Airborne Ranger and the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot of the C47 Chinook.

He is predeceased by his loving wife of 40 years, Agnes Cujdik (nee Dembik).

Dallas, Mathew D. USA; Flight Class: 62-2AA; RVN: 66-67 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF; SS, DFC, BS (V), PH; Callsign: Dark Horse 3.

Mathew Dale "Mat" passed away on February 9, 2018. Mat was born on March 9, 1938, in Geary, OK; later moving to Oklahoma City where Mat attended Hawthorne Elementary and graduated from Classen High School. He enlisted in the Army in 1956. In 1961, Mat was selected for and graduated from the Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, where he was at the top of class in leadership. He deployed to RVN in 1965 after flight school and was wounded and evacuated to Fort Sill in Lawton, OK to the Reynolds Hospital for care and recovery. While under care at Reynolds Hospital, Mat volunteered and served as Executive Officer 154th Aviation Company. Upon release from the hospital, Mat was assigned as Instructor, Tactics and Combined Arms, Artillery School at Fort Sill. Due to his wounds received in Vietnam, Mat was medically retired from the Army in February 1970.

In 1980, Mat co-founded/co-owned Frontier Express, Inc. (FRXP) with Onis Miller, which later included D&M Distribution Services and Dallas-Miller Logistics in 1991. In the 1990s, FRXP and D&M Distribution were both recognized by Metro 50 as one of the fastest growing companies in the OKC metro area. Additionally, in 1991, the National Blue Chip Enterprise Initiative Program recognized FRXP for its "never say die attitude" for FRXP's part in helping with Oklahoma's economy survival during the four-year stagnant period of the late 1980s "with renewed strength.

Mat is survived by Ireeta Joy "Rita" Kirk, his wife of 61 years.

Fiedler, Charles M. USA; Flight Class: 70-29; RVN: 70-71 273 HHC, 72-73 62 CAC; Callsigns: Superhook/Boss; died May 28, 2018 (no obituary provided).

Fleck, Rodney A. USA; Flight Class: 70-18; RVN: 70-68 AHC, 70-71 334 AHC, 71 E/3/17 CAV, 71 128 AHC; Callsigns: Gremelin 16/Tomahawk 16.



Rodney Fleck of Saranac, MI passed on Easter Morning, April 1, 2018. He was born on January 12, 1946.

Rod discovered his life's passion for flying at an early age. As a young boy, he would ask to go to the airport to watch the planes land so often his grandfather started telling him that "Planes can't fly when it's raining." Following his dreams, he built a distinguished aviation career with the U.S. Army and Amway Corporation.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanne (Hewitt) Fleck.

Hinton, Robert R. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Classes: 66-8/67-4; RVN: 67-68 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 71 COMMAND AVN CO; DFC (2), BS; Callsigns: Blue Max/Long Trip.



Robert Richey Hinton died on August 6, 2016 at the Baptist Reynolds Hospice House after a battle with cancer.

He was born and raised in Collierville, TN and graduated from Collierville High School in 1958. He attended Duke University, graduating with a degree in History in 1962.

Mr. Hinton joined the US Army in 1963 where he had a distinguished career as an aviator in the 101st Airborne Cavalry.

After retiring from the Army in 1985, Mr. Hinton was a commercial airline pilot based in both Memphis and Switzerland. He retired from flying in 1998.

Robert is survived by his wife, Sigrid.

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Keller, Lewis W. Jr. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 70-26/70-22; RVN: 70-71 326 MED 101 ABN; DFC, BS; Callsign Dustoff94.

Lewis Woodrow Keller, Jr. peacefully passed away on February 4, 2018. He was born on September 3, 1943 in Lansdale, PA. He graduated from Valley Forge Military Academy. He then went on to join the JROTC Exploring program and enlisted in the United States Army. After his enlistment, he was able to complete a Bachelor's Degree at Kansas Wesleyan before taking an active military role in 1968.

After he retired from the army, Lewis earned a Master's Degree from OSU-Tulsa, and continued his education by pursuing teaching certificates to share his knowledge and insight with others. Lewis taught history at Claremore high school for 16 years before he retired in 2012.

Lewis is survived by his wife Mary Louise (Zschach) Keller.

Lawson, Jon D. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 70-22; RVN: 70-71 45 MED CO, 71-72 326 MED 101 ABN; BS; Callsign: Dustoff910.



Jon Dennis (JD) Lawson, resident of Matthews, NC passed peacefully into the arms of His Savior on July 29, 2015. JD was born on July 6, 1946 in Salina, KS. He grew up in Kansas City, KS where he attended Turner High School, received a Bachelor's degree from Emporia State Teachers College (now Emporia University) in 1968 and a Master's degree from St. Mary's University, San Antonio, TX in 1977.

JD had planned to be a teacher but Uncle Sam had other ideas. He was drafted in December 1968 and received a direct commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in September 1969. He was in the active Army for 11 years.

After leaving the active Army, JD served as a nursing home administrator for 20 years in various locations throughout the North Carolina Piedmont region. He then worked for Reformed Theological Seminary Charlotte campus primarily in the Virtual Campus for 15 years where his impact on seminary students all over the world was memorable and unselfish.

For the last 19 years JD had been a member of the North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (NCVHPA.org).

With this group, he attended many air shows, parades, and other events to display their Vietnam era helicopters. In addition, he served as chapter chaplain for several years.

Jon is survived by his wife, Sandy.

Marshall, William T. USA; Flight Classes: 70-5/70-3; RVN: 70 4 INF, 70-71 C/158 AVN 101 ABN, 71 163 GS 101 ABN; BS; Callsign: Woodstock 13.



Former Army Warrant Officer Tom Marshall passed away on May 20, 2018. Tom was born in Martinsville, VA, and grew up in Pensacola, FL. In 1969, he enlisted in the United States Army in the Warrant Officers Rotary Wing Pilot course.

He flew OH-58s for the 1st Brigade, Headquarters Company. At the end of this twelve-month tour, Tom had accumulated 1,087 hours of combat flying time.

He was an active member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association since 1990. In 1998, he wrote a highly-acclaimed book, *The Price of Exit*, chronicling his experiences in Vietnam. For the past 40 years, Tom worked as a professional commercial real estate appraiser, holding the prestigious MAI designation.

Masterson, Gerald E. USA; Flight Class: 65-22; RVN: 66-67 DIV ART 1 INF; Callsign: Custer 19.



Gerald Edwin Masterson passed away on May 10, 2018, with his wife, Barbara Louise Masterson, by his side, in Roseville, CA. He was born on March 3, 1941, in Cincinnati, OH. He was the oldest of six siblings. He graduated from Xavier University in 1964, completing the ROTC Program, and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the summer of 1964. He then attended flight training to become a helicopter pilot.

Upon retiring as a CFO within the Silicon Valley in 2009, Jerry volunteered his time with Yu-Ai Kai, Japanese American Community Senior Services, in San Jose, CA, as a board member.

Midkiff, Carl E. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 66-18; RVN: 66-67 1 BDE 101 ABN, 69-70 20 TCC CO.



Carl Edwin Midkiff, 83, of Radcliff, KY, died on April 24, 2018 at home.

He served two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot; he was a member of VFW Post 10281 and was a flight simulator instructor on Ft. Knox.

He is survived by his wife, Ingeborg M. Midkiff of Radcliff.

Morris, Warren M. USA; Flight Class: 69-41; RVN: 69-71 11 ACR; Callsign: Traveller 21.

No obituary provided. He is survived by wife Debbie.

Oliver, William H. USA; Flight Class: 67-13; RVN: 67-68 173 AHC; Callsign: Robinhoods.



William Oliver died on May 20, 2018. He was born in Nashville, TN on May 14, 1946.

"Hunt" attended Montgomery Bell Academy and graduated from The Bolles School in Jacksonville, FL. He attended Emory University and graduated from Vanderbilt University after a tour of duty in Vietnam and Germany.

As a Chief Warrant Officer in the U.S. Army, he flew Huey helicopters. Associated with Nashville Carpet Center for more than 30 years, he was loved by customers and a mentor to many young salesmen.

William is survived by his wife, Deborah Whitney Oliver.

Ramsey, Forest L. II USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 69-8; RVN: 69-70 199 LIB; LM, BS, MSM, JSCM.



Forest Lee "Mike" Ramsey II, died on May 1, 2018. He was born on August 23, 1945 in Ashland, KY.

Mr. Ramsey was a University of Kentucky graduate. His career as an officer in the U.S. Army included many endeavors and positions. He was inducted into Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame. He enjoyed being involved in the entertainment industry, receiving the 2014 IMTA (Images Model & Talent Agency) LA Male Actor of the Year.

He is survived by his wife Juanita Lewis Ramsey.

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Sabey, Walter D. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 55-C; RVN: 61-62 57 TCC CO.

Walter Sabey passed away on March 1, 2014. He graduated flight school in Fort Sill, OK and volunteered to go to Vietnam with the first Army aviation unit sent there in 1961-1962. His was the second Army helicopter to land in Vietnam; the company commander was first! There were no formal helicopter tactics at that time and they had to make them up as they went along.

Walter also made the first flight in a Huey using night vision goggles and flew the Blackhawk, in its testing stages. With the exception of the CH-53, he piloted every helicopter the army had in its inventory up to the present date and also the Army fixed winged aircraft such as the Caribou, Otter, and the Beaver.

Salisbury, Gary L. USA, MAJ Ret; Flight Class: 66-12; RVN: 66-67 116 AHC, 70-71 CMD AVN CO; MSM, ACM (V); Callsign: Hornet 5A.



Gary L. Salisbury "Rabbitman," passed away on April 16, 2018. He was born on January 20, 1939 in Coon Rapids, IA. He joined the Military in November 1956. After Vietnam, his duties included assignments as an Experimental Test Pilot and a Tactical Intelligence Officer.

Gary is survived by his wife, Christa.

Stanley, Richard E. II USA; Flight Class: 67-9; RVN: 68 B/7/1 CAV, 68 A/3/17 CAV, 68-69 187 AHC, 71-72 AFAT 2, 71-72 VNAF SQDN; Callsigns: Dutchmaster/Silver Spur/Crusader.

Richard E. Stanley II passed away on November 3, 2014. He was a true hero who served two tours in Vietnam.

Stanley is survived by his wife Tong.

Summey, Paul B. II USA; Flight Class: 70-22; RVN: 70-71 B/123 AVN AMERICAL; DFC, BS; Callsign: Warlord 23.

Paul Bickett "Scoot" Summey II was born in Hampton, VA in 1946. He graduated from the Georgia Military Academy in Atlanta, GA, and tried his hand at UNC-Chapel Hill for a few semesters, before eventually landing at Ole Miss, joining the Army ROTC.

After his military duty, he and his wife moved to Cypress, CA in 1976. By then, Paul had already begun his 30 year career at Procter & Gamble. He was an award-winning salesman (most proud of his "Safe Driving Awards"), manager and corporate trainer with a car trunk stuffed with toothbrushes, Crest, Scope and Pampers. Paul enjoyed the California weather but not the traffic. He was happy to return to the East Coast in 1983 where he and Diane lived in Herndon, VA, until 2004, when they retired to Asheville, NC. While in Virginia, Paul

earned his Master's in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola College in Maryland.

Paul is survived by his wife, Diane.

Vandeuresen, Ferdinand W.JR USAF, COL Ret.

Ferdinand W. Van Deursen, of Olympia, WA, passed away peacefully on February 16, 2018 following a 17-year battle with cancer. "Ferd" was born on May 18, 1932 in New Brunswick, NJ. The family relocated to Troy, NY, and Ferd graduated from Lansingburgh High School with the class of 1950. Ferd then attended Rutgers University, where he earned his Bachelor's Degree and participated in the Glee Club, ROTC, and the University Choir. He graduated from Rutgers in 1954. Ferd was a pilot, flying the great C-130 aircraft and helicopters for the Air Force for 26 years. He earned numerous awards and decorations before retiring in 1981. After earning his MBA at the University of Puget Sound, he became a CPA, working in the State Auditor's Office for 13 years. He married his first wife and high school sweetheart, Janet Seith, in 1954, who died of cancer in 1987. In 1990, he was blessed to marry again, to Harriet Gleason of Olympia, WA.

Ferdinand is survived by his wife, Harriet.



INTERESTING URLs

Army stops AH-64 deliveries for safety issue.

www.defensenews.com/land/2018/04/19/army-stops-taking-ah-64es-from-boeing-due-to-lack-of-confidence-in-part-critical-to-safety/

“In Vietnam, These Helicopter Scouts Saw Combat up Close” Air and Space article link

www.airspacemag.com/military-aviation/snakes-loaches-180964341/

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.

Addiss, Daniel A. USA, LTC Ret.; LM, DFC, BS; died April 16, 2018.

Abplanalp, Robert H. USA; Flight Class: 65-1W; died May 5, 2018.

Barthle, Robert C. USA; died March 18, 2018.

Beam, Theodore D. USA; Flight Class: 69-34; died May 6, 2018.

Bourgeois, Randy C. USA, LTC Ret.; LM, DFC, BS (OLC), MSM (OLC), ACM; died April 19, 2018.

Cheek, William A. USA; Flight Class: 71-48; died March 11, 2018.

Childress, Carlisle H. USN, CPT Ret.; RVN: 68-69 HA(L)-3 DET 6; Callsign: Seawolf; died April 23, 2018.

Daniel, James E. Jr. USA; Flight Class: 69-10; RVN: 69-70 B/101 AVN 101 ABN; Callsigns: Kingsman 3/Kingsman 15; died May 13, 2018.

Deason, William T. IV USA; Flight Class: 63-1W; died March 28, 2018.

Doheny, Francis V. USA; Flight Class: 68-521; died November 15, 2014.

Driscoll Bruce W. USMC, LTC Ret.; MSM; died April 23, 2018.

Erby, Tommy L. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-8; died May 13, 2018.

Gilbert, Robert A. USA; Flight Class: 70-6; BS (2), PH; died May 3, 2018.

Graham, Richard G. USN, CDR Ret.; RVN: 67-74 AA; died April 22, 2018.

Harney, Edward A. USMC, MAJ Ret.; died March 29, 2018.

Harper, James USA; Flight Class: 64-3; died April 20, 2018.

Hefford, Robert A. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 58; RVN: 64-65 13 CAB, 65 121 AHC, 67 HHT/7/17 CAV, 67-68 B/7/17 CAV, 68 HHT/7/17 CAV; SS (OLC), DFC, PH; died May 26, 2018.

Hooke, Henry E. USAF; DFC; died late April 2018.

Johnson, Ronald J. USA; Flight Classes: 70-15/70-13; died April 2, 2018.

Jordan, Homer R. USA; RVN: 66 117 AHC, 68-69 A/7/17 CAV; DFC (3), BS (2), MSM, PH (2); died April 22, 2018.

Jordan, Norman N. USAF; died January 29, 2018.

Ledoux, Richard D. Sr. USAF, LTC Ret.; died April 28, 2018.

McCreary, William T. USA; Flight Class: 67-14; died April 6, 2018.

McEachran, Robert B. USMC; RVN: 64-65 HMM365; died May 26, 2018.

McGee, Thomas A. Jr. USA, CW5 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-519/68-35; died April 12, 2018.

McSwain, Gregory R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 70-44; PH; died March 29, 2018.

Mulcahy, William J. USN, CPT Ret.; RVN: 70 HA(L)-3; Callsign: Seawolf; died March 29, 2018.

Noble, William R. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 67-21; DFC (OLC), BS (OLC), PH; died February 27, 2017. Note: Family member indicated three tours.

Riederich, John B. USAF; died April 24, 2018.

Rutland, Larry K. USA; Flight Class: 67-7; died December 19, 2017.

Shaeffer, John E. USAF Ret.; RVN: 67-38 ARRS; died, March 29, 2018.

Stokes, Albert W. USA; Flight Class: 69-10; BS.

Storey, Randall D. USA; Flight Class: 69-17; died April 24, 2018.

Sustarich, Joseph P. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 64-5W; died May 4, 2018.

Swank, David W. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 68-3/68-1; died October 5, 2017.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

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]

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: Bill Janes [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

Any questions contact Jim Donnelly at: [REDACTED]

A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



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SOCIETY

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

DFCSociety.org/membership

HHC 1st BDE 1st Cav

"Flying Circus"

When: 14-16 September, 2018

Where: Grand Plaza Hotel, Branson, MO
Contact: Bill Medske [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.myfreesites.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,
cell: [REDACTED]

"Hercules / Boxcar 2019 Reunion

When: 8-12 October 2018

Where: Wyndham Garden Hotel, [REDACTED]
Oklahoma City, OK 73108
Contact: [REDACTED]
(Call by 23 September)
Room Rate: \$ 85.00 + taxes (double if space unavailable)
www.wyndhamkc.com

A 158 AHC 101 Airborne Division Reunion

When: October 11, 12, 13, 14; 2018

Where: Branson Missouri

Contact: Allen Bolle [REDACTED]

or

Gary Rossomme [REDACTED]

Note: Any soldier from 101 is welcome.

187th Assault Helicopter Company 2018 Reunion

When: November 7-12, 2018

Where: Sirata Beach Hotel, St. Pete Beach, FL
Contact: Jim Henry (Crusader 16) at [REDACTED] or

Additional Information: www.187thahc.net

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Brian and Marilyn Paine

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