



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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Combat damaged aircraft from 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance).

Left to right: AC: WO Jim Siverd (Dustoff 30); P: WO Gene Manning (Dustoff 31); Medic: SP Jerry Pask; CE: unknown.

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

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# From the President of the VHPA

As Thanksgiving Day and the holiday season approaches, I am certain that you, as I do, recall our time in Vietnam during those days. As we do so, let us all remember those serving today and their families.

While the holidays lie before us, so does the 36th Annual Reunion of the VHPA in Kansas City. I can assure you that our National Reunion Committee and our HQ staff are working diligently and vigorously to bring an outstanding reunion to us all. Registration will begin immediately after the first of the New Year and I want to encourage you to register early. Some events are capacity controlled and if you wait until closer to the time of the reunion to register, or at the reunion itself, you may find certain events sold out.

Two events that I am particularly looking forward to are the breakfast on Wednesday the 29th and the BBQ luncheon the following day. At the breakfast we will hear experiences of a former POW. COL John Clark (USAF Ret.) was a RF-4 pilot, flying out of Udorn, Thailand, when he was shot down over



North Vietnam, captured, and held captive for six years, many at the Hanoi Hilton. I believe everyone will be moved by COL Clark's words.

Then on Thursday, at the BBQ luncheon, we will have a wonderful program of patriotic music along with songs of the 60's and 70's. Students, 40-45 in number,

from the College of the Ozarks will be providing the entertainment. The C of O is a small private college in southern Missouri where support of our veterans and patriotism is one of the pillars of the school. These young people will have completed their school year and are looking forward to performing for us. Having seen them numerous times, I know that this is something you will not want to miss.

*With the holidays looming, I want to take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas.*

*See you in Kansas City.*

## FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

**R2019 Info** – Space for mini reunions and in the Vendor Room is limited this year. If interested in either of these areas, be sure to book early! Space for both areas will be allotted on a first come, first serve basis and will fill up quickly! On Line Registration for events and tours will be open January 7, 2019.

**Reminder** – Directories purchased beginning September 1, 2018 will be for the 2019 directory that will be delivered in October 2019. The deadline for ordering the 2019 directory is August 31, 2019. A copy of the paper directory is \$15 and a CD copy is \$10. 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>.**

HQ now has copies of the Vietnam Helicopter & Crew Members Monument Dedication Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery DVD for purchase. The price is \$15 which includes shipping cost. A copy of the program will be included with each order, while supplies last. Call HQ at 800-505-8472 to place your order. T-shirts with the monument on them can also be purchased online at <https://gear.vhpa.org>.

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

**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*

# "IN THE OPEN!"

by Terry Shulze

It started out as just another day in 'Nam. The breakfast was mediocre, but there were fresh apples - I took two, one to eat during the flight. The mission was more than just a light "pink" team; there were two Cobras, a Charlie-Charlie and the Scout. William "Smitty" Smith, Spur 18 was flying the Scout with Sgt. Marion Hill as his observer, Spur 37 was the lead Cobra and I, Spur 34 (Terry Shulze), had the wing position.

My "front-seater" was a second tour CW2 like me, can't remember his name, but we got along very well together. He had a lot more aviation experience than I did, whereas I had a bit more combat experience than he did. He eventually went over to Bravo company as the maintenance officer. One of the most brilliant pilots I ever flew with.

We depart Soc Trang and head south to an area only about 30 minutes from Soc Trang. Once we get out in the AO, 18 drops down for a look. It's quiet, the Gun Team is just cutting circles in the sky, round and round, keeping a watchful eye on the Scout. The Cobra I drew is the only Cobra left in the unit with a working air-conditioner, can't let this opportunity pass. I flick on the air-conditioner and place my apple in front of the left vent. The apple starts getting a layer of frost built up on it. I dial in AFVN on the AM radio and we settle in to a delightful ride - air-conditioning and rock and roll - what a way to draw combat pay.

18 moves across the wet grasslands toward another tree line - as he swings around some nipa palm - "I got gooks in the open, I'm engaging."

I key a monologue on the internal intercom for my front-seater - "Don't do it, don't do it, they've got nowhere to go." I had seen this scenario too many times before, when a man has nowhere to run to, he simply turns and takes very careful aim - it is the only chance he has. It is a scenario that has been played out for thousands of years, Sun Tzu in "The Art of War" writes about it. This time it is no different.

Within seconds, I see the Scout jerk harshly from a cyclic movement, the reeds below it flattened from the

increase in collective pitch, no radio call; I know he's taking hits and the radio is already shot out.

"Shit! "Air-conditioning - off" (the air-conditioner bleeds off the turbine compressor). I flick off AFVN just as the flames begin licking down the left side of the Loach. I had seen plenty of helicopters shot down, but 18 is the first one I can remember where it was on fire before it hit the ground. It doesn't get far, it hits with forward air speed and tumbles. As soon as it stops moving, I see both guys exit at the same time - they're moving fast - good, looks like no serious injuries.

Suddenly, 37 calls out, "I'm going after the Scout, cover me," and he drops down out of the orbit to pick them up on his ammo bay doors. I snap the Cobra over and down toward the tree line where 18 was taking the hits. My front seat starts spraying mini-gun. "Cease fire, cease fire - save the mini-gun for the breaks."

I start punching rockets all over the place. I get down to about 300-400 feet to draw fire from the Scout and continue to plaster the tree line. I call "left break, ready, GO," and whip the aircraft over into a tight left turn, the front-seater blazing with the mini-gun on the word GO. As I start to come straight, I call "ready, STOP," as the mini-gun stops; I start punching rockets again. I don't want the mini-gun to jam. I position the aircraft just along the tree line to again draw fire away from the Scout.

As I come straight, I pull the nose up a bit and fire a pair, then I drop the nose and the collective (relative wind across the tubes) to put a pair underneath me, then right, left, long, short. The bad guys can't tell where the next pair is going. A break opens in the tree line, I try to put a pair in the trees just on my side - the pair goes long and hits dead center in the open - a wasted shot. I say "oops" on the intercom and my front-seater keys the mike, "nice shot." We're cracking jokes in the middle of a war.

As I finish the run, I key "right break, ready, GO," and around we go again with the mini-gun roaring. Again, "ready, STOP," and back along the tree line we go. I spot the break in the tree line early and put my rockets where I wanted, gotcha. Again, "left break, ready, GO," and around we go the mini-gun not missing a beat. The front-seater has the experience to keep it buzzing without promoting jams.

As I start the run, I hear "37's coming out," and I

break away from the tree line to cover him, "Rog, 34's picking up your six". It takes about three to four seconds and I'm in position "34's got you covered." I have my airspeed up, so I start pulling "S" turns behind him to keep him covered while he builds up airspeed. I can see the Scout team on the left ammo bay door. The wind buffeting their uniforms and their feet a long way from the ground.

Spur 37 keeps the speed down to about 80 knots and I take up a covering position back and lower than him; he can't use any of his armament with the team on the doors. When he gets to altitude, I join him.

As we enter Soc Trang, 37 takes the Scout team over to the medevac pad. I go straight to the "snake pit" and re-arm and re-fuel. I am ready to go before 37 even gets back. I am monitoring the company frequency and I can hear that the contact is still going hot and heavy with our back up team. The Cobra is down on armament. The XO is calling for backup. Our operations officer tells the XO out in the AO that we are rearming. I tell 37 the XO wants another gunship and I'm ready, he tells me to sit tight.

As 37 arrives back at the "Snake pit", the XO calls out again for gun support. "I don't care what they've got, just get me a gunship." That's all I need. I murmur an expletive on the intercom, roll on the throttle and as the RPM builds I call, "Soc Trang tower, Spur 34, I've got a hot contact, request immediate departure from the "Snake pit." "Roger, 34, you're clear." I come straight out of the "Snake pit" under full power, heading down the runway, building speed.

As I'm heading down the runway, my experienced front-seater says, "why don't you request a left break after clearing the tower?" "What a good idea" I reply. "Soc Trang tower, Spur 34, request an immediate left break after clearing the tower". "Roger 34, you're clear."

Now, this is too good to pass up. How many times do you get to buzz the tower? I rise to the height of the tower and cut the turn close. As I go past, I tighten the turn even more so that the guys in the tower can look down into the cockpit. We're about 30 meters out, when we go flying by. I tell the front-seater, "give 'em a wave, it must get boring up there." As he waves, I look over, the three guys in the tower are screaming, jumping up and down, waving their arms - they're more pumped than we are. After we pass, I can just imagine them saying, "who got a picture of that?" then realizing none of them did.

As I get out to the AO, the action has cooled off. 37 joins me about 10 minutes later and I pick up his wing position. After a while we return to Soc Trang. After shutting down, 37 calls me over for an ass chewing (I was a disciplinary problem, I got used to it). As he goes on, I realize he isn't chewing me out for buzzing the tower; he's chewing me out for leaving him in the "Snake pit." Whew! - I have an excuse for that one. I tell him the XO had called for the backup and I was responding to his request. Take it up with him.

Oh yeah, I ate my apple while the Scout team was being ferried into Soc Trang - it was still cold.

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# Friday the 13th – Unlucky or Not?

## COVER STORY

February 1970, Binh Dinh province, Northern II Corps, Vietnam: The field phone rattles in the Dustoff hooch at LZ English. An urgent medevac - the rest of the crew scrambles for our ship as I hurry to the RTO desk in the 173rd Airborne's B-Med Company to get the mission details: hoist mission, unit still in contact, gunships on site.

I run to the ship, and as I fasten my shoulder harness, I point to the north and my pilot, WO Gene Manning, makes an immediate takeoff. He already had clearance from the tower operator who monitors our scrambles and gives us first priority. Our goal is to be in the air within three minutes of the call. I get my helmet on and brief the crew as the aircraft accelerates. After my briefing, SP Jerry Pask, my medic, comes on the intercom and says he has a bad feeling about this mission, as it's Friday the 13th. He claims that on the last Friday the 13th, our unit had an aircraft shot down on a hoist mission. I don't remember this, but Jerry is persistent and really concerned. After some good-natured kidding, our crew chief says, "look, let me run the hoist on this mission." The medic usually runs the hoist, but our crew always works together and the crew chief, per his training, knows all the systems on the aircraft. So, they trade spaces.

As we near the pickup site, I discuss the situation on the radio with the ground unit and the helicopter gunships presently making gun runs. Most likely they were 61st AHC Starblazers stationed at LZ English. The mission is on the edge of the mountains, and I pick out a location in the rice paddies below where we'll land the aircraft if we're forced down. I have already grease-penciled the coordinates of the pickup site, call signs, and frequencies for the mission on the windshield. Identifying the ground unit's location by the marker smoke filtering up through the trees, I confirm there is no place to land; we'll have to hover over the site and use our rescue hoist to bring the patient up from the tree covered mountain slope. Unfortunately, the bad guys were located above the unit's site at about the same level where we'll have to hover – hopefully the gun runs have driven them away, or at least caused them to retreat into the many caves that exist in these mountains.

As the gunships finish their latest run, I take the controls and we slip in right behind them as planned. So we'll both gain experience, I have a personal policy to take turns flying with my pilot – this mission is my turn, while the other pilot always stays lightly on the controls, in case he needs to quickly take over. I remind Gene to raise the safety cover on the hoist cutter button, and to keep his hand on the switch – if we get into trouble with the hoist down, I want the option to cut the cable rather than making a vertical climb or dragging that anchor through the trees.

The crew in back goes to hot-mike so they can talk without keying their microphone buttons, leaving both hands free to run equipment, coordinate with each other, and keep me posted on aircraft and hoist location. As I come to a hover over the smoke, the crew chief directs me to move the aircraft slightly to reposition over a better hole in the trees to lower the hoist, and the medic, now on the other side, calls that the tail rotor is clear. This has to be a crew operation, as the pilots can't see straight down or to the rear.

Operating the hoist, the crew chief calls, "hoist on the ground," and then it happens. Tat-tat-tat, the distinctive sound of an AK. Events now become a blur, and many occur almost simultaneously. The master caution light on the main instrument panel flashes on, I tell Gene to read the panel on the console, and he replies, "fuel boost pump." My eyes are occupied in maintaining a steady hover, and I tell him to read the fuel pressure. Smoke boils in front of my eyes and starts to fill the cockpit as I ask where the hoist is. The crew chief replies, "still on the ground." It takes a little time to get a patient secured on the jungle penetrator for the ride up. Another burst of gunfire, and someone in the back says over the intercom "I'm hit." That's enough for me – I tell Gene to blow the hoist, and when the crew chief calls "cable away," I dive off the ridge.

We splash down in the rice paddies, and I notice the smoke clouding the cockpit is purple! One of the AK rounds hit and ignited a smoke grenade hanging on the back of my armored seat. I ask who is hit, and the medic says it's him, but it doesn't seem bad. We peel off his chicken plate (body armor), then see a creasing wound on his side that barely breaks the skin. The rounds (maintenance counted 12) came into the aircraft on a level angle from the hoist side, one of which pierced the transmission compartment on both sides and exited the aircraft right where the medic was sitting to clear the tail rotor. It caught him on the edge of his chicken plate and deflected into his side, fortunately with most of its energy already expended. The gunships made a call on Guard, and a Huey soon lands to lift us out until the site can be secured for a Chinook to sling out our crippled ship. Later, after the gunships work out some more, another Dustoff aircraft successfully completes the mission.

So, was this Friday the 13th bad or good luck? Yes, we were shot down, but it could have been much worse. And our superstitious medic, Jerry Pask, trading sides of the aircraft, on the side opposite the bad guys, and being hit by a round that was already going out of the aircraft – almost comical!

Jim Siverd



# AAAA SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION, INC.

F:

quad-a.org

**Dear VHPA Members,**  
15 August 2018

The Army Aviation Association of America Scholarship Foundation, Inc. (AAAASF) has been managing the VHPA Scholarship Program since its first award in 1999. Through your generosity, over \$100,000 has been awarded to VHPA applicants since then. The SFI has over \$275,000 VHPA funds invested for future scholarships. Inherently, the more endowed funds you have the more scholarships can be awarded.

The SFI Selection Teams have just completed voting and I am proud to announce the selection of 310 deserving applicants who will receive \$503,500 in 2018. VHPA elected to award seven \$3,000 scholarships this year. There were also 24 scholarships awarded to VHPA applicants in other categories.

This is SFI's second year since we transitioned to a fully electronic voting process consisting of members from the AAAA Awards Committee, AAAA National Board, SFI

Board of Governors, Chapter Representatives, and VHPA. We had just enough volunteers to allocate a minimum of 12 voters to each Team. Thank you to the 12 VHPA members who took the time to assist in this very important task.

During the selection process, students are judged solely on their own merit. All references to names, units, location, or to a relative member's rank/title are removed from the files before Board review and are only revealed after all files have been voted and selection by order of merit list has been completed.

This year there were 591 total applicants with a selection rate of approximately 52%. As in previous years the competition was tough with 48.6% of freshmen attaining a 4.0 or higher grade point average (GPA).

A key take-away here is that 100% of your donations go directly to scholarships because AAAA National pays overhead costs less Portfolio Management Fees of the Scholarship Foundation, which is a separate corporation. All of your donations are tax deductible.

The current qualification policy is that an AAAA member sponsoring the applicant (or self) must be a member for one full year prior to May 1st of the current year. Although you still need to be a member of AAAA for a relative to apply, the one (1) year requirement will be waived for VHPA members. Just make sure the applicant indicates that on the SFI Form.

Again thank you for your Time, Talent, and especially Treasure in supporting the VHPA Scholarship Program.

**BG (Ret) Thomas J. Konitzer**  
AAAASF President



*Ben Walker - is attending the University of Tennessee Knoxville and will be majoring in Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology.*



*Tyler Law - is enrolled at Texas A&M's Mays Business school.*



*Evan Smith - is studying engineering at the University of Michigan.*



*Maggie Ratliff - is Majoring in Behavior Analysis and Therapy at Southern Illinois University.*



*Emily Botnen - is currently attending Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*



*Kacy Cartwright - is a freshman at the University of Central Florida studying Entertainment Management.*



*Patrick Meehan - is attending North Carolina State University.*

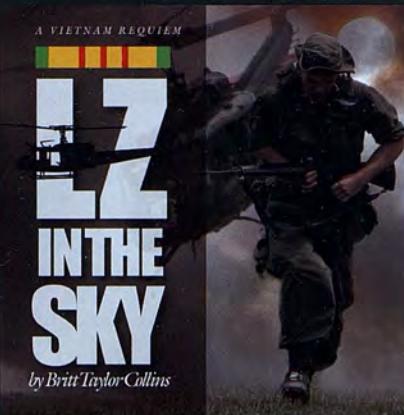
AMERICA'S PREMIER MAN CAVE OUTFITTERS

# Whoever Said Old Soldiers Just Fade Away Didn't Know Vietnam Veterans.



*The Offering*  
BY BRITT TAYLOR COLLINS

When Vietnam Veterans pass into eternity they don't just fade away, they depart with sound and fury! And they leave a huge hole in the heart of the Vietnam Community. The fine art print, "The Offering" by military artist Britt Taylor Collins is a farewell tribute to a Vietnam Veteran. Proudly displaying the American flag to a passing formation of Hueys, the old soldier never suspects they are angels on a mission to escort him home.



Britt Taylor Collins has written "LZ in the Sky" to tell the story of "The Offering." This song is fast becoming a tradition at Veterans events and memorials. Performed by recording artist, Todd Childers, "LZ in the Sky" is now available for \$10.00. Visit [bootsonthegroundART.com](http://bootsonthegroundART.com)

*The Veterans' Artist*  
**Britt Taylor Collins**  
[www.bootsonthegroundART.com](http://www.bootsonthegroundART.com)

"The Offering" Print-16"X20"  
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## VHPA 2019 CALENDAR

### Available for Immediate Shipment!

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new VHPA 2019 Calendar, hot off the press and available for immediate shipment. This is the 26th calendar produced by the VHPA.

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

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

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

*On the cover: VHPA Member Jim Hadley took this photo on 25 Feb 1967 while waiting his turn to refuel at Tay Ninh during Operation JUNCTION CITY with the 336th AHC. The 500-gal fuel blivets are easy to spot between the helicopters.*



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Acclaim Press •

## 2019 CALENDAR



*Operation Junction City  
Hot Refuel ~ Grunts Gotta Go!*

Photo details on back cover



# WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

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

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

*AVIATOR REPORT completed for 18 New Members and covers the period 6-4-18 to 7-27-18*

Angle Charles F. 'Chuck' ** Fair Play South Carolina Army 69-19 C/7/1 CAV in 69-70	Dunagan Larry E. Pendergrass Georgia Army 70-17 70-15	Hunt James P 'Jim' ** Williamsburg Virginia Army 61-1 D/227 AWC 1 CAV in 65-66; 135 AHC in 67; 120 AHC in 68	Nguyen Phat Tan 'Sean' Savannah Georgia Vietnamese Air Force 70-17 213 SQDN VNAF in 70-71; 231 SQDN VNAF in 71-73; HQ VNAF in 73-75
Arredondo Michael E. Boerne Texas Army 69-50 176 AHC in 70-71	Dunn Stephen M. 'Steve' Humble Texas Army 69-26 176 AHC in 69-70	Jewett Leo G ** Fairfield Idaho Army 67-5 C/227 AHB 1 CAV in 67-68	Oldfather Dave L. Newton Alabama Army 70-35
Boyle James V. ** Canon City Colorado Army 68-21 68-37 92 AHC in 69-70	Gillespie William W. 'Doc' Newnan Georgia Army 70-3 70-1 271 ASHC in 70-71	Lyons Rocklin D. 'Rock' Edmond Oklahoma Army 69-45 70-1 190 AHC in 70; 118 AHC in 71	Riley Brian D Vonore Tennessee Army 71-2 61 AHC in 71-72
Brown Gary A ** Sun Prairie Wisconsin Army 61-1 D/3/4 CAV in 66-67; HHC 14 CAB in 69-70; 196 ASHC in 70	Gray Clarence E 'Ed' Marietta Georgia Army 70-30 D/3/5 CAV in 71; C/3/17 CAV in 71; 7/1 CAV in 71-72	Martin Ronald S ** Austin Texas Army 67-9 147 ASHC in 67-68; C/228 ASHB 1 CAV in 71	Routt Dan E ** Fort Wayne Indiana Army 69-29 117 AHC in 70
Caraker Robert C Anna Illinois Army 67-11			Sitze Robert G. 'Bob' ** Enterprise Alabama Army 69-21 191 AHC in 69-70



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Compiled by Michael Lazares  
Published & Edited by The VHPA Staff

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

~ John L. Penny

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Official White House photo by Melanee Thomas

The following is provided courtesy of The North Platte Telegraph of North Platte NB, originally published June 20, 2018.

*Story by: Job Vigil/The North Platte Telegraph*

*Photos by: Stephen Barkley/The North Platte Telegraph*

# Canteen tradition of service carries on

It was a complete surprise to the soldiers, most of whom had never heard of the North Platte Canteen in World War II.

More than 700 service men and women filed off their buses and into a warm welcome at the D&N Event Center on Monday and Tuesday. North Platte residents lined the entryway to the D&N Event Center and cheered and clapped as the surprised soldiers made their way inside.

Mayor Dwight Livingston stood at the front of the crowd to greet the soldiers. "It just can't get much better than this," Livingston said. "You want to talk about goose bumps, I've got them."

A call to the North Platte and Lincoln County Convention and Visitors Bureau last week set the process in motion. It was important to keep the story under wraps for security reasons, and it was only word of mouth that brought the volunteers in to serve the soldiers.

Lincoln County Historical Museum curator Jim Griffin said the similarities were many to the WWII Canteen, for which North Platte has become famous. "The last minute of knowing when anything is coming is exactly the same as what it was (in WWII)," Griffin said.

Lisa Burke, executive director of the Visitors Bureau, said it was amazing how quickly and enthusiastically the local businesses contributed to the cause. "It was finalized on Thursday exactly when and how many would be coming through," Burke said Monday. "We're trying to re-enact, bring back that Canteen spirit."

Many of the soldiers did not know anything about the WWII Canteen, nor did they know what awaited them at their stop in North Platte.

"This is a very good surprise," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Carter. "This is great." Col. Hal Vineyard agreed it was a big surprise, but had not heard about the WWII Canteen prior. "Our bus driver was telling us a little bit about the North Platte Canteen when we pulled up," Vineyard said.

"We were not expecting this at all," said Cpl. Tayler Scott. "It's greatly appreciated."

Shelly Chromy of North Platte volunteered to help serve the dinner.

"It's been overwhelming to have the privilege to serve our service men and women as they come through," Chromy said. "It's really neat in that the Canteen was years prior and now we get to kind of relive that right now."



Sgt. Maj. Steve Griffin said the troops were traveling back to their home base after training in Wyoming. "We were just intending to stop and have lunch, and nobody let us know that this was waiting for us," Griffin said. "It's amazing. Many of these young men and women have never experienced anything like this."

When Amanda Connick heard the soldiers would be coming through and just wanted to stop for sandwiches, she had a larger idea. "When I got off the phone with the (tour bus company), I went right in to Lisa's office and said, 'Can we do something more,'" Connick said. "Can we make this into the North Platte Canteen, and she said, 'Absolutely.'"

In a press release, Burke wrote, "These young men and women hadn't had a real meal in weeks. They had been out on maneuvers and living on MREs. Steak sandwiches, cold sandwiches, potato salad, deviled eggs and cookies galore filled the empty stomachs. Continuing a Canteen tradition, nearly two dozen birthday cakes were given out, including for one young man's 21st birthday, who had never had a birthday cake before."

The smiles on the faces of both the service men and women as well as the volunteers told the story as all got a glimpse of what it was like in WWII.

To view The North Platte Telegraph website coverage:

[www.nptelegaph.com/news/local\\_news/canteen-tradition-of-service-carries-on/article\\_4f5518a6-7443-11e8-8da9-afac73643c15.html](http://www.nptelegaph.com/news/local_news/canteen-tradition-of-service-carries-on/article_4f5518a6-7443-11e8-8da9-afac73643c15.html)

To view The North Platte Telegraph story Photo Gallery:

[www.nptelegaph.com/gallery/sunday-focus-north-platte-revives-the-canteen-spirit/collection\\_d1070ef4-7754-11e8-8f5e-4baaa51a92ea.html](http://www.nptelegaph.com/gallery/sunday-focus-north-platte-revives-the-canteen-spirit/collection_d1070ef4-7754-11e8-8f5e-4baaa51a92ea.html)

# *What a difference a few years makes.*

by Life Member Michael O'Brien, Woodpecker 23

BABY KILLER!!! Or some other unprintable, derogatory remark or gesture is what greeted me after my first tour in Vietnam in 1968, and again in 1969 after a second tour. Fast Forward: June 6, 2016. 502 Vietnam combat veterans depart Omaha for Washington D.C. Assembling at 2:15am Monday morning or more appropriate Sunday night, 502 veterans and 51 support and press people boarded three airplanes to begin a day none will ever forget.

Arriving at Reagan Airport we were greeted by the airport fire department creating a halo of water as the planes headed for the gate. Arriving at the gate and when the seat belt sign extinguished, we departed our planes for an experience we were not prepared for. As we entered the gate waiting area heading for the doors where our buses awaited us were crowds of people greeting us with warm handshakes and many "thank you for your service, welcome home". I don't know how much of it was organized, but emotions ran strong as we negotiated our way through the crowd of cheering and clapping people. There were military, children, young and old adults. People waiting for their planes dropped their suitcases and joined the throng of well-wishers. 502 people boarded the twelve buses with no dry eyes. This was just the beginning. What a difference a few years makes.

The first stop was to the Vietnam Memorial wall. We gathered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for our group picture. We then migrated to the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Many looked for the names of family, neighbors, friends, or fellow soldiers who were not as lucky as we were. For those of us who had not seen it before, we were impressed with its size and the 58,307 names engraved in granite. Many greetings and thanks for our service came from others at the wall, as we were impressive in our red, white, or blue shirts embroidered with the Nebraska Vietnam Combat Veterans Flight logo. At eleven o'clock, we gathered for a program and were greeted by several people including Nebraska's own Senator Deb Fisher and former defense secretary Chuck Hagel. It concluded with a representative from each of the three groups to place a memorial wreath on the center of the wall. What a difference a few years makes.

Leaving the wall, the three groups split up, as twelve buses do not make finding parking spaces easy. We spent the rest of the day visiting the WWII Memorial, Korean War Memorial, touring around DC as we ate our lunch, a walking tour of Arlington Cemetery, Changing of the guard ceremony at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Iwo Jima Memorial, and Air Force Memorial. At the various stops we were greeted by many tourists who thanked us for our service and apologized for the rude treatment we received many years before. What a difference a few years makes.

As we were transported to our awaiting planes to return us

to Nebraska we were greeted by many well-wishers. More roller coaster emotions. The flight back could not have been quick enough as we wanted to share our day with our families. Even though the day was long - now into hour eighteen, the adrenaline flowing in our veins kept us awake and talking with each other.

We knew our arrival would be cheered by our wives, and some well-wishers. What we did not expect was five thousand people who waited for two hours to finally welcome us home as their defenders of freedom, and heroes. We were greeted by family and friends, veteran groups, strangers of all ages, including many small children with their warming smiles and eager hands extending to shake ours as they gripped their welcome home signs. Twenty-two hours after it started, it closed but did not end. The warm feelings and memories will last the rest of our lives. What a difference a few years makes.

All of this was made possible by many volunteers, sponsors, and two very warm and caring people by the name of Bill and Evonne Williams. Founders of Patriotic Productions they have organized honor flights for WWII veterans and Korean War Veterans. Check out their gracious activities at [www.patrioticproductions.org](http://www.patrioticproductions.org).

In years past, our loved ones were left behind, but not on this day. The wives were treated to a trip to Lincoln where they toured Memorial Stadium, had lunch with First Lady Susanne Shore, a selection of afternoon tours, with a Wine tasting and pizza to conclude their day before they were bused to Epply Airfield to greet their heroes. What a difference a few years makes.

As for me, words do not express the feelings I experienced that day. Returning from Vietnam, I was hardened by the terrors of war. The people who had rude remarks did not understand what I understood. They did not know of my wanting to serve my country, to do what I deemed was the right thing to do. I do not talk much of what I did or saw or experienced. It became a part of me and I knew others would not understand it as I did. What I shared were good or fun times and the great friends I made while being in the military. But on June 6, 2016 I found a lot of people who felt as I did and appreciated the values of military service as I did. We know that many have to sacrifice to keep the USA the greatest country in the world. What a difference a few years makes.

## UPCOMING REUNIONS

D/3/5 & C/3/17

**When: 2-5 May, 2019**

Where: Daytona Beach Resort, Daytona Beach, FL

Guest of honor & speaker: Joe Galloway

Contact: Rick Roll

# TACRON

by Gene Beyer

This tale begins in the Spring of 1971 at Fort Leavenworth, KS at Command and General Staff College (CGSC) class of 70/71. We were all seated as classes started on time. They figured since we were all officers and gentlemen we knew coming to class late was verboten. My section of approximately 76 students was still gossiping and comparing orders they had just received. The instructor got our attention, left the podium and walked across the stage, not asking anyone specifically as he said, "What is gross ignorance?" He hesitated, turned around and headed back to the podium, faced the class and looked at us unbelieving. "Gentlemen, gross ignorance is 144 Marines." I immediately turned my attention to a couple of Marine Corps officers in our section and if looks would kill, that instructor would have been a dead man. Almost all instructors started their class with a joke. Some were very good as I started writing them down early on.

There were 1,380 students in this class; mostly Army, but we had 14 Air Force, six Marines, 11 Vietnamese, four Navy, plus 100 Allied Officers. We were divided into 24 sections for our training and exercises. As a matter of fact, the honor graduate of our class was a Marine Major who spent many long hours studying. After the first exam, I knew I would not be in contention, so I had a good time but still learned a lot. Little did I know, I would soon learn more about Marines and the Navy than I ever thought. Orders were coming in fast and furious as graduation day loomed on the horizon. A couple of weeks passed and still nothing. A good friend, Texas A&M classmate and hunting partner, Gene Fudge had orders to the Pentagon. Roger Donlon, a medal of honor recipient, had his orders. Almost all the Americans in the class had been to Vietnam. I had two tours under my belt serving with the 93rd Transportation (CH-21) Company in 1963 and 1964 at Soc Trang. I went back in 1967 and 1968 when I served as a platoon leader and then Commanding Officer of A/229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cav Division.

Like I said, guys were comparing orders. Most were happy with their upcoming assignments. Many would later be generals. My orders finally arrived. It is my opinion that maybe they didn't know what to do with me. Made me wonder if word had gotten out on my comments about how the war was being run in Vietnam. Something along the lines that LBJ should give the military a mission, the tools, the manpower to achieve that mission; then let them get at it and stay the hell out the way. Well I ask you, what would you think if you received the following orders: assigned to the US Army element, Navy activity, Washington, DC, with station San Diego, CA, DOD, TACRON 11 / COMPHIBPAC?

I packed up family, dogs, and a fishing boat loaded with everything movers will not move, then headed west toward the Pacific Ocean. Upon arrival, I quickly learned what COMPHIBPAC and TACRON stood for. ComPhibPac was the official U.S. Navy abbreviation for "Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet." TACRON Eleven (Tactical Air Control Squadron) was one of three assigned to Tactical Air Control Group ONE on the amphibi-



ous base in Coronado, CA. Each TACRON had a billet for an Army aviator, a Marine aviator and an Air Force pilot. The US Air Force did not fill their slot while I was there.



The mission of the TACRON is control of aviation assets during an amphibious operation until control on the beach is established, secure and operational. Once this occurs, command is passed ashore to that commander and his group and the TACRON goes to backup mode. My skipper upon arrival was Commander Ed Keough with CDR Bill Mercer as executive officer. There were numerous naval aviators assigned plus a Marine aviator. There were two chief petty officers assigned. Chief Wiley was my favorite as I worked closely with him. He called me "Action Army."

Household goods were delivered over July 4th weekend in our rapidly purchased house in Chula Vista, CA. I hit the ground running, was accepted, made friends and went to work. Three months down the road we were deployed to WESTPAC, stopping in Hawaii enroute, visiting the USS Arizona for the second time. We arrived in Okinawa almost 2 weeks after leaving San Diego as this was home port for Commander Amphibious Forces Seventh Fleet. Cross decking occurred as our unit was divided into three detachments. I was assigned to the flag detachment aboard the USS El Dorado that had been General MacArthur's flagship during the World War II invasion of Okinawa. The Marines aviation and other combat units rotated at this time as well.

There were two amphibious ready groups with a TACRON detachment with each. I am not sure of the strength in numbers of Marines assigned on Okinawa at that time, but it was substantial. The embarked Marines were the ready reaction force for the commander of the 7th Fleet. Our six-month deployment started upon completion of these turnovers.

We made numerous ports of call during our deployment, conducting some amphibious operations in waters off Korea and the Philippines. The big one though was conducted with Vietnamese Marines off the coast near Quang Tri and Dong Ha. I watched B-52 strikes from topside our command ship, F-4 napalm runs and LCVTs (landing craft vehicle tracked) disgorged from the bowels of

LPDs and destroyers shelling the beach.

I was on the promotion list and I knew it was getting close to time for my number to come up. CDR Keough was anxious to get his new assignment. We came into port in Subic Bay and he got through to the Pentagon. I happened to walk by and heard a portion of the conversation. I asked him to save the connection. I got on the line later and had the switchboard transfer me to the Army Infantry assignment branch. I got the preverbal little-ole-lady in tennis shoes and she politely told me to write down the Special Order number dated so and so and that would suffice until my orders caught up with me. I had a grand promotion party upon return to California.

At some point in our deployment, the USS Blue Ridge showed up. This was a state-of-the-art command ship. It officially replaced the old slow and reliable USS El Dorado on 29 Jan 1972. Rear Admiral Gaddis had a Cadillac of a ship. I even got to fly copilot in his helicopter. And as usual a Russian trawler shadowed us constantly.

As our deployment time was coming to an end the NVA came across the border into South Vietnam. Crunch time, our replacements showed up, but we quickly realized we were not going home. I was instructed to go aboard the USS Tripoli, a helicopter carrier. The Tripoli had embarked Marine CH 46s and CH 53s. We made port in Okinawa. After two days I was briefed by CDR Bill Mercer, my new CO, of an impending mission. I was to cross deck to an LPD (possibly the USS Cleveland) to take charge of a detachment from our squadron headed by a lieutenant. The mission involved four Marine Cobras to come aboard with pilots and support personnel, then we would head out on a special mission. Things were moving at a rapid pace. I was moving from one ship to another as Marines were coming aboard the LPD. In short order, three Cobras landed prior to our departure. The sun was going down as we got underway. Where is the fourth Cobra? It caught up with us, landed, was secured and we steamed into the night.

The mission involved a Chinese merchant ship anchored off the coast of North Vietnam. In a nutshell, China was delivering supplies to North Vietnam south of Hanoi. They were using small sampans to do this. All activity was done under the cloak of darkness. There was no activity at all in daylight hours. Since we could not attack a third nation ship the only targets were the sampans. Destroyers were the attackers, attacking only what they could pick up on radar. Thus, the mission was to put eyes on targets using the Cobras.

We arrived in Subic Bay, Philippines, took aboard a support package for the Cobras, refueled and departed. We were headed for North Vietnam waters. On the way, I observed the transfer of a patient from our ship to an oiler, just like in the movies. We were running side-by-side, a line was shot across, then a rope followed by a cable. The stretcher with a secured patient was transferred and we kept droning on in the never-ending body of water.

Arriving at our destination on a Sunday about noon we went into what was called a MODLOC (modified location). While top-side sunbathing, I heard a loud boom. Looking toward the beach I observed a slow-moving destroyer parallel to the beach. A large splash occurred off the fantail. Almost in slow motion, smoke arose from the stack of the destroyer, moving forward slowly, another loud boom. The destroyer gaining speed, another splash off the fantail, a ninety degree turn by the destroyer heading to deeper water. When

the destroyer reached a certain distance from shore, it slowed, turned parallel to the beach and returned fire. Another destroyer arrived, and the coastal artillery site was pounded. An afternoon of sunbathing and a spectacular show of the dangers faced by the destroyers on a daily basis. What a life.

As the Sun set and darkness arrived, it was time to initiate the first phase of our mission. The Cobra crews were assembled, frequencies were passed and recorded. It was time to man the aircraft. This first night was an orientation flight for the crews. We had a tower operator and radar coverage as one by one they departed the flight deck. They were not going to the beach, only an orientation flight. I debriefed the crews, covering communication satisfaction and other areas of interest. Ditto night two. Ditto night three. Upon completion of the debrief on night three I looked the Marine Major in the eye with all the pilots' eyes on me and asked a very simple question, "When are you going to the beach? If we had Army helicopter pilots here, they would have gone the second night." Well, if looks could kill I would have been a dead man that night. They went to the beach the fourth night for an uneventful evening of night flying. There was an A-7 from a carrier flying coverage for additional help if needed. They reported no activity after loitering for some time near the merchant ship. Don't you know the pucker factor was tight!

Commander Bill Mercer, now my skipper, showed up, observed our operations for a night or two to see what we were doing. That morning at breakfast Bill sipped his coffee and calmly said, "Gene, go home, I got it." I hesitated briefly and responded, "Sir, I distinctly heard you tell me to go home and I don't have to be told anything twice."

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I caught a chopper ride next morning, leaving the operation in good hands and landed on a carrier in the gulf. I know that Marine Major was glad to see me go. I observed air ops off the carrier into North Vietnam that night. What a professionally run operation. Aircraft were launched by type and recovered by type as the catapult and arresting cables must to be set for weight of the aircraft. The commander of the photo reconnaissance squadron took me under his wing showing me film of SAM sites in North Vietnam and bomb damage assessment.

I departed the carrier next morning aboard a C2 making a normal trip to Da Nang. From there I rode an Air Force C-130 to Saigon. I had to wait three days to get a seat on a bird back to the States.

The rest of the squadron had to ride ships back when they were finally released. Our lives returned to some semblance of normalcy. I had a year of a two-year tour under my belt. LCDR Chuck Anderson, a jet jockey, took me as a pupil and taught me so much about the Navy. He lined me up to accompany a Marine Major on a F4 test flight out of Navy North Island. He accompanied me to the plane and casually passed me a barf bag. What an experience I'll never forget! Skimming the waves of the Pacific to check the radar altimeter. Rolling over at 50,000 feet and told to look up. I did and gazed into a semi darkness that chopper pilots can only imagine. I was instructed to button my collar as the dirt under my boots would be in my face shortly. Yeah, right I said to myself. He was right. I was glad I had a G suit on. The barf bag you ask? It was used. A speed run down the

coast from L. A. to San Diego completed the flight. Chuck was waiting for me as I returned to flight ops sheepishly trying to hide the barf bag.

We had a social function that evening at the O Club. Chuck presented me a framed barf bag inscribed with the date, etc. I still have it today.

Before I knew it, it was time for another deployment. Riding the waves, heading west over the vast Pacific aboard an LSD with a UDT doing PT each morning. I got permission to work out with them. I could not stay with those guys, but I improved somewhat.

I received orders to Fort Bragg and had to depart the squadron about three months into the deployment. We were in port in Subic Bay when I learned Admiral Gaddis was to fly from there to Okinawa. Lucky me, I caught a ride with him in a small jet and was able to use my orders to get a ride back to the states.

This meeting the CNO, flying Navy aircraft, going into ports and visiting countries I would never have had the opportunity to see. Watching a Navy CH 46 cover the flight decks of so many ships in formation, conducting vert rep (vertical replenishment), refueling underway, seeing honors being rendered to our ship by a passing ship because of Adm. Gaddis, a prince of a man, being on board and so much more. Chief Wiley, I will forever cherish the title you branded me with, "Action Army." Captain Bill Mercer, I have enjoyed our relationship and it continues to this day. This assignment with the Navy was so much more than I ever thought possible.

*Order copies of VHPA member Paul Sailer's*

## *THE ORANGES ARE SWEET & I HAD A COMRADE*

*from....*

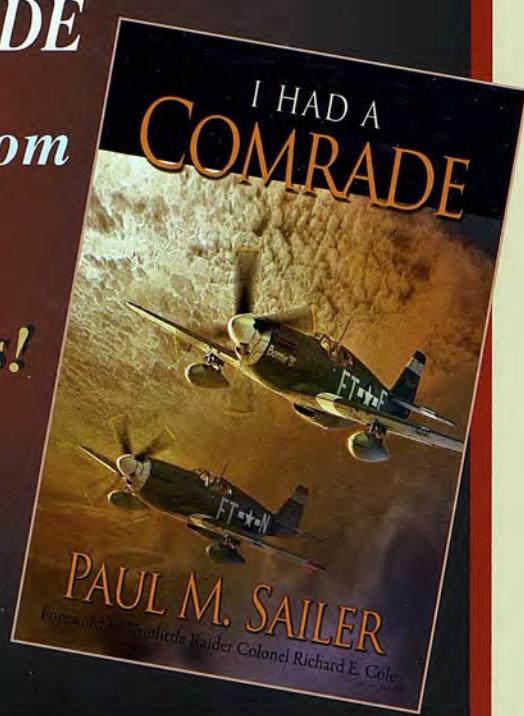
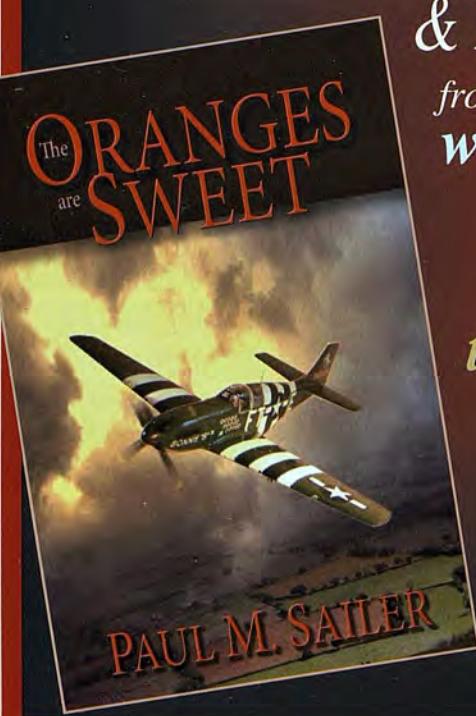
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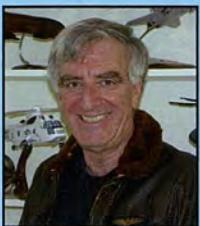
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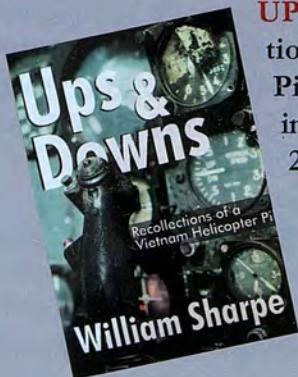


# ~ BOOK REVIEWS ~

**Marc Liebman,**  
a VHPA Life Member, is a retired Navy Captain and Naval Aviator  
who flew combat search and rescue missions during the Vietnam War.  
He is also the author of five published novels with more coming.

E-mail - [\[REDACTED\]](#)  
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Website - [www.marcliebman.com](http://www.marcliebman.com)

## Book Review by Author & Life Member Marc Liebman



**UPS AND DOWNS.** Recollections of a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot, by William Sharpe, Sinking Resources Consulting, LLC, 265 pages.

I enjoyed this book because it provides a different perspective on what it was like to be a junior Army officer flying helicopters in Vietnam. It is a well-

written story about a helicopter pilot's year in Vietnam void of the derring do that we often expect from books of this type. The ups and downs were

more than the take offs and landings. They are also emotional peaks and valleys coupled with a roller coaster of experiences with leaders who were, well, not leaders. In many instances, Sharpe's tour was affected by the strategy imposed on the troops in Vietnam by those in DC, local commanders, the enemy as well as the uneven pace of the war. This is not a memoir with lots of dates and a detailed, well-documented chronology. It is a "memoirography," i.e. one part autobiography, one part biography and one part memoir. Ups and Downs is a collection of very interesting stories from Sharpe's year in country and he took pains not to name names unless he needed to make a point. It is clear from Sharpe's stories that he had an unhappy tour. It is a very interesting book that's well worth a read.

## Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

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



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If personal assistance needed  
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(life member VHPA and CHPA)  
cell [\[REDACTED\]](#)



# GENERAL REUNION INFORMATION

Last updated 04 OCT 2018

Detailed event/tour schedules, descriptions and pricing will be updated on [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org) in December and will be in the Jan/Feb issue of the Aviator. Continue checking [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org) for the most up to date info.

**ONLINE REGISTRATION (ORRA) WILL BE OPEN JANUARY 7, 2019**

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

As a general rule, since VHPA Membership and Subscriber dues expire on the last day of the month, someone who is dues current when they register, could be non dues current on the 1st day of the Reunion (28 May 2019). Because of this, the VHPA Reunion Registration software is "forward looking" with respect to the dues status.

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

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

**Reunion hotel** – Kansas City Marriott Downtown, 200 West 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64105.

**Reunion hotel reservations:** There are at least three ways to make your hotel reservations while insuring that you receive the VHPA Group Rate of \$127 plus tax over the dates of **23 May 2019 thru 3 June 2019**. **Cutoff date for the hotel rate is 26 April, 2019.**

Please consider the following:

- Via the Reunion's personalized website, go to: <https://book.passkey.com/go/vhpa2019>.
- Via [www.vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org) then Reunion Information and use the

reserve your hotel room link.

■ By calling the hotel's reservation line at [REDACTED] You need to mention "VHPA 36th Annual Reunion 2019". PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY OR MARRIOTT'S CENTRAL RESERVATIONS NUMBERS. You MUST speak to a Passkey Agent.

**Parking** - VHPA has negotiated \$10/night for self parking for registered Hotel guests.

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

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

- It is a good idea to wear your Reunion lanyard so other attendees can recognize that you are with VHPA.
- At the Closing Banquet, many men wear a suit and tie with the ladies wearing a nice dress. You will even see Dress Blues.

**Vendor Area** - We are in "Full Recruitment Mode" for the Vendor Room at this year's Reunion! The Vendor Area has been a huge success for the past several years! **Space is limited this year so be sure to sign up early!**

If you have a product that you feel our Members and their guests would love to see, or if you know of a vendor that you would like to join us at the Reunion or even if you know of a product you think would be well received by our Members and their guests, please let us know.

There will also be an "Author Area" in the Vendor Room. Please let us know if you have written a book or know of someone that has written a book and would like to display it in the Vendor Room. This is the perfect time for our Members and their guests to add an "Author signed and dedicated" copy of a book to their collection!

If you would like to sign up as a Vendor, Book Seller or Exhibitor for this year's reunion, please go to our website at [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules &

Regulations, call HQ at 800-505-8472 or email Sherry Rodgers at [sherry@vhpa.org](mailto:sherry@vhpa.org). Complete the forms and mail, fax or email to VHPA HQ.

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

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

**Mini-Reunions: 28 May through 31 May** - Keeping in mind that one of the primary reasons for our Reunion is to reconnect with past compatriots from your RVN unit and flight school. The best way to meet up with unit members is to schedule your own Mini-Reunion. If your unit does not have a Mini-Reunion, why not take the initiative to start one up, or you could combine with other sister units you are familiar with if you wish. In addition to specific units and flight classes, we've had Mini-Reunions for such subjects as tandem rotor, Dust-off, Operation Lam Son 719, anyone who was stationed at Soc Trang, VHPA chapters, anyone interested in radio controlled aircraft models. Really there are no rules! Mini-Reunions are typically scheduled in 4-hour blocks and are available for booking on most days during the Reunion. You can also request a second four-hour block. However, this second block will be granted on a space available basis with priority for the particular space given to units requesting only one block. Due to decreased usage and increased expenses, the Reunion no longer provides AV equipment for Mini-Reunions. Once your Mini-Reunion is scheduled the details will appear on the webpage. You still should make an effort to get the word out to your buds. Use your directory to contact members (encourage them to re-up with the VHPA if they are not dues current), write a short article for the VHPA Avia-

tor, and schedule early so we can list your unit in articles such as this.

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

**Mini Reunion space is limited this year and will be allotted on a first come, first served basis. Be sure to send your request in early to insure a space for your group!**

*It is easy to schedule a Mini-Reunion or TOC. Complete the Mini-Reunion Request form available at VHPA.ORG and email it to Sherry Rodgers at [Sherry@vhpa.org](mailto:Sherry@vhpa.org) or call 800-505-8472 or mail the completed form to HQ in Grand Prairie, TX.*

**O'Club:** 27 May - 4:00pm-8:00pm / 28 May - 30 May - 11:00am - 11:00pm / 31 May - 12:30pm - 11:00pm

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

**Early Bird Gathering:** 28 May - 7:00pm - 10:00pm - This social gathering continues the long standing tradition of having an appointed place and time for everyone who comes "early" to the Reunion to meet and greet others. Since the room is configured with lots of tables and chairs, you can sit, stand, and walk around as you see fit.

**Breakfast w/Speaker John Clark** 29 May - 7:30am - 9:00am - John Clark was born in 1940 in Columbia, Missouri and commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Missouri-Columbia on June 5, 1962. Clark graduated from Undergraduate Pilot Training and awarded his pilot wings at Reese AFB, Texas. He flew C-130 Samaritan transports with the 12th Aero Medical Transport Squadron at McGuire AFB from October, 1963 to June, 1965. Clark then completed RF-4C Phantom II Combat Crew Training and served at RAF Alconbury, England, from June, 1965 to October, 1966. He was assigned to the 11th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron in October, 1966 flying combat missions in Southeast Asia out of Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand. On March 12, 1967, Clark was forced to eject over North Vietnam. He was immediately captured and taken as a Prisoner of War. After spending

2,170 days in captivity, he was released during Operation Homecoming February, 1973. He recovered from his injuries at Scott AFB Medical Center, Illinois, and then returned to college through an Air Force Institute of Technology assignment at the University of Missouri-Columbia in October, 1973. Clark then served as an instructor pilot at Vance AFB, Oklahoma, before leaving active duty on June 10, 1977. He spent time in the Missouri Air National Guard before joining the Air Force Reserve, retiring January 1992

**KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast: 30 May - 7:30am - 9:00am** - Gold Star Family Breakfast is a traditional VHPA reunion event organized by Julie Kink. This is an opportunity to recognize our Gold Star families. All are welcome to attend. These families are extremely appreciative of the fact that their loved ones did not die alone and that we care about them and remember them like a brother.

**Kansas City BBQ - 30 May - 11:30am - 1:30pm** - The KC BBQ luncheon will give everyone a chance to sample the various styles of KC BBQ. Whether you like ribs, brisket or pulled pork, you are sure to find something finger lickin' good. Come with an empty tummy and plan to not only eat, but learn about Kansas City style BBQ. During the luncheon we will be entertained by the College of the Ozarks Chorale. They are known for their patriotic songs, and the college itself is a great supporter of veterans. This will be a highlight of the reunion that you will surely remember.

**Quilter's Show & Tell: 30 May - 2:00pm - 4:00pm** - This special meeting continues the tradition started at least seven years ago to present wonderful hand-made, American flag themed quilts to VHPAers and possibly local area veterans.

**1st Time Attendee Reception: 30 May - 7:00pm - 8:00pm** - This is a special reception for those attending a VHPA reunion for the first time. Besides meeting other first time attendees you will visit with members of the VHPA Executive Council and various VHPA committee chairmen in an informal setting. After a brief presentation about the history of the VHPA and the way the VHPA operates there is time for Q&A and one to one conversations. For example - maybe you want to meet and speak with the VHPA President or the Editor of The Aviator? Maybe you have a question about how the annual financial audit is conducted? Maybe you have a

photo that you'd like to see published in the VHPA Calendar? Now is a good time to have these conversations! While the primary audience is VHPA members, their guests and friends are also welcome. A cash bar is available in this reception.

**Welcome Reception: 30 May - 7:30pm - 10:00pm** - Traditionally this reception was the first official event for everyone to get together FOR SURE at a Reunion. Now it is just a "get together" at an appointed place and time for everyone who attends the Reunion. Please don't be concerned about the word "reception" ~ there will be NO RECEIVING LINE and NO FORMALITIES. The room will be configured with lots of tables and chairs so everyone can sit and talk. We'll position cash bars to make certain no one has to stand in a long line. You are welcome to bring a unit sign or guidon so people will know where "your table" is located. We CANNOT hang unit banners over the tables at this Reception, sorry.

**Pre-Memorial Service Breakfast: 31 May - 7:30am - 8:45am** - This is the third and final breakfast offered at this Reunion. The Memorial Service, scheduled to begin at 9am is primarily a time to honor the several hundred VHPA members and potential members who passed away since the 2018 Reunion in Atlanta.

**Memorial Service: 31 May - 9:00am - 9:30am** - The Memorial Service has been part of the "Reunion's Fabric" for at least ten years. It has evolved into the perfect setting / opportunity to reflect and remember our fallen brothers and friends. Since the KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast is dedicated to our KIA/MIA brothers, this Memorial Service is dedicated to those who passed away after their service in Southeast Asia with SPECIAL EMPHASIS on those who have passed SINCE THE LAST VHPA REUNION. The VHPA often uses the term DAT (Died After Tour) to refer to those who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era, survived the War, and then passed away.passed away.

**Annual Business Meeting: 31 May - 10:00am - 12:30pm** - The Annual Business Meeting (ABM) is when we conduct the official business of the association. On Friday morning you will hear committee chairmen give reports on their activities over the past year and you will have the opportunity to vote on administrative issues plus elect our next two Executive Council members. This is a good time to learn about the workings of

the VHPA behind the scenes and to influence the future direction of our association.

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

**Closing Banquet – 31 May – 5:45pm – 10:30pm** - The highlight for most reunion attendees is our closing banquet. This is the only “dress up” occasion of the reunion. It is a celebration of our time together opening with a tribute to our missing men and closing with the change of command from our current president, John Sorensen to the new one, Art Jacobs after the meal. For those who just want to visit after the closing remarks, please know you can stay at your table until 11 pm. Cash bars remain open until they are no longer needed.

## TOUR INFORMATION

Last updated 04 OCT 2018

Tour schedule is not finalized at this time. Final tour dates, times and pricing will be released on [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org) in December and will also be listed in the Jan/Feb issue of the Aviator. Most tours are capacity controlled so registering early is highly recommended to get on your preferred tours.

**Fort Leavenworth & Carousel Museum:** Hop on your coach bus and head to the “First City of Kansas”! We will pick up our tour guide and head to Fort Leavenworth for a tour of the oldest active military post west of the Hudson River. Your tour will feature the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails, a drive by and stories of the Haunted Homes and buildings of Fort Leavenworth. Drive through the National Cemetery, established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. It is one of the first 14 national cemeteries and is the final resting place for 23,000 veterans from every war since 1812. Tour the nationally-recognized Buffalo Soldier Monument, which was dedicated in 1992 by General Colin Powell to the memory of the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments comprised of black soldiers. Visit the Frontier Army Museum, which is the home of personal artifacts of General Henry Leavenworth, an exhibit depicting the history of African-American servicemen, the Buffalo Soldiers, and many other intriguing galleries and memorabilia from 1804-1917. VHPA guests will enjoy lunch with “Harvey Girls” in the historic 1888 Union Depot. Before heading back, take a ride on a restored 1913 wooden carousel and get a behind the scenes tour of the C.W. Parker Carousel Museum.

**Independence City Wagon Tour:** Take a trip back in time and travel the same streets of Historic Independence, Missouri as the early pioneer settlers, Frank and Jessie James and President Harry S. Truman all from the comfort of a horse drawn covered wagon. On this wagon ride and city tour VHPA guests will see sights like the location of Harry S. Truman's first job and the court house Truman helped rebuild.

Hear the history of Quantrill's Raiders, Independence Civil War battles, how Wild Bill Hickok got his name and of course Frank and Jesse James! The tour is highlighted with a visit to the historic birthplace of Bess Truman, as well as following a portion of the actual Sante Fe Trail! This tour will also include time at the National Frontier Trails Center and the 1859 jailhouse that held Jesse and big brother Frank James. The wagon seats are padded on the bottom and be aware that there are a few steps to get into the wagon. Extra steps can be added to make this process easier if needed.

**Arabia Steamboat Museum Tour:** The Arabia Steamboat Museum is home to a true time capsule of frontier life in the 1800s. When the mighty Steamboat Arabia sank near Kansas City on September 5, 1856, she carried 200 tons of mystery cargo. Lost for 132 years, its recovery in 1988 was like finding the King Tut's Tomb of the Missouri River. Remarkably preserved clothes, tools, guns, dishware and more were found and all of Arabia's cargo was transformed into the Arabia Steamboat Museum, a top Kansas City attraction. For our VHPA Guests, this will be a partially guided and a partially self-guided. The Treasures of the Steamboat Arabia will connect all VHPA Guests to American history in a new and exciting way.

**Kansas City Gangster Tour:** This Gangster Tour features an interactive look at the Pendergast era from 1920 to 1945. You'll learn about and see how the “Pendergast Machine” controlled the political system and the very fabric of life in Kansas City. This tour highlights infamous crimes like the

Union Station Massacre, shows the locations of speakeasies and gambling halls and explains how liquor flowed freely during prohibition. The homes and workplaces of crime bosses and the sites of major turf wars are also featured on this tour. Sounds like an "offer" our VHPA Guests can't refuse.

**KC Brewery, Distillery and Wine Tour:** The best of all worlds! Barley Bus will pick up VHPA Guests and take them on a private tour to visit a local brewery, winery & distillery. All stops will include behind the scene tours of each facility, samples at each stop to taste the spirit of Kansas City, and light snacks/water. This is your opportunity to get an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at the places and people making some of KC's best beer, wine & liquor! This is a tour you don't want to miss and will be a small capacity tour so register early!

**WWI Museum and Memorial:** VHPA Guests will be mesmerized at The National WWI Museum and Memorial as it is the only American museum solely dedicated to preserving the objects, history and personal experiences of a war whose impact still echoes in the world today. The National WWI Museum holds the most diverse collection of World War I objects and documents in the world and will take VHPA Guests on an epic journey through a transformative period and share deeply personal stories of courage, honor, patriotism, and sacrifice. This will be a self-guided tour through one of the largest collections of WWI artifacts in the world with interactive displays, thought-provoking films and eyewitness testimonies. From the first shots fired in 1914 to the last attempts at peace in 1919, this award-winning museum offers a global perspective of "The War to End All Wars," and includes firsthand accounts from the battlefield and home front alike.

**Kansas City Trolley Tour:** Get acquainted with the popular sites, local favorites and hidden treasures that Kansas City has to offer during a fully-narrated, guided tour aboard authentic, air-conditioned trolleys with padded seats! Some of the things you'll experience on this Trolley Tour of 15 miles of Kansas City's beautiful sites like art museums, fountains and statues. - Kansas City's vibrant history and culture. This is a great way for our VHPA Guests to learn where to go for sites to visit, history regarding the city and great restaurants to enjoy cuisine from around the world including Kansas City's famous BBQ! Don't miss out on this exciting tour of the BEST KANSAS CITY HAS TO OFFER!

**Kansas Belle Dinner Train:** Reminisce as you travel onboard the Kansas Belle Dinner Train in 1940's Era decorated cars, all of which have their own unique and distinct personalities,

and let your mind wander as you listen to the music of the 1940's Big Band Era. Enjoy a 3 course dinner on this 22 mile round trip train ride departing from Baldwin City Depot and relax while enjoying breathtaking views. Roam from car to car and view era related memorabilia. Dinner does not include alcohol but there will be bars for our guests to purchase. This is a dinner every guest will truly remember and enjoy. This will be a popular event that is sure to sell out so register early!

**Spouse/Guest Event: BBQ Sauce Competition:** Board a coach bus and head to the Culinary Center of Kansas City where VHPA Spouse/ Guests are taking BBQ Sauce to a whole new level! Trade the typical outing in for the heat of the kitchen and get fired up at this smokin' fun competition brimming with culinary adventure and fun. First, head into the kitchen with your fellow VHPA Spouses and Guests and enjoy a tasty grilled appetizer prepared by one of our CCKC chefs, then listen up as a BBQ Pro gives you the low-down on exactly how to create your own personalized Kansas City-style BBQ sauce. Then it's into the kitchen as teams start designing and building their own customized BBQ Sauce complete with a clever moniker and packaging. The clocks will be ticking and the judges waiting to choose a winner! Each guest will be able to take home their own homemade BBQ Sauce.

**Quilters' Hamilton Outing:** Board a VHPA coach bus Wednesday, May 29th headed to the Missouri Star Quilt Company in Hamilton, Missouri for a fun day shopping for that unique fabric you need for your next quilt. Missouri Star Quilt Company was founded by the Doan siblings in support of their mother Jenny Doan's dream, and in tribute to her talent as a quilter on YouTube. It has grown into a \$20,000,000 per year business that owns 21 buildings in Hamilton and is part owner of three restaurants. Of the 21 buildings, 12 are currently dedicated to quilting fabric and quilting related items/notions. Missouri Star has become the largest employer in Caldwell County, with over 300 employees. Hamilton has become a must visit mecca for dedicated quilters. For history buffs, there is a museum dedicated to Hamilton's very own J.C. Penney, who began the "American Department Store". The town has done a really nice job on the museum as a great tribute to the boyhood home of J.C. Penney. Hamilton has something for everyone. For the men who might accompany their significant other, there is a "man cave" where you can watch sports on TV, play a game or two of pool, read and visit other travelers from around the state(s). Lunch will be at your own expense and is available at places like The Blue Sage, Hank and Tank's BBQ, J's Burger Dive, Mama Hawk's Kitchen, and many more.

# ~ LOOKING FOR ~

## QUILTERS SHOW & TELL

Update for the coming year. The quilt tops have been assembled and are ready to be quilted.

- At the 2019 Reunion in Kansas City, presentation quilts will be on display in the vendors room Tuesday, May 28th.

- Quilters Presentation and Show and Tell will be Thursday, May 30th'

Blocks (12 1/2 " unfinished) for the Veteran's quilts are still in demand. They can be used as your show and tell, as well as other projects you are working on. If you are not able to attend the reunion, the blocks can be mailed to the address below.

Kathleen Sherfey



The Missouri Star Quilt Company building.

*Can someone help me to gain information regarding my Uncle, Edward Cole Thornton. He was my Dad's only brother and he has no records of his service prior to or after Vietnam.*

*Additionally, can someone put me in touch with Jim Towle or Tom Trebby, as I am interested in talking to any one still living who may have known my uncle and/or have served with him as a pilot or otherwise.*

*Respectfully,*

*John  
(son of Tom Thornton, brother Edward Cole Thornton)*

*John C. Thornton  
H&B Management Corporation*

*e-mail:*

## HELP PRESERVE YOUR HISTORY!

Unit specific items: Patches, Uniforms, Headgear, Flight Gear, Calling Cards, Souveniers AND Captured Bad Guy Items!

## WANTED

### Helicopter Memorabilia from the Vietnam War

Contact: John Conway

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

ARMY ~ NAVY ~ AIR FORCE ~ MARINE CORPS  
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Fair Prices Paid. Not for profit.  
References available.

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email:



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

# MERRY CHRISTMAS DICK

LITTLE FORETHOUGHT – SOME MALICE – TRUMPED BY GRACE

*By J. Bruce Huffman*

The officers and men of Charlie Troop 1/9th Cav, 1st Cav Div. (AM) had gathered in the dead space between our maintenance hangar and the chow hall to watch a movie when the first rounds of NVA 107 mm recoilless rifle fire exploded in our midst. Beer got spilled, lawn chairs were scattered, and rocket box seats flew every-which-way while the movie played on and the race for the nearest bunker began.

I was headed for a berm near the corner of the chow hall and was matching WO Miller stride for stride, heading for cover, when a brilliant white flash knocked us both to the ground peppering us with dirt. It had knocked Miller into full eyeball defilade submerging him in the horrific contents of the kitchen drainage ditch. Neither of us was hurt. My fresh uniform was dirty, but Miller had small shrapnel holes in his pants legs and was covered in the foulest smelling sun-baked concoction of bacon grease, decomposing vegetables, and discarded powdered eggs, scented with rotten reconstituted potato flakes. The armor piercing 107 mm round had exploded between his legs, on striking the berm and other than forcing him into the filth, had caused little damage.

Our brilliant President Johnson had announced yet another bombing halt on October 31st that had gone into effect on November 1st, a week earlier. He had told the American public the halt would offer a 'good faith' gesture and bring the North Vietnamese to the table in Paris to end the war.

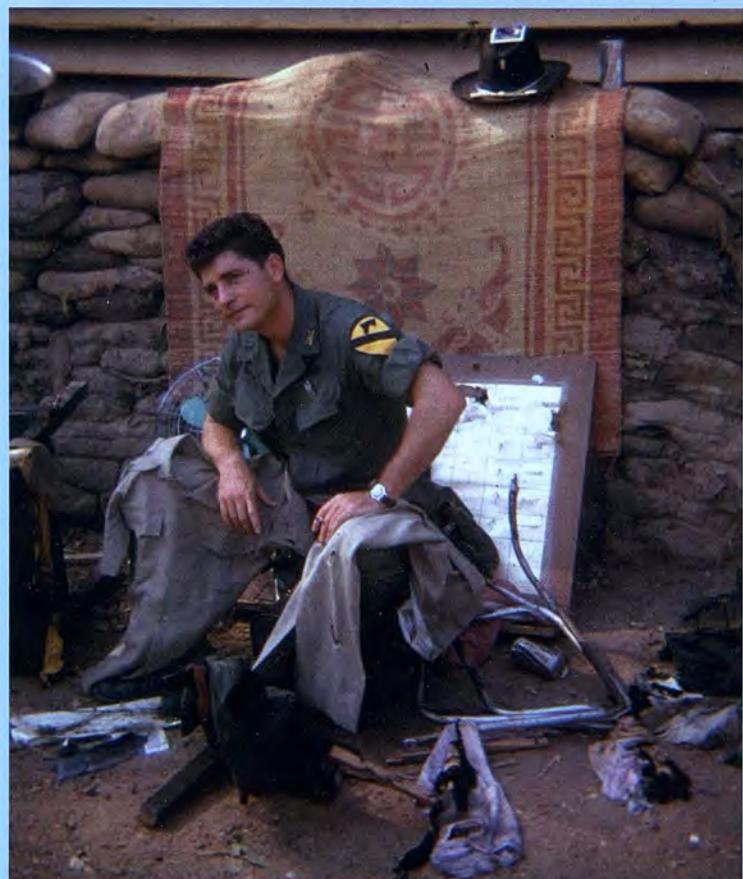
'Good faith; my ass!' was the feeling among



*Gary's Room - Shared Common Wall*

the men of my unit. None of us were certified military geniuses but it didn't take a genius to see what would shortly be happening. We were just a bunch of youthful warrior children doing the politician's bidding and executing decisions, that affected our very lives, which were being passed on to us by fools far removed from any danger to themselves.

With the Route Pack plugs pulled, at the top of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the NVA logistics would immediately flow through Laos and into Cambodia while



*Ungaro's Hong Kong Clothes*

ending up in our AO squarely between the border and Saigon. The NVA we were beating down gun by gun, cache by cache, and battle by battle would suddenly get their ammo bunkers topped off, have a fresh bunch of reinforcements joining their comrades sporting new LBE, clean pith helmets, and the latest AKMs festooned with Soviet and Chinese labels. That damn 107mm recoilless rifle would now have endless rounds to foul up our evening's entertainment.

The morale, just before Thanksgiving 1968, had sunk to new depths after our unit area and flight-line got pummeled with a substantial barrage of Katyusha Type 63 107 mm HE rockets.

Within the space of two weeks, Ungaro would lose his uniforms along with his shiny new Hong Kong suits, I would get blown out of my bed, Gary would have his back broken, and one of our Hispanic RTOs would take a flying rocket motor to the butt. His pain was so intense that we all held him while the medic and Flight Doc picked rocket parts out of his flesh and we listened to him scream in Spanish at the top of his lungs.

Christmas was coming, Nixon had been elected, and the Division thought it would be a great idea to give us all Christmas Cards with that big wonderful Cav Patch, so we could send them all over the world and wish our family and friends a 'Merry Christmas' from Phuoc Vinh.'

During a late-night bout of rowdy debauchery, at our Officer's Club infused with Tennessee sipping whiskey and Miller's finest beer, we all thought it would be a great idea to write the newly elected President and just let him know once and for all how we all felt. After all, 'What the hell could he do, shave our heads and send us to Vietnam, Fat Chance!'

So, I found one of those Cav Christmas Cards and proceeded to write in large bold strokes. "Merry F\*\*g Christmas Dick! From the Officers of Charlie Troop fighting the damn war that you don't have the balls to win!"

There, that should do it! I put my 2nd LT APO SF 96490 return address on the envelope, we all signed it, dropped it in the mail sack, sobered up in the morning, and thought little about the outcome. In a couple of weeks this showed up from the White House. →

My brothers and I had hurled an insult, born from the anger and frustration we all felt over our personal circumstance and the pain we shared over the injuries

and deaths of our friends. The reply was a message of kindness and dignity that instantly defused most of our anger and left us feeling pretty small and petty beneath the power of the Office of the President of the United States.

The war droned on, more lives would be lost, but President Nixon would show strength and boldness that would eventually lead to the return of our POWs and the extraction of American combat forces from south-east Asia. We can only muse what the outcome might have been had his immense popularity, following his huge re-election, not have been destroyed by the Watergate scandal and his subsequent resignation.

As Charlie Sheen's lines from the monologue in *Platoon* goes, "The war is over for me now, but it will always be there the rest of my days."

One of life's lessons that also stays with me is that dignity, good manners, and grace in the face of petty misplaced anger thoughtlessly hurled in your direction; should always be the first approach to resolve a conflict. Richard Nixon taught me that.



*Nixon's Election Photo at the Waldorf*

*I want you to know how deeply grateful I am for the message you sent to me after our election victory. The expressions of confidence and good wishes I have received from people all over the world will be a great source of strength and encouragement as I undertake the responsibility of providing new leadership for America in the years ahead.*

*Mrs. Nixon joins me in extending our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.*

*Richard Nixon*

*Nixon's Dignified Christmas Reply*

# *I WAS AN OUTSIDER*

*By Paul Mayo, submitted by his surviving brother Dann*

At our plane's last refueling stop, in Tokyo, there'd been snow on the ground. At the one before that, in Alaska, it'd been easy to fancy that there was no such thing as ground -- just snow; now, as the plane's door opened onto Ton Son Nhut airport in South Vietnam, the ground veritably rose up to meet us on shimmering waves of heat that made the ramp of stairs pulled up to the aircraft seem unnecessary: "We could float down in this stuff," I thought, and it seemed almost true.

We'd moved again. It was 1964. I was nine and an Army brat and already used to moving, but this was going to take a little getting used to. I couldn't believe the heat. I couldn't believe that at the Continental Hotel, ooh-la-la, we had to boil the water. I couldn't believe that our hotel window overlooked a field containing a water buffalo. And I couldn't believe there was a war going on, a fact I do not recall anyone's mentioning to me until, shortly after our arrival, my older brother delighted in breaking away from the family group as we shuffled along Saigon to ask of passersby, "Are you a V.C.? Are you a V.C.?"

"Uh.. .what's a V.C.?" I asked my parents (as they swatted my older brother and told him to shut up). And I found out.

So, you're in a war zone. Nothing to it: You share your school bus with two armed guards and learn your multiplication tables while soldiers carrying M-16s crunch along the gravel on the roof overhead; you forego P.E. (and most other outdoor activities) for a while, and instead of fire drills, you have sniper drills, and practice diving under your desk; you play tag with your friends and wind up impaling your wrist on one of the steel spikes gracing the gate outside your house (See? That outside stuff'll get you); you ask General Westmoreland's daughter Margaret, to go steady, and you get your class-consciousness raised ("Me?" she said; "With you?"); you sing altered-for-Vietnam versions of Christmas carols ("And a V.C. in a palm tree...."), which is kind of fun; and you finally and forever give up on Santa Claus on a 105-degree Christmas

Eve while you take cookies outside to the soldiers guarding your house and listen to the shelling going on outside of the city; and you discover perplexing new feelings -- somehow scared, somehow sad -- when you see your mother one night sitting on the terrace, rocking, with a loaded .45 in her lap.

Finally, one March morning in 1965, the radio served my mother and siblings and me news of escalation (of the war) and evacuation (of us) with our breakfast; it seemed we were moving again, in a hurry. And, so we packed, and the reporters descended to film us vacating our school and traipsing to the airport, and we rode the air currents up in to another plane and were gone.

Now, it'd be ludicrous for me to even so much as suggest that my schoolboy's experience in South Vietnam was hellish or horrific. More than that: that'd be an insult to those, and especially the children, for whom that and other wars have been those things, up-close-and-personal. No: I had a basically normal childhood under somewhat other-than-normal circumstances, and while in Vietnam I was guarded, protected, and even pampered. But it'd be making no false claim to say that I somehow changed while in Vietnam. Perhaps that change in me was merely the difference between eight and nine; I don't know. But I do know that somehow, while in Saigon, I stepped over some invisible line of demarcation and stepped irrevocably outside of my childhood, or at least an early phase of innocent childhood. I feel that this happened as surely as Santa, while I was there, was consigned to my mental toy chest, put away as an idea I didn't play with anymore. I don't know when this event occurred: while the soldiers crunched over our heads at school, or while I dove for cover from imaginary snipers; or, perhaps, when the general's daughter blew me off, or on that Christmas Eve when the sky was lit by cannon fire; but I know that the world became a less innocent place, and I became a less innocent boy, just for having perceived the change. And those feelings I

had --somehow scared, somehow sad -- when I saw my mother with the gun in her lap, rocking, welled up because, I believe, I had sensed that I'd stepped outside of my innocence. That lap with the gun in it --I'd used to crawl in that lap, and now it was 1965, and I was nine, and I wanted to crawl in it again --maybe just for old time's sake.

---

*I did not personally observe my mother sitting with a .45 in her lap on Christmas Eve, 1964, and I have wondered about that detail since then. To the best of my knowledge, the weaponry in our house at that time consisted of my father's 7.65mm Mauser pistol and an old Japanese bayonet (which I kept under my bed, as mine was the only bedroom on the ground floor, and I slept better with this likely useless piece of metal -- as in "never bring a knife to a gunfight" -- nearby). It was not until I returned to Saigon as a tourist in 2016 and we went by where the Brinks*

*Hotel used to be that I made the connection with the history that I knew. As an officer's wife, my mother was not allowed to have a "real job" overseas, so when we were in Saigon she had some sort of volunteer position in the American Red Cross. On Christmas Eve she was downtown, shopping I presume. When the Brinks was bombed, the USO club (on or near Tu Do Street) was used as an aid station and I know, because she told me, and I saw the blood on her dress, that she ended up there assisting with casualties. She did not tell me about the gun. My guess is that as she was leaving there for home, someone gave her the sidearm with advice along the lines of "Best you be careful, ma'am, there's bad guys out there." Now it all makes sense to me: this woman, traumatized by what she had just seen, rocking quietly with a loaner .45 in her lap wondering, on Christmas Eve, what she had gotten her five children into.*

Dann Mayo

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# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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Marshall Eubanks, President

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER  
(currently inactive, seeking members)

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER  
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Mel Latham, President

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional  
Ken DeHoff - POC

## Notice to all Members of the VHPA

The liaison between the national HQ of the VHPA and the independent Chapters has reverted to Tom Payne of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. Tom can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or via E-mail at [REDACTED] Feel free to contact Tom 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

Alamo Chapter men enjoyed lunch together on September 11th. We met as couples for lunch on October 17th in Boerne, TX, a smaller town near San Antonio. The location was Peggy's on the Green, located in the historic Kendall Inn. This was a stagecoach station and stop in the 19th century.

Our quarterly meeting was for dinner at the Barn Door Restaurant on October 11th and we had another great turnout of over 50 people. We conducted an election for 2019 officers, to take office on January 1st. Mike Clark will move to president from his vice president position. Mike Law resigned from his member-at-large position, so he could run for vice president, and he won. To replace him as intermediate member-at-large, to move to senior member-at-large next year, Chuck Oualline was elected. Jim Talley was elected as junior member-at-large. Al Flory was reelected as secretary, and John Deer was reelected as treasurer.

Al Flory will again host a Christmas party at the Army Residence Community in San Antonio, this year on December 1st. Alamo Chapter members should send \$30 per person and a reservation to Al. Food, booze, and live music will be provided for this cost. We will begin with cocktails at 1800 hours, followed by dinner and dancing. This party has been great fun year after year, and members can find details on our website at [www.vhps-alamo.org](http://www.vhps-alamo.org).

Chuck Oualline



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# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

We had Mike Nord, Al Doucette, Ken & Leslie Lake, Curt & Carla Knapp, Tom Inks, Jeff Socorro Magaziner, Mike O'Connor, Ken & Marcia Fritz here on 23 SEP for a Huey



Wash and Annual Business meeting. Several other members could not make it at the last minute. After spending about two hours cleaning up the Huey and pickup, we had BBQ'd chicken, Kentucky Fried chicken, fruit salad, macaroni salad, potato salad, chips, plum pudding, brownies, veggie lasagna, assorted sodas and beers. The business meeting was held on the patio while Ken Fritz BBQ'd the chicken. The ladies did a fine job setting up the banquet and the weather was perfect with plenty of shade under the 80-foot American elm and the English walnut trees. Jeff & Socorro again brought their nice lawn tables and chairs.

### Business meeting topics (Details to be emailed to members):

- 1) Change bylaws to allow council members to continue in their posts when no one else steps up for election.
- 2) Financial position is in great shape.
- 3) Next event is Veterans Day at Village Barbershop in Stockton, 10 NOV with Huey wash at 10AM on 9 NOV. Last year's donations were substantial at this event and Bobby at the barbershop says it should be bigger this year.
- 4) Mike Nord has moved the MOC to a lot on S. Jefferson Blvd, W. Sacramento. He will do a survey in the next two weeks to determine what's needed to resurrect it. A vet from Grand Forks, ND, has pledged to sponsor taking the MOC to KC for the reunion, Memorial Day, 2019.

On 24 SEP the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance again invited us to their annual Salute To Valor at the Serrano Country Club. All golfers got to cruise by Huey 563 parked right next to the cart path at Hole # 1. The Collings Foundation B-17 did two fly overs. All services were honored and represented. A large men's chorus sang a nice medley of all service songs: "Anchors Aweigh" etc. We enjoyed explaining and showing various features of the Huey to many moms and their kids. Tom Inks, Curt Knapp, Mike Nord, and Ken Fritz crewed the Huey and



Huey Power wash at LZ Fritz



B-17 flyover



LZ in the Trees

received a challenge coin for their service.

We are looking forward to a Veterans Day display in Stockton and our annual Christmas Party on 5 DEC.

Check our website [www.vhpaccn.org](http://www.vhpaccn.org) for more info and to volunteer for the free lunches and a chance to educate more folks about the Huey and our history.

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Our scheduled trip to Wise, VA. with six helicopters was canceled by "Florence", that small hurricane that hit squarely along the North Carolina coast. In New Bern, my hometown we had a ten-foot tidal surge that left most of downtown with anywhere from a few inches to a few feet of water to deal with.

I am glad to say the business owners and home owners are making great progress in their recovery efforts.

Our October event, The Mum Festival, in New Bern is still a "GO." Due to circumstances beyond either the Mum Festival Committee's or our control, we might not be able to participate in that event with a full complement of aircraft. We might be able to sup-

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

support the event with two aircraft.

We are currently scheduled to be in Washington DC from 7 Nov to 16 Nov, at the National Archives. We will take three aircraft that will be on display through Veterans Day week.

The NCVHPA has a 14-passenger bus (thanks to Jerry Seago) that is decked out in NCVHPA Logos and pictures. It made its maiden trip to Washington NC with

four members and their wives, we all had a great time.

Jerry is working on our newest aircraft, it was sand-blasted last week and then finished off by Brock Nicholson and Jerry Seago with a good hand sanding. Painting is next.

Hope everyone has a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Ed Hughes, President, NCVHPA**

## FLORIDA CHAPTER

Our 26th annual reunion, September 20-22, 2018 was absolutely outstanding and definitely one that will be long remembered. It was held at the beautiful beachfront International Palms Resort and Conference Center on Cocoa Beach, FL. This resort is a favorite for beachfront family fun and sits on 13 pristine oceanfront acres and exudes the Sunshine State's laid-back, family-friendly vibe. Once the playground of astronauts, this 502-room beach resort overlooking the Atlantic Ocean delights with a pirate-themed pool, rescue gators in the lobby, live entertainment, and fire pits that beckon families to gather for s'more-making memories.

The resort is also famed for its world-class surfing, close proximity to the Kennedy Space Center and Port Canaveral. The Kennedy Space Center traces the history of NASA's space program, and Port Canaveral is the coun-

try's second busiest cruise ship port just 10 minutes from our Cocoa Beach resort. Other nearby local attractions included the Ron Jon Surf Shop (open 24 hours a day), and the 75-acre Brevard Zoo in Melbourne which offers the only kayak zoo tour in the country and home to more than 650 animals.



Ernest 'Rabbit' Hare and B. J. Atkins were "Bartenders" in the Hospitality Suite.



Tom Tomlinson, John Hawn, and Dan Brunger relax while awaiting inquisitive passers-by.



Our LOACH on static-display in the beachfront International Palms Resort parking lot.



"Bobbie the Weather Girl" (AFVN TV Saigon 1967-69) volunteered at our registration desk. She still wished her 'captive' audience "a pleasant evening weather-wise and good wishes for other-wise."



Tom and Sharon Rountree are poised for action in our sales store.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

After completing our administrative and logistical tasks of setting up our registration table, hospitality room, and sales store, we strategically parked our LOACH in the front parking lot of the Resort. On Friday evening, we enjoyed pizzas and beverages while watching "In the Shadow of the Blade" which is a 2004 American documentary film produced and directed by Patrick and Cheryl Fries. It won awards in the film industry and with the Vietnam veteran community. It's a MUST see! The film follows a restored "Huey" helicopter on a flight to reunite Vietnam War veterans and families of those killed in action with the iconic aircraft three decades after the war. This effort was used as a vehicle for eliciting the stories of those individuals affected by the war.

Our reunion concluded Saturday with our annual business meeting, an auction that included a number of Joe



There was simply no end to the conversations during the banquet. It seems that the older we get, the better we were!

Kline's Aviation Art, and our closing banquet to include a mini-awards ceremony. What a fantastic way to end the day!

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



A beautiful and magnificent sunrise overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at the beachfront International Palms Resort.

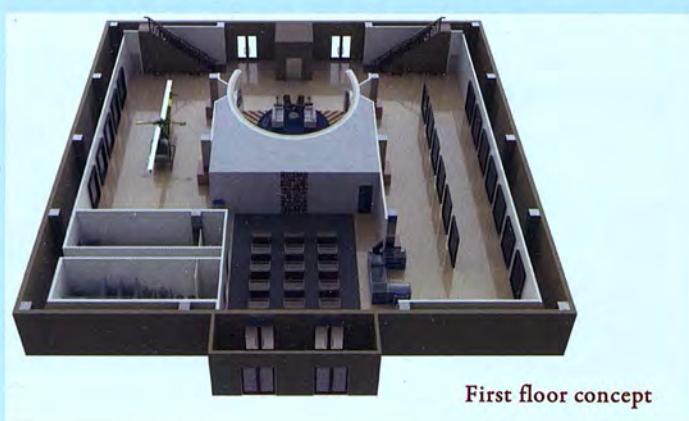
## FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

The Fort Wolters Chapter decided shortly after its inception in 1994 that its legacy would be a museum honoring the men and women who served in the Vietnam War. To that end, a committee was formed which became the board of directors for The National Vietnam War Museum. After almost 25 years, that legacy is about to come to fruition, and the chapter's name is about to be emblazoned upon the centerpiece of the Fort Wolters

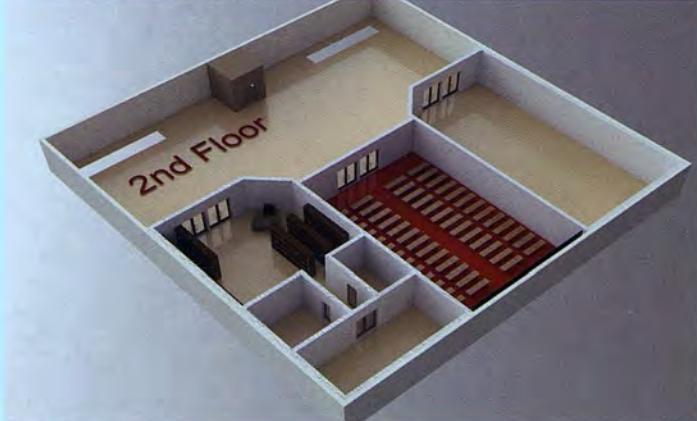
Gallery, a fully restored OH-23D, financed by contributions from the chapter's members. This \$25,000 project was part of the larger project of building phase one of the museum, a 20,000 square foot, two-story structure featuring three galleries and a



Current building.



First floor concept



Second floor concept

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

gift store on the first floor, with offices, an art gallery, multi-purpose room, and storage on the second.

The galleries include an introduction to the Vietnam War and era; the Home Front, featuring a replica of the LBJ Oval Office; and the Fort Wolters/Camp Wolters gallery covering the history of the facility from its role in World War Two through the Vietnam War.

While still under construction, the exterior wall is complete to the top of the first floor, and the steel for the second floor has been installed. At the same time, Southwest Museum Services is constructing the exhibits and display cases which, along with the OH-23, will be moved into the building when the roof is completed, and the building

is "dry." Then the final touches will be applied so the opening can be scheduled.

A grand opening is expected sometime in the first half of 2019, and the museum board will announce the date at the earliest possible time so those who wish to attend can make the necessary travel plans. More information is available on the museum's website: [www.nationalvwnwarmuseum.org](http://www.nationalvwnwarmuseum.org)

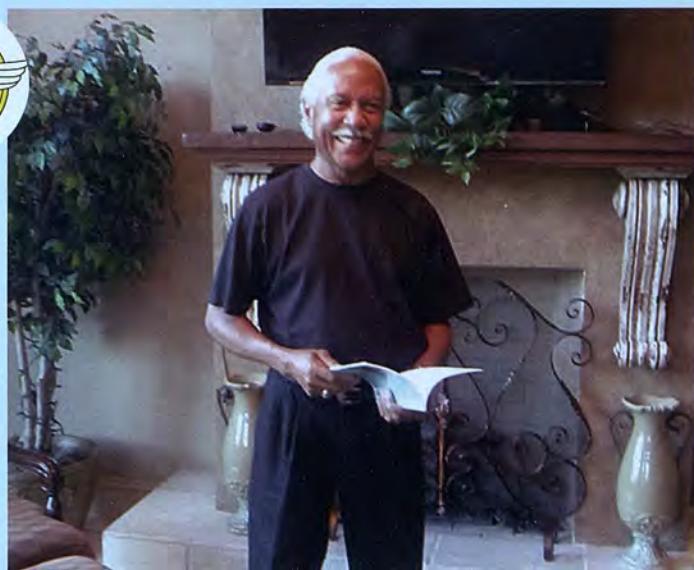
**Edward T. "Edd" Luttenberger, Communications Director, The National Vietnam War Museum**

**Richard Gaurkee, Chapter President, FWCVHPA**

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter held its September bi-monthly breakfast meeting at its new LZ, the Del Ray Diner in Marietta, GA. Our next meeting will be conducted at the same location on 17 November. While our business meetings always begin at 0900, most of our members muster around 0800 to mingle and have breakfast before rather than during the business meeting.

Our speaker for the September meeting was Col Ret., Tom Anderson, a recent member of our Chapter. I would think it would be safe to say that anything like Tom's military career pattern has never been duplicated in the history of the US Army. He was commissioned as a Field Artillery second lieutenant in 1969 and retired 29 years later as a colonel. In the interim, Tom graduated from both Airborne and Ranger Schools, followed by flight school where he graduated as the top aviator in his class. He served in the 1st Cav in Vietnam (D troop, 229 AHB) as a scout pilot. Tom then attended and graduated from medical school while on active duty. Following medical school, Tom attended and graduated from both the Armed Forces Staff College and the Army War College. Medical assignments followed, and would you believe he served as a flight surgeon at Fort Benning! During Tom's presentation, one of our wise-crackers asked Tom, "Tom, I'm curious, as a recipient of many "finger waves" during annual flight physicals, tell me, is it easier to give than receive?" Tom answered, "Give!" I suppose only a doctor could answer that one! After Tom's Army Career, he entered the civilian medical world and practiced as a radiologist for 17 years before fully retiring in 2015. As a radiologist he specialized in diagnosing and treating circulato-



**Tom Anderson**

ry anomalies most often prevalent in older patients. Of course, when he got to that segment of his presentation, he got the full attention of his audience as there ain't many among us who are running the Peachtree Roadrace these days! All of our Chapter members welcome Tom and are grateful he joined us as a chapter member. It's kinda comforting to have a medic among us these days.

As this report is submitted, we don't have a guest speaker scheduled for the November meeting. But, not to worry, we will have, even if it's yours truly, Bob Lanzotti.

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

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

**Bob Lanzotti, President**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter has been very active through the end of the summer.

**Michigan Helicopter Association.** Chapter member Bill Andrew spoke at a meeting of the Michigan Helicopter Association in Grosse Ile on July 19th. He was joined by Member-At- Large Glen Veno at the gathering of about 20 MHA members. MHA president Paul Boucher hosted the meeting and provided food and pop for all. Bill talked about flight school and flying helicopters in Vietnam. Afterward he spoke with Paul about a future talk about helicopter flying in the National Guard.

**Traverse City Luncheon.** Mark Benjamin hosted another monthly lunch gathering at Brady's in Traverse City on August 9th. Nine attended including new member Joe Meredith and guest Kurt Grockaw. Ed Luck, Bart Halliday and Ed Canright made their membership official with forms and dues paid. Ed Luck is one of our non-Michigan members, hailing from Minnesota.

As usual, there was steady interaction between those present. Mark related how he is over-the-top active with Coast Guard Association activities. His list of upcoming events and logistics was impressive to say the least.

Joe Meredith, Bob Potvin and Rich Deer had a mini-reunion of sorts from past days with the Michigan National Guard. Joe was even a student of Rich's for night vision goggle training and Bob participated with Rich's flight platoon at Grayling during annual training - both activities many years back.

Kurt Grockaw was introduced by Mark as being in the 5th Infantry Division and was deployed near the Laotian border during Lam Son 719. Mark was assigned to C Company, 1/11th Regiment as a ground pounder at the time. He said he was transported by helicopter every two weeks or so, frequently by air assets from the 101st.

He told a story of being sent to retrieve a KIA pilot from an OH-6 near the border and on arrival discovered he was still alive. His team was able to evacuate the pilot with considerable effort.

**Mason Aviation Day August 18.** Not every event goes as planned. Vice President Dave James reported: Because of fog we only had about 35 planes and only several hundred people in attendance. The other Dave James, who sells Bell H-13 rides was not there this year either. EAA Chapter 55 still serves a great breakfast, they quit selling steak lunches and only sell brats, dogs and pulled pork sandwiches.

Doc Farrell and Bob Carusi reported for duty early and stayed until the end, so set up and tear down was a breeze.



Aug 9 Traverse City L-R Bob Matlis, Mark Benjamin, Bart Halliday, Ed Canright, Joe Meredith, Kurt Grockaw, Rich Deer, Bob Potvin, Ed Luck.



Bill Andrew red jumpsuit with Michigan Helicopter Assn.



Maple Grove Front L-R Rich Deer, Charlie Marvin, Glen Veno, Back Doc Farrell, Dave James, Bob Carusi, Jerry Wright.



Maple Grove lunch L-R Jerry Wright, Charlie Marvin, John Akley, Glen Veno, Rich Deer, Dave James.

The whole day was quiet, too quiet, very disappointing.

**September 25-26 Thunder Over Michigan.** Hugh "Sandy"

Despite some wind, rain, fog, and rotor wash, our

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

McLeod headed up our participation at Thunder Over Michigan and submitted this AAR:

Despite some wind, rain, fog, and rotor wash, our Michigan Chapter volunteers wonderfully represented VHPA at this year's Thunder Over Michigan air show at Willow Run airport in Ypsilanti.

Volunteers included Hugh "Sandy" McLeod, Mark Benjamin, Frank Chafee, Bob Carusi, Charles Marvin, Terry and Karen Hunt, Bill Andrew, Clay and Linda Maxwell, Jim and Donna Murphy, and Glen Veno who also was volunteering in support of Army Aviation Heritage Foundation's Sky Soldiers operations.

We set up adjacent to the landing zone of the AAHF, which brought in three Hueys and a Cobra to give rides to the public. Our display included two VHPA canopies, personal artifacts, war stories, and on Sunday, Bill Andrew's 1969 bright red Firebird.

We signed up one new member for the chapter, connected with two additional strong prospects, and engaged numerous other air show attendees, to include family and friends, who were interested in Army helicopters, their roles in Vietnam, and the pilots who flew them.

We enjoyed the air shows both Saturday and Sunday, which were highlighted by the Thunderbirds. Display and demonstration aircraft besides the Thunderbirds included B-17, B-25, B-26 and B-29 bombers; a wide variety of WW II and current day transports, trainers, and fighters including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter; acrobatic aircraft; and many others. Ground demonstrations included a battle put on by the WW II Historical Reenactment Society.

A highlight on Saturday was meeting Medal of Honor recipient, LTC Charles Kettles, at the time of his heroic action, commander of the 176th Aviation Company. See [www.army.mil/medalofhonor/kettles](http://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/kettles) for details.

We got to know many of the pilots and support personnel of the AAHF. And as always, we met new members of our Chapter and strengthened the bonds among ourselves by sharing, and likely resharing, our Vietnam and post-Vietnam experiences and reminiscences.

Kevin Walsh, Executive Director of the Yankee Air Museum, which sponsored the show, and his team of volunteers treated us exceptionally well. We were not charged to display at the show because we are a veterans group. As "vendors" we received entrance and parking passes, free lunches and water, golf cart transportation, and whatever else we needed.

Lessons learned included not setting up too close to the Sky Soldier's landing zone. We were doing OK on Saturday until one of the Hueys had to flare excessively to stop.



September 13 Traverse City L-R Bob Matlis, Mark Benjamin, Barry Witt, Walter Topp, Don Pond, Bob Potvin, Carol & Lee Luck, Peter Fabien.



Thunder Over Michigan Manning the fort.



Thunder Over Michigan with Bill Andrew's red Firebird.



Thunder Over Michigan With MOH Recipient LTC Kettles.

(Nearby storms forced downwind landings in their LZ.) Despite the heroic efforts of our team, the rotor wash from that flare coupled with the storm wind blew down our canopies, damaging both. For Sunday, we had to use aging football tailgating canopies.

Thanks again to all who made our presence at 2018 Thunder Over Michigan a success. Hugh "Sandy" McLeod

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

I'm adding my thanks to Sandy and all the volunteers who participated. I received photos from Sandy, Mark Benjamin and Bill Andrew so the ones shown here are just a sampling.

**Maple Grove Airport Fly-In September 9.** Seven chapter members participated in this year's event at the Maple Grove Airport near Fowlerville and an eighth joined in at the lunch afterwards. Vice President Dave James picked the spot and brought a canopy, table, banner and other materials. Doc Farrell, Charlie Marvin, Bob Carusi, Jerry Wright, Glen Veno and Rich Deer joined him.

This annual event is very popular with the local community and draws a very big crowd. Highlights include a full breakfast served by local volunteers and aircraft including helicopters and fixed wing coming and going throughout the morning. Our display drew the attention of veterans, family members of veterans or current service members, and the general public. Glen's "toys" of flight gear, steel pot and rifle were a big hit with the kids who posed for family photos while wearing the gear.

Chapter members told many war stories which especially appealed to one nine-year old boy who spent a couple of hours listening, and sharing stories with the many veterans who visited with us. This also led to recruiting with one new member and several applications sent with family members to prospective candidates. Emphasis on recruiting associate members resulted in the new member Brian Lipiec joining us. Brian is USMC veteran Iraq and Afghanistan attack helicopter pilot.

The "volunteered" photographer who took our group picture at the airport made a comment that struck me. As he was looking over our setup and seeing the banner, helicopter model, and photo it dawned on him who/what we were. In a voice I can only describe as awestruck he simply asked: "Did all of you fly helicopters in Vietnam?" I

replied "yes" and saw the realization sink in on his face.

After the event, we redeployed to the Great Lakes Family Restaurant in Fowlerville for lunch. John Akley joined us there. Although they were busy with their Sunday crowd, the restaurant staff was very friendly, attentive and efficient. They were appreciative of our group of veterans and clearly showed it.

Then when I asked the gentleman at the restaurant seated next to us to take our photo there, he replied he'd be happy to as one veteran to other veterans then adding he was a 22 year Navy vet.

This is our third year of participating in the Maple Grove event and it will continue to be an annual event for our chapter. With the added lunch gathering at the end, it's a great way to finish our year of activities – but don't forget Mark Benjamin's monthly Traverse City lunches.

**September Traverse City Luncheon.** Member At Large Mark Benjamin filed a short and sweet AAR for the September 13th lunch at Brady's in Traverse City: Another successful monthly lunch outing. The photo shows Bob Matlis, Mark Benjamin, Barry Witt, Walter Topp, Don Pond, Bob Potvin, Carol and Lee Luck, and Peter Fabian. Not in the picture were Sandy & Dianne McLeod and Miriam Fabian. Everyone seems well. Lee and Carol were in town from across the state for Lee's Blackhawk reunion. Still no pool.

For any VHPA members in or near Michigan who would like to be added to our email list for updates on our activities, contact me at [REDACTED] We have several non-Michigan residents on our roster so don't let that stop you from joining us.

More information on our chapter can be found online at [vhpmi.wordpress.com](http://vhpmi.wordpress.com) and on Facebook at Michigan Chapter of the VHPA.

Submitted by Rich Deer, President

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

*Note from the Editors: Because of an email mix up, North Alabama's report was not published in the Sep/Oct Aviator.*

*This report includes information from the summer that did not appear in the last issue of the VHPA Aviator.*

On June 2nd, the NAVHPA supported the 2018 Military Heritage Open House at the Huntsville Executive Airport. NAVHPA brought Buc 3 so many children and adults could see and explore our "Vietnam Veteran" UH-1C/M helicopter. Buc-3 is always a big hit. Also support-



ing the open house was the Friends of Army Aviation Ozark (FAAO), providing rides in their UH-1H. In addition, the Southern Museum of Flight, in Rome, GA brought a vintage T-28 trainer looking as good as new. Other notable displays were the Saving Our Flying Heritage's Yak-52 and Phil Fox's O-2A.

On June 23rd, members of the North Alabama Chapter gathered for an opportunity for fun and social intercourse. (Please note the word is Social!) The get together was organized by Sam and Ruth Maki along with Johnny and Darlene Purser. The event took place at the Purser's private bar located on their property. The weather initially

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

cleared. By the time all the folks were there, the head count was about 38. Sam and Ralph Weber were running the grill as others just lined up to eat. Burgers and Dogs, tater salad, beans and a BYOB seemed to work out really well. The Purser's bar worked out so well that all the attendees want to do it again in 2019. Some want to make it an annual event. Johnny and Darlene liked the idea and are happy to do it. Johnny is a Vietnam Vet himself, MOS 11B. They have some friends who don't know much about Vietnam and would like to host a get together with those folks and some of our pilot and crew members to hear about what the Vietnam War was like from the air crew prospective. The afternoon went off with no problem and a good time was had by all.

Yulista Aviation, Inc. requested our support for a joint safety training exercise on 20 July. The exercise was held at the Huntsville Executive Airport. It was an aviation rescue/fire training/hazardous spill containment exercise. NAVHPA provided our UH-1C/M Huey Gunship to serve as the helicopter used to evac casualties after a hard landing. This exercise evaluated the capabilities of the Meridianville Executive Airport fire department, the local ambulance service, the Madison County MEDFLIGHT, and the Yulista Hazmat Team to respond to an emergency on the airport and Yulista's ramp area (used to support Redstone aviation development activities).

Mr. Walt Buie, president of Yulista Aviation, Inc. presented NAVHPA with a \$1000 donation to help with our operations and maintenance costs of BUC-3 (our display UH-1C/M).

NAVHPA is participating on the committee that is bringing The Wall That Heals (TWTH) to Huntsville from 31 Oct to 4 Nov 2018. As one of two Vietnam veteran organizations in Huntsville (the other being the Vietnam Veterans of America), we are planning a large presence at TWTH. We are providing



A ride in the FAAO Huey is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many.



The NAVHPA crew at Tate Farms.



The Saving Our Flying Heritage Yak-52 was featured at the 2018 Open House in June.



Perhaps a future aviator?



Buc-3 was used to train firefighters and rescue personnel by Yulista Aviation, Inc.



NAVHPA members at the June social, "there I was?"



Buc-3 was used to train firefighters and rescue personnel by Yulista Aviation, Inc.

volunteers to support the many positions required for the event as well as Docents to be present at our UH-1C/M (BUC-3) static display. We are providing 10 members to

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

serve as security during a 4-hour period and individual volunteers for parking, operations, education guides, ambassadors, emotional support and site maintenance. NAVHPA is a proud Silver Level Sponsor for the TWTH in Huntsville.

The NAVHPA participated in another great community event at the Moontown Airport annual Vintage Airplane Fly-in. "Buc 3" was again a crowd pleaser. The living history hands-on museum was one of the many static displays that line the side of the grass runway. Young and old alike got to sit in the Cockpit Pilot seats and the Cabin, Crewchief and Gunner seats. Many memories were awakened and a few war stories were embellished to the delight of all present. Several young and old had their picture taken while sitting in the Door Gunners position holding the replica M-60 Machinegun. Also on static display was our Mannikin, with a bushy mustache, and dressed in a Vietnam era Nomex flight suit, and associated flight gear. Our display table also had additional Vietnam-era memorabilia. Our NAVHPA Docents were available to explain the displays and answer questions regarding the helicopter operation and their personal experiences during their Vietnam tours of duty. These events are sometimes emotional experiences; however, they are always a healing experience for all of us. Vietnam Veterans are proud of their service, and we are finally speaking about it.

On September 22nd, the NAVHPA had another great Saturday with the Yulista Company picnic. It was held at the Tate Farm again. Tate Farms offers so much to do for the families, especially the kids. This this was our fourth

year supporting Yulista at their annual picnic and it's still fun. Most of the employees know all about Blackhawks and Apaches but very little about an old Vietnam Huey gunship. For the young parents and their kids, its like a classic 57 Chevy. You mention that we could listen to tunes on the AM radio and it was a blank look on their faces. One of our members brought out his beauty of a Corvette. Bill Binkley has all kinds of decals and painting on his "little yellow corvette" depicting the Vietnam era. Even has the Aviation Memorial stone depicted on it. This year the picnic was held in late afternoon starting at 4PM and going until 8PM. As always, it was still warm but as we got closer to closing time we could see off in the west that a storm was brewing. We started to take all the weapons off Buc-3 and get it locked up, but it wasn't about half an hour and it poured. We had plenty of folks to tear everything down. Many thanks to Malcolm and Jo Brown, Jim and Teresa White, John and Linda McDaniel, John and Susan Lowe, Clair Parr, Rick Davis, Bruce Norton, Les Haas, Sam Maki, Hal Stitt and Bill Binkley for the corvette parked by Buc-3.

The Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the 2nd Monday of most months at 6:00 PM (18:00). Stop in when you get a chance. If you live in the North Alabama and Middle Tennessee areas, we want you to join our chapter. You can contact us at [navhpa@gmail.com](mailto:navhpa@gmail.com). 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..."

Ralph Weber, September 30, 2018

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

Chapter meetings for August and September were held at the American Legion Post #1. We continue to have a good turnout due to the midweek meeting with lunch.

In August, the Helicopter War Museum visited The Adams County Fair near Brighton, CO. One of the highlights of this event was a visit from the Crusaders Equestrian Team representing "Valor for Veterans", a nonprofit organization founded and managed by Tracey Nazarenus. The organization, with the help of a network of other organizations, helps veterans in need. The Helicopter War Museum estimated 1000 visitors experienced the museum during the three day event. Docents for this event were Bill Robie, Doug Neil, Rick Beaver, Bill Bates, Ben Priebe, George Mayl, Gregg Mann, Terry Olson, Al Harnick, Carl and Barbara Cavaluzzi, and Cliff Lawson, photographer.



Honor Flight Welcome Home Representatives: LR Bill Bates, Ben Priebe, Terry Olson, Rick Beaver, "Organizer" Carl Cavaluzzi, Photographer Cliff Lawson.

Members Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Dale House, John Mitchell, Ben Priebe, Terry Olson, organizers Carl and Barbara Cavaluzzi, and Cliff Lawson who provided photography, were at Signature Flight Support, Denver International Airport, to greet the American Airlines return flight

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

from Washington DC. This will be the last of the Northern Colorado Honor Flights, as they have announced, "mission accomplished." A majority of the Honorees are now Vietnam Veterans, 113 Vietnam Veterans, 3 WWII, and 7 Korean Veteran's. Carlo Cavaluzzi is contacting the Denver Honor Flight on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Chapter to offer assistance to "Welcome Home" returning veterans from their visits to Washington DC to continue the tradition. Honor Flight is now accepting applications from Vietnam Veterans to be honored in ceremonies in Washington DC.

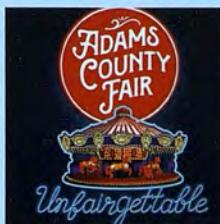
## Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

Upcoming Museum events are at the Sky Vista Middle School on November 2, 2018. They have school programs that study the recent wars to include Vietnam and honor veterans at Veterans Day. The City of Denver honors Veterans in celebrations and a parade on Veterans Day November 10th and 11th. The Helicopter War Museum and our Chapter have been invited to participate. We will hold our annual Christmas Party on December 8, 2018. These events will be reported in the next Aviator. Next Chapter meetings will be held at the American Legion Post #1 on Wednesday, October 17, 2018, and November 14, 2018. Other chapter activities will continue to be announced on our Web site.

## Meeting Schedule and other Information:

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Wednesday of the month, at 10:00 hours at the American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. We occasionally change venues, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, times and location. We do not meet in December or July, but normally have a holiday get together in

**All Photos by Clifford Lawson**



Adams County Fair Logo: "Unfairgettable."



Our outside setup with Terry Olson, Barbara Cavaluzzi and Al Harnick manning the tent.



Inside the Museum with docents explaining the exhibits and George Mayl teaching the kids how to fly a helicopter.



This Aviator is happy she is flying a helicopter.



Honor Flight Conversation with Chapter Organizer Carl Cavaluzzi and Northern Colorado Honor Flight President Lee Seward.



The Crusader's Equestrian Team learned some of the finer points of flying a Huey Helicopter from Gregg Mann (in the background).

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

December. The Museum committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays. Visit our Web site at [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com).

We continue to look for artifacts for the Muse-

um. 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:

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER



Submitted by James Davidson

SoCal VHPA and the local AAAA join forces with the AAHF crew at Yanks Museum September 30, 2018 for a last day of rides in the AH-1F Cobra and BBQ before the Black Pearl Cobra returns to winter quarters at Mesa, Arizona. A grand time was had by all.

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

From June 21st through June 24th, an event entitled Minnesota Remembers was held at the State Capitol in St. Paul. A three-quarter scale replica of the Viet Nam Memorial, a Huey on a trailer, a mobile education exhibit, videos and interviews were all featured at the event and culminated in a 21 aircraft flyover by period aircraft. Four members of the Upper-Midwest chapter (Jim Ottman, Ray Wilson, Kevin Ryan and Don Abrams) participated in various parts of the event, which was very well attended by the public.

On July 19, 2018 the Upper Midwest chapter of VHPA went for a scenic river cruise on the St Croix River. Members, wives and significant others enjoyed a fantastic buffet dinner and time together.

Our next meeting will be held at the New Richmond, WI Airport September 20, 2018. We have access to a flyable Huey if weather allows.

If you are a current member of the VHPA living in the Upper Midwest area (Minnesota and Western Wisconsin), please consider joining our group located in the Twin City area.

Submitted by Don Abrams and Bruce Hunter



Minnesota Remembers Vietnam The Wall That Heals.



19 July 2018 UMCVHPA Chapter River Cruise.

# OTHER ACTIVITIES

## Charlie Co. 227 AHB 1st CAV September 2018 Reunion

Charlie Co, 227 AHB 1st CAV recently held a Reunion from Sept. 11 – Sept. 13, 2018 in Peachtree City, GA. We started with a reception on the 11th to greet old friends and their families and introduce first time attendees. On the 12th we visited the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and Flying Museum where we learned about their history and mission from LTC Ret. Fred Edwards, Director of Operations. A delicious catered BBQ lunch was served and afterwards some of the vets and their families went for a ride in Huey 426 flown by Ron Disney and Jack McCormick and crewed by Donny Brown, all 'Nam veterans.

Julie Kink and her husband Mike Sprayberry, were Guest Speakers at our Banquet on the 13th. They spoke about their trips to the A Shau Valley to locate six bodies. Three fallen soldiers KIA in an ambush on the flank of Tiger Mountain and three more from an observation helicopter from B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry that attempted to locate the bodies and was lost to heavy enemy fire. Mike is determined to find the six lost men and bring them home and has returned 6 times in search of evidence. Julie has accompanied him on recent trips. After their inspiring talk, Julie and



Back Row: Standing, left to right: Mike DuBay, Bill Tisdale, John Mc Daniel, Chuck Gietz, Dave Hammond, Tom Stryker, Larry Gordon, Jim Aldendifer, Laurie Pope, Jay Amundson, Wyndell Peacock

Middle Row: Standing, left to right: Jim Fink, JD Wilder, Gene Bish, Glenn Hess, Paul Keil, Chuck Anderson, Charles Phipps, Mike Rudd, Bruce Peterson

Front Row: Sitting, left to right: Tom McFarland, Dennis Beckler, Jim Brennan, Alan Hales, Terry Pestel, Jack Islin, Kirby Lawson, Pete Bradley, John Elphick

*Missing from picture: Tom Houser, Bruce James, Kathy Bromley, wife of Paul Bromley (DAT), Steve Opp, Ned Schantz, Brian Utermahlen, (guest of Bruce James) and Roy Villaflor*

Mike were presented with Honorary Life Memberships in C/227.

Jim Fink



*Photography by Ryan Hammond.*

Back Row, Standing Left to right: Kirby Lawson, Chuck Gietz, Dennis Beckler, Jack Islin, Alan Hales, Bill Tisdale, Jay Amundson, John McDaniel, Wyndell Peacock, Brian Utermahlen, Jim Fink, Ron DuBay

Front Row, Standing Left to Right: John Elphick, Bruce Peterson, Dave Hammond, , Larry Gordon, , Jim Brennan, Tom McFarland, Charles Phipps, Jim Aldendifer, Roy Villaflor, Chuck Anderson, Tom Stryker, JD Wilder, Paul Keil, Mike Rudd, Terry Pestel

# 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.*

**Bailey, Terry A. USA; Flight Class: 69-11; RVN; 69-70 195 AVN; BS; Callsign: Skychief 19.**

Terry Alan Bailey passed away September 11, 2018. Terry was born on September 02, 1947 in Hogensville, GA. Terry enlisted in the United States Army after graduating from The Marion Institute in 1967 and went to helicopter flight school after which he was deployed to Vietnam. Terry was proud to serve his country and did so with distinction for 26 years. Terry was employed with OSHA from 1978-2002, where he retired as the Assistant Area Director and used his knowledge of safety compliance on a worldwide scale by assisting in the rebuilding of Poland's infrastructure.

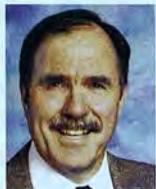
He is survived by his loving wife, Jane.

**Barnett, Burnam J. USA; Flight Classes: 68-507, 68-9; RVN: 68-69 A/158 AVN 101 ABN; PH.**

Burnam (B.J.) Barnett was born September 14, 1947, in Dayton, OH and was raised in Stamford, TX. B.J. died at his home in Round Rock, TX on June 2, 2012. B.J. graduated from Stamford High School in 1966, attended East Texas State University then enlisted in the Army in 1968. He became a helicopter pilot and spent 6 months in Vietnam before being shot down.

After a five month stay in Darnall Army Hospital at Fort Hood, TX, he attended McMurray University where he earned a Bachelor's degree. He worked for Motorola after graduating, and in 1979 started Design Communications in Abilene. He moved to Round Rock in 1991 working for Matco Tools for 16 years prior to joining Hunter Engineering in 2006.

Burnam is survived by wife, Susan Marie.



**Bates, Austin B. USMC; COL Ret.; Flight Class: 4-60; RVN: 62-63 HMM-363, 63 HMM-163; Callsign: AB**

Austin Brewster Bates flew west on Aug 13, 2018 in his beloved town of Ketchum, Idaho surrounded by the mountains where he skied for most of his life.

Austin was born in Akron, Ohio on July 11, 1937. He obtained his BS in Technology-Aeronautics from ASU, 1959. He graduated Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, VA in 1959; Naval Flight School in Pensacola, FL in 1960, Communist Guerrilla Warfare School in 1961, Marine Corp Base Officer School in 1962; Naval flight instructor 1963; USAF Command and Control Technician, 1967; USAF Command and Staff Course graduate, 1976; USAF Air War College Volume I & II graduate, 1981. He also earned his Masters in Business Management from ASU in 1962.

Following his active duty in 1965, Col. Bates transferred to the Air Force Reserve and joined the Arizona Air National Guard where he served an additional 16 years, for a total of 22 years of service to the United States of America.

In 1969, Austin began to fly commercially for Bonanza Airlines, Hughes West, and Republic Airlines which eventually became Northwest Airlines and then Delta, and retired after 33 years at age 60.

**Beatty, Eugene E. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-520, 68-36; RVN: 69-70 A/123 AVN 23 INF; Callsign: Pelican 46.**

Eugene "Ned" was born on October 21, 1945 and passed away on Thursday, May 17, 2018. Eugene was a resident of Minden, LA at the time of passing. Ned served



his country in the United States Army and retired after 21 years of service. Ned was 123's aircraft maintenance officer. He did an outstanding job of keeping us flying. Many American and South Vietnamese soldiers' lives were saved because we always had helicopters available for missions. He was a respected team player held in high regard to all of us who served with him. I have lost a close friend. America has lost a hero!

He is survived by his wife, Betty.

**Bevis, Michael C. USAF; Flight Class: 71-26AF; RVN: 74-75 40 ARRS; Callsign: Jolly Green**

Michael Charles Bevis, beloved husband of Kathleen Flynn Bevis, passed away surrounded by his loving family during 2018.



Mike graduated from the University of New Orleans. He proudly served five years active duty as a Captain and helicopter pilot in the U.S. Air Force stateside and overseas in Thailand. Then he began a successful career in pharmaceutical and manufacturer's sales.

He was a giving person whose final act of generosity was donating his remains to the LSU Medical School for the purpose of education and research.

**Bradley, Richard C. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-503, 67-25; RVN: 68-69 604 TC CO, 72 HHC 34 GS GRP, 72-73 HHC 1 AVN BDE; BS; Callsigns: Highlander, Hustler, and Hawk.**

Richard Craig Bradley, 71, was born and raised in Auburn, NY and resided on Fox Island, WA, where he died on September 7, 2018. Dick was an Army aviator for 24 years, including two tours in Vietnam. He served 12 years on active duty and 12 years with the Washington State National Guard where he retired in 1990. In January 1979, Dick was



# TAPS

hired by a small airline named Alaska Airlines. He was a smooth pilot and a great instructor. He closed his logbook with over 32,000 hours of safe flying.

He is survived by his wife Barbara.

**Brumm, Lawrence W. USA; Flight Classes: 68-503, 68-03.**

Lawrence "Larry" W. Brumm, of Petersburg, died August 26, 2018, at Memorial Medical Center. He was born November 11, 1944.

Larry was a United States Army veteran serving during the Vietnam War as an Army helicopter pilot.

He is survived by his wife, Nora.



**Byars, Eldon J. USA; Flight Classes: 67-1/66-23; RVN: 67-68 C/227 AVN 1 CAV, 70-71 142 TC CO.**

Eldon Byers was born on October 5, 1943, died August 1, 2018. He graduated Waco HS in 1962 and attended Sam Houston State & U. of Houston. He joined U.S. Army in 1966 and served 2 tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and Retired from TX National Guard in 1992.

He is survived by his wife.

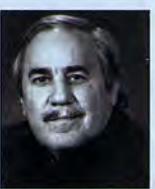


**Cahill, Thomas E. USA, CPT; Flight Class: 68-6; RVN: 69 A 158 AVN 101 ABN, 69-70 173 AHC; Callsigns: Ghost Riders, Robinhoods.**

Thomas Edmund Cahill passed away on February 18, 2018 in Atascadero. Tom was born on August 15, 1946, in San Jose. He grew up in Long Island, N.Y. Enlisting in the army in 1966, and after OCS and flight school, he was assigned to Vietnam.

Following his service in Vietnam, Tom was assigned to Germany. Receiving several awards and medals for outstanding and meritorious service, Tom was released from the Army in 1971.

Back in the United States, he enrolled at the New York School of Visual Arts and the Art Students League. Later, Tom earned a Technical Illustrator Diploma from El Camino Community College. He worked at Pandick, LA, McDonnell Douglas, and Continental Graphics. He moved to the Central Coast of California in 1989.



He is survived by his wife, Ruth.

**Canfield, Gerald I. USN; RVN: 69-70 HC 7 DET 102; Callsign: Sea Devil.**

Gerald Israel Canfield (Jerry) peacefully passed away July 30, 2018. He was born March 13, 1930 in Ogden Utah.

He graduated from the University of Utah with a major in Political Science. He met Joyce Ludwig and they were married October 22, 1953.

Jerry spent over 20 years as a pilot in the US Navy. He served in Korea and Vietnam. He loved flying helicopters and was dedicated to serving his country. After his retirement from the Navy he served 15 years in Montreal with the United Nations.

He is survived by his wife Joyce.

**Cecil, Donald E. USA; Flight Classes: 71-25/71-21. Died September 22, 2018.**

**Combs, Roger E. MC., USA, USAF, MG Ret.; Flight Class: 69-18; RVN: 69-70 HMM-364; DSM, LM, DFC, MSM; Callsigns: SWIFT Roscoe.**



Roger E. Combs, King City, MO passed away August 22, 2018 at his home. Roger was born on February 22, 1945 in Stanberry, MO. He studied Genetics & Reproductive Physiology at the University of Missouri-Columbia and planned to become a veterinarian; however, fate intervened in the form of the Vietnam War and he joined the United States Marine Corps in 1968. Roger graduated with honors from the USMC Basic Officer Infantry School and was selected for the US Army Rotary Wing Flight School in Texas. He served a tour as a CH-46 helicopter pilot from 1969-1970, flying over 500 combat missions with his squadron "the Purple Foxes."

Roger served over 39 years in the United States military and achieved numerous commendations. He retired as Director of Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) for the National Guard Bureau in Washington D.C. in 2007.

In 1974, he resumed Law School at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He began his legal career after graduating law school in 1975. After practicing in St. Joseph, MO, he returned to Gentry County and served as the Prosecuting Attorney for 10 years followed by 16 years as an Associate Circuit Court Judge.

Roger is survived by his wife, Gloria.

**Denson, Prince A. USA, CW2; Flight Class: 65-3W; RVN: 66-67 HHC 1 BDE 101 ABN; Callsign: Eagle 12.**

Prince Albert Denson III, 74, of Honey Brook, PA passed away at his home, August 19, 2018. Prince was a veteran of the Vietnam War and enjoyed a career as a professional pilot for 42 years.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret.

**Donoghue, James A. USA; Flight Class: 67-9; RVN: 67-68 A/4 AVN 4 INF, 68 B/4 AVN 4 INF; Callsigns: Blackjack 23/Gambler 10.**



"Jay" James Avery Donoghue, Jr., cherished husband and loving father, slipped the surly bonds of earth and earned his second set of wings on July 31, surrounded by family. He waged a courageous two-year battle with brain cancer, undergoing five surgeries to extend his time with those he loved. He was a respected Washington-based aviation journalist, writing first for Aviation Daily in the '70s, then as Editor in Chief of Air Transport World, and finally, as Director of Publications for the Flight Safety Foundation. He earned the Aviation/Space Writers Association's Lauren D. Lyman Award, the Aerospace Writers/American Airline Public Relations Association's Eugene Dubois Award, and the European Regions Airline Association Hank McGonagle Award for Excellence in Aerospace Journalism, the Royal Aeronautical Society's Aerospace Journalist of the Year Award, and the Aero-Club de France Aerospace Journalist of the Year Award.

**Goss, Joe W. USA, CPT; Flight Class: 68-16, 68-26; BS, ACM.**



Joe Wayne Goss was born June 19, 1944 in Tulsa, OK. He grew up in Vincennes, IN and Tahlequah, OK. Joe passed away peacefully at home in San Diego, CA on August 25, 2018. Joe attended Tahlequah High School, and joined the National Guard at age 19. Commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant prior to entering the United States Army in 1967, he received his Army Wings in 1968, went on to Chinook transition. In 1969, he was sent to Vietnam and was discharged from the Army in 1973.

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After his discharge from the military, Joe moved his family to Omaha, NE, where he took a job as a pilot for the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice in 1974 from the University of Nebraska in Omaha. He was certified as a commercial pilot and instructor, flying single and multi-engine airplanes. He worked for Aero, Inc., as a pilot and instructor from 1973-1975.

In 1975, Joe embarked on a distinguished 26-year career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He was assigned to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota from 1975 to 1978, and later was assigned to Puerto Rico, San Francisco, and San Diego, where he retired in 2001.

During his career, he flew more than 16,000 hours while serving in Vietnam and working for the FBI. Following retirement, he continued to teach as a flight instructor and certify pilots.

**Graves, Robert L. USA, CW? Ret. Flight Class: 66-18; RVN: 67-68 20 TC CO, 70 1 SIG BDE, 70 20 TC CO, 70 520 TC BN; BS; Callsign: Pipesmoke/Red hat.**

Robert died on Saturday, Aug. 25, 2018 at St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Big Spring, Texas on June 20, 1929.

He joined the U.S. Air Force in April 1950 and attended Spartan School of Aeronautics where he learned airframe and power plant mechanics. On Nov. 11, 1950, Robert was set up on a blind date with Darla Jean G limp, starting a love affair that has lasted more than 66 years. His 20-year military career sent them to such places as Guam, California, Hawaii, Texas, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

In February 1966, he left the Air Force and entered the U.S. Army with a direct appointment to Warrant Officer. He earned his B.S. degree in Trade and Industrial Education from Oklahoma State University, and went on to work for OSHA, C-E Natco, McGill Inc., and Central Tech. Following his second retirement, he also served for a time as Associate Editor of the Drumright Gusher.

He is survived by his wife Darla Jean.

**Harding, Michael D. USA, CW2; Flight Class: 70-11, 70-7; RVN: 70-71 170 AHC, 71 235 SQDN VNAF, 71 A/158 101 ABN; BS, ACM; Callsigns: Bikini 50, Ghost Rider 50.**

Michael was born July 28, 1948; he died May 22, 2017.



**Harrell, Archie A. USA; Flight Class: 62-1W; RVN: 65-66 48 AHC, 68-69 213 ASHC; DFC, BS, PH; Callsigns: Blue Star/Black Cat.**

Our beloved Archie was born on November 9, 1931 at Ft. Benning, GA. He chose to follow those before him by enlisting in the Army in 1951. There he found travel, adventure, love, danger, skills, and honor. He was honored to fly President Eisenhower and escort Robert Kennedy's memorial train. After nearly 30 years in service he entered the real estate profession, selling houses to officers moving in and out of Ft. Lewis. He also bought and managed properties until the last week of his life. He is survived by his second wife Claudia Maves. His first wife preceded Archie's passing



**Hepler, Leslie J. USA; LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 63-6; RVN: 66-67 117 AHC, 69 2/17 CAV 101 ABN, 69-70 5 TC BN 101 ABN; SS; Callsign: Beachbum.**

Leslie Jackson "Jack" Hepler of Locust Grove died June 9.

Jack was a graduate of Purdue University with a degree in aeronautical engineering. He also served his country as a Department of the Army civilian.

Jack was a member of Wilderness Baptist Church. He liked to sing, and was a member and occasional director of the church choir. He was also a member of the Orange County Community Chorus.

**Harrison, Hubert B. USA; Flight Class: 70-15; RVN: 70-72 3 BDE 101 ABN; DFC; Callsign: Thunder 88.**

H. Bruce Harrison, 61, died in his home on March 2, 2012, after a brief but tenacious battle with cancer. He was born in Elmo MO on January 30, 1951.

Bruce grew up in the great state of Texas. He graduated from David Crockett High School in Austin, TX. After graduation, Bruce enlisted

in the United States Army where he attended flight school.

Bruce had been employed with the Pabst Brewing Company for over 30 years. He was an outstanding business man and made a powerful and positive impact on the lives of whomever he came into contact with.

Bruce is survived by his wife of 39 years, Patti Harrison.

**Hill, David E. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Class 61-1A; RVN 63-64 8th TRANS CO/117 AHC, 67-68 11th GS AVN CO 1st CAV DIV, 71-72 1st AVN BDE/60th AHC.**



Dave Hill passed away on August 22, 2018 in Fairfax VA. Born in Sheridan, MT on October 4, 1936, Dave grew up in Juneau, AK, graduating from Juneau High School in 1954. He graduated from Oregon State University in 1959 and was commissioned as an Infantry Officer. Like most Vietnam-era aviators, Dave began flight training at Camp Wolters, TX before graduating from Ft Rucker in 1961. Dave served three tours in the Republic of Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, was an IP at Ft Wolters, and participated in test and evaluation of the OH-6A at Lakehurst NAS. He retired in 1980, and was a lifetime member of VHPA.

Dave is survived by his wife of 59 years, Jan.

**Jenkins, Teddy F. USA, CWO; Flight Class: 63-3; RVN: 64-65 339 TC CO, 67 478 HHC, 68 355 HHC; DFC, BS, MSM, AM w V, ACM; Callsigns: Hurricane 478, Workhorse 355.**



Teddy Franklin Jenkins, of Paris died July 31, 2018, at Morningside Assisted Living in Paris after a long illness. He was born June 10, 1934; in Springfield, MO. Jenkins graduated from Grove High School in 1952 and enlisted in the Army in 1955. His first post was at the Presidio in San Francisco. In 1962, he was accepted to flight school and served as a helicopter pilot during two tours in Vietnam. While serving in the military, Jenkins also completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in history and education.

He is survived by his wife, Ruthie Harnish.

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**Johnson, Edward F. USA; Flight Class: 67-18; RVN: 68-69 C/7/17 CAV; Callsign: Red 6.**

Edward F. "Ed" Johnson, a lifelong resident of Woburn, passed away peacefully at his home August 25, at 74. Born in Woburn, Ed received his BA from Norwich University in Northfield, VT where he met Molly Mayock from Longmeadow. In 1966, they married and several days after their wedding he headed off to US Army flight school.

Upon his return home to Woburn, he began working in the banking industry and spent several years in the Army Reserves. Ed was at Woburn National Bank for 28 years. When Ed retired, he turned his love for woodworking into a second career. He and his coworkers at Wood 'n Things masterfully refinished many old treasures ranging from the front doors of St. Charles Church to a small table in a living room. Ed is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Molly.

**Juneau, Daniel M. USA, CW3; Flight Classes: 66-17, 66-15; RVN: 66-67 129 AHC, 69 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN; SS, DFC, BS; Callsigns: Cobra Rogue, Condor 13.**



Daniel "Dan" M. Juneau, of Deland, FL died July 20, 2018 at the Florida Hospital Deland, surrounded by his family. Dan was born on August 3rd, 1946 in Hartford. After graduating from Lewiston High School in 1965, Dan enlisted in the U.S. Army. After finishing flight school, he was ordered to Vietnam where he completed two tours and over 3,000 hours as a helicopter pilot. After returning from Vietnam, Mr. Juneau attended the University of Maine and obtained a degree in Criminal Justice. For the next ten years, he worked as a Police Officer for several cities and municipalities throughout Maine, and later moved to Florida where he established several businesses. In retirement, he was an active member of the Deland community.



**Leman, James T. USA; Flight Class: 70-44; RVN: 71-72 A/229 AHB 1 CAV; Callsign: Pontiac.**

James Thomas Leman, 72, of Hillsdale, passed away peacefully on September 6, 2018. He is survived by his beloved wife Barbara.



He was born in New York City; he resided in Hillsdale since 1975. He held a BS from St. Peter's University and an MBA from Fordham University. He began his career on Wall Street at the New York Stock Exchange. James was a Managing Director with Salomon Brothers and was a founding member of the FIX Protocol. He sat on the Board of Regents of St. Peter's University.

**McGillicuddy Cornelius F Jr. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 59-2; RVN: 66 11 CAB, 67 128 AHC, 71-72 223 CAB; DFC w 3 OLC; Callsigns: Red Dog 3/Tomahawk 6/Griffin 6.**



Cornelius Francis, Jr. died Saturday, July 14, 2018 at Fort Walton Hospital in Fort Walton Beach, FL.

Cornelius, or best known as Neil to family and friends, was born January 16, 1932 in Boston, MA.

He graduated from Mission High School in 1949 and enlisted in the United States Army on February 25, 1952. Colonel McGillicuddy was singled out for exceptional performance during basic military training and was selected for Officer Candidate School where he earned his commission in March 1953. His first assignment was to Korea where he served for two years. Ultimately, Neil was a master parachutist, a senior aviator and completed two tours of duty in Vietnam. He was a graduate of the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College, Fixed Wing Aviator Course, Rotary Wing Qualification Course and the Naval War College and he was inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame. He was a highly decorated combat veteran.

Colonel McGillicuddy retired from the U.S. Army in March 1983 while assigned to Fort Rucker AL as the Program Manager for the Army's newest helicopter the Black Hawk. Colonel McGillicuddy earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska at

Omaha and a Master's Degree in International Affairs from Georgetown University.

He is survived by his wife Betty Jean Wheeler.

**McElroy, Robert V. USA, CW2; Flight Classes: 67-5, 67-3; RVN: 67-68 173 AHC; Callsign: Robinhood 20.**



Robert V. McElroy, of Effingham, passed away on May 14, 2018, at HSHS St. Anthony Memorial Hospital in Effingham. Bob was born March 6, 1947, in Patterson, NJ. Bob served in the United States Army from 1966 to 1970. He was a helicopter pilot and instructor while serving during the Vietnam War. Bob worked in sales with Fedders Corporation for 23 years and later the Vice President of Sales of Haier America, retiring in 2017.

Bob is survived by his wife, Jo.

**Montarro, Robert B. USA, CPT; Flight Class: 70-4; RVN: 70 C/3/17 CAV; BS, PH; Callsign: Charlie Horse 13.**



Robert Bruno Montarro, born on March 6, 1946 in Bridgeport, CT, passed away on August 6, 2018 in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Robert graduated from UCONN with a BA in Political Science in 1968. He worked at American Airlines as a flight attendant for many years and retired in 2004. He later began his work for the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor where his flight jacket is displayed.

Robert is survived by his spouse, Michael Manello.

**Nesbit, Charles L., USMC, LTC Ret.; PH w OLC.**

Charles Lovette Nesbit, Sr., a resident of Charlotte, NC, died on August 23, 2018 after a brief illness. He was born on June 24, 1930, in Winston-Salem, NC. After graduating from Monteverde Academy in Florida and attending Duke University, Charles enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He served in the Korean War, earning a Purple Heart (his second was earned in Vietnam), and then was commissioned as a second lieutenant. Later earning pilot wings, he was a helicopter pilot in the presidential flight detail for Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, and commanded helicopter squadron HMM-162.

# TAPS

He and his wife were antique dealers specializing in American glass and avid collectors of traditional North Carolina pottery.

**Pearce Lane A. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 55-LFW; RVN: 64 USARV, 65 118 AHC, 67 HHC/229 AVN 1 CAV, 68 B/229 AVN 1 CAV; Callsign: Killer Spade.**



Pearce Allen "Rocky" Lane, of Cedar Springs, formerly of Big Rapids, passed away Friday, July 27, 2018, in Greenville. He was born October 9 on a farm in Big Rapids. Pearce graduated from Big Rapids High School, and attended MSU on a boxing scholarship.

Rocky was the World Amateur Boxing champion in 1954, was the All-Army Worldwide Boxing Champion in 1955 and 1956, and boxed in the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. (He earned the nickname "Rocky" before the movie came out!)

For 25 years, Rocky served his country in the U.S. Army, and earned many honors. He served two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, and was shot down but escaped injury.

Rocky was named an Outstanding Young Man of America in 1967, and was president of Georgia Olympians. He was honored to carry the torch in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. Throughout his life, Rocky earned other honors and awards, and could tell you a story about all of them. He will be missed along with those stories and his sense of humor.

He is survived by his wife Betty.

**Ross, Jack F, IV USA; Flight Class: 67-4; RVN: 67-68 B/229 AHB 1 CAV; Callsigns: Hardcore, Silent Preacher, Killer Spade.**



Jack Ferrill Ross IV passed away on August 28th, 2018. He was born November 10, 1942, in Mobile, AL. Jack graduated from Auburn University in 1965. Immediately after graduation he went to Officer Training School and flight school. He then served his country as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. After the war, Jack worked at First National Bank in Mobile. He finished his work career at Kimberly Clark. Jack dealt with Parkinson's for many years and met it head on and head strong.

He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Linda Zevac Ross.

**Scott, Clyde E. USA, Flight Class: 63-7WT; RVN: 65-66 114 AHC, 68-69 242 ASHC; Callsigns: White Knight 7/Mule-skinner.** (Obituary not found date of death est. 2015)

**Smrcka, Edward J. USA; Flight Class: 65-11; RVN: 65-66 155 AHC, 68 361 AVN; BS, PH; Callsigns: Falcon, Panther.**



Edward J. Smrcka, Jr. "Jim" age 73 of Mahwah, died peacefully on August 24, 2018. Born in Baldwin, WI, Jim lived in the Wyckoff area for the past 30 years. He served his country proudly during the Vietnam War in the United States Army. Jim saw much action as a helicopter pilot flying more than 1000 missions during his 2 tours of duty in country. Jim continued his joy of flying in his civilian career as a helicopter pilot for Citi Bank, Teterboro Airport.

Ed is survived by his beloved partner in life, Birgit.

**Stefanowich, Daniel R. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67-68 334 AHC; LOM w 1 OLC, DFC w 2 OLC, PH; Callsign Saber 6.**



Daniel R. Stefanowich, Sr., 89, died peacefully in his sleep at the New York State Veterans Home in Oxford, NY on July 31, 2018.

Dan was born and raised in Old Forge, PA and worked for Federal Telephone and Radio before being drafted into the Army in 1951. He served in Korea, and then mapped the Amazon basin for the Army Corps of Engineers before serving as a combat pilot in Vietnam. He retired in 1971. Dan worked for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare in Tioga and Potter Counties, retiring as Executive Director in 1991.

Dan is survived by his wife of 59 years, Catherine.

**Stefanski, Michael C. USA; Flight Class: 69-7; RVN: 69-70 A/7/17 CAV; Callsign: Knight 27.**

Michael C. Stefanski (Mike) of Sturgis, MI, died August 30, 2018, at Bronson Methodist

Hospital following a short illness. He was born December 28, 1947, in Sturgis.

He was a graduate of Bronson High School in 1965. He served in Vietnam as a Cobra pilot. He was a Sturgis resident since 1977. He was employed at Syndicate Systems in Middlebury, IN for 36 years, retiring in 2011.

He is survived by his wife Ellen.

**Stewart, William P. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 57-17, 60-6Q; RVN 65-66 D/227 AVN 1 CAV, 68-69 USARV; AM w/V; Callsigns: Devil 36, Long Trip.**



William P. (Bill) Stewart Colonial Heights, Virginia was born May 26, 1931 in the Hill Country town of Utopia, TX. William died in 2018.

He was a graduate of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX. Following his graduation from St. Mary's, he began his military career in the Field Artillery, training soldiers in Hokkaido, Japan during the Korean War. His first tour in Vietnam, he served as a helicopter gunship pilot; during his second tour he flew fixed-wing aircraft where he served as the pilot for General Creighton Abrams and other dignitaries. After his retirement from the Army, he worked for the Quartermaster School at Fort Lee VA.

He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, LTC Liz Stewart USA Ret.

**Stroud, Joe T. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 64-2; RVN: 65-66 116 AVN, 68-69 334 AHC; PH; Callsigns: Stinger 95, Playboy 16.**



On August 1, 2018, Joe Travis Stroud, Jr. passed away unexpectedly at his home for over 25 years in Sierra Vista, AZ. Joe was born July 3, 1945. Joe served over thirty years in the US Army, inspiring so many of his fellow soldiers along the way.

In addition to building a local business with Phyllis and their employee family, Joe served in positions of public trust, hosted a local education radio show, and served as Cochise County Campaign Manager for its U.S. Congressional representative.

Joe is survived by his exceptionally loving wife, Phyllis.

# TAPS

Thomas, William F. USA, LTC Ret; Class: 67-1, 66-23; RVN: 67-68 129 AHC, 71 173 ABN BDE, 71 116AHC; BS; Callsigns: Baron, Casper 6, Stinger 90.



William F. Thomas, 72, passed away July 22, 2018 in Riverdale. He was born in Rose Hill, NC. Bill was a Master Army Aviator. He served two tours as a Gunship Pilot in Vietnam.

Bill is survived by his wife of 52 years, Wilmouth.

**Watson, Don Robert Jr. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-38, 68-22; RVN: 69-70 A/1 AVN 1 INF; SM, BS, MSM, ACM; Callsign: Bulldog.**



Don Robert Watson, Jr. of Rocky Mount, NC, passed away on February 9, 2018. He was born in Chicago, IL on September 3, 1943. Don was drafted into the US Army in 1966. After graduating from Infantry Officer Candidate School and Flight School, and serving a tour in Vietnam, he was assigned to Ft Rucker as a Tactics Instructor Pilot. Later tours of duty sent him to Ft Benning, GA, Ft Jackson, SC, Panama Canal Zone, Daytona Beach, FL, Ft

Hood, TX, and Ft Campbell, KY. During his military career, he proudly served with Infantry, Aviation, and Military Police units. He retired from the Army in 1986. After leaving the service he was a VP with Granutec, Health Corp, and Pharm Star Pharmaceuticals; he also owned his own business.

Don will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 24 years, Judy.

**Weaver, Richard L. USA, CPT; Flight Class: 68-4; RVN: 68-69 A/5 TC 101 ABN.**



Richard L. Weaver died on June 22, 2018 at Windber Hospice in Richland Twp. He was born December 17, 1943 in Windber. Richard was a U.S. Army veteran, who served in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot with the 101st Airborne Division. As a licensed private pilot, Richard enjoyed flying his Eurocoupe aircraft.

Richard is survived by his wife of 52 years, Marjorie.

**Wise, Bruce P. USA, CW4 Ret; Flight Classes: 67-19/67-21; RVN: 68 C/7/1 CAV, 68 A/7/17 CAV; DFC, BS; Callsign: White 27.**



Bruce Wise of Vonore, TN; born November 10, 1947, in Waukegan, IL and passed away, unexpectedly, on March 10, 2018 in Ft. Myers, FL. He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Nina Wise. Bruce graduated from Waukegan High School, 1965, one year at Southern Illinois University and enlisted in The United States Army in December, 1966.

After his tour in RVN, Bruce instructed In UH-1s at Fort Rucker for two years until his ETS in December 1970. Within the next few years, he worked non-aviation jobs, obtained his Associate's Degree in Business Administration from College of Lake County, IL and joined The Illinois Army National Guard at Chicago's Midway Airport, flying CH-34s and later UH-1s. Bruce remained in the National Guard for 26 years, retiring as a CW4. During his time in the Illinois National Guard and The Ohio National Guard, he instructed in and flew UH-1M and AH-1S Gunships.

In civilian life, Bruce was a pilot for 35 years in fixed and rotary wing aircraft. After 17 years with the aviation department of Motorola Corporation, Bruce retired and went on for another 10+ years with Priester Aviation.

# 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.

Cox, Billy J. USA, CW3 Ret; Flight Class: 63-3WT; SM, BS, PH, MSN; died August 13, 2018.

Klein, Arthur "Joe" USA, CPT; Flight Classes: 66-23, 67-1; DFC, BS, PH; died August 10, 2018.

Nisson, Robert G. USA; died May 24, 2018.

Culpepper, Cecil W. USA; Flight Classes: 66-8/66-7WF; RVN: 66-67 174 AHC; died August 2, 2018.

Komblevitz, Andrew USA; Flight Class: 69-24; died August 13, 2018.

Jones, Roy C. USN/USA; died September 10, 2018.

Dawson, Elliott P. USA; Flight Class: 71-14; died August 2, 2018.

Komblevitz, Andrew USA; Flight Class: 69-24; died August 13, 2018.

Rohrsheim, Graham "Zork" RAN, LCDR Ret.; RVN: 68-69 135 AHC; died September 3, 2018.

DeLong, Michael MC, LTG Ret; RVN: 68-69 HMM 262; DDSM, DSSM w OLC, LM w OLC, DFC w OLC; died July 27, 2018.

Lewis, Charles H. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Class: 67-22; RVN: 50 MED DET, 326 MED 101 ABN died July 5, 2018.

Saltee, Lawrence T. USA; died August 16, 2018.

Hunt, Carl V. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Class: 70-10; died January 6, 2016.

Lupenski, Alex P. USAF, LTC Ret; died August 17, 2018.

Sanburn, Everett O. USA; died July 27, 2018.

Jutz, Donald G. USA, MAJ Ret; died July 2, 2018.

MacQuarrie Ernest (Ernie) L. USAF, LTC Ret; RVN: 69 20 SOS; died January 25, 2018.

Smith, Robert E. USAF, MAJ; RVN: 68-69 40 ARRS Udorn RTAFB; died July 18, 2018.

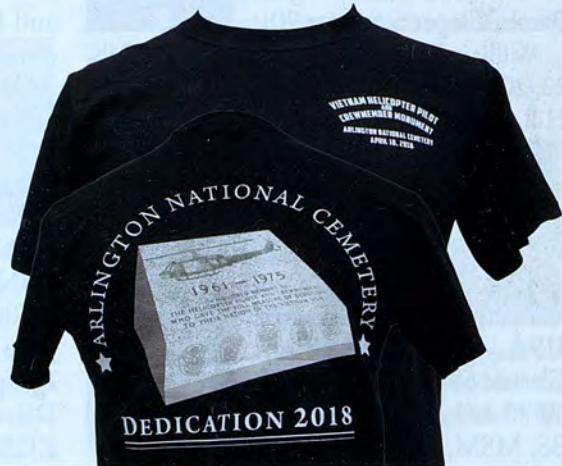
Summerford, James USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 71-23; died December 29, 2014.

Wing, Lubert E. USA, MAJ Ret; died August 23, 2018.

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