



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



*A Smiling Tiger UH1-B, D Co. 229th AHB 1st Cav Div. flies through the Bong Song pass June 1967. Armed with four flex mounted .30 cal machine guns, fourteen 2.75 inch rockets and an M-6 40 mm grenade launcher, it is ready to go to work.*

*Photo by VHPA member Al De Mailo, Smiling Tiger 21, '67-'68.*

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# From the President of the VHPA

As pen meets paper, I realize this will be the last time I write a "President's Column" for The VHPA Aviator. Despite my significant hearing loss, I can hear the cheers coming from the east coast and the west coast! In truth, it has been my honor to serve as your President and a privilege to serve on your Executive Council. During my time on the EC, I have served with seven Past Presidents, three National Reunion Chairmen, two Legal Advisors, and worked with several others serving as Committee Chairmen and Chapter Liaison, striving to ensure the best interests of the VHPA are met, both for the short and long terms. The one constant, throughout all those years, has been our HQ Office Manager, Sherry Rodgers. What an absolute gem she is, and I hope you express your appreciation every time you see her! She is both the oil and the grease that keeps the VHPA machine running!

It is often said that our World War II veterans are part of America's "Greatest Generation." Because my father, a naturalized citizen born in Denmark, and my father-in-law both served in this war, I will not be one to argue against that distinction. What I will submit to you is that we, the Vietnam Veterans, are the "Greatest of Our Generation." We lined up when others didn't. We took an oath when others didn't. We served when others didn't. We fought



when others didn't. We returned home when many of our brothers didn't. Then, we were despised and ridiculed when others weren't. We stuck together and supported each other when others didn't. We are, without any doubt, the "Greatest of Our Generation." Like you, I am proud to have served my country. I am proud to be a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot, and I am proud to call you Brother.

At the Reunion's Closing Banquet, Art Jacobs will become our President. He has worked hard and accomplished a lot during his time on the Executive Council. I sincerely hope that each of you support him in his Presidency as you have me in mine. He has earned your support.

Now, in closing, I will leave you with some good news and some bad news. The bad news first: I plan to, once again, run for Junior Member at Large. The good news is there will only be seven of us living when I announce my candidacy! Then, I will propose that we follow the example set by the Doolittle Raiders, open that bottle of Scotch reserved for The Last Man Standing, and share it with each other. My reason in doing so is simple – I do not like to drink alone!

*Thanks again, my Brothers. Welcome home.*

*John Sorensen, President*

## FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

### ~ REUNION 2019 ~

### HOPE TO SEE YOU IN KANSAS CITY!

**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 have been added.

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 if you haven't already. You can no longer 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 who 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**

# REMEMBERING TET

(1967-68 – 149th MI, Hue, South Vietnam)

The city of Hue was surrounded completely by thousands of enemy troops thirsting for the blood of foreign invaders and lusting for revenge against those native Vietnamese who had been assisting the Americans, militarily and domestically. Our intelligence unit, located on the south side of the Perfume River and opposite the old imperial capital, was charged with collecting, assessing, collating, and disseminating all intelligence about any hostile troops within the northernmost province of South Vietnam.

In late spring of 1967, daily ominous reports began to suddenly pour in from our agents in the field from all areas surrounding Hue. These agents were mostly common people from all walks of life: farmers, merchants, housewives, students, missionaries, etc., and they were fairly-trustworthy. With the increasingly wide range of sources telling us basically the same thing, we could clearly see that something big, even apocalyptic was about to happen.

A careful analysis of these reports indicated a major enemy troop buildup in all the environs of Hue. The sources gave the precise location and strength of these individual units: multiple battalions had the entire city encircled, each with hundreds of soldiers. The reports indicated what type of weapons each unit possessed: rockets, mortars, artillery, and heavy arms. They also revealed the mission of each unit: to kill every American and every Vietnamese who had worked for, or with, the Americans.

The information coming in seemed to give a complete picture of this dire threat. We knew the Who, the What, the Where, the How, but there was one piece of data that was not forthcoming: the When.

Most likely the enemy units did not know this themselves and were simply awaiting a directive from the North.

For over a month, the reports continued to pour in and the level of concern about an imminent attack had reached a 'fever pitch.' The unanimous opinion of the intel staff, after viewing the large map on the wall of the



Remembering Tet.

A village near Binh Hoa - Early 1968. These photos were taken by VHPA member Brian Wold while flying over a village near Binh Hoa air base when serving with Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division. During Tet of 68 (the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong offensive that lasted from 31 January until early February in most areas of the country), he had a front row seat to much of the action. The before picture was taken in late January 1968, the after picture in mid-February.

'war room' with the enemy units' location clearly pinpointed, was 'to get outta here – and fast! But where to go? The decision came quickly to relocate our unit's headquarters to the large military installation at Danang, hopefully out of danger's path.

The most disillusioning aspect of these circumstances was the unwillingness of military leaders in Saigon to take the threat seriously. In spite of the high volume of intense reports of impending attack facing the city of Hue, and in spite of our unit's repeated commentaries attempting to alert the U.S. war machine in advance, and thus avert the obvious consequences of an all-out invasion, our unit was told to 'shut up' and 'mind its own business!'

And shut up we did. For the next few months we pushed papers, ceased all 'warnings' and commentaries until one-by-one our staff members rotated out of the country and back to the states. The impending 'threat' appeared to be an empty one. But each member left confident of having done his duty.

The 'When' was not to be ridiculed nor ignored for long. It emerged as a roaring lion on the eve of Tet, the

Vietnamese Lunar New Year, January 30, 1968. Over 100 towns and villages were simultaneously and viciously attacked throughout the country, including the city of Hue. This military offensive spelled disaster for the U.S. effort and changed the entire course of the war. It drastically changed lives on both sides of the Pacific and altered both societies for generations to come. It can be argued that our country has never truly recovered from that debacle of military and economic futility. We have moved on, but we have never truly recovered.

Such arrogance, foolhardiness, and repetitive miscalculations during two decades of tragedy cost the lives of over 3 million people, including 58,000 Americans.

*May God rest their souls.*

ecardwells6@gmail.com

Wikipedia Tet Map:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tet\\_Offensive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tet_Offensive)



## Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage – Kontum, Vietnam (FVSO)



Founded in 2005 by Veterans who served in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, FVSO supports 850 Montagnard children living at seven orphanage locations in the Kontum area. Providing education food, medicine, dental care, and shelter, 100% of all donations go directly to the kids and caregivers. Your donations are tax deductible (501©3).

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**We can be reached at:**

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**Web:** [FriendsofVSO.org](http://FriendsofVSO.org) **Email:** [FriendsofVSO@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofVSO@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING REUNIONS

A/2/17 Reunion

A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division  
Alumni Association

**When: May 29-June 2, 2019**

**Where:** El Tropicano hotel (855 680 3243), 110 Lexington Ave.,  
San Antonio, TX. Mention "Alpha Troop" to get discount  
(\$109/night). Details and registration are available on the website  
at [www.alphatroopalumni.com](http://www.alphatroopalumni.com).

Contact: Glen Veno at 810-599-9999 or [gveno36@comcast.net](mailto:gveno36@comcast.net),  
for additional details.

Bravo Troop 7/17th Air Cav

**When: 20-22 May 2019**

**CANCELLED**  
**Where:** Grand Plaza Hotel, Branson, MO.  
All 7/17th Air Cav Personnel Welcome

Contact: Buddy Harp, 573-470-0395 for further information  
[email:buddyharp@yahoo.com](mailto:buddyharp@yahoo.com)

Distinguished Flying Cross Society

**When: 15-19 September 2019**

**Where:** Dayton/Fairborn, OH.

Contact: Warren Eastman: 760-985-2810.  
[email - weastman@dfcsociety.org](mailto:weastman@dfcsociety.org)

61 AHC – Lucky Stars/Starblazers

**When: 7-8 September, 2019**

**Where:** The Zogelman's, College Springs, IA.  
Contact/Information: website - [www.61ahc.org](http://www.61ahc.org)  
Kansas City Mini-Reunion 1300-1700 May 31

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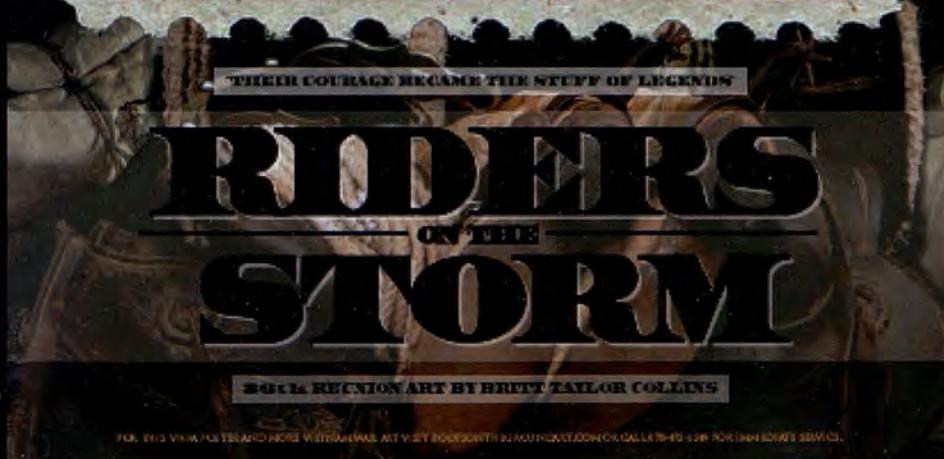
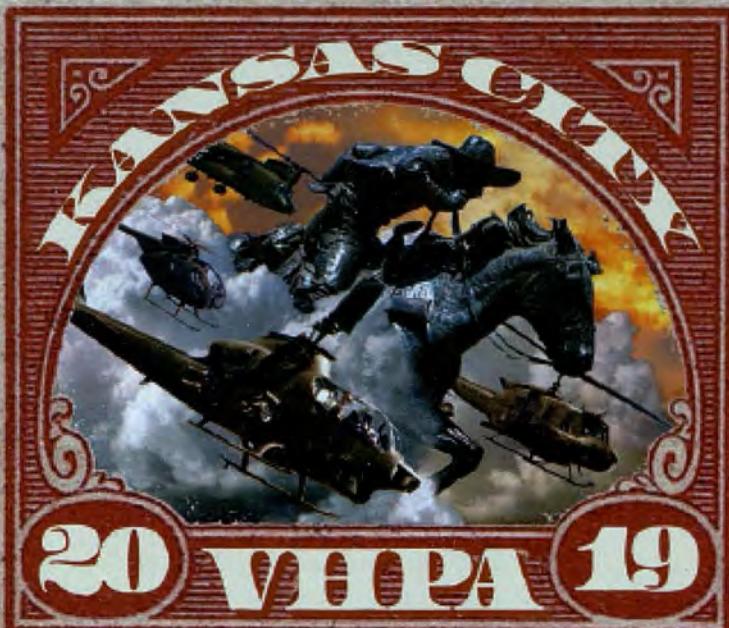


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# XM 4/77 SLAMMER

*Excerpt from NO TWO MEN FIGHT THE SAME WAR (TBP)*

## **"The AH-1G is the P-51 of helicopters." Griffin 69R**

One of the problems associated with having non-aviators making aviation decisions is that two dimensional thinkers don't necessarily reach the same conclusions reached by those in the three-dimensional world of aviation. By the 1970s, helicopter delivered fire power had proven to be an effective tool. The general support artillery of both the First Cavalry Division (Air Assault) and the 101st Airborne Division had been assigned to 2nd Battalion 20th Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA). Later designated Aerial Field Artillery (AFA) and the 4 Battalion, 77th Aerial Field Artillery respectively. ARA arrived in The Republic of Vietnam in 1965, following successful testing stateside as the Eleventh Air Assault Division (Test). ARA consisted of a Headquarters Battery and three-line batteries of twelve UH-1 B and C helicopters each. The three line batteries, Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie, were made up of three platoons each. Each platoon was further broken down into two, two-ship sections. This configuration allowed an association of each battery with one of the three maneuver brigades of the division.

Aerial Rocket Artillery responded to fire missions in a manner not unlike that of tube artillery. When the words, "Fire Mission!" were heard, the "hot" section was to be airborne in less than two

minutes and headed in the general direction of the contact. Like the tube artillery, ARA provided fire power in close support of ground units. Unlike the tube artillery, ARA delivered fire directly on the targets, and those targets could fire back, a condition which led to a great deal of sheet metal work and the loss of some aircraft and crews. First generation ARA (2/20th) had several capabilities missing with tube artillery. Lacking the GPS we now take for granted, the average location error of a ground unit was in the neighborhood of 300 meters. ARA significantly reduced that error and was able to provide fire support with surgical precision, e.g., in one case a soldier was pinned down on one side of a dike in a rice paddy and enemy were in a tree line on the other side of the dike less than twenty-five meters away. ARA was able to distract the enemy combatants by placing suppressive fire much closer than could be provided by tube artillery. Flying low level directly at them caused the VC to temporarily forget about the trapped soldier and focus on their own survival, allowing him time to crawl quickly to the safe side of the dike. We accomplished our mission with the dike-bound soldier without injury - with the possible exception of temporary hearing loss. It was not uncommon for us to draw enemy fire toward ourselves and away from our ground troops, allowing the friendlies a brief respite.

ARA also delivered mail, ice cream, and ammunition on occasion when slicks were driven off by ground fire. We also performed medevac missions when an area was too hot for the regular Medevac birds to do the job. ARA had the ability to shoot our way into an area, pick up and or drop off and shoot our way out using one bird overhead and the two M-60s on each aircraft. Each aircraft in a section had forty-eight 2.75-inch rockets and two thousand rounds of 7.62 ammunition for the M-60s.

Additionally, each aircraft had a Field Artillery officer on board who could call in fire missions from the tube artillery in range, direct Air Force assets in the area, and, on occasion, direct Naval gun fire. First generation ARA using the UH-1B and -C aircraft were all-purpose flying warriors.

Second generation AFA (rebranded as Aerial Field Artillery) transitioned into the AH-1G Cobra. "The world's first attack helicopter", according to the certificates awarded to new pilots by Bell Helicopter Company. Some things were gained, some lost. Among the losses were



Slammer. US Army Photo.

two crew members with their eyes and bungee-mounted M-60 machine guns capable of firing in almost any direction to include shooting their own aircraft. Also lost was a cargo capacity that allowed for resupply, illumination, medevac, a dry place to sleep in the rainy season and a shady hang out on sunny days. An additional loss was the ability to fly around with doors and windows open to experience Nature's air conditioning and the ability to hear ground fire.

In the gain column were the increased speed and maneuverability of the Cobra, increased firepower (76 instead of 48 rockets plus the turret with its 40 mm cannon and 7.62 mini gun). The Cobra was a smaller, faster target with better armor than its predecessor, the UH-1 Huey (The U stands for Utility - it was not intended to be a specialized aircraft.). An example of the improved speed and maneuverability was an incident in which an anti-aircraft position caused aircraft to fly extra miles to avoid it delaying fire support to ground units. When AFA entered the scene, we determined that the antiaircraft system had a maximum elevation of 87 degrees leaving a six-degree cone directly overhead into which it could not fire. My section of AFA accepted the challenge of eliminating that particular annoyance. My wing-man stayed out of the range of the anti-aircraft position and lobbed rockets in its general direction as a distraction from a safe distance while my bird climbed to 7000 feet directly over the target. Halfway through a "split S", the position was attacked vertically (actually slightly inverted to allow for the 100 mils elevation of the rocket pods). Having cranked the intervalometer to its maximum rate of fire, six pair per second, eliminating the anti-aircraft position took only seconds and was the easy part of the maneuver.

The hard part came in recovering from a vertical dive without succumbing to retreating blade stall or hitting the ground. When unloading the main rotor, only the tail rotor could provide thrust to right the bird. The same situation that had caused one Cobra to crash during "pop up" maneuver in the corridor between Cobra Hall and Fort Stewart was now used to recover from an unusual attitude. Movement of the cyclic control was touchy. One quick move and I would go into retreating blade stall which was only partially a problem and a possible solution. During retreating blade stall, the movement of the air over rotor blades is increased by the speed of the aircraft on the advancing blade and decreased by the airspeed on the retreating blade resulting in severe asymmetry of lift on the rotor disk. Although the difference of lift occurs at points ninety degrees to the direction of flight, the application of that force is controlled by another law of physics, gyroscopic precession. Forces applied to a rotating body act ninety degrees after the point of application in the direction of rotation. In the case of the Cobra, the nose of

the aircraft would pitch up violently. Once again, a condition that has caused other aircraft to crash was used in my case to flare the aircraft with minimal cyclic movement. There is a point at which an aviator becomes one with his aircraft. Aerodynamics and applied physics are just part of the thought process that functions as the helicopter's "brain". Normal flight was resumed at less than 100 feet and more than 220 knots. A Huey could have never pulled off that maneuver.

We aviators learned of the effect of a powered tail rotor and an unloaded main rotor the hard way. During the initial period of Cobra transition at Hunter Army Airfield's "Cobra Hall", Cobras would fly low level to the aerial gunnery ranges at Fort Stewart. During one such commute, one of the birds did a "pop-up", practicing a maneuver that allowed transition from low level flight to an altitude which rapidly provided enough altitude to gain visibility and engage a target from a dive. The maneuver resulted in an unloaded main rotor and heavy left pedal needed to maintain yaw control with the increase in power required to "pop up." The aircraft was in a position, however briefly, of floating with the only active thrust on the system being at the end of the ninety-degree gear box of the tail rotor mounted high enough to roll the aircraft. The first time that happened it cost the Army one aircraft and two pilots. I was told that engineers were aware of the problem but had no solution, so they didn't mention it. Once aviators identified the problem not only could we avoid it if we chose, but were able to use it to make the Cobra do things not imagined by the engineers.

As we became better at our job of keeping Americans alive, the enemy got better at anti-aircraft measures. Following our involvement in Vietnam, our eyes turned to possible interaction with a more sophisticated adversary, the USSR. Two new pre-GPS tactics were introduced out of respect for possible efficiencies of anti-aircraft fire: NOE and "Hover Fire". NOE or Nap of the Earth, involved slow and low flight following subtle changes in the terrain and in the process it was thought the enemy would be unable to effectively engage near hovering aircraft at least in heavily wooded areas. The other tactic was "hover fire" which basically prevented Cobras from executing diving attacks. Rockets were to be fired blindly similar to what tube artillery does, but without the precision possible for the Red Legs with their survey, forward observers, reliable firing data and accurate orientation.

At Fort Campbell, KY, I was briefly the commander of Charlie Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Field Artillery. Out of a sense of resentment at being relegated to a hover as much as anything, I took the new tactics to their logical conclusion and created the XM 4/77 Slammer. Using my quarter-ton, M-151 truck, the inboard pods from one of my Cobras mounted to a

a modified trailer axle, the intervalometer, a couple track jacks for on-carriage traverse and elevation, a welded sight mount for use with aiming poles like the tube cousins and "spades" replacing the rear lifting shackles, with the help of a talented maintenance sergeant, I managed to create a functioning weapon system powered by the vehicles electrical system. As I was making preparations to fire it, I consulted with the Divarty Commander for his permission to continue and for a possible name for the new creation. He had just ordered a soldier to the confinement facility on Fort Campbell, so he suggested it be called the "Slammer" and so it was. Using tabular firing data obtained from the Navy's initial testing of the MK-40, 2.75 inch rocket at China Lake, we were able to create a rough tabular firing table which met the safety standards of the aerial gunnery range at Fort Campbell where, in October, 1975, we successfully test fired the XM 477 Slammer meeting the low and slow standards of NOE and the hover fire requirements of the "new" tactics.

### *Air Assault!!*

LARRY A. BOND  
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## **EPILOGUE**

The concept of mounting rocket pods on small, wheeled vehicles never gained much traction with DA and with the re-designation of Air Assault Divisions, the Slammer never got beyond its first, and I must say, successful firing on the aerial gunner range at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. It did, however, evolve into a towed, MRL system that continued to use the 477 Slammer name using six rather than the original two rocket pods. By the late 1970s, our focus was back on the USSR in the European theater having declared victory and departed Southeast Asia following "Vietnamization".

Following the successful demonstration of the prototype XM 477 Slammer, Major Bond was reassigned to research and development as a test management officer at TRADOC's Combined Arms Test Activity (TCATA) where he contributed to Division '86, DOD's concept of how to fight outnumbered and win in the European theater. Beginning his retirement in 1982, Major Bond began a second career as an educator as he became the Senior Army Instructor at Los Angeles High School where he was able to focus his creativity on the next generation.

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# Flying the JATO-Assist Cobra

By Randy Larsen

Not many folks are likely to have flown a "JATO-Assisted" helicopter. I did, just one time. JATO stands for jet fuel assisted takeoff. The most famous demonstration of this system is the Blue Angels C-130, known as Fat Albert.

It works great on airplanes, such as the C-130, for reducing the length of takeoff rolls or providing steep climb outs, but who ever heard of putting JATO on a helicopter?

In April 1969, I was flying a combat mission in the Republic of South Vietnam as an aircraft commander in an AH-1G Huey Cobra gunship. I was the wingman in a two-ship formation. An infantry company from the 101st Airborne Division was in a nasty firefight with an unknown-sized enemy unit.

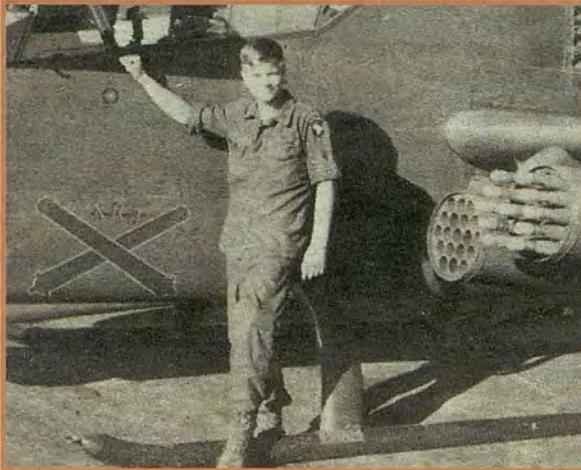
Because the American unit was trapped in a tight valley, we had to confine our rocket and machine guns passes down that valley—making our flight path highly predictable (bad idea, but no other options available). On each run down that valley, I was firing 3-4 pairs of 2.75 inch folding-fin aerial rockets (FFARs) from my inboard rocket pods. (These rockets had 17-pound warheads, which made them the equivalent of a 105 howitzer round.)

As I pushed the nose over to begin our fourth pass, my copilot was firing the mini-gun (in the turret) in response to tracers coming from half way up the mountain slope on our right. I armed the outboard pods and was flying at near redline airspeed (190 knots) and suddenly found myself pinned to the right side of the cockpit. Out of my peripheral vision I could see an enormous fireball on the right side of my Cobra. I then experienced one of those rare moments when everything seems to slow down. What seemed like a long time actually occurred in about 2-3 seconds, or less:

- I realized my right outboard XM-19 rocket pod (loaded with 13 2.75 inch FFARs) was engulfed in a fireball
- I reached for the pod eject switch on the center console between my knees
- I actually thought about switching to "outboard only" (we flew in the "both position" (inboard and outboard)
- I decided to dump all four pods, and in one motion lifted the cover and flipped the switch
- Instantaneously, the Cobra went from what seemed like a 30 degree crab left from the forward track of the helicopter back to proper alignment.

My mission was over, and I returned home without further incident.

Since the bad guys were known to use unexploded 2.75 FFAR as land mines, the infantry unit eventually recovered all four pods.



One had a large bullet hole in the side and was extensively damaged by the fire. Apparently, the bullet had jammed a rocket in the tube just as it was launched (or perhaps, it ignited the rocket motor and caused the jam). Either way, I had one or more rockets—a JATO-assist-on the starboard side of my Cobra. The stress on the tail boom from redline airspeed with the nose 30 degrees off of the relative wind must have been incredible.

Thanks to the folks at Bell Helicopter, I made it back to Camp Eagle—still shaking, but happy to have survived a short flight in a JATO-assisted Cobra. I was still too young to buy a can of beer, but do recall drinking a few (perhaps many) that night.

## LESSONS LEARNED:

- Don't put JATO-assist on a helicopter
- If you do, make sure it is on both sides, it is very uncomfortable when it is just on one side

Randy Larsen, Dragon 31D  
A Bat, 4/77 Aerial Rocket Artillery  
101st Airborne Division ~ 1968-69  
[www.randalllarsen.com](http://www.randalllarsen.com)

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# Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

If you were a US military helicopter pilot or crew in combat or imminent danger area – in any conflict - you should be a member of CHPA.

Invitation to VHPA members:  
Come to our annual conference  
Sep 12-15 Huntsville, AL  
Details soon at [www.chpa-us.org](http://www.chpa-us.org)



Website: [www.chpa-us.org](http://www.chpa-us.org)  
Email: [hq@chpa-us.org](mailto:hq@chpa-us.org)  
Phone: 800-832-5144 messages  
Membership assistance:  
Terry Garlock 770-630-6064 cell  
(life member VHPA & CHPA)



*Invitation from...*

## Combat Helicopter Pilots Association (CHPA)



I am Jack Bailey, President of CHPA. You should know we want every VHPA member to consider joining CHPA as well. Our organizations are siblings, not competitors. Many of our members are also VHPA members, quite a few are Life Members in both.

Since CHPA was formed in 2005, I am the first President from a generation younger than you. I flew UH-1s in the Gulf War and the AH-64 in Bosnia. I can tell you personally, and from all others who followed your very deep rotary wing footprints that Vietnam helicopter pilots are held in the highest regard by all of us. You are our forebears. You are the ones who blazed our trail. You are the ones who created helicopter tactics for combat by your own ideas, and passed on your experience to others who followed you in Vietnam. Lessons from what you learned and

refined are in the roots of rotary wing training programs today.

We want to keep alive the legacy that you started and we continued, even after your generation and mine are gone. We have members who flew in Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Granada, the Gulf War, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and others will arise when hostilities need the very best helicopter crews in the world.

This is your invitation to come to our annual conference in Huntsville, AL September 12-15. Details are coming soon to our website [www.chpa-us.org](http://www.chpa-us.org). Meanwhile, if you need details or assistance on membership, you are welcome to contact

Terry Garlock at [tg.chpa@gmail.com](mailto:tg.chpa@gmail.com) or on his cell 770-630-6064. Terry is one of yours, too; he's a Life Member of VHPA and CHPA and loves them both.

You may also reach me at my personal email [jackbaileyjr2014@gmail.com](mailto:jackbaileyjr2014@gmail.com). Hope to meet you in September, and have a chance to welcome you soon as a new CHPA member.



# LOOKING FOR

*Looking for anyone who knew or served with the late 1LT John Kinsley Putnam*, who died on 11/04/1971 at Ft. Benning, GA at the age 22. His death was the result of an A/C accident.

He was in Flight Class: 69-7 and served in B/220/ARA/1 CAV. He and I grew up together. If you knew John, I'd like to hear from you.

Jeff Holden USA 69-73 [hurwxt1@aol.com](mailto:hurwxt1@aol.com)

*Looking for information on aircraft that had names painted on the fuselage.* This request is necessary to produce an Army Aviation History as well as an article for the Aviator planned by Dany Pennington and myself.

If you recall seeing, crewing, piloting or know of someone with information about a helicopter with a personalized name, e.g. "Susie Q", or "Iron Butterfly" please contact me. I have already published books depicting "nose art".

*Thank you,*

John Brennan former SP5,  
114 AHC 70-71 [johnmailman2@yahoo.com](mailto:johnmailman2@yahoo.com)

*Looking for the UH-1 pilots who flew into an ambush between Dak To and Ben Het on June 7, 1969, carrying a Colonel from 299th Engineers and me from 1/92 Artillery.* I was the artillery 1LT who was going to coordinate artillery support for convoy that was ambushed. However, everyone on my side of helicopter was wounded including pilot, door gunner and me. I ran into the injured pilot in Mineral Wells, TX in 1970; I believe we were on the golf driving range and he recognized me. I started flight school in 1970 and ended up flying Cobras in RVN 1971-1972 (C7/1 and then 175th AHC). I regret that I never got the pilot's name that I ran into at Fort Wolters.

He did tell me the other pilot was able to fly the UH-1 back to Dak To despite all the damage. I did not get his name. This being the pre-cell phone era I did not get a selfie nor did I have my 35mm camera with me. I would like to thank both pilots and crew. (I was flown on a medevac to 71st Evacuation Hospital in Pleiku and then to another hospital in Nha Trang and had surgery at one of these. Then I was taken to Camp Zama in Japan and then to Fort Dix.).

Rich Golaszewski Life Member [richgola@comcast.net](mailto:richgola@comcast.net)

*Looking for our rescuers.* I would really like to locate the helicopter crew who extracted my team and me via McQuire Rig west of Dak To 51 years ago today (12/1/67). Three aircraft snatched the six of us out of a very small opening in the rugged ridge lines near the Laos/Cambodia border.

We had hit a large NVA unit (retreating from the Hill 875 battle of the previous week). We took out the point element, but were immediately pursued by the main NVA unit. The slicks came in after serious gun runs by "fast movers" and then gunships. If the slicks had not come in with the McQuire rigs right behind the gun ships, we had no way out. We flew in the McQuire rigs back to a Fire Support Base near Dak To. We certainly thanked the crews after the rescue (and if my memory is correct we gave each of the 3 slick pilots a captured AK).

I would love to contact the pilot/crew of the slick that pulled me out, and in all reality prevented all six of us from dying that day 51 years ago.

I cannot remember which unit was supporting us that day. It should have been either the 335th AHC "Cowboys", the separate "Casper" Aviation Platoon attached to the 173rd, or the 61 AHC "Lucky Stars".

Because a McQuire Rig extraction was not a common thing to attempt under fire, and given it was such an extremely dangerous thing for slick to attempt, I thought that there might be a good chance that someone from one of these units would remember it and might know the identity of the crew. Again, it occurred around 9:30 AM on December 1, 1967, west of Dak To and just east of the Laos/Cambodian borders. It involved three slicks taking out two of us on each rig. I (as point man on the team) came out on aircraft # two with the Assistant Team Leader. The Team Leader and RTO came out on aircraft # three.

I would appreciate any thoughts you might have on identifying and locating the pilots and crews from this mission. It would be nice to talk to them and thank them again.

Irv "Bugs" Moran  
Please send any information concerning this mission to  
Dany Heckerman. [dheckerman@comcast.net](mailto:dheckerman@comcast.net)

I would like to locate the Medevac Crews who picked up some soldiers from Company D 2/16th Infantry 1st ID on August 5, 1968 in III Corps (Neither of us know the exact location, like most grunts he had no idea where he was at any given time). There were two aircraft involved. The first A/C took the CO, RTO and a Platoon Leader. Later a second A/C took my friend Bill Paquin who had been wounded during the firefight but not discovered in time to go with the first A/C (behind a termite mound). Bill was taken to a 25th Division Hospital (GP Large Tent) but the other guys from his unit weren't there. He would like to get in touch with the crew that pulled his chestnuts out of the fire. Any recollections would be very much appreciated. My phone is (304) 210-0235 and my email is [sandrawhee@gmail.com](mailto:sandrawhee@gmail.com)

Thanks for any help, Bob Wheeler

# Letters to the Editor

## To the Editor of the Aviator:

### Has anyone ever heard of "Helicopter Hunch"?

I recently came across a four-year old article from the Smithsonian Air and Space Magazine, dated March 11, 2014. An article that asked the following question: "What's the most common injury sustained by military helicopter pilots?"

So, as to the above question... here is the answer/cause:

Did you think Quasimodo was disabled by his bell-ringing gig?

He may have been a victim of "Helo Hunch," or poor cockpit-sitting posture.

We all probably think that combat wounds would top the list of injuries. But, according to this article, a 2010 Department of Defense survey of 10,000 U.S. helicopter pilots concluded that 85 percent reported neck, back, and leg pain as their number one ailment—more commonly known as "helo hunch." And some 62 percent of those suffering from the problem avoided medical treatment for fear of being grounded. Ever try to file a VA Claim? Hmmm.

The article titled, The Helicopter Pilot's Dreaded "Helo Hunch" Flying Helicopters is a Musculoskeletal Nightmare, was the first time in over 48 years of flying, I had ever even heard of such a thing. Needless to say, as a life member of the VHPA, I am curious if anyone else has, and if so, what they have heard. Given the history of neck and back problems I have experienced along with worsening knees, I am really curious, and I assume many of my fellow VHPA members might be as well.

The article went on to discuss "cockpit ergonomics," which they contend to be "universally disliked." Any data

I have found regarding this topic focused primarily on Apache pilots, no RVN era ships to my knowledge. I am quite sure, however, that any seating arrangements made for us did not have "ergonomics at the forefront. More like "economics," I'm sure - just a "hunch." (I always did wonder why the military didn't spring for the extra 97-cents and put a cigarette lighter in the instrument panel.)

The article continued: Focusing on Apache pilots, Army Major Seneca Peña-Collazo notes in his 2013 monograph that helo hunch "injuries are attributed to a combination of several factors: whole-body vibration caused by the airframe, use of night-vision goggles, helmet-mounted displays in the AH-64, and poor cockpit-sitting posture."

Continuing due to my natural curiosity, another article I was able to find on the Marine Corps Safety and Force Preservation website defined "The Hunch" thusly: The 'Helo Hunch' – a much maligned posture forced upon helicopter aviators in order to pilot their aircraft. This musculoskeletal nightmare is caused by a plethora of reasons spanning from basic aircraft design and seating requirements to aircrew anthropometrics (the fitting of a pilot to an aircraft). The end result is a notable level of neck, back and leg pain experienced by pilots which, if left unattended, can result in life-long debilitating

injuries. Whoa there Nelly, that sounds serious.

In true US Government "Mind over Matter" style, the USMC article listed a myriad of fun facts and suggestions for current aviators to heed. Among these were: "Pre/post flight stretching exercises ensuring proper fit of all flight equipment and use of approved lumbar support... and, if an approved lumbar support is not available, a flight clearance request can be submitted." (Lucky for us!). I do not recall seeing that form. And, finally, the suggestion I found most useful: "During extended/long flights, as the mission permits, it is critical to get out of the seat to stretch and/or walk around." Recalling some of my better days in the RVN, I do not know just how practical this suggestion would have been either.

One last website I checked was a Facebook page belonging to the "Apache Warrior Foundation." I did post a request that anyone with any knowledge of the history of this disability pertaining to aircraft and/or pilots from our era reply to me but, as of this penning; I have only received one reply thanking me for my "service." ... Okay, anytime.

The links to these sites are at the end of this article. I hope some members might take some time to research this for themselves and, perhaps, we will have some sort of data to add to this growing topic.

Tom Morrissey

tomartist2004@yahoo.com

[www.airspacemag.com/daily-planet/dreaded-helo-hunch-180950037/#ljQ4WZDw0tBLjAwx.99](http://www.airspacemag.com/daily-planet/dreaded-helo-hunch-180950037/#ljQ4WZDw0tBLjAwx.99)

[www.safety.marines.mil/Portals/92/Docs/DYK%20APR%202012%20Helo%20Hunch.pdf](http://www.safety.marines.mil/Portals/92/Docs/DYK%20APR%202012%20Helo%20Hunch.pdf)

[www.facebook.com/pg/ApacheWarriorFoundation/posts/](http://www.facebook.com/pg/ApacheWarriorFoundation/posts/)

*Speaking for myself, I believe some type of chronic conditions have visited many high-time helicopter pilots (27 years in a Huey and various civilian helicopters- and I forgot to stretch). Accordingly there may be too many accounts for this forum. Please contact the author directly. ~Tom Kirk*

## To the Editor of the Aviator:

A recent article contained information concerning the 236th Medical Detachment out of Da Nang with a field site at Hawk Hill, Charger Dustoff.

Pat McGrath, Dustoff 600, put out a call for anyone with information concerning the night Mary Ann was overrun in March of 1971. Pat referenced an article in the VHPA magazine that suggested the 236th Dustoff turned down a mission to Mary Ann.

I was first up out of Charger Dustoff the night Mary Ann was overrun. Mary Ann was in the area of operation of the Chu Lai Dustoff group and I was returning from a mission and heard the radio traffic. This was on the Dustoff FM primary. It was chaos.

The first thing I thought of is that I needed to help. My second thought as I recall was checking if I had fuel for the mission without refueling and I did not. It would have taken me 10 minutes to refuel.

I heard one of the Chu Lai Dustoff aircraft on frequency and I called and told them my situation and that I would need to refuel and would be available. I must admit much to my relief that aircraft commander told me they had the situation in hand as I did not look forward to flying into an area I had never worked before.

At no time did a mission come to me through Charger Dustoff. Furthermore, there have been comments on our email board concerning the comment that we declined the mission and no one recalls any mission being declined at any time. I do have to admit to having terminated a mission as I left the revetment at Hawk Hill and returning due to torrential rain, having then flown the mission weather permitting. This

had nothing to do with the Mary Ann operation.

Memories from that time are different than, "Where did I leave my keys?" They were created in the minds of young men with courage and determination and in circumstances that some now consider entirely different than events that are not with the danger and adrenalin involved in question. That mission never came to Charger Dustoff. In addition, I offered assistance and was informed Chu Lai Dustoff had things covered. I was the commander of the aircraft and did not decline a mission; which was not requested.

Daniel Stephenson,  
Dustoff 613.

## FROM THE EDITORS:

The July/August deadline for submission of items such as Chapter Reports, President's Message, and so on is:

**JUNE 14**

This is to accommodate attendance at the Kansas City Reunion. Please e-mail any questions about this to [aviator@vhpa.org](mailto:aviator@vhpa.org).

★ KANSAS CITY ~ 28 MAY-1 JUNE 2019 ★

### QUILTERS' SHOW AND TELL

The presentation quilts will be on display in the vendors room Monday and Tuesday (May 27 & 28). If you are curious or have any quilting questions, I would love to talk to you and address your concerns.

On Wednesday, May 29 the bus will depart the hotel at 9:00 a.m. for our adventure to Missouri Star Quilt Co in Hamilton, MO. We should arrive in Hamilton about 10:15. Have a project in mind? There are 12 shops of which to make your selection. For non-quilters you will be able to enjoy the Man Cave with lounge chairs to watch TV or play pool. Lunch will be at your leisure and own expense. The bus will need to depart Hamilton at 2:30 and arrive back at the hotel early enough for anyone interested in attending the evening excursion on the



Kansas Belle Dinner Train.

With the help of many quilters in VHPA and their friends, seven quilts will be presented to preselected VHPA veterans on Thursday, May 30th.

Everyone is invited to attend the presentation and talk to the quilt recipients as well as the quilters themselves. Show and Tell will follow the presentation, many quilters will have projects they have completed as well as blocks for next year's quilts.

In order to keep up our annual tradition of quilt presentations to our veterans, more quilt blocks are being requested.

Kathleen Sherfey

# SELECTIONS FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

*This issue's column is from December 1992.*

## NVA Spoils Last Flight in Loach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CPT Paul "Red" Dagnon was my high-bird, with the XO, CPT Retterer, in the front seat. CPT Retterer had also just taken over as troop commander; MAJ. Chole had gone to a headquarters assignment.

We arrived on station and found the low bird had been hit, but had flown out of the area before having to set down. His high

bird Cobra had to leave due to low fuel and no munitions, as he had shot everything up when his Loach had taken fire. The Loach pilot was a brand new First Lieutenant who hadn't been in the unit more than a week or two; this was the first time he had taken fire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Everything went into slow-motion. The aircraft was nose over with a ton of torque to the blades, and the rocket blast flipped the Loach into a full forward flip. While it was upside down, I took one .30-caliber round through my right hand. It came through what would have been the top of the aircraft. The round entered

my hand between the thumb and index finger and exited out my ring finger where it was attached to my hand. My thumb and little finger were the only thing letting me hang onto the cyclic. I remember the aircraft finishing the flip and heading down, as parts of the dash, instruments and radios started flying everywhere from rounds coming through my side of the cockpit. I felt several tugs at my left leg and then a whack in the chest and head.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Something was wrong with the aircraft, as it would not maintain trim and the wind coming from the gunner's door was blowing blood all over my face and helmet. We tried to get my visor down, but it was history as two .30-caliber rounds had gone through it from front to rear and there was a crack on the right side of the helmet from the rotor hit. We landed at 15th Medical at Phuoc Vinh, and I was carried inside. The smell inside these places was one you would never forget. I gave my name, unit, blood type, etc., and then watched my flight suit disappear into pieces from all the scissors being used on it.

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

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

Of course, I couldn't see the bullet and rotor blade damage on the helmet, plus all the blood and parts of my leg splattered all over it, and they must have thought part of my head was gone. I said, "Sure," and reached up with my left hand, grabbed the lower rear of the helmet and pulled it off. They all gasped, but there was nothing but my black, sweaty, dirty hair underneath.

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

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

birds and eight people down within a 10-minute period.

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

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

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

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

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

Louis J. Rochat III, DAT, Headhunter 16

## THIS COULD BE WHERE YOUR STORY STARTS!

It was a dark and stormy night, and there I was, guarding the aircraft revetments. I had my three-candle-power flashlight, my .38 revolver, and 20 rounds of ball ammunition. The communist hoards were all about me...

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# 2019 South Carolina Hall of Fame Recipient: Wesley Frank Walker

Wesley Frank Walker was born in Rock Hill on June 7, 1947. The proud son of a World War II B-17 pilot, Walker grew up in the Neelys Creek community, where he was a member of Boy Scout Troop 132 and earned the Eagle Scout Badge. He attended Clemson University as a member of the ROTC program and graduated with a BS degree in Industrial Management and an Army Infantry Second Lieutenant commission.

Walker reported to Army Aviation Flight School in June 1970. In November 1971, he began a tour in Vietnam, where he conducted multiple rescue operations as an OH-6A scout pilot, volunteering for perilous missions into heavily fortified areas and enduring enemy fire almost daily. Walker was awarded three Distinguished Flying Crosses and multiple Air Medal awards, including one with the "V" device for valor. On July 11, 1972, he volunteered for an operation to rescue the passengers and crew of a downed Marine helicopter deep inside enemy-held territory. He took heavy fire while coordinating the rescue of six men who would otherwise have been killed or captured. For his gallantry, Walker was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor and ultimately awarded the



Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest award for valor.

Upon returning to the United States, Walker was assigned to Ft. Jackson in Columbia. In 1979, he joined the South Carolina National Guard where he flew OH-58 and UH-1 helicopters. He was the aviation section commander in the 218th Infantry Brigade and served as Aviation Group Logistics officer until his National Guard retirement in 1994.

Walker owned and operated Walker Electric Company until he retired in 2006. He continues his love of aviation, regularly flying his private plane along the Southeast coast and garnering thousands of flight hours. An example to all private pilots, he meticulously maintains his aircraft, is a no-nonsense pilot in command, and is a leader in staying abreast of FAA rules and regulations.

Walker is one of the most decorated South Carolina National Guardsmen living today. In 2008, Ft. Jackson dedicated Range 14 in his name in recognition of his service and status as a Distinguished Service Cross recipient.

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# The Hoist Mission from Hell

Now, more than fifty years later I am inclined to recall one of the many medical evacuation missions we were called upon to perform under "crazy," unimaginable conditions. While recently attending the Dustoff (call sign for medical evacuation air ambulances during the Vietnam conflict) convention in San Antonio, TX, I was thrilled to share some quality time with one of my old crew chiefs, Barry Grubbs, and flight medics, Joseph Redman, better known as "Doc." While sharing memories of some of the most interesting missions we flew together, Doc shared with me an article he had written for a magazine published by the 155th Assault Helicopter Company that was based in Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands very near the Cambodian border. While many of the details of the mission escape me, the more we talked, the clearer my memory became.

First let me set into place the conditions and events that frame the story. In October 1968, I was a young captain flying medical evacuation missions with the 254th Helicopter Ambulance Detachment based at the airfield in Nha Trang, Vietnam, a major city on the coast of Southeast Asia. Except during Tet of 1968, Nha Trang was a relatively passive area. While the 254th Dustoff was based in Nha Trang, the unit provided area-wide air ambulance coverage to a large sector of II Corp in the Central Highlands. To service the entire area, it was necessary to position air ambulances at remote locations, one of which was Ban Me Thuot, a small remote village near the Cambodian border. Ban Me Thuot was home for the 155th Assault Helicopter Company. The Company slicks claimed the call sign "Stage Coach," and the guns claimed the call sign "Falcons." As there was not a great deal of enemy activity in Nha Trang, our crews were always anxious to pull field standby at Ban Me Thuot, where the 5th Special Forces operated across the Cambodian border and were frequently engaged with the Viet Cong and the NVA (North Vietnamese Army). Another factor that made Ban Me Thuot a desirable assignment was that we could always rely on the "Falcons" for gun cover on "hot" missions, that being missions where the casualty's unit was still in contact with the bad guys. There was great camaraderie between us and the Falcon guns. We were all one big happy family and we always knew the Falcons would be there to cover us.

On this day, much like any other day for a medevac crew, my crew

chief, Specialist 5 Ron Scroggins, better known as "Bloody Eddie," was out on the flight line with his baby, the H model Huey we were flying. As I recall, "Doc," our flight medic, and the co pilot, LT Thomas Parker, better known to everyone as "The Phoenix Flash," and I were hanging out in the underground aid station when a radio call came in for an urgent mission. Among the levels of urgency for medical evacuation missions, an urgent mission is the most critical, and requires an immediate response. As I was taking down the coordinates, call signs, and radio frequencies, the radio operator stated, "we are still in contact, so we don't have an LZ for you, you will need the hoist." That statement by the radio operator was not exactly what I wanted to hear. Performing a hoist mission requires your helicopter to become a sitting duck during the time the casualty is being extracted. As I continued to gather information needed for the mission, both Doc and the Flash are "A" holes and elbows to the flight line.

By the time I arrived at the aircraft, the crew was on board and ready to lift off. Flash was on the controls and had already received takeoff instructions. We were airborne and enroute to the pickup site.

While Doc and Bloody Eddie readied the cabin of the aircraft for the hoist extraction, I was monitoring instruments and coordinating gunship cover with the Falcons. The hoist mission, under fire, was probably the most demanding and dangerous type of evacuation missions a Dustoff crew had to perform, it was truly a "puker" producing experience. The mission required a synchronized effort between all four members of the crew and gave aircraft performance a new meaning. While the H model had considerably more power than prior models, it did not provide unlimited power; weight and density altitude significantly impacted the aircraft's performance. This mission required the extraction of multiple casualties, this factor alone weighed heavily on my mind as we arrived in the vicinity of the pickup location.

By the time we arrived, two of the Cobras were already on station. I established radio contact with the Cobras, and we set up the best cover pattern for what we thought would be my approach to the pickup site. My next move was to establish contact with the ground unit to determine where the bad guys were, so we could avoid making our low, slow approach directly over them. Once we had an idea of where the bad guys were operating, I requested the ground unit pop smoke so we



could identify their exact position. It was about this time that Flash gave me the controls. Out the right side of the aircraft, Doc saw the smoke and pointed it out to me. As I set up my approach, Flash radioed the Falcons to let them know the direction we intended to approach from, they dumped a ton of heat in the area ahead of our approach. While we were on approach, Flash made radio contact with the unit and identified red smoke. The radio operator came back with "Negative, Dustoff." I immediately pulled in collective and aborted the approach while the Falcons dumped another ton of heat on the location where the red smoke was seeping thru the jungle canopy. The NVA had popped the red smoke to lure us into their position. As we gained altitude and pulled away from the area, the crew identified purple smoke about two hundred meters south of the previous location. Flash reestablished radio commo with the ground unit and identified the purple smoke. Once again, we coordinated with the guns and started our approach to where the purple smoke was rising thru the jungle canopy. The canopy was so thick that neither Doc nor Bloody Eddie could see who was on the jungle floor. As I steered the aircraft to a still hover and settled into the top of the canopy, we could still hear sporadic small arms and automatic weapons fire as well as the 40mm cannons from the Falcons. Doc and Bloody Eddie masterfully deployed and lowered the jungle penetrator through the overgrown canopy while receiving radio direction from the ground aid man. Meanwhile, I had my eyes fixed on a tree that was visible thru the chin bubble, so I could have a reference point to ensure we were maintaining our hover position. Concurrently, LT was focused on the instruments, ensuring all indicators were in the safe range. Doc and Bloody Eddie were

busy as all hell in the cabin pulling out casualties and getting them on board the aircraft. While Doc was bringing up the fourth patient, I began to run out of left cyclic and could barely keep the aircraft from striking the canopy tops on the right side of the aircraft. The weight on the right side of the aircraft with the hoist, Doc, Bloody Eddie and the three patients we

already had on board left me without enough left cyclic to hold our steady position. As we gradually began to drift to the right into the trees, I told Doc to shift as much of the weight as he could to the left side of the cabin. As the weight was being redistributed in the cabin, I could feel I was regaining lateral control of the aircraft. After pulling the fourth patient onboard, Doc determined the patients he had onboard needed to get back to the aid station at Duc Lap, a nearby firebase. After telling the ground unit we needed to get the critical patients back to the aid station and that we would return to extract the remaining patients, we alerted the Falcons, and departed the area for the aid station which was about a twenty-minute flight. As we were departing, the radio operator asked us to bring a Stokes litter when we returned. Generally, a Stokes litter is used for casualties who cannot be placed on a jungle penetrator, those with serious head injuries. Upon our arrival at the aid station at Duc Lap, after off-loading the critical patients, Doc and Eddie found a Stokes litter and loaded it onboard. I was thinking, just what we need, more weight. While we were enroute back to the pickup site, using the rotor tie-down straps and some of the seat belts stored on the aircraft, Doc and Eddie rigged the litter so it could be attached to the hoist. Arriving back at the site, we went through our coordination routine again with the ground unit and the gun ships. This time the coordination went much smoother and we had no issue identifying the smoke.

Between dropping patients at the aid station and refueling, this routine went on for most of the day. I believe Doc used all the medical supplies he had on board, and I am sure the Falcons expended their entire munitions load covering us that day. When it was all over, we had hoisted out twenty-four wounded and six more who were not wounded but needed to be extracted. During the mission, we lost one casualty who later died at the aid station from loss of blood.

The courage and determination my crew demonstrated that day was not too different from that which was demonstrated by hundreds of Dustoff crews every day during the Vietnam conflict. I consider it an honor to be counted as one of the team members providing "Dedicated, Unhesitating, Service, To Our Fighting Forces," (DUSTOFF).

*Note: Colonel Ret. Michael Herndon (Callsign: Dustoff 101) served two tours flying medical evacuation in Southeast Asia, one with the 254th Helicopter Ambulance Detachment, December 1967 – December 1968, and one with 3rd Brigade (Med Evac) of the 1st Cavalry Division, June 1971 – June 1972.*



# Warning Light

My tour in Vietnam began in mid-December 1968. At Bien Hoa, I was assigned to Dong Tam, HQ base for the 9th Infantry in the Mekong River Delta. We were part of the 214th Aviation Battalion, OPCON to the 9th. My unit was the 162nd Assault Helicopter Company, the Vultures. We had two slick platoons and a gun platoon plus a maintenance platoon and HQ platoon with several support sections. The job was to transport infantry troops all around IV Corps area so they could find and engage Vietcong units. Ten slicks and three gunships daily were the norm, and Maintenance worked three eight-hour shifts each day to keep the Hueys in the air. The ten slicks carried 70 or so combat infantry on each sortie. Consideration of things like max gross weight and density altitude were not in the lexicon used in mission briefings. You just flew the missions, sometimes finessing the helicopter into the air.

I remember two incidents vividly, though there were many others deserving of recollection. It is probably because the first happened very early in my tour, the second one on the night before I left the unit for the trip home. The first was in January 1969; the 162nd was inserting infantry into a landing zone (LZ). The two pilots took turns flying sorties to reduce fatigue. The aircraft commander was my platoon leader; he gave me the controls for a takeoff and landing. The gunships were busy suppressing enemy fire on our way into the LZ.

Tension was high, pilots listened to three radios, flew precise, tight positions in their platoon formations, and the door guns blazed away laying down suppressive fire until we were on short final approach. My landing was pretty smooth. The grunts usually jumped out at about five feet above ground, so the trail ship was able to call quickly, "You are up." This let the lead aircraft know he could begin the departure. My platoon leader let me make the takeoff, then announced he was taking the controls.

Cockpit conversation was relaxed during assaults so the important words could be heard clearly. I said, "you have it," and let go after checking visually that his firm grip was indeed applied. We trained ourselves to keep our hands near the controls, so the pilot not flying could grab them if the guy who was flying got hit. When I moved my left arm off the collective, I still kept it close per protocol. My right hand was behind but near the cyclic. Then everyone aboard heard the distinct sound "Tink! – Bam!" (that is what it sounded like to me) the double report of an enemy round piercing the floor of the aircraft. My eye caught a flash of something moving on my left. The AK 47

round creased the end of the collective, hit the lower area of the instrument panel, ricocheted upward, and spider webbed the upper windshield just to the right of the center post. The round ricocheted again, luckily it was nearly spent at this point. It landed in my lap, bounced forward into the chin bubble and went out the drain hole. I scanned the instruments and reported no change.

Lead called for damage reports since several radio calls had been made to report receiving fire. My platoon leader announced we had taken a hit in the cockpit. Again, his voice was calm and factual. Then he added "It almost hit my pilot." 1LT Mike Pacifico was a great guy, so I know he was not being at all sarcastic when he grinned at me and said, "It is going to be a long year, Chuck." He was so right.

Later that year, the unit moved farther south to an established airfield at Can Tho. The 9th Infantry went home per President Nixon's plan, and we began doing a lot of bizarre combat support missions for the 7th ARVN Division. Somehow, I got selected to be a night flyer taking bolted-on tubs of parachute flares out to near the south west coast of 4th Corps area and dropping them over suspected Vietcong infiltrators. Then the Cobra gunships could attack them bringing what we now call "shock and awe" to the enemy.

It was policy to ground pilots a week or so before they were to leave Vietnam, so I was miffed when the operations officer told me I had to fly another night flare mission. I wanted to go to the bar with the guys, get drunk, and throw up on my boots.

Up and running, I got clearance to hover across the field to pick up a pilot from the neighboring Cobra company so we could fly out to an old French airstrip near a town called Rach Gia on the coast. The flares would be waiting there for us to load into the tubs. The captain they sent me was a decent guy, but he said he had not flown a Huey in a long time and would rather not help with the flying. That was fine with me.

We left the airfield pattern, contacted air traffic control, and struck out across a long, flat, and dark stretch of rural rice paddies and ancient canals. This was Victor Charlie's backyard. The master caution light came on in the instrument panel, so I reset it and checked the light segment series on the radio console between we two pilots. The segment light said, "Transmission Oil."

There is nothing more serious than the prospect that a helicopter rotor might stop turning in mid-flight, so the emergency procedure is simple: "Land, Stupid!" Okay, it does not really say stupid, but the transmission warning

light is notorious for false alarms caused by tropical moisture shorting out the circuit on the pressure system. The lettering on the warning segment was pale, flickering like it often did with false alarms.

Our commander had once told us to increase engine RPM to maximum and land immediately no matter what the situation might be when that light came on. I did not want to land in Charlie's backyard at night, so I went to plan B. We turned around, contacted Can Tho tower and asked for a downwind approach direct to the refueling point on the far side of the field. Tower approved and I began the descent. I came to a hover over the refueling pad at about two feet, then shook the collective slightly to see if the warning light would go out. It did not, it came on full bright. We shut down the aircraft on the pad, then performed a post-flight inspection of the Huey. The captain was kind enough to help, he went up atop the engine deck. I went down to look under the aircraft and saw a puddle of hot oil.

When I looked up into the inspection hole I could see the bottom of the transmission. There was a drain point at the bottom of it where a threaded bolt was normally closed, and safety wired shut. A bullet had blown the drain bolt off the transmission and there was virtually no oil in the system.

It is part of the post-flight inspection to uncouple the aircraft battery where it is carried in the nose of the Huey. I did that function and then locked the access panel shut like a good Army aviator. When I turned away my guts convulsed; I bent over and threw up, yep, right on my boots. The crewmen and the captain said nothing. They just gathered their gear and looked to the airfield tower for a green light so we could walk back across the airfield to our hooch. There you have it, the beginning and end of a very long year in the Republic of Vietnam. That was 49 years ago.

Charles Carrillo, CW4 US Army Retired

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*Jerilyn Brusseau (left) stands beside Gail Garcelon at Dan Cheney's crash site fifty years later.*

# *Green Pastures beside the Still Waters*

*By Colin Cahoon*

On January 6, 2019, in Hau Nghia Province, Vietnam, Gail Garcelon and Jerilyn Brusseau stood together on the canal bank, poised but with heads bowed, in front of two small tables positioned between them and the muddy water drifting by. They gazed silently at the pictures of Lieutenant Dan Cheney that Gail had brought with her from Texas and arranged carefully on one of the tables. Fruit and various other offerings lay on the other table, set for the ceremony soon to begin.

It was then that the golden sunlight transformed the two ladies in my eyes. I was no longer looking at two women in the autumn years of life. Instead, before me were Dan Cheney's big sister, Jerilyn Cheney, and his young fiancée, Gail Higgins. The many years and thousands of miles were bridged in an instant. The two women appeared reunited

with the memory of the young Cobra pilot who meant so much to them, the fun-loving twenty-one-year-old with the big smile and impish glint in his eyes, the young Cavalry trooper who died a half-century before on this very spot.

Fifty years ago, Lieutenant Dan Cheney had been in-country but a couple of weeks and not out of flight school much longer. In between flight school and his arrival in Vietnam he took a short leave back home to Bellingham, WA, where he promptly proposed to his sweetheart, Gail Higgins. Joyous celebrations followed between the Cheney and Higgins families, long friends and now to be united by marriage. It was the most magical of Christmas seasons, but Dan found himself on Christmas day the newest aviator in A Troop 3/17th Cavalry (the "Silver Spurs") assigned as a Cobra copilot.

The Bellingham Herald posted the engagement announce-

of Miss Gail Higgins and First Lieutenant Daniel B. Cheney in its January 6, 1969, edition. That same day, half a world away, Lieutenant Cheney was part of a different engagement, flying over the rice paddies of southern Vietnam as a part of a 3/17 pink team sent to investigate reported enemy activity south of Duc Hoa. Soon he was in the middle of a battle, one that began when the Cav pink team's Loach, piloted by Lieutenant Dennis Duarte, came under fire and crashed into a canal. The little-bird's crew crawled out of the wreckage and began swimming toward the opposite shore. Dan's Aircraft Commander, Warrant Officer Walter Koslosky, nosed their Cobra over into a gun run, hoping to keep Charlie's head down and give the downed crew a chance to make the safety of the opposite bank. Pulling out of one pass over the enemy position, WO Koslosky pointed the Cobra's nose skyward for a classic "return to target" maneuver. The aircraft climbed straight up, but its nose never swung back toward the ground. Instead, the Cobra fell straight back to earth, tail first, plowing into the bank of the canal. In all likelihood, both pilots were put out of commission at the beginning of the maneuver by the intense ground fire. The crash was not survivable, in any event.

The two Cobra pilots had not sacrificed their lives in vain. Their gun runs bought the Loach crew precious time. The two Loach troopers made it to the opposite bank and were later rescued by another aircrew. Two days later, the January 8, 1969 edition of the Bellingham Herald announced Lieutenant Cheney's death in combat over Vietnam.

I was honored and a bit surprised last fall when Jerilyn and Gail asked me to accompany them on their memorial trek to Vietnam. The trip had been arranged by Peace Trees Vietnam, a non-profit co-founded by Jerilyn. Peace Trees had a long history of clearing Vietnam War battlefields of unexploded ordnance and rehabilitating the land by planting trees. I was writing a book about Vietnam era helicopter pilots who earned purple hearts in combat. The Loach pilot whom Dan Cheney died trying to defend, Dennis Duarte, was one of the vets working with me on the book. Word got back to Jerilyn that I was writing about the battle in which her brother sacrificed his life. The next thing I know, I'm in Vietnam with a delegation from Peace Trees led by Jerilyn and Gail.

There were seven Americans in the group, only two of us didn't know Dan. Gail brought along her best friend, Terry Skeesick, her brother, Brian Higgins, and another family



*Jerilyn Brusseau (left) stands beside Gail Garcelon at Dan Cheney's crash site fifty years later.*

friend, Pam Clayton. Jerilyn was the sole participant from the Cheney family. Norm Knott, a former Huey gunship pilot, and I rounded out the group.

The battle occurred northwest of Saigon, and the memorial service was scheduled toward the end of our delegation's two-week tour of the country. We started in Hanoi and worked our way progressively south, visiting among other sites the DMZ, Dong Ha, and Khe Sahn, before leaving Hue on a plane headed to Saigon.

As we flew into Saigon, I peered down at the endless rice paddies crisscrossed by ribbons of brown canals. It all looked very much like the images I'd seen as a boy watching the war unfold on TV. I didn't know Dan Cheney, but he was suddenly with me. My heart raced imagining the young soldier looking down at the same scene fifty years before. I felt anxious looking out the window of our jet. Dan must have felt even more so.

On January 5, our delegation spent the night in Duc Hoa, now a suburb northwest of Saigon. The next morning, we took a van to the crash site. From what I knew about the battle fifty years before, I was expecting to park and hike a ways through the countryside before arriving at a rural setting far removed from the constant noise and commotion of Saigon and Duc Hoa. Instead, the van pulled off the highway into the driveway of our hosts, a local Vietnamese family that owned the house next to the canal bank. The crash site was just feet from their driveway, in the middle of Vietnamese suburbia.

It was a beautiful, sunny day. We exchanged pleasantries with our hosts, who then left us on our own as we set up a small shrine on the bank of the Bobo canal utilizing two small tables our hosts had provided. The memorial ceremony was a blend of our cultures, with incense burning all along the bank. Vietnamese custom holds that prayers float upward on the smoke. I wondered if Dan Cheney's last prayers received an assist from the smoke that surely engulfed the site fifty years earlier. Clumps of freshly cut vegetation floated lazily by us, as if the canal itself was paying homage with green funeral pyres. Occasionally, the slow-moving water produced a swirl. Jerilyn felt as if Dan was dipping his hand in the water and making the pleasant swirls for her. I think she was right.

Prayers were said, a poem recited, and we all basked in the familiar phrases of the 23rd Psalm. We stood before the green pastures with the still water slowly rolling by in front of the table prepared in the presence of his former enemies. We all scattered bits of food about the canal bank in order to feed the roaming spirits that might congregate with us. It was all quite lovely, and deeply moving.

I never met Dan Cheney, but I think I know him now, a little. He clearly made the world a better place by his brief presence and very real journey through the valley of the shadow of death. He left behind family, friends, and a fiancée, all of whom loved him dearly, and made life itself a continuing possibility for his fellow troopers. It was a privilege to honor him and his sacrifice. Surely goodness and mercy followed Dan all the days of his life, and now he dwells in the house of the Lord forever.

*Colin P. Cahoon is a former Army Aviator, practicing patent lawyer, and a published author.  
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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 22 New Members and covers the period 02-07-18 to 04-09-19*

Beck James W. ** Chester Virginia Army 69-14 1/1 CAV 23 INF in 67-68; 3/17 CAV in 71	Dungey Merlyn R. ** Raymond Mississippi Army 68-9 213 ASHC in 68-69; HHC 11 CAB in 69; HHC 34 GS GRP in 72-73	Latham Edward D. Denton Texas Army 70-21 B/7/1 CAV 101 ABN in 70-71	Pfeifer Roger A. ** Anchorage Alaska Army 68-514 68-24 B/7/1 CAV in 69-70; 574 TC DET in 70
Beck Jerry L. Vero Beach Florida Army 67-16 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV in 67-68	Eisenhower Warren J. 'Jim' ** Buckeye Arizona Army 67-6 121 AHC in 67-68	Majkut Jarema 'Ray' Manchester New Hampshire Army 71-7 HHC 3 BDE 101 ABN in 71; HHC 196 BDE 23 INF in 71-72	Porter James A. ** Blue Ridge Georgia Army 69-31 1 CAV DIV in 70-71
Braddock Curtis H. 'Curt' ** Byrdstown Tennessee Army 68-12 68-18 B/3/17 CAV in 68-69	Garrison Lee E ** Leavenworth Kansas Army 67-13 C/227 AHB 1 CAV in 67-68; 271 ASHC in 70-71	Mashburn Woodrow B. 'Woody' ** Hartsville South Carolina Army 69-21 69-19 1/4 CAV 1 INF in 69-70; C/16 CAV 13 CAB in 70	Remley Thomas P. Potosi Missouri Army 68-4 173 ABN BDE
Clair Stanley P. 'Stan' Firestone Colorado Army 69-7 HHC 3 BDE 101 ABN in 69-70; C/101 AVN 101 ABN in 69-70	Haugen Dennis R Spokane Washington Army 66-5W 66-5 175 AHC in 66-67; A/7/1 CAV in 70-71	Merritt Gordon L. ** Fairfax Station Virginia Army 66-20 Montgomery Dennis A. 'Chitown' ** Des Plaines Illinois Army 68-20 68-34 54 FAG in 69	Santos Dennis Lewis Statesville North Carolina Army 68-3 119 AHC in 68-70
Cruthirds Nelson R. Lawrenceville Georgia Army 71-5	Lambert Michael O. 'Mike' ** Springfield Missouri Army 69-50 A/7/1 CAV in 71-72; A/101 AVN 101 ABN in 72; 13 AVN BN in 75	Turrel Robert J. 'Bob' Overland Park Kansas Marine Corps Jan 68 HMM-161 in 69-70	Whipple Frank W. 'Bill' Wilmot South Dakota Army 70-16 128 AHC in 70-71
Dagnon Paul A. 'Deputydog' ** Apple Valley Minnesota Army 68-6 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 69-70; E/1/9 CAV in 70-71			

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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### 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 918-813-5132 (cell) or 918-298-5132 (home) or via E-mail at ka5h2d@att.net. 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

The Alamo Chapter ladies met for lunch on February 19th, at Cappy's Restaurant in San Antonio, an old, well-established restaurant in Alamo Heights. They met again for lunch at Alamo Quarry Market, on March 20th. Chapter men met for lunch at Tomatillos Café y Cantina, on February 12th. They lunched at Zio's Italian Kitchen on March 13th.



All of us had a grand time and dinner at our quarterly general membership business meeting at the Barn Door Restaurant on March 28th. This meeting was well-attended, as usual.

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

## ALASKA CHAPTER

All is well as we head into spring. Seems Alaska weather has been a pleasant surprise compared to what has gone on in the States!



We have awakened and enjoyed the first gathering of the year. It is always nice to get together and watch the Dog Races during the Fur Rondy. Especially from the warmth of a nice Mexican Restaurant and while enjoying nachos! We discussed plans for the year and encouraged everyone to come to the Kansas City Reunion. Looks like a handful of us will be there.

We also worked on the calendar of events and planned our efforts for preserving the VHPA name by naming a



road or bridge. A local State Representative has gotten onboard and we hope to have exciting news this summer. To all that make this magazine possible ... great job!

*Pride in Knowing WE FLEW!*

## AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

Created in January, our chapter Facebook page has served as a good outreach tool. Chapter membership is not required to become a member of the page. Mark Hopkins did a great job designing our logo and the page

header. All requests to join the group page are vetted by the Page Administrator, Robert Fureigh (Secretary/Treasurer).

Chapter apparel is another effort underway to promote camaraderie and to advertise our chapter/VHPA mission.



Our new cap (also available in tan)



Our leader, Chuck Canfield



American Huey Chapter -  
VHPA >

PUBLIC GROUP · 130 MEMBERS

Header of our Facebook page

In March, the chapter became a Founder of the National American Huey History Museum by donating \$1,000 toward its construction. As a museum founder, the chapter will be memorialized with a line on a bronze plaque (56"x80"; 802 lb) that will be prominently displayed inside the museum entrance. More information is at [www.americanhuey369.com](http://www.americanhuey369.com).



National American Huey History Museum

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

These VHPA members are also pilots with - and life members of -

American Huey 369. Five are chapter members; two soon will be. Front: Phil Marshall, Chuck Canfield, Tom Agness. Back: Al Michaels, Ron Clark, Ted Bruisker, Ron Payne.



It was cold, and our temporary hangar is not heated. Among the chapter members that traveled to Peru, IN to help with annual inspections on 369, 803 and 049 were Tom Shields and Mike Adams.



*Come Join Us at our next flying events...*

**May 17 & 18 - 32nd Annual Armed Forces Day - Hancock Co. Fairgrounds - membership flights available - Findlay, OH**

**May 26 & 27 - South Bend Cubs Military Appreciation Days - Four Winds Field - Static Display Only - South Bend, IN**

**June 21, 22 & 23 - Lest We Forget - St. Joe River Basin - membership flights available - St. Joseph, MI**

**July 3, 4 & 5- 150th Ann. of Baseball & Honoring Our Military - Great American Ball Park - Static Display Only - Cincinnati, OH**

## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

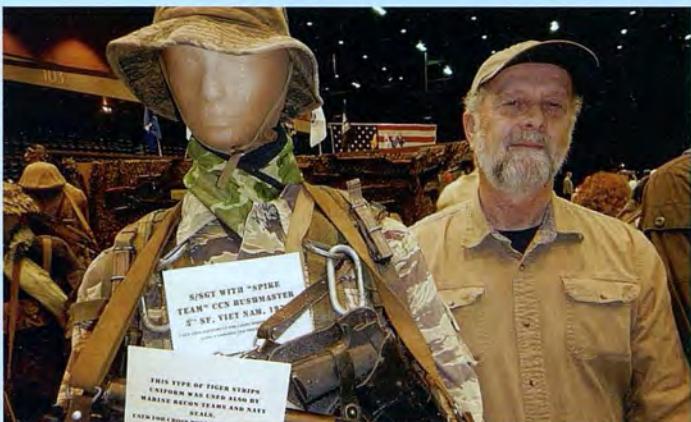
Our 2019 season kicked off at 1000 hrs on Sunday, 17 FEB when Ed Morris and Jim Cunningham met with Ken Fritz at LZ Fritz to wash the Huey and prep the pickup for a President's Day celebration the next day. The Huey covers were shot and thrown out. Ken will look for a new cover. Marcia Fritz joined the group for lunch and refreshments at the nearby Alamar Restaurant.

Mt. Vernon Memorial Park, in Fair Oaks, CA sponsors American Heritage Day each Presidents Day. This includes George Washington, Abe Lincoln, Revolutionary and Civil War groups, and of course our UH-1C/M helicopter 66-00563. VHPA-CCN was represented by Ken & Marcia Fritz, Al Doucette, Mike Whitten, Jim Stein, Ed Morris, Ken Lake, Jim Cunningham, Thom Gilbert and Curt Knapp. The weather was bright and sunny, but breezy and chilly. There was a good turnout including of course Abe and George. A Revolutionary War cannon went off twice right next to us with no damage! Mt. Vernon gave us a nice donation and invited us to come back on this coming Memorial Day. Unfortunately, this conflicts with the VHPA National Reunion this year.



Our next event was to show our helicopter in Reno, NV on 30 March for a Vietnam Memorial Day celebration, sponsored by the Reno Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Association (VVA). The Huey was cleaned up on 28 Mar with the help of Mike Nord, Ken Lake, Tom Inks, Curt Knapp, Ed Morris, and Ken Fritz. Of course it rained right after they finished, and it was forecast to snow in the mountains that night. A decision to abort or go was made at 0900 on Friday, when I-80 chain restrictions were finally lifted. The transport team was then told it was a go. Some of the team live 70 miles from LZ Fritz. The team consisting of Al Doucette, Jim Stein, and Mike Whitten, assembled, then drove the unit to Reno on 29 Mar. Of course the helicopter and truck were very dirty again from the slushy roads. VVA organizers were asked to muster a Huey wash crew in a few hours! They met our Huey at the Chevron station at Boomtown Casino, a few miles west of Reno in the early afternoon. Not only had they managed a wash place and crew, but added a Patriot Guard motorcycle escort, local TV newscasters, and Reno PD motorcycle officers to join in, for an estimated 30 motorcycle strong escort to the Reno Event Center where 66-00563 was put on display to a large crowd.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Spike Team member, 5th SF, circa 1969.



A Few Kids enjoying our Huey.

celebrating National Vietnam War Day. The VVA chapter in Reno is an amazing group to pull off a reception like this in only a few hours notice!

In addition to Al Doucette, Jim Stein and Mike Whitten taking the Huey to Reno, other members met the Huey on Saturday morning in Reno. Mike O'Connell, Ed Morris, Marcia and Ken Fritz, were all there and honored as VIP guests. The event was a tribute to the men and women who went to Vietnam – those who were lost and those who returned. Over 1000 veterans and guests attended the event. The governor of Nevada proclaimed it Nevada Vietnam War Day.

It was also a tribute to the Huey – the savior of so many in Vietnam. Congressman Mark Amodei spoke at the luncheon and he was especially thankful for having our Huey there as he talked about the efforts to successfully place the memorial to helicopter crewmembers in Arlington National Cemetery.

There was other Vietnam memorabilia on display. Ken



Our Team supporting Vietnam Memorial Day.



Our Huey Returning Home on Sunday over the Sierras.

Fritz met a Spike Team member, 5th SF, that he may have flown into Laos and North Vietnam while flying insertion missions in 1969. How did the man get out of country with all that stuff? The guy was thought lost, so his buddies mailed his uniforms home – then he showed up to an empty locker! If the stuff had been sent through regular channels, we know it would never have made it home. His parents saved the gear and he displays it proudly.

We are also still trying to restore our infamous MOC and arrange for it to be transported to the

next few reunions. The MOC was water damaged several years ago. At this writing, it is highly likely to happen for Kansas City this year.

Please check our website [www.vhpaccn.org](http://www.vhpaccn.org) for more info.

**Dave Anderson**  
VHPA-CCN Secretary

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## CALIFORNIA SOUTH CHAPTER

The VHPA SoCal Chapter had our meeting and BBQ last Saturday at Wings and Rotor Museum. August Swanson is missing in the picture. He and his Serve-One Catering crew was preparing our luncheon. Thank you, August and crew for the awesome brisuit.



From the bottom to the top on the photo: With Randy are his two grandchildren, his wife Sandy, son Randy Jr. also a Naval Aviator, Steve and Kris Gedestad, Jack Rae's daughter, and Connie and Ron Warner.



California South meeting and BBQ. Top row L/R Pat Rogers, Jim Davidson, Andy Hodder, Carl Cortez, Randy Krekeler, Brian Novak, Rod Dykehouse, Ron Warner.  
Bottom Row: Sven Akesson, Charles Carrillo, Phil Roby, Tom Crosby, Jack Rae.

## FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER

In May of 2009, the Fort Walters Chapter of the VHPA held a ceremony at the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, TX for the dedication of a half scale replica of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. Since then, every year, an "Honoring the Wall" ceremony has been held around Memorial Day to update the Museum's Wall based on the previous year's updates to the Wall in D.C. The 10th annual "Honoring the Wall" ceremony will begin at 9:45 AM on May 25, 2019. No names are to be added this year, but we are honoring the fifteen men who were identified and brought home in 2017. Following are the names of those brought home:



Honoring the Wall.

*Editor: The following is a correction to CALIFORNIA SOUTH's Chapter report in the March/April issue of the Aviator.*

*Randy Krekeler was presented with the military salute/honor during the Anaheim Ducks vs. the Las Vegas Knights game at the Honda Center on January 4, 2019.*

James Davidson

- Robert Russell Barnett; CAPT; USAF; Gladewater, TX; Panel 6E, Line 91
- James Reginald Bauder; CAPT; USN; La Canada, CA; Panel 10E, Line 126
- David Thomas Dinan, III; 1LT; USAF; Nutley, NJ; Panel 29W, Line 62
- Charles Bernard Goodwin; LCDR; USN; Haskell, TX; Panel 2E, Line 78
- Donald Joe Hall; CMS; USAF; Stroud, OK; Panel 14E, Line 129
- Roosevelt Hestle, Jr.; COL; USAF; Orlando, FL; Panel 8E, Line 134
- Robert Edwin Holton; CAPT; USAF; Butte, MT; Panel 33W, Line 14
- John Alexander House, II; CAPT; USMC; Pelham, NY; Panel 22E, Line 87
- John Dewey Killen, III; LCPL; USMC; Des Moines, IA; Panel 22E, Line 88
- Glyn Linal Runnels, Jr.; CPL; USMC; Birmingham, AL; Panel 22E, Line 90
- William Cornelius Ryan, Jr.; 1LT; USMC; Bogota, NJ; Panel 25W, Line 54
- Martin Ronald Scott; COL; USAF; Tula, OK; Panel 6E, Line 12
- Joseph Stanley Smith; CAPT; USAF; Assumption, IL; Panel 4W, Line 106

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

- Daniel Wayne Thomas; CAPT; USAF; Danbury, IA; Panel 3W, Line 102
- James Blair White; MAJ; USAF; St. Petersburg, FL; Panel 16W, Line 119

The guest speaker will be Lt. General Tex Brown USAF Retired. Information about the program and guest speaker is available at the museum website at [www.nationalvnmuseum.org](http://www.nationalvnmuseum.org). Under "News & Events", select "Events." Then under "10th Annual Honoring the Wall," select More information about Honoring the Wall event 2019. All are invited and donations are welcome.

Our next quarterly chapter meeting will be Saturday

June 8th at Logan's Roadhouse in Hurst. The Executive Council will meet at 11 AM with General Membership meeting at 11:30 (or whenever the EC finishes its meeting). Lunch, which includes coffee, tea, or a soft drink, is \$20 per person. The beer is on you. Guests eat if you or someone pays. Peanuts are free and you can throw the shells on the floor. Address is 948 NE Loop 820, Hurst, TX. Phone is 817-590-0261. GPS data: N 32°49'32.43": W 97°2'03.69".

Herb Koenig

Fort Wolters Chapter Past President

## GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues the Saturday morning breakfast meeting at the Del Ray Dinner in Marietta, GA. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 0900 HRS with those wishing to have a meal arriving a little early to order.

Our gathering on the 23rd of March saw about 20 members show up for the head count and socializing. Bill McRae did his usual DJ music ensemble and showed some videos from Vietnam on the big screen in our meeting room. Our Chapter Secretary/Treasurer report by Gary Earls was on the positive side and reminded members that yearly dues are due.

As was noted in the last issue, our chapter voted in a new president. It seems I was elected by a 1 vote margin. Then I found out the only one voting was the outgoing president, Bob Lanzotti. Thanks a lot!

So a little of my background for the record... I joined the Army 24 Oct 64 with a slot in Flight School confirmed. In January 1965 I arrived at Ft. Wolters, as an experimental class. 65-11W. The seniors could not harass us to any great extent, nor could the TAC Officers. They



Chuck, 18 April 1966.



Ralph Staunton.



770.846.4413

CHUCK STOUDT

GA-VHPA PRESIDENT

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VN 1966 335TH AHC COWBOYS: FALCONS: CASPER

Chuck's card.



Georgia VHPA cup.

were limited on the harassment and were able to keep us "inspection ready" without the demeaning activity. No formations in the middle of the night and no toothbrush activity, etc. (We graduated Pre-Flight with the highest academic average at Ft. Wolters.)

I arrived in Vietnam in late December 1965 with a DROS of Christmas Day 1966. I was attached to the Cowboys, and Falcons which were later named the 335th AHC in support of the 173 ABN BGD in Bien Hoa. I also did a month in the OH-13S Casper Platoon.

After leaving the Army in Oct 1968, (most of you were just getting your wings groomed), I stayed in General Aviation for another 50 years flying helicopters and airplanes accumulating 8,000 RW hours and 22,000 FW hours, and even got time in the great ole bird.... The DC-3.

Our speaker for the meeting in March was one of our own members: Ralph Staunton. Ralph Staunton left the 134th AHC in Tuy Hoa, Vietnam for a high security assignment flying in Italy, Greece, Turkey and the Mediterranean area for five years. Ralph was then assigned as direct support shops supervisor and test pilot with the 335th AHC (my old combat unit) in Ft. Riley, KS. Additionally, Ralph was a Charter Member of

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

the First N.E.S.T., and some other special assignments. He did graduate work with Boston University in International Relations including collaboration with Rand and Brookings. He also has a Masters Degree in Administration of Justice. He did design work for some prisons at Leavenworth. After leaving the Service, Ralph was a Deputy Sheriff Lt. and helped design and supervised the opening of the 850 bed First Direct Supervision Jail in Georgia for Gwinnett County. Ralph was a National ACA Instructor in Jail Management and a Georgia P.O.S.T. Instructor. Before retiring he also worked in Computer Network Security for an International Financial and Insurance Conglomerate.

I would like to encourage all the National VHPA Members who reside in the North Georgia to come out to our Breakfast meeting and socialize with us. We would welcome the new faces and would be glad to make you a member.

At our next meeting we will have a raffle drawing to try to enrichen the treasury so we can do more charity work for our local Veterans from all the Wars.

Additionally, we discussed the matter of inviting guests to our meetings that may not be helicopter pilots, or any pilot for that matter and agreed that we are an open meeting for all to enjoy. So, invite a guest to visit our group.

Speakers I have contacted for future meeting include: A member of American Legion Post 105 in Fayetteville who did one hitch in the Navy as an enlisted guy beginning in 1964. He used the GI benefits to learn to fly and eventually flew for Delta and retired in 2003 as an MD-11 Captain. He has four published books, three fiction and one non-fiction. We look forward to listening to his stories.

A Navy Carrier Pilot with stories of the various landing on the pitching deck of an Aircraft Carrier, day and night.

Former Vietnam helicopter pilots interested in joining our Chapter, please view our website at [www.ga.vhpa.org](http://www.ga.vhpa.org) for a schedule of future meeting dates. For questions regarding our organization and/or directions to our meeting location, please contact me. My contact info is on the card.

Chuck Stoudt, President

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter's activity during the winter is usually quiet, but this year has one significant exception. Mark Benjamin's monthly gathering in Traverse City is picking up steam on a project to restore a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans memorial in the city. He filed an Outstanding AAR for the March 14th gathering in Traverse City:

Very productive meeting today. STILL no time for pool!! The purpose of this month's meeting was to meet with the players involved in the cleaning and restoration of the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans memorial located at the intersection of Front Street and the Parkway in Traverse City, MI. Much was accomplished.

### Participants included:

- Derek Melville, Superintendent, Traverse City Park and Recreation was invited to attend. Traverse City owns the property the Welcome Home monument sets on.
- Ed Canright: Ed and his wife have agreed to head up the planting of appropriate flowers at the Welcome Home Vietnam Vets memorial.
- Scott Schwander: Scott is a retired 27 year veteran of the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Department. He now cleans and restores headstones for veterans. Some are 150 years old and have never been cleaned. He will clean the monument stone that was erected in 1988.



L-R Ed Canright, Barry Witt, Scott Schwander, Bruce Whipple, John Lefler, Paul Fitzsimons, Linda and Clay Maxwell, Chuck Benson, Mark Benjamin, Bart Holiday, Walter Topp.

- John Lefler: John is President of the Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition. His group consists of representatives from nearly every Veterans Group in this region of the State of Michigan. More info at: [gtavc.org](http://gtavc.org).
- Paul Fitzsimons: Paul is the architect who designed the planned American Huey 369 Museum in Peru, IN. Lives in Traverse City and he was a LRRP in VN.
- Chuck Benson: Chuck owns Bay Supply in Traverse City. He is a flagpole expert and will direct the cleaning of the monument flagpole.

"Many of these people just showed up because they heard of our efforts on the Welcome Home memorial and want to help. I can't say no." – Mark.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

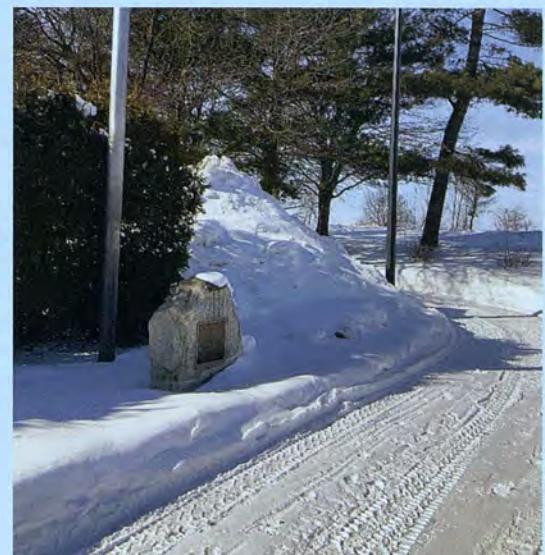
During the gathering, Mark recruited three new associate members and reloaded a full member – Pat Mullen - and another associate member.

Since the meeting, Mark has continued coordination efforts with Derek Melville, Chuck Benson and Scott Schwander. The project is moving along nicely.

2019 Activities – By the time this goes to press, we will have had our annual spring meeting on May 4th and a list of our planned activities for the year will be known. There are several opportunities that I expect we will cover. 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 richdeer@att.net. 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 [vhpami.wordpress.com](http://vhpami.wordpress.com) and on Facebook at  
Michigan Chapter of the VHPA.

Submitted by Rich Deer, President



View of Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran Memorial.

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

During February, the NAVHPA continued to serve dinner to the homeless at the Downtown Rescue Mission in Huntsville. This is always a heartwarming experience. The 200-300 men we served were most appreciative of a hot meal on a cold night.

Our scheduled activities for the March-May 2019 period are below. From this you can gather that we plan to be busy, but that is not news to most of you. The NAVHPA is one of the most active chapters in the nation.

**11 Mar:** Membership Meeting at Meridian Crossing

**20 Mar:** Rebuild Inside BUC-3 Support Trailer

**21 Mar:** Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

**23 Mar:** Clean BUC-3

**28 Mar:** Monrovia Middle School "Vehicle" Career Day with BUC-3

**29 Mar:** Annual Vietnam Veteran's Day at PX (info and new member sign up table)

**30 Mar:** Annual Vietnam Veteran's Day at Madison County Veterans Memorial with BUC-3

**31 Mar:** Aviator Article Due

**8/9 Apr:** Membership Meeting

**18 Apr:** Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

**25 Apr:** Redstone Protection Day at Redstone Activity Field with BUC-3

**13/14 May:** Membership Meeting

**16 May:** Downtown Rescue Mission Dinner Meal Serving

On a cool morning of 20 March 2019, some of us were at



Sam Maki and Marshall Eubanks load a replica minigun into the Buc 3 trailer.



NAVHPA members Bob (Buffalo Bob) Monette works on a gun mount.

Marshall Eubanks' home to change the inside of the Buc-3 support trailer. The team consisted of Marshall, retired Engineer Colonel, Ralph Weber, retired maintenance warrant, Bruce Norton, retired maintenance warrant, Gil Fluhr, retired maintenance warrant, Sam Maki, retired maintenance warrant and Bob Monette, retired IP/SIP. Do we see a problem here? Now Marshall, being a man in charge all the time with tunnel vision on projects, four maintenance warrants, who are used to do things "their way" and an IP/SIP who always thinks HE is in charge. Problem? As we disassembled the inside of the racks that held the rocket pods, shelves for the mini-guns, the M-60s and just the other stuff, we all had an idea of how we should build our new supports. Once the trailer was empty, the ideas flowed. Marshall and Ralph had those tape measures just flying inside the trailer. We'd measure the height and width of the all the components and remeasure the inside again. WE all had a floor plan of how things should be put. Hard to believe that after all that we came to a plan. Now Marshall, who

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALWAYS has HIS plan of things, finally gave in to some changes and we started to cut wood, screw the pieces together and finally put the framing together for the new rocket pod holders and new shelving for the weapons.

We did get to take a break for a great lunch. Anne Davis had been working the grill and did some great bratwurst, hot dogs and all condiments. The beer was good too. Sharron Eubanks, Ruth Maki, Diane Weber, Anne Davis, along with Marshall's Aunt Mabra took care of the BSing and the politics of the day.

After lunch we put all the equipment back in their new places. We gained some floor space and feel that with all the different opinions the trailer turned out alright and makes it a little easier for us old guys to get the equipment in and out. Getting old isn't fun but it sure makes it easier when all your friends are close to the same age. We had fun with the project and now we are ready for our next Buc-3 display at Monrovia Middle School.

On 23 March nine members assembled to clean the winter grime off BUC-3, our restored UH-1C/M Gunship, in time for our upcoming spring events. Members Gil Fluhr, Malcolm Brown, Bob Monette, Ernie Megli, Bob Stewart, Rick Davis, Chris Wheeler, Stan Souvenir and Marshall Eubanks gave BUC-3 a good cleaning inside and out, including using a polishing wax on her skin. After final checks and installation of oversize load signs and flags, she is ready for events on 28 and 30 March.

NAVHPA supported Monrovia Middle School's Eight Grade Career Day on 28 March. The career day theme was "careers on vehicles." In addition to BUC-3 (aviation careers), there were vehicles representing crime scene investigation, SWAT, utilities, fire, communications, and construction careers. Each vehicle had operators to explain jobs and the responsibilities of positions on each vehicle. NAVHPA



Chapter member Stan Souvenir speaks to 8th grade students at Monrovia Middle School.



People from 5 to 95 years old want to handle and pretend to shoot the replica M-60A.



L-R Ernie Megli, Bob Monette, Glen Mettler, Marshall Eubanks supporting the Redstone PX Commemoration of Vietnam Veterans Day.



Chapter spouse Sharon Souvenir gets some 'stick time' at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Docents Ernie Megli, Bob Monette, Glen Mettler, Bruce Norton, Jim White, Stan Souvenir, Les Haas, Chris Wheeler, Sam Maki and Marshall Eubanks discussed different aviation and aviation related careers centered around helicopters. These included pilot, crew chief, maintenance of many levels, air traffic control, airfield operations, communications and armament. About 800 eighth grade students had the opportunity to learn about many "vehicle oriented" careers.

On Vietnam Veteran Day, 29 March, NAVHPA supported Redstone Arsenal's Exchange and Commissary Commemoration Event by thanking and honoring local Vietnam veterans and their families. We provided a display and talked to Vietnam and all veterans about NAVHPA. After a short ceremony, Vietnam-era veterans were presented Vietnam Veteran lapel pins by a BG(R) Robert Drolet, a representative from a 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemorative Partner organization. NAVHPA members Glen Mettler, Ernie Megli, Bob Monette and Marshall Eubanks discussed VHPA and NAVHPA with veterans, especially Vietnam veterans. The PX/Commissary provided lunch and gift bags to veterans.

Northern Alabama's 8th Annual Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration was held on 30 March at the Huntsville/Madison County Veterans Memorial. This celebration of Vietnam veterans was presented by Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 1067 of Huntsville, AL. Several hundred people attended, including Vietnam veterans, veterans and non-veterans. Keynote speaker was CPT Gary "Mike" Rose, Medal of Honor recipient from Vietnam. Also on the program was the presentation of VVA Chapter 1067 annual awards. Several other speakers, a band medley of

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Service songs, and chorus and individual songs rounded out the program. NAVHPA supported the celebration by displaying BUC-3. Always a big attention getter at veterans and civic events, BUC-3 was a focal point of interest during the two-hour "meet and greet" prior to the formal program. Seventeen NAVHPA members and several spouses attended and were fully engaged talking about BUC-3 and helicopter operations in Vietnam.

The Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the 2nd Monday of most

months at 6:00 PM (1800). 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!! If you aren't a member of a chapter, we know all those war stories need to get out of your system. We have each heard all of ours. We need new war stories and comrades! "There I was..."

Ralph Weber

## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Old Dominion Chapter had a 16 February meeting at which President Don Agren presented pictures of his recent trip back to Vietnam over Christmas and New Year.

For our March 16th meeting we had the Cosby High School Students of the Armed Forces Leadership Team interview our members. They are also planning more detailed one on one interviews with more members of our Chapter and they are doing an Exceptional Memorial Day Tribute on 20 May honoring the United States Military.

We also have planned for our group to attend a "Patriots of the Week" videotaping at the USA Iron and Metal Flag at 1800 Coxendale Road Chester, VA 23836 on Saturday 6 April 2019.



This 40' by 76' USA Flag flies from a 212' tall flagpole near the intersection of I-95 and Route 288 in Chester, VA.

Our Chapter has been adopted by the Senior History Class of Cosby High School and will be featured at the 13th Annual Memorial Day Tribute on 20 May at Cosby High @08:45.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Agren, President, Old Dominion Chapter

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

Chapter meetings continue to be held at the American Legion Post #1. They have been more than accommodating. The Post Commander, Tom Yagley, always welcomes us and provides us with information about events happening in the Denver area. We are very appreciative of their hospitality.

At our last meeting, we discussed the consolidation of our constitution and bylaws. By doing so we believe they would be more current to our times and scope of organization. The new By-Laws were presented by Secretary Bill Bates at our March meeting. Also, Krista Mortensen, Fund Manager, from the Wings over the Rockies made a presentation about the new forthcoming exhibit at the Wings Over the Rockies: "Sweet Sioux", and invit-



March Chapter Meeting with guest speaker Krista Mortensen from the Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum.

ed us to "Cockpit Days" at the museum (explained in more detail below).

We lost two of our members this past month: Steve Lyons Class 68-17/68-29 who served with the 335th AHC from 1968-69. Steve was the owner of "Patrol Helicopters" specializ-

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

-ing in power line work in the local Denver area. David Richter Class 66-15, who served two tours, 66-67 with the D/1/4 Cav 1st INF, and in 1969 with the 120th AHC. He was a driving force in the establishment of local helicopter routes and heliports.

Although we lost two members, we also gained two new members: Jim McGrevey who was in the same flight school class as Dave Richter, Class 66-15, who served in the 162nd AHC at Phouc Vinh 1966-67; and Dick Compton Class 66-7, 117th AHC, Bien Hoa. He also served as a Crew Chief in the 119th 1964-65 with the 119th AHC in Pleiku.

Chapter members participated in "Cockpit Days" at the Wings over the Rockies Museum to honor the installation of "Sweet Sioux", a Huey gun ship. The Huey was donated by Chapter member Col Bill McPherson, as a permanent display at the Wings over the Rockies Museum located at the old Lowry AFB. "Sweet Sioux" was named after Bill's wife shortly after acquisition from White sands Missile range. In his words:

"The Gunship is a UH-1 (M) Mike Model, built in August 1967. Served in Vietnam in 67-68/69-70.

Returned to Bell for rebuild in 1971. It was then issued to the Nebraska Army National Guard. Years later, it was retired from service and sent to White Sands missile range to be used as a target. That program was cancelled, and Col McPherson rescued it from destruction and completely rebuilt it. He was also able to rescue a second UH-1 and refurbished it and mounted it on a pylon over the War Memorial in Cripple Creek, CO. Cockpit parts were used in the construction of the Huey Cockpit that now resides within the mobile Helicopter War Museum.

In 2008, Col McPherson formed "The Gunship Ministry", mounted the Gunship on a custom-built flatbed trailer. Hit the road, with four other Vietnam Veterans, including VHPA mem-



Artist rendering of the Sweet Sioux Diorama.



Cockpit Days Attendees: From L to R: Col Bill McPherson, Dale House, Jim McGrevey, Bill Bates, Krista Mortensen, Mike Silva, Vietnam era Crew Chief, Brian Wold, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Ed Arden, and Ken Overturf.



"Sweet Sioux" alongside the RMC's Helicopter War Museum at one of the many events.

Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum.

We have been in contact with the Northern Colorado Honor Flight which was re-branded to "High Plains Honor Flight" (HPHF). The current president Matt Voris thanked us for our past participation with the Northern Colorado Honor Flight and would like us to continue that participation with the HPHF. Their first flight is scheduled for Sept 15 - 16, 2019 which will be comprised mostly with Vietnam Veterans, some Korean Veterans, and hopefully a few WWII Veterans. Our Chapter provided refreshments as well as a traditional "Welcome Home" to the returning veterans from Washington DC to Denver International Airport.

ber Ken Overturf, and Crew Chief Ed Arden and two VA counsellors and traveled throughout the state of Colorado for 10 years. They participated in 152 Veteran events and Parades. Visited Ft. Carson, the USAF Academy, NORTHCOM & NORAD at Peterson AFB. It was often displayed alongside the Helicopter War Museum.

As you can imagine, the Gunship drew large crowds at each event; Vietnam Veterans are drawn to the gunship like a magnet. Many of the veterans openly cried when they touched the Gunship, as memories of that horrific war returned. Many told stories their family had never heard before and many wives thanked us for bringing the Gunship to their community. The VA counsellors were always busy working with those Vets showing signs of PTSD. Over the 10 years, we estimate there were 575,000 visitors to the Gunship. It was a very rewarding experience for Col McPherson and his crew and will continue its legacy within the Wings

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## Other Chapter and Upcoming Activities:

Ceremonies will be held in Frisco, CO in the upcoming months to rename the Post Office in Memory of Patrick Mahany who was killed in a helicopter crash in that community. Dedication of "Sweet Sioux" to its new resting spot in a reverent diorama at the Wings over the Rockies Air and Space Museum on May 16, 2019. Our HWM will attend Memorial Day ceremonies at the Colorado Freedom Memorial in Aurora, CO on May 25th. Our June chapter meeting will be held at the American Legion Post # 32, Longmont, CO on Saturday, June 22, 2019. We hope to capture our Northern chapter members. Other chapter activities will continue to be announced on our Web site, [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com).

We are excited that the 2020 reunion will be held here in Denver. We are so looking forward to seeing you May 21-24, 2020.

## 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. Our April and May meetings will be held at the American Legion Post One. We occasionally change venues as noted above, so contact us at the address below to verify dates, times and location. We do not meet in December, but instead have our annual Xmas party. We have decided to have our meeting this July, as the VHPA Reunion is being held over Memorial Day. The Museum committee will meet periodically to continue categorizing inventory and developing additional displays. Visit our Web site at [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com).

We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum. 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: [RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com](mailto:RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com).

**Dale House**

## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The Quarterly meeting was held in Earth City, MO, a suburb of St Louis on March 9. Business included a discussion of the upcoming VHPA National Convention in Kansas City, and how we are the host Chapter. The significant shortage of volunteers was reiterated by our President and members were solicited for service. John Sorensen, Treasurer, informed the Chapter that our scholarship endowment to the College of the Ozarks now stands at \$6600. John also informed us that The College of the Ozarks' Choir from southwest Missouri will sing as part of the entertainment at the National convention.

The guest speaker for our meeting was CPT Ryan Ball who began his military career as an infantryman and was soon selected for the Old Guard, 3rd Infantry Regiment, in Washington DC. The Old Guard's mission includes the Ceremonial Drill Team, Continental Honor Guard, Arlington Cemetery Funeral Duty, Caisson Platoon, and performance at special events PLUS providing the Sentinels to guard the



CPT Ryan.

## Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

CPT Ball gave a terrific account of his experiences as a Sentinel and the training required before he could begin performing as a guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He told how the position instills a selfless and a unique dedication to unknown soldiers. He said the Sentinels look upon the unknown soldier as one of their own family, and how they realize that the position is much bigger than any individual. The tomb has been guarded 24/7/365 since 1937, and only 665 badges have been awarded for those who perform the duty (CPT Ball was awarded badge #522 for his Sentinel service). Badges can be revoked if they bring dishonor on the position in later life, although it is an untrue rumor that they take a vow never to consume alcoholic beverages.

After his Sentinel assignment, CPT Ball was awarded an ROTC scholarship and became an Aviation officer, only to have a back injury prevent him from completing flight school. He became an MP Officer and has two tours as commander of an MP company, including one in Afghanistan. He is currently an instructor at the MP Officers' Basic Course at Ft Leonard Wood. He has served as a General's Aide and had some other interesting assignments. He has numerous awards

including the Meritorious Service Medal.

The next meeting will be in the Kansas City area on June 29.

**Ken Sherfey, President**



VHPA South Missouri in St Louis.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

Minnesota House Representative Bob Dettmer, former Chair of the Minnesota House Veterans Affairs Committee, spoke at our January meeting. He is extremely dedicated to veterans' issues at the state capital, and a champion of all major veterans' organizations such as the VFW, American Legion, DAV, and Minnesota Department of Veterans and Military Affairs. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Army National Guard and was deployed in Iraq. He has two sons making careers in the military.

Rep. Dettmer made a presentation on current veterans' issues being discussed at the State Capitol during the current session. These related to availability of health care, housing for veterans, PTSD, and other legislation of interest to the group. He was very passionate about our group staying involved with our military connections and in general being proud of our military service. He also urged us to stay involved in legislative actions that will affect veterans.

Our March meeting was hosted by the Army Aviation Support Facility at the St. Paul Downtown Airport. CW5 Keith Shelstad, Command Chief Warrant Officer for the State of Minnesota, gave us a rundown on recent deployments of Minnesota aviation assets and a large upcoming Brigade size deployment they are preparing for. That very day, Minnesota deployed a CH-47 and ten personnel to Nebraska to assist in flood relief efforts. Planning is also underway for potential flood relief deployments around Minnesota. After the presentation we were able to look over one of their M model Blackhawks. They received these aircraft "right out of the factory." They have glass cockpits and full autopilot. If you need to maintain a hover, just press the button! They are also equipped with anti-icing, which is a good thing in Minnesota especially this year!

After the tour we held our annual business meeting with the election of officers. Tim Callister moved up from Vice President to President, Bruce Hunter moved to Past President, Rick Erlandson was elected as Vice President, Jim Bankston stayed on as Treasurer and Dave Larson was elected to the position of Secretary. We also went over plans to participate in Veterans events



March meeting attendees in front of M model Blackhawk. L-R (front) Bob Godar, Don Abrams. L-R (rear) Jim Bankston, Mike Rynerson, Bert Leach, Tim Callister, Lloyd Enos, Bruce Hunter, Dave Larson, Rick Erlandson, Bill Geyer.



Dave Larson, Chapter Secretary, in the cockpit of a UH-60 M

in Red Wing on March 30; New Richmond, WI April 11; and Neillsville, WI on May 18. In addition, we hope to have a contingent at the Moving Wall in Lakeville, MN July 8 through the 14th.

The Upper Midwest Chapter of VHPA meets every other month. Our next meeting is planned for May 16. Our Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/UMCVHPA/>. Leave a message for any inquiries you may have.

By Dave Larson

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## WASHINGTON CHAPTER

Our first general meeting for 2019 was held at Famous Dave's BBQ in Everett on March 9th. Our President, Mel Latham, called the meeting to order at 1030 with the Pledge of Allegiance and an opening prayer by Pat Staeheli. Mel explained that we were forced to reschedule this meeting because of the heavy snowfall that made our original meeting of February 16th impossible. He read into the minutes our previous meeting's minutes which were reviewed and accepted by the members present. Our chapter Treasurer and National Executive Committee Member, John Shafer, brought us up to date on our financials and reported that the chapter is in good fiscal shape. He also updated the members on the upcoming National Reunion in Kansas City and provided us with the next several years' reunion locations. John encouraged anyone interested to submit their names for the National Committee positions coming open this year.

The next order of business was the nomination and selection of new officers. Dave Swanson was selected as our new chapter President. Hal Thornton assumes the position of Vice President and Doug Decker is our new Senior Member at Large, serving as our Director for Programs and Planning. Our Junior Member at Large is Steve Lodwig, who will serve as our Director of Communications. Alex Bremen accepted the position of Quartermaster. Rick Walker and Bill Vaughn have agreed to remain as our Webmasters (vhpawa.org). John Shafer continues as our Treasurer. Following the election of new officers, our outgoing president, Mel Latham was presented a plaque in recognition for his outstanding service to our chapter. Thank you, Mel for all your hard work and the rest of you guys who agreed to step up and serve the chapter!

Our next meeting will be held on June 15th, during the Olympic Air Show at the Olympia Airport. Look for specific information for the meeting place and time on our website. After the good response we've had for the past few years, we will again hold a membership meeting in Eastern Washington in September. Details for the meeting will be posted on our website. The Auburn Veterans Parade with our Huey in tow, is scheduled for Saturday the 9th of November.



Our state chapter is an active veterans group and we invite all Vietnam helicopter pilots to join us and re-connect with those you served with so many years ago. Finally, thanks to the many members who put in the hours to make our state chapter a success. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

**Dave Swanson, President**

*Submitted by: Steve Lodwig*

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# OTHER ACTIVITIES

## Mini Reunion, During the VHPA Reunion EYES OF THE 3RD BRIGADE

Thunder Aviation Platoon, HHC,  
3rd BDE 101st Airborne Division.

Like our unit patch implies, Thunder Aviation was indeed the eyes of the 3rd brigade.

The 3rd Brigade arrived at Bien Hoa on November 18, 1967. From there they moved to Phuoc Vinh. Then the unit flew to Hue/Phu Bai via C-130s and set up shop at Camp Eagle around October 1, 1968. It was at Camp Eagle where they got the 1st Huey. Thunder stayed at Camp Eagle for about a month, living in tents which were not fun during the monsoon. Just beginning to settle in at Camp Eagle, the call came for yet another move. This time they moved around November 5th to Camp Evans, north of Hue City. It was the final move in Vietnam and Thunder stayed at Camp Evans until December 21, 1971, when the unit moved back to Fort Campbell KY.

The first helicopters (OH-23, Ravens) were used for both Command and Control (C&C) ships and reconnaissance (Recon) missions. Later while at Camp Evans, the unit received five UH-1 Hueys and eight OH-6 Loaches. The C&C Huey was equipped with a large radio console in the cargo area and seating for a minimum of five passengers. The Brigade or a Battalion commander, along with the aid of an RTO, could be in contact with many units via the console. During a combat assault into a landing zone (LZ), the whole mission could be orchestrated from the C&C bird.

The C&C Pilot would coordinate with all air support via radio and by marking the targets with a smoke grenade for Air Force Forward air command (FAC) doing LZ preparation, CH-47 dropping foo-gas on the LZ and, finally, the Lift companies.

The Brigade and/or Battalion commanders would coordinate with both the infantry and artillery commanders and watch over the whole operation as it unfolded. An artillery forward observer was also on board to coordinate any LZ preparation or artillery support needed once the troops were on the ground.

The Loaches were used early on for unarmed visual recon or sometimes with 3rd BDE S-2 folks with a rifle. Sometimes a crew chief would come along with a rifle. In August of 1969 miniguns were added and the Brigade's Aero-scout White Teams (2-loaches) were formed. The low bird would fly at tree top level searching for the bad guys. The high bird would cover the low bird should there be any contact. These White Team "Loach's" were armed with 7.65mm miniguns and a door gunner with an M-60 machine gun. At times, they would work with the REDSKIN Cobra as Pink teams. They could wreak havoc on the bad guys or mark the target and call

in other forms of fire. Sometimes these loaches would fly point for a grunt unit in the jungle.

At times some of the Battalion commanders would elect to use the Loach as their C&C bird. The smaller bird could have a better chance of getting in and out of hot areas and tighter LZs.

The Thunder Crews, being on location many times, were asked to perform on the spot missions, medevac the wounded, rescue downed aircrews, emergency ammo resupplies, removing the KIA, etc. Some of the other aviation units we worked with are: Griffin, Redskins, Phoenix, Lancers, Ghost Riders, and Varsity.

Being the Brigade's eye in the sky, our crews were very aware of what was going on with the 101st at any given time. Whenever any part of the Brigade was in contact with the enemy or under siege, Thunder was there.

We have a Mini Reunion room set up for Wednesday May 29th 1-5pm and Friday May 31st 1-5pm. Times and dates subject to change.

### Contact:

Phil Spence: [gruntpilot47@gmail.com](mailto:gruntpilot47@gmail.com)

Dave Hause:

[dhause21@hotmail.com](mailto:dhause21@hotmail.com) or 717.497-9787

## Authors' Mini-Reunion

Over the years, several VHPA members have contributed many important monographs providing a much-needed firsthand record regarding the all-important helicopter war we were all a part of throughout the Vietnam War.

While the VHPA has always supported its member/authors and provided us exhibit space to make these publications available to our membership, never has there been a "VHPA Authors Reunion" held to provide a forum for us to formally meet one another, exchange thoughts and ideas and perhaps share brief readings from our many contributions to the literature of this war.

For information contact Tom Morrissey: [tomartist2004@yahoo.com](mailto:tomartist2004@yahoo.com)

So, BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) and join us in Kansas City for this exciting and long overdue "Reunion."

Tom Morrissey

# 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 vhpa.org.*

*Correction: In the March/April issue we posted an obituary for Maxwell, John R. Additional information indicates this was supplied by a family member. His time in RVN, however, was spent as a flight surgeon and not a rated aviator.*

**Amis, Thomas W. USMC, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 56-26; RVN: 65-66 HMM-363, 68-69 HMH-462; SS, DFC (2OLC); Callsign: Millpoint.**



Thomas Amis "faded away" peacefully with dignity, surrounded by family and friends at Onslow Memorial Hospital in Jacksonville, NC on February 25, 2019, at the age of 82. Tom was preceded in death by his wife of 47 years, Natalina D'alessandro Amis.

After graduating from Gulfport High School in 1954 and obtaining an Associate Degree in Engineering from Perkinston Junior College, Tom applied to the Naval Aviation Flight School in Pensacola, FL. His dream of becoming a pilot became a reality in 1955 when he earned his "Wings of Gold" and the rank of 2nd Lt in the United States Marine Corps.

Upon retirement in 1978, Thomas obtained his Bachelor of Science in Finance from Southern Illinois University. His second career was at Bank of America and Regional Finance Corp. After retiring for a second time, not being one to let grass grow under his feet, Tom decided to become a bus driver for the Onslow County School System. He took his responsibility very seriously and never missed a day of work; he retired after 10 years of service.

Stephen Hawking once said: "However bad life may seem there is always some-

thing you can do, and succeed at. While there is life, there is hope." This was Tom's mantra his entire life. He was never one to "sit still." His great loves were the Marine Corps and his family. In the military, the mantra drove him to exceed all expectations from his peers during seemingly impossible missions under heavy enemy fire.

Personally, it fueled his comeback from five near-death hospitalizations where doctors gave up all hope. He was a stubborn Marine! No one told him when it was time to let go of the life he loved so much. He fought hard to make sure he had all his affairs in order. He fought hard to make sure he let everyone he loved know how much he loved them. He fought hard against all the doctors who could only see the disease and not the man. When he made the decision that it was time to "fade away" he left this earth with the dignity he desired and the love of his family.

**Bagby, Frederick R. USA; Flight Class: 67-12; RVN: 67-68 3 BDE 101 ABN, 69-71 1 AVN BDE; Callsigns: Black Widow 6.**

Frederick Bagby died on April 1, 2015. No obituary was provided.

**Bell, William D. USA; Flight Class: 65-18; RVN: 66-67 116 AHC, 69-70 25 AVN; Callsigns: Beekeeper 8/Hornet 8.**

William Bell died on November 8, 2018. No obituary was provided.

**Cooksey, James K. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 63-8; RVN: 64-65 52 CAB, 67-68 180 ASHC; BS; ACM; Callsigns: Dragon/Big Windy.**



Since 2007 Jim had battled lung cancer caused by Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam, but complications following a hip surgery were the cause of his death on February 14, 2019. Jim was born in Louisa, KY on July 10, 1937.

Jim grew up in Columbus, OH. A Distinguished Military Graduate and Cadet Colonel commanding a 2500-man ROTC Brigade, he graduated from Ohio State with a BS degree in geology. In 1961, Jim was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army.

He spent his first years in the Army at Fort Lewis WA, and at the Artillery Officers Basic Course at Fort Sill, OK. In 1962, after graduating from Airborne and Ranger schools at Fort Benning, GA, he went back to Fort Lewis. From there he went to flight school to learn to fly helicopters.

Following his retirement, Jim worked for 20 years as a project manager at various companies including Northrop, Advanced Technologies, Sherikon, TRW and Palau. Jim was instrumental in establishing a number of simulation systems for teaching troops the use of military and aviation armor.

Jim received a commendation as Conference Chairman of Interservice/Industry Conference (I/ITSEC) in the training and simulation community and especially for leadership in the culmination of the extraordinary success of the 1998 Conference and Exhibition, the first in the Orange County Convention Center. Jim was also active in the Army Aviation Association where he was once President. He was a long-time member of NDIA (National Defense Industry Association). Jim received the Honorable Order of St. Michael Bronze Award for Tried and

# TAPS

Proven Army Aviators and Aviation Patriots. This award is for "... the embodiment of courage, justice, and gallantry ... and represents excellence in aviation."

James is survived by his wife, Kay.

**Gillingham, Richard I.**  
USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 57-1; RVN: 62-63 8 TC CO, 67-68 HHC/268 AVN BN.



Richard Gillingham, beloved husband of 62 years, father and grandfather, passed away December 10, 2018.

He was born January 16, 1933 in Kittanning, PA. He served in Korea and two tours of duty in Vietnam. He worked for Bell Helicopter for over 20 years and was a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

**Harris, Jerry M. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 69-43; RVN: 69-70 237 MED DET; BS, ACM (2 OLC).**

Jerry Harris passed away at his Dutton, AL home on February 15, 2019. Jerry was born in Chattanooga, TN.

He is survived by his wife of over 50 years, Judy.

**Hill, James E. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-28/68-516; RVN: 68-69 240 AHC; BS, PH (OLC), ACM; Callsign: Greyhound 26.**

James Edward (Jim) Hill, passed away March 19th at his home in Atlanta, GA. He suffered from health complications due to Agent Orange for years that got progressively worse in recent months. He died in peace and little pain.

James Lee Hill was born June 15, 1935 in Hermansville, MS. James attended Manassas High School in Memphis, TN. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Business from Park College and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

He served 31 years in the military of which 14 were enlisted before becoming a Warrant Officer. He was rotary and fixed wing qualified. He

served at numerous duty stations around the world including serving in the Korean War and Vietnam War.

After retirement, Jim worked as a contractor training Navy pilots in Beeville, TX. He then worked in civil service as an accident investigator at Ft. Rucker, AL, Director of Safety in Seoul, Korea, and Safety Manager at Fort Bliss, TX. He attained a grade of GS-14, and then retired with over 30 years. He proudly served over 60 years of government service.

James is survived by his wife, Leola Loretta.

**Jung, Joseph S. USA, Flight Classes: 68-508/68-12; RVN: 68 21 AVN; PH.**

Dr. Joseph Sylvester Jung passed away at Arborview Court in Wisconsin Rapids on March 23, 2019, surrounded by his loving family.



Joe was born on May 12, 1947 in Hammond, IN. After graduating from high school, he served in the United States Army for six years during the Vietnam War. He became a pilot and flew Chinook helicopters. He earned the rank of Captain. He received his bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. In 1976, he earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Purdue University. He founded the Community Animal Hospital in Fond du Lac, WI where he practiced for over thirty years.

Joe was passionate about gardening and enjoyed collecting prize winning flowers. He also loved fishing, especially for Northern Pike in Ash Bay.

**Keough, William J. USMC; Flight Class: 2-68; RVN: 68-69 VMO-6; Callsign: Seaworthy 99.**



William James Keough of Paddock Lake, WI passed away Monday, March 18, 2019. His six-year battle with cancer ended for him at the age of 76. 'Bill' was born in the

Chicago area. He was educated in the parochial school system culminating in his graduation from Marquette University. After volunteering for service in the U.S. Marine Corps he completed OCS and flight school. He went on to fly the UH-1E Helicopter in Vietnam. He met and married a Navy nurse, Helen Clapp, with 2019 being their 50-year wedding anniversary. Before retiring in 2016, Bill had a successful career in sales. His humor and ability to engage people coupled with his strength of character pulled us all into his life.

Bill is survived by his wife, Helen.

**Livingston, Larry D. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 65-3; RVN: 65-66 61 AVN, 69-70 201 AVN; Callsign: Red Baron.**

Larry Dean Livingston died unexpectedly October 24, 2017, at South Baldwin Regional Medical Center due to medical complications associated with Myasthenia Gravis disease. Larry was born on December 1, 1936, in Fort Scott, KS, and served his country for 26 years.

His military service included US Air Force 1954 - 1963 as a gunner for the B-36 and B-52; the US Army 1963 to 1980 as a pilot and flight instructor, fixed wing/rotary wing.

After retirement, he was a civilian flight instructor at Ft. Rucker, AL for 13 years, and then went on to work part time as a contract pilot for the Department of Defense in the US and Bosnia. Larry continued to work part-time in commercial real estate and was in the process of returning to active flight status just before he died.

Larry is survived by his wife, Markeeta.



# TAPS

**Martin, Donald L. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-8; RVN: 67-68 119 AHC; PH; Callsign: Crocodile 6.**



Donald "Don" Lee Martin, a Seminole, OK resident, passed away Thursday, March 21, 2019 in Seminole, OK. Donald was born January 21, 1941 in Seminole.

Don entered the United States Army, attaining the rank of Major. He had a distinguished career before his honorable discharge from the United States Army.

After his time in the U.S. Army, he served as Dean at Central Texas College in Killeen, TX, Pacific Far East Campus. He was affiliated with the following: Special Operations Association, Riders Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Associations, Blackhorse Association, DAV, Harley Ownership Group, AAA, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Abate Oklahoma, the American Legion. Donald was also a faithful member of the Church of Christ at Seminole, OK.

Donald is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Maria Katharina (Schwarz).

**Nagy, Alex F. USA; Flight Classes: 66-2QC/64-1FW; RVN: 66-67 48 AHC, 67 HHC 1 BDE 101 ABN; DFC; Callsign: Joker 14.**



Alex F. Nagy born in Mishawaka, IN, died on February 22, 2019 at the age of 81.

He graduated from Mishawaka High School, Class of 1956. He later moved to Southern California, graduating from Mt. San Antonio College. He was a Veteran Army Aviator, qualified helicopter, and fixed wing pilot, with service in Germany and flying helicopter gunships in Vietnam.

A photograph of Alex, his helicopter gunship, and flight helmet is enshrined in The Distinguished Flying Cross section, Veterans Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA. He is also listed on the Distinguished Fly-

ing Cross Wall of Honor, at the entry to the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Smithsonian Institute.

He was a Life Member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 360; Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association; The Distinguished Flying Cross Society, American Legion Post 28.

Yesterday is history; tomorrow is a mystery; today is the present, which is why they call it a gift.

**Parkhill, Patrick E. USA; Flight Class: 70-24; RVN: 68-69 25 INF, 70-71 20 ENG; Callsign: Castle.**



A much-loved husband, dad, papa, son and brother, Patrick Evans Parkhill passed away peacefully at Denver Hospice on March 28, 2019 with his family present. He had bravely confronted and fought lung cancer for the past 3 years.

Pat was born October 24, 1947 in Sioux City, IA and resided in Aurora, CO for the past 48 years.

Pat is survived by his wife of 50 years, Sheri.

**Richter, David P. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 66-15; RVN: 66-67 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF, 69 120 AHC; MSM; Callsign: Mustang 10/Dean.**



David Richter passed away on March 13, 2019 in Gainesville, FL, due to complications from heart surgery. Dave was born in Denver, CO on May, 25, 1944. He graduated from South High School in 1962. From there he attended Ft. Lewis College in Durango, CO. for two years before joining the US Army in 1964.

After Vietnam, Dave finished his college degree at FIT (Florida Institute of Technology) in Melbourne, FL. He continued his service in the Army Reserve and Colorado National Guard as a CW4 until retirement in 1999.

He continued flying helicopters for a living, first flying for McDonald's Corporation in Atlanta, GA, then Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. (PHI) servicing oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. Dave moved back to Colorado in 1988 and took a position as Lead Pilot for the "Air Life" program at the Presbyterian St. Luke's Hospital in Denver. Dave served in this position until 2012, at which time he became the Chief Pilot for Air Cam National Helicopters, located at Centennial Airport (APA) in Englewood, CO. Dave was the primary architect and project leader on many of the original Colorado hospital landing pads, and heliports that are in use today. He had well over 17,000 accident free flight hours in his logbooks. Dave was a Lifetime Member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA).

Dave leaves behind his wife of over 40 years, Peggy.

**Wilson, Jerry T. USA; Flight Class: 65-15W; RVN: 66-67 2 BDE 4 INF; BS.**

Jerry Thomas Wilson of Harderville, SC and formerly of Bluffton, SC died March 6, 2019 at Memorial Medical Center in Savannah, GA. Jerry was born on December 12, 1945 in Sikeston, MO.

He was a veteran of the United States Army, serving in Korea and Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Following his military service, he attended Pacific Lutheran University. After his formal education he began his career with New Jersey Bell Telephone Company. After over 30 years of service, Jerry retired as an Information Systems Specialist from Verizon. He was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and was active with the Civil Air Patrol. He also had a passion for birds and had cared for 4 parrots for the last 20 years.

# 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.

Baucom, Billy J. USA, LTC Ret.; BS, MSM, ACM (2OLC); died March 6, 2019. Kenner, Ivol C. USA; Flight Class: 65-2; RVN: 68 335 AHC; died February 23, 2019.

Billet, Edwin D. USA; Flight Classes: 66-17/66-15; RVN: 69 C/4/77 ARA 101 ABN; died November 10, 2014. Hatch, Robert D. USMC; DFC; died March 6, 2019.

Clary, James E. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-2/67-22 died September 19, 2017. Richardson, Dennis M. USA; Flight Class: 70-37; died February 26, 2019.

Hill, James L. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 67-9; MSM, PH (OLC), ACM; died March 1, 2019. Ware, Robert P. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67 190 AHC; died June 27, 2018.

Flood, Thomas J. USA; Flight Classes: 71-9/71-7; died April 3, 2018. Wills, Walker T. USA; Flight Class: 55-L; died February 29, 2019 (aged 91).

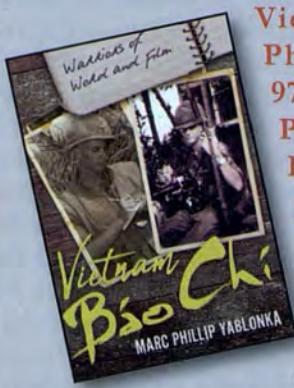
## ~ BOOK REVIEWS ~



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

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

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**Vietnam Bo Chi by Marc Phillip Yablonka, ISBN: 978-61200-687-1, Casemate Press, 1950 Lawrence Road, Havertown, PA 19085, 305 pages, \$32.95 in hardcover**

This is a book about men who, when bullets are flying stick their heads up to take pictures or make notes so they can tell the story when the rest of us want to take cover. They were there to record history, not make it even though they had to use their rifles. Vietnam Bao Chi is the story of thirty-plus Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps,

Coast Guard correspondents who were sent to Vietnam to record the war. Who knew? They didn't work for TV networks or major publications; instead they were one of us. Many were officers, most were enlisted men. All were sent to Vietnam to accurately record what they saw – the bravery, the conditions, the humor and what we did without providing commentary. Many were wounded and some were killed. The book starts with Marine captain Dale Dye, more known for his work in the film industry than as a correspondent. Their stories will make you laugh and cry, sometimes in the same story as they did their level best to record what they saw in Vietnam. This is their story and Yablonka does a great job of telling it. Vietnam Bao Chi is a great read about men who did double duty. I highly recommend it to everyone!

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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