



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



*A CH-46D Sea Knight from HMM-364 at Duc Pho. November 1970*

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## VHPA Officers, Members of the Executive Council 2019-2021

President	Art Jacobs	art.jacobs.tn@gmail.com
Vice President	Art Price	arp.red22@gmail.com
Past President	John Sorensen	jsore65648@gmail.com
Senior Member	Donald Le Master	hookpilot@yahoo.com
Midterm Member	John Powell	rotorpylut@gmail.com
Junior Member	Frosty Price	frostyprice@me.com
Secretary/Treasurer	John Shafer	johnshafercpa@comcast.net
Founder	Larry Clark	



**VHPA Aviator Newsletter:  
Aviator@VHPA.org**

**VHPA WebSite:  
VHPA.org**

**VHPA Headquarters  
and Headquarter Staff  
contact Information**

**Phone:  
1-800-505-VHPA (8472)**

**E-Mail:  
HQ@VHPA.org**

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## National Committee

Aviator Magazine	Tom Kirk, Managing Editor Tom Hirschler, Editor	aviator@vhpa.org tah44@msn.com jsore65648@gmail.com
Chaplain	John Sorensen	ka5hzd@att.net jsore65648@gmail.com
Chapter Liaison	Tom Payne John Sorensen, Asst. Chair	mikesloniker@yahoo.com beaner1138@aol.com
Elections	Frosty Price, Chairman	frostyprice@me.com
Historical	Mike Sloniker, Chairman Bob Hesselbein, Asst. Chair	tigersmty@hotmail.com
Investments	Bob Smith, Chairman	beaner1138@aol.com
Legal Advisor	Mike Poindexter, Legal Advisor	poinlaw@aol.com
Legacy Committee	Bob Hesselbein, Chairman	msheuerman@tx.rr.com ltcbobhow@tx.rr.com
Membership	Mike Sheuerman, Chairman Bob Howard, Asst. Chair	groush2@earthlink.net mglaw@earthlink.net
Membership Directory	Gary Roush, Editor & Chairman Mike Law, Asst. Chair	rotorpylut@gmail.com art.jacobs.tn@gmail.com hookpilot@yahoo.com
National Reunion	John Powell, Chairman Art Jacobs, Asst. Co-Chairman Don LeMaster, Asst. Co-Chairman	beaner1138@aol.com
Public Relations	Bob Hesselbein, Chairman	groush2@earthlink.net mglaw@earthlink.net
Records/Database	Gary Roush, Editor & Chairman Mike Law, Asst. Chair	art.jacobs.tn@gmail.com hookpilot@yahoo.com
Reunion Site Selection	Art Jacobs, Co-Chairman Don LeMaster, Co-Chairman	ka5hzd@att.net msheuerman@tx.rr.com
Scholarship Program	Tom Payne, Chairman Mike Sheuerman, Asst. Chair	johnshafercpa@comcast.net rotorpylut@gmail.com
Secretary/Treasurer	John Shafer, Chairman John Powell, Asst. Chair	mglaw@earthlink.net bek082346@gmail.com
VHPA Calendar Project	Mike Law, Chairman Bennie Koon, Asst. Chair	

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

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# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

For as long as I can remember, the President's Corner message in this Summer edition of the AVIATOR has almost always been dedicated to talking about what a great time we all had at the most recent annual reunion. Well – not this time! The VHPA is now into its fourth decade of reunions; we've been to lots of great cities, but I think it would be quite a memory challenge for each of us to name the year and location of each one of those past reunions (bonus points for listing them in sequence). That will certainly not be the case for Denver 2020. That's a reunion year and location that we will probably always be able to recall – the one that was not!

Denver would have concluded with our banquet on Sunday evening, 24 May, and on Monday, 25 May – Memorial Day, most of us would have been making our way home. Our reunions have typically been held over the Memorial Day weekend or the 4th of July. The reason has been three-fold: 1. Holding a reunion in the Summer always meant that we could bring our children who were out of school (but I guess today we're talking about grandchildren). 2. Those two dates hold a special meaning in the hearts of Americans – especially veterans – honoring our fallen brothers, and celebrating our nation's beginning. 3. The practical component has been that corporations and other non-veteran associations usually don't schedule conventions or meetings over those two holidays, and since hotels want to keep their bookings, occupancy rates, and revenue projections steady, the VHPA can negotiate some pretty decent rates for our members by choosing one of those two dates.

And now, we are on to Charlotte for next year. Your HQ Staff and the Reunion Committee have already begun the planning process for 2021. Hopefully, in missing this year in Denver, there will be some "pent up demand" and the Charlotte numbers for attendees will be even higher than we have projected. We know you have missed all your buddies, so please, do plan on being there in North Carolina. As always, we'll have some great events and activities planned and a few surprises for you and your guests.

I trust that you and your family have remained safe,



and hope that your loved ones and friends have not been adversely affected by the virus. At this writing, it's of course been encouraging to see the beginnings of a national re-opening – both socially and commercially. The pandemic has certainly caused most of us to alter our living pattern, but as I've chatted with many of you on the telephone and by email, everyone seems to be coping quite well indeed under the circumstances. None of us would really be surprised by that because, of course, if there was anything we learned in Vietnam, it was how to adapt and overcome!

ART JACOBS, VHPA PRESIDENT



Full color. 20" x 28" limited edition print of Huey SOG / LRRP ladder extraction. Standard version as shown, \$80.00 ea. **Customized** version with markings of your choice, \$125.00 including postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

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**Joe Kline Aviation Art**



6420 Hastings Place

Gilroy, CA 95020

408-842-6979

[klinejd569@aol.com](mailto:klinejd569@aol.com)

[www.joeklineart.com](http://www.joeklineart.com)



# FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

Can you believe it is already July? Hopefully, everyone has received their reunion refund. If you have not, please notify HQ.

By membership request, HQ is taking pre-orders for R2020 t-shirts & pins. If you are interested in purchasing these items you can visit [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org) to download an order form or there is an order form in this issue that you can mail to HQ with your payment, or you can call HQ to place your order. Orders will only be taken until August 14, 2020. We will then place the order and your items will be mailed to you once HQ receives them.

**REMINDER:** The deadline for the purchase of 2020 directories is August 31, 2020. The 2020 directories will be delivered in October 2020. Directories purchased beginning September 1, 2020 will be for the 2021 directory that will be delivered in October 2021. The deadline for ordering the 2021 directory will be August 31, 2021. The price for a pre-ordered copy of the paper directory is \$25. The price of a pre-ordered CD copy is \$10. The online directory is free at <https://directory.vhpa.org>.

Dues can be paid and a directory can be ordered online via the On Line Directory at <https://directory.vhpa.org>!

HQ still has copies of the Vietnam Helicopter & Crew Members Monument Dedication Ceremony at Arling-

ton 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.

**PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF REMAILING ITEMS!** If you move, PLEASE go online to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password. 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

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

Patrick Leary, FVSO President and VHPA Life Member



**FVSO was founded in 2005 by Veterans who served in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Since then, we have focused on the 850 children living in seven Vinh Son orphanages located in the Kontum/Pleiku area. FVSO provides dental care, food, shelter, medicine, and education. All donations will support the children and their caregivers. Although the kids welcomed schools re-opening, strict protocols were still enforced. Our May newsletter tells the story and is available on-line. ENJOY!**

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
the schools re-opened & the  
kids rejoiced!

**For more information, please contact us at:**  
**Mail:** FVSO, P.O. Box 9322-C, Auburn, California 95604-9322  
**Web:** [FriendsofVSO.org](http://FriendsofVSO.org) **Email:** [FriendsofVSO@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofVSO@gmail.com)

The Denver reunion may have been cancelled but the spirit of what could have been lives on. The reunion logo was such a big hit that several members have asked about t-shirts & pins.

HQ will be taking pre-orders for t-shirts and pins until August 14, 2020. One reunion pin will be included with each t-shirt ordered and additional pins may be purchased. After sales have closed, the order will be placed with the vendor. Upon receipt of the shirts, HQ will ship your orders.

#### STEPS FOR PURCHASING T-SHIRTS & PINS:

1. Go to the VHPA website at [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org)
2. Download the form, an order form is also be available below.
3. Mail your order form, along with your payment, to HQ at the address listed on the form.
4. Orders may also be placed by calling HQ at 800-505-8472.

#### VHPA R2020 T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

**Orders Must Be Received at HQ By: August 14, 2020**

Mail with payment to VHPA:

1601 E Lamar Blvd, Suite 117

Arlington, TX 76011

Or call HQ at 800-505-8472 to place your order



Size	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
<b>One (1) R2020 pin included with each t-shirt ordered</b>			
Black Small		\$ 22.00	
Black Medium		\$ 22.00	
Black Large		\$ 22.00	
Black XL		\$ 22.00	
Black 2XL		\$ 23.00	
Black 3XL		\$ 24.00	
Black 4XL		\$ 25.00	
Gray Small		\$ 22.00	
Gray Medium		\$ 22.00	
Gray Large		\$ 22.00	
Gray XL		\$ 22.00	
Gray 2XL		\$ 23.00	
Gray 3XL		\$ 24.00	
Gray 4XL		\$ 25.00	
<b>Pin Order Only (includes shipping)</b>		\$ 4.00	
<b>Shipping (first 2 shirts)</b>		\$ 7.50	
<b>Shipping for each additional shirt over 2</b>		\$ 2.00	
		Sub Total	
<b>Texas Residents add sales tax</b>		8.25%	
		Grand Total	

Member Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Visa, Mastercard or Discover)

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*There have been several responses generated by the input from Art Jacobs and Bob Hesselbein. In the interest of neutrality, these were printed in the order in which they were received. ~Ed.*

*Editor,*

I always read with interest "The VHPA AVIATOR" and was exceptionally moved by Bob Hesselbein's article "Planning for the End". As time goes on, we are all becoming cognizant of our mortality and this article has brought up serious questions as to our legacy. In fact, unless it has been found, the last man standing won't even get the Cobra statuette.

Perhaps we should be looking into the possibility of establishing an Associate or Auxiliary Membership? Most large Veterans organizations have this type of non-voting membership that are a proven valuable asset, who assist in ongoing programs including veteran out reach. These Associate Members not only give their time but also contribute needed funds, not only in dues but also at reunions and other fund-raising activities.

*Fraternally,*

Alan J. Donovan, VHPA Life Member

*Letter to the Editor,*

The article "Planning for the End" by Bob Hesselbein in the March/April 2020 Aviator is a call to action. It highlights the urgent need to make changes now to provide for our continuing legacy. The ever-growing "Taps" section in the Aviator is clear evidence that our thinning ranks need younger blood to carry our banner.

The VHPA membership rules must be changed to allow a new generation to participate. Associate membership is one way to label them. Recruit any who would be willing and able to support the activities of the VHPA. They could be family members, military veterans, active military, historians, military enthusiasts, or any of a number of potential supporters.

They would need to be vetted to ensure that they fully understand and support our legacy. Key individuals would need to be incorporated into the VHPA Executive Committee and assume roles in National Committee for continuity. As our officers become unable to continue these duties these embedded associates would be up to speed. Our legacy would carry on.

As Bob wrote in his article: "The future of the VHPA will be decided by the actions of the present. Unchanged, the VHPA will likely disband within 10 years; modified, the organization can remain vibrant until the last man is gone. A considered decision must be made, and soon."

Richard Deer, President, Michigan Chapter VHPA

*To the Editor:*

I read with interest "With a Critical Eye to the Future" (President's Corner by Art Jacobs) and "Planning for the End" (by Bob Hesselbein) in the March/April 2020 Aviator Magazine. As the content of those two articles is debated and considered, I thought it might be of some interest to point out how the North Alabama Chapter (NAVHPA) handles membership. When we organized our Chapter in 2010, we codified three categories of membership in our Bylaws. Our Bylaws state:

- a. Regular Members are those individuals who piloted rotary wing aircraft in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam era.
- b. Associate Members are those individuals who:
  1. Maintained or crewed rotary wing aircraft in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam era.
  2. Piloted, maintained, or crewed aircraft in other military units during the Vietnam era.

Associate members are due-paying members have all the rights and privileges of regular member and shall be treated the same under the Bylaws.

- c. The North Alabama Chapter Board of Directors (BoD) shall nominate potential members. After ratification by a majority vote of the General Membership, they become active members of the NAVHPA.
- d. Honorary Members are non-dues paying members designated to recognize persons who have contributed to the mission of the NAVHPA. Honorary Members have no voting rights, nor can they hold office in the NAVHPA. Honorary Membership shall be bestowed and continued on agreement of the BoD.

We have found that this approach works well. While the preponderance of members are Vietnam pilots, NAVHPA Associate and Honorary members have embraced, enhanced, supported and made significant contributions to our organization and activities.

The NAVHPA Board of Directors has begun a discus-

sion on legacy planning and the points made in the articles by Art and Bob and as they state, this subject should be addressed sooner rather than later.

**Marshall Eubanks, President, NAVHPA**

**Dear Editor,**

Regarding the recent article and Letters to the Editor concerning having crewmembers as associate members in the VHPA.

The VHPA of Florida (VHPAF) has had non-voting Associate Members since 1996. In the case of Crewmembers, they have been proven to be valuable assets to our organization and can be counted on to support all VHPAF activities.

Recognizing that the membership pools for VHPA and the Vietnam Helicopter Flight Crew Members Association (VHFCA) are finite and getting smaller rapidly, it might be time to open talks with their Board of Directors about a merger.

**Gary Harrell, President**

**Don Welch, Chairman**

**VHPA of Florida Board of Directors**

**Letter to the Editor,**

I read with interest the letter written by Bob Hesselbein about the last man standing. I understand the comradery that pilots have, and I am very grateful to my fellow pilots and this organization.

But an exclusive organization, which we currently have, may be overlooking the opportunity to continue our history and legacy years after we are gone.

The Alaska Chapter has a policy that includes other crew members and pilots as associate members. These include those who served in the back and laid down fire as we ran in and out of LZ's. They also include other combat aviators (fixed wing and helicopter) that may have missed the Vietnam Conflict but choose to share their adventures with us, very much like our experiences. Many of these members are our sons and close friends who followed in our footsteps. We like to believe that without the crews we would not have been able to do what we did. They kept our ship in flying shape and shared the wrath of bullet strikes we experienced together. Without them, many more of us might not have returned. We are a flying family and not exclusive to one seat. Our legacy should have an opportunity to continue through others.

Our Alaska Chapter membership allows for crew members, by recommendation of our members, the right to join and participate in our mostly social gatherings.

There are exclusions, as associate members can only serve on the board as a member at large and not hold an office position.

We also recognize our lady companions in our Lady auxiliary membership. The effort and energy they add is overwhelming.

Currently about 13% of our Alaska membership is associates and it is serving our organization well. I will add that if you look at our Arlington Memorial you will notice it says "Helicopter pilots and Crewmembers" as we are one family and needed each other to complete our missions in flying style.

It is time to open the VHPA up to include, with restrictions, associate members who may well take our legacy into the future. Sustainability is essential and fits our swagger.

*There is Pride in knowing WE ALL FLEW!*

**Lynn Kile, President, Alaska Chapter of the VHPA,**

**NOMAD23**

**To the Editor,**

It's hard to feel old here in Hawaii, surrounded by the vast Pacific Ocean, green mountains, blue skies, year round flowers, 80-degree weather and the beauties of the beaches. But sometimes nostalgia sneaks in, like when I read that the National Museum of American History had added the Huey to its collection alongside the civil war era furniture from Appomattox. It's one thing to have our birds in the Air & Space Museum, quite another to have one in the American History. With Taps happening more often with our members, we are forced to ask what will happen to VHPA when we have all "going west." We all might agree that we want to be remembered. I think opening our membership can help.

Today, we think about our organization in terms of what WE want out of it, and have over these past nearly 50 years, as our focus has been to welcome ourselves home - when no one else would. We get together; have drinks - tell our own stories. Some chapters even rebuild the birds we flew and put them in parades, others build trailers and travel into the community and to some extent, we educate.

The VHPA has not been like other groups that seek out new membership and have a stated - written mission to educate, inspire others with their history, knowledge, or intentions. They want to grow in size, develop programs, and get funding. That new membership often brings different goals, with different benefits to provide and people to please.

As the executive director for 10 years at Pacific Aviation Museum - now Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum - I worked closely with the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association and the AVG Flying Tigers Association. Both of these organizations were on the verge of extinction with the passing of their last members - Donald Stratton on February 15th and Emery Arsenault, March 1st and Frank Losonsky on February 6th; all this year during the 2020 pandemic quarantine.

Pearl Harbor Survivors opened their membership to spouses, sons and daughters of survivors, and grandchildren, and associate members as fans and supporters in 1965. It grew to over 30,000. In 1973, they decided to organize a separate group as Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, now with 4,000 members. Their mission is to create programs that inspire youth and adults to learn and document the history of the beginning of WWII. Pearl Harbor Survivors disbanded their organization September 2019. The Sons and Daughters keep their stories alive.

The Flying Tigers Association has a similar situation. Their mission was established "to preserve, respect, inform, educate and keep alive the accurate history of the AVG." Their membership is composed of Flying Tigers and their families, the families of AVG who died during service and Friends of the AVG who have a desire to support the AVG and keep the AVG legacy alive. All the original members have gone west, and about 200 associate type members are keeping the memory alive. Not a very large group.

Before the museum decided to change its focus from an internationally recognized aviation museum to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the aircraft of WWII, we restored, displayed and interpreted aircraft from all wars in the Pacific with our partners around the rim. We acquired helicopters to tell their stories including Bell UH-1H Huey 68-16411, AH-1G Cobra 66-15298, OH-58D Kiowa 90-00368, Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight BuNo 153965, Sikorsky HH-34J Choctaw BuNo 148963, UH-3H Sea King BuNo 152700 and CH-53D Sea Stallion BuNo 157173 – Vietnam era aircraft with long tales to tell. (Tail / bureau number in case you find one in your logbook.)

And, we held sunset ceremonies with Hawaii military units that had flown these birds – Army, Navy and Marines - telling stories to their families, the community, to the world – which is why we have museums. The interest in preserving the history of the aircraft and those who flew, crewed, and maintained

these birds can well bleed over into a new membership.

Here's another angle. Years ago, after returning from Vietnam, I flew for the Sheriff Department in Golden Colorado the OH-13 – Bell's 47. We used that vintage machine for many missions from surveillance to search and rescue to community service. I got the assignments to land in school playgrounds, talk to the young students that came out to watch and learn about flying, helicopters, what made them fly, and maybe about policing. I remember my young son proudly standing up in class saying, "my Daddy flies helicopters." And...my son still makes that same statement, still with an interest in what we did.

All across the USA and around the world, there are groups still putting helicopters on display and honoring what we did for the Republic of South Vietnam. In 2015, the Tri-state Veteran's Memorial Park, Dubuque IA mounted C Troop, 16th Air Cav Cobra AH-1G 15758 on a pole in the middle of the Mississippi River and painted our names - Wayne Burk and me on the canopy rails. Our children and grandchildren came to watch, to honor, to learn, to know. They met some of those we flew with; they asked questions never asked of me. Then they went home to preserve our stories. The Tri-State veterans remember us each day.

What do we want? For over 50 years we have said what we did in Vietnam was honorable. We went; we did what we were sent to do. That history needs to be preserved, needs to be shared. Do we want others to be directing our organization during these last years of our lives? Maybe not, but we all might agree that we want to be remembered. I think opening our membership can help.

*Aloha,*  
Ken DeHoff

***To the Editor,***

Here is my view concerning Associate VHPA members: Having thought long and hard over the ideas put forth in the March/April issue by Art Jacobs and Bob Hesselbein about Associate Members (AMs); I'd like to put three main ideas into the 'discussion.'

First, the EC discussed the AM ideas for more than a year around the time John Shafer was President and came to the correct conclusion that 'it ain't broke, so don't need to fix it' That is because the VHPA already had the 'membership type' called SUBSCRIBER that fits all the requirements/specifications for an AM as outlined by Art and Bob. Specifically, Subscribers pay

the same dues as a Life or Regular Member (therefore it is easy to determine who is and isn't dues current), enjoy all the benefits of a dues current Member (access to the Online Directory [indeed they have their own Section in the published Directory versions], receive the Aviator, can attend Reunions (paying the same fees as a dues current Member), receive Membership services (Eblasts, dues renewal notifications, cards, etc.), can volunteer to service on committees, and can make donations) **SAVE** they can NOT attend the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) [therefore they cannot vote or run for an elected office]. However, Subscribers can and DO participate on VHPA committees (especially the Calendar, Legacy, Membership, and Reunion Committees), submit material to the Aviator team as well as the Vietnam Center and Archive (VNCA) ~ VHPA HQ's future home. Additionally, they can be and are members of local VHPA chapters where they are allowed. To illustrate my points, please consider the following taken from the VHPA Member

Dues Current Pilot Dues			Current Subscribers		
Life	Regular	Total	Life	Regular	Total
6,789	1,642	8,431	68	78	146
521	114	635			26

6/30/2019 Membership  
KC Reunion

ship and Kansas City Reunion databases:

Subscribers are 1.7% of the VHPA's total dues current population...not a large number, but not ZERO either! Only 7.5% of dues current pilots attended the KC Reunion. An estimated 450 attended the ABM. Therefore, about 5% of the pilot membership determined who were elected and voted on changes!

**17.8%** of dues current Subscribers attended the KC Reunion. They wanted to be there for mini-reunions, history presentations, meals, tours, comradery; all supporting the VHPA programs and interests.

**Second**, several VHPA committees have been preparing for 'life after sunset' for more than half a decade by carefully advancing our relationship with our future home in the VNCA, leveraging advances in IT (Information Technology), and having a detailed understanding of the STANDARDS we have in place today. Please consider the following:

- The well-funded 'family' (unit, chapters, etc.) of VHPA related Scholarships administrated by AAAA will sunset with the generation of the grandchildren of VHPA members. If this is a shock to

you, read the fine print! Even when great volunteers and champions like Tom Payne and Mike Sheuerman (to name just a few) are unable to participate, AAAA will administer and award scholarships annual until none of our grandchildren apply; then the corpus of the VHPA donated funds passes to AAAA.

- Because the VHPA's Reunion expenses are so 'well known,' they can easily be scaled down as the various sunsets occur. There were only 30 golfers at the KC Reunion; thus, it will sunset in the next few years. Preparing for each Reunion is the biggest staff and volunteer person-hour 'surge' for HQ. Almost one full-time equivalent is required for tour administration, another for tickets and packet preparation, another for registration/changes/cancellations plus supplies, published material, signage on top of Vendor and Mini-reunion administration. The majority of Reunion Attendees (1154 'primary', adult guest, <21) purchased at least one tour or outside the hotel events (1526 tickets sold). Additionally, 3944 tickets were purchased (some were no-cost events like the Memorial Service) for inside the hotel events. Make no mistake about it

~ 'activities' (both inside and outside the hotel events) are a **HUGE** feature of a VHPA Reunion. Yes, they are expensive to plan, administer, and execute. But when they sunset, the expenses scale down as well. The last VHPA Reunion could easily be a ZOOM video conference!

- The Records/Database committee, the HQ Office Manager and EC members have worked with the VHPA's IT contractor, Greg, for several years to replace the current FoxPro applications suite the VHPA has used for more than three decades with modern web-based applications. The applications suite produces the Membership Directory and maintains about twenty databases used by the Membership and Reunion automated business processes. So, when Mike Law and Gary Roush sunset, the VHPA will be just fine from a computer applications point of view for the Directory and all the HQ Office business processes including those related to Reunions. Indeed, the new Online Member Management Application (OMMA) will host all the DAT (Died After Tour) details which currently requires almost one full-time equivalent to maintain and 'feed to' the [www.VHPA.org](http://www.VHPA.org)! Just to be clear,

the main 'Vietnam Era helicopter pilot and other people' database has 44,600 records and we only know about 13,900 deceased (30%).

▪ Now, the Aviator team is, in my opinion, THE MOST IMPORTANT committee that needs a sunset plan. Currently we send out about 8,500 Aviators six times a year. For the past five years that number has only a 1% per year decline! This speaks WELL for the quality of the publication plus the HQ staff and all the various Membership efforts. However, I believe when we no longer have real Vietnam helicopter pilot veterans that can select and edit the source material; we can look to The Vietnam Center and Archive (VNCA) at Texas Tech University for those skills. God knows there are tons of Oral Histories, manuscripts and books, thousands of photos, pictures, and film, hundreds of linear feet of Vietnam Era orders and unit histories housed there already and more coming all the time. The Aviator sunset plan, like the Records/Database committee and HQ office sunset plans, needs a detailed EC approved SOP for how to do the tasks TO THE VHPA's STANDARDS versus some the ideas of some modern liberal History or Political Scientist PhD. The VHPA needs to provide the endowment to VNCA for this "VHPA Chair" and let the VNCA Board of Directors make it happen.

▪ Blessedly since the VHPA was founded and started enjoying financial surpluses, the Investments commit-

tee (Bob Smith and the late Bob Potvin deserve A LOT OF CREDIT HERE) plus most every EC over the years have positioned the VHPA well as we approach the various sunsets. As would have been announced in the Denver Reunion ABM, our investment account at Stifel currently has about \$1.3 million! This is especially impressive when one remembers that the VHPA funded an endowment with the VNCA of more than \$250K and a scholarship corpus with AAAA of even more than that!

Third, rather than worry about a 'politically correct' solution and recommending, quoting from Art's article, "a small group of very carefully nominated, vetted, and selected individuals with a direct connection to who we are" (like their children!) to manage the VHPA with its approximately one million dollars in the bank plus priceless databases and historical assets in the VNCA; I strongly request the EC to get going on sunset plans with SOPs that meet our current standards. I also strongly urge the collective VHPA leadership (including committee chairs) to start preparing SOPs for how to do business when our subject experts (i.e. Gary Roush) is no longer able to advise HQ who should and should not be allowed 'can be a member' status.

Mike Law, Past President,  
VHPA Calendar Committee Chairman,  
Records and Database Assistant Chairman.

## WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

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

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

### AVIATOR REPORT completed for 6 New Members and covers the period 4.8.20 to 5.28.20

Misner Peter H. 'Pete' \*\*  
Garden City Idaho  
Army  
66-15  
68 AHC in 67-68

Parks David A \*\*  
Brooksville Florida  
Army  
69-17 69-19  
2/20 ARA 1 CAV in 69-70

Smith Jimmy M.  
Jacksonville Florida  
Army  
69-18  
6/14 ARTY in 67-68; 347 AVN DET in  
68

Souvenir Stanley J 'Stan' \*\*  
Madison Alabama  
Army  
67-14  
101 ABN DIV in 67-68; HHC/12 CAG  
in 70-71

Topp Walter W. \*\*  
Traverse City Michigan  
Army  
67-1 66-23  
192 AHC in 67-68

Westerman Jerald N. \*\*  
Washington Iowa  
Army  
70-1  
117 AHC in 70-71

# Do you remember him?

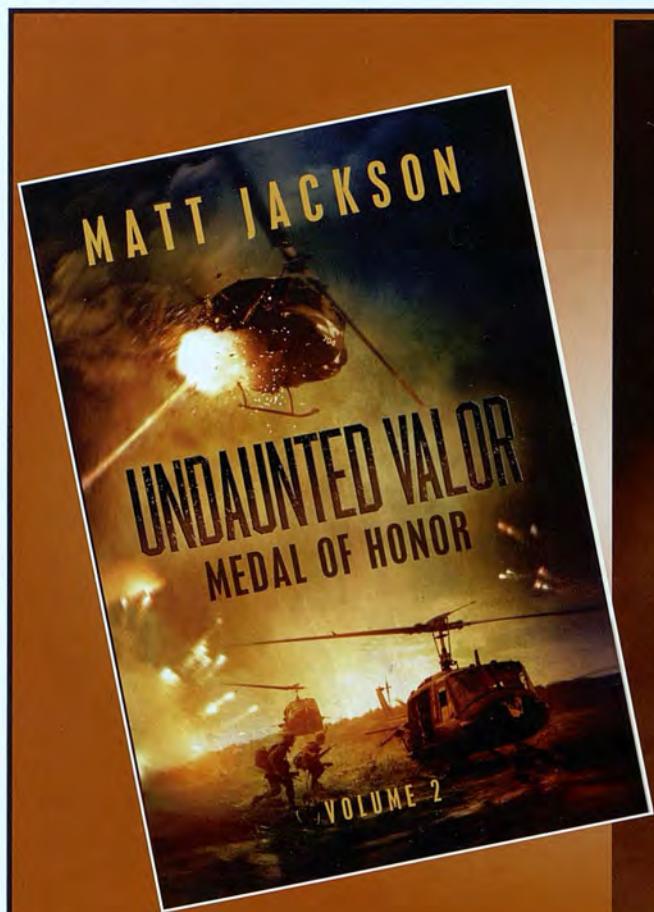
The families of the following had planned to attend the 2020 VHPA Reunion to seek connections with men who trained or flew with their loved ones. They would love to touch base with you if you have a recollection of their loved one . . . *a memory no matter how brief, a photo, or simply your perspective of what life was like in that flight class or that unit.* If you recall any of these

men and wish to communicate with their family but have not already had contact with them, please contact Julie Kink, [kink100@att.net](mailto:kink100@att.net), 651-206-2542.

*Hopefully, some of these family members will be able to attend the reunion in 2021.*

*Never forget.*  
*Julie Kink*

1LT Carl Thomas Cahill, Class 68-518/68-32, A/2/20 ARA KIA 6-1-1969  
1LT Claude Harmon Cargile, Class 69-26, A/123 AVN 23 INF KIA 5-13-1970  
1LT John Timothy "Tim" Conry, Class 71-42, 361 AVN KIA 5-9-1972  
1LT Gary Dean Frasher, Class 69-34, A/25 AVN 25 INF KIA 5-8-1970  
WO1 John Floyd Hummel, Class 70-5/70-3, B/7/1 CAV MIA 6-3-1971  
CPT David Lindford Nelson, Class 67-17, C/158 AVN 101 ABN KIA 3-5-1971  
1LT Ronald Benton Rueppel, Class 70-50, 1 AVN BDE KIA 9-27-1971  
PFC John Richard Stinn, Gunner, C/229 AVN KIA 5-15-1970



"This book ambushed me in the first chapter and I was decisively engaged through the last page. As the son of one of the main characters, I knew how the story would end, but I still could not put it down. I am a veteran of multiple combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and for me *Undaunted Valor: Medal of Honor* effectively captures the tenor of combat operations in its descriptions of the intense emotions, hilarity, and tragedy experienced by troops living in a hostile environment. The story it tells of the bravery and dedication of fighting men to their fellow soldiers is one that will resonate with every reader.  
-Colonel John Adams, USMC (ret.)"

AT THE CONCLUSION of the Cambodian Incursion in 1970, many thought that the South Vietnamese forces were in a position to take possession of the war with a chance of victory. Vietnamization commenced with the withdrawal of US forces from that country. However, US Army Aviation was still needed and many aviation units were the last to leave South Vietnam. As events unfolded, those aviation units left saw some of the most intense fighting of the war. This is the story of two of those actions resulting in two Medals of Honor, one posthumously.

Matt Jackson served twenty-five years, enlisting in 1968 as a Private and retired in 1993 as a Colonel having served in both aviation units and infantry assignments as commander of both an airborne rifle company and an air assault infantry battalion in Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

Available on  
Amazon – Paperback \$19.99  
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# GRIFFIN 67

*By Don Bisson, Griffin 67F, C Btry 4/77 ARA Mar 69 - Aug 69, Camp Evans, Vietnam*

It all started after I graduated flight school on 4 June 1968. My first assignment was to Fort Bragg to a yet to be formed unit for deployment to somewhere in South Vietnam. My best friend, Nolan Black and I were assigned to requisition all the equipment, aircraft, and support items we would need. We knew very little about the terms TOE, PLL, CPL. We learned very quickly what all that meant. I still remember filling out hundreds of requisitions for everything from beans to bullets and especially ordering helicopters. Since we were the first two officers, we were in charge of getting things done, we had no idea of the consequences of our toil.

Months and months later as we were finally building up personnel, we started training in our rebuilt and converted UH-1B/C aircraft. They were armed with the XM-3 system and we went through extensive training on the local ranges at Ft Bragg, cutting down 4X8 plywood panels with 2.75-inch rockets. The tactics we used would include a rapid deceleration, roll nose down and fire before our airspeed built back up. We learned about retreating blade stalls, target fixation, and inherent characteristics of the 540 rotor systems. Suffice it to say combined with the T-53, L-11 engines, we couldn't take off with a full load of fuel and rockets. We were aware of this stateside but had no idea what was in store for us in Nam. Eventually, I stayed assigned to C Battery and Nolan went to B Battery of what had become 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Rocket

Artillery. My best friend later was shot down and his aircraft lost a tail boom, caught fire and crashed inverted in the fall of 69.

Our final training completed; we ferried all 12 aircraft on a four-day mission to Sharp Army Depot in CA. All aircraft sporting the square XM-3 rocket pods. (We RON'd in El Paso and took a liberty in

Juarez. (That is another story.) Once we made it over El Capitan mountain with some difficulty from under powered engines and finally through the pass in marginal weather one aircraft at a time, we made it to Sharp. We quickly dropped off aircraft and boarded a



WO1 Don Bisson with his UH-1C gunship. Note the Griffin nose art.  
Tactical 1:50,000 map of the A Shau Valley.

flight back to Ft Bragg to say goodbye to our families and boarded a C-141 with only troop seats for a VERY long trip to Danang. We had all our equipment including duffel bags and our individual weapons.

Many hours later, after well over 30 hours enroute, we landed in Danang in the middle of a rocket barrage. The flight engineer lowered the aft ramp and we were told to run to the nearest bunker we could find. The C-141 never stopped rolling. We ran off with explosions going off nearby and wondered if we'd even make it through the first day! Before we made into the safety of a bunker the C-141 had already departed. Thanks Air Force!! In all fairness, it probably was Charlie's target anyway.

Once that rocket attack was over, somehow, we all

were transported to Camp Evans, north of the A Shau valley and within throwing distance to Quang Tri province, north of Hue. Our company area included a mess hall on the approach end of the PSP runway. (aircraft landing had to tilt one wing up on approach because it was so close to the roof on the mess hall), several wooden huts with screened walls, a makeshift shower, where water would heat in the day from the sun so we could take a warm shower, and of course, an outhouse.

We set up camp and our readiness profile for missions. Most, if not all, were in the A Shau. We had numerous firing missions on Hamburger Hill. Our set up included a two-minute response team, a five-minute backup, (if I remember right,) and a 15-minute standby. Aircraft would be set up on a pinnacle overlooking jungle. Preflight would be completed, blades untied, throttle set at detent for quick start. One pilot would crank as the other suited up and strapped in. Once strapped in he would take over controls, while the first pilot strapped in. We would barely get off the hill bleeding RPM and building it as we dove downward to build up transitional lift and regain rotor RPM. We witnessed our first aircraft and crew loss and had a ceremony in the company area with boots, guns and flight helmets. We had to go on!!!

We always flew our assigned aircraft unless it was in maintenance. The maintenance tent within the pit with all the other aircraft below our hill take off vantage point. It was on one early morning as I and my crew scrambled for a rapid response mission that I noticed the engine EGT somewhat cooler than it had been in recent missions. I knew that was strange, since I flew this aircraft almost every day. I had mentioned it to our maintenance officer Bill Pilon, but he had just sluffed it off as an EGT gage malfunction. We took off that morning and the engine power was eerily better. I had this terrible feeling, something drastic was going to hap-



Unit sign for C Battery 4th Battalion 77th Aerial Rocket Artillery.

## A Luoi Airfield (North A Shau Valley)

April 1968



Special map prepared for Bravo 2nd Bn 8th Cavalry

Tactical 1:50,000 map of the A Shau Valley.

pen that day. On our second rocket run pass on Hamburger hill, I finally noticed what I had feared. The engine power was cavitating and EGT rising. I informed our ground contact that we had to disengage and head back to camp Evans. He asked if I could leave my wingman and of course I said, "Hell, No." Less than 10 minutes later we were trying to nurse our way over two peaks (Eagle's Nest and Helen). We made it over Eagle's Nest, but before reaching Helen everything went to crap.

The engine was dying a slow death and we still had most of our armament and four-man crew. Eventually, we rolled the throttle back, went into Emergency Governor and coaxed the RPM up to the green arc. That worked until the engine finally blew. We were above triple thick jungle with nowhere in sight to try to land. Being a Charlie model, we also knew we had only a couple of collective moves before we couldn't overcome the stiffness on controls. I gave over the control to my LT. (Can't remember his name) but, proceeded to jettison the pods. Somehow, we finally saw a bend in the A Loui river and determined we could reach it. As we had to roll left before we had room to roll right as set up our autorotation path, we saw the RPM bleed down way below the green arc. By God's grace, as we rolled right

and set up autorotation attitude, the RPM built back up to the middle of the rotor RPM, between 294-324 Rotor. We made it to the sand bar without destroying aircraft and losing lives. Our wingman was screaming on the radio that we were on fire so we couldn't even send out a mayday on that freq. As it turned out there was no fire.

As soon as we were on the ground, I told the rest of the crew to set up in a defensive position and be out of the line of fire for the enemy. I grabbed one of the M-16s to try to be John Wayne from the aircraft and protect them. I finally was able to let our wingman know we were ok. Our CO, Ed Miller was in the AO and heard the commotion. He salvoed his full load of rockets and hovered next to our aircraft. His crewchief walked out on the left skid and was opening the fuel draincock to reduce weight. The rest of my crew loaded in his aircraft and finally I left my aircraft and leapt into the waiting C model. As we were taking off with bleeding rpm, I noticed directly across from where we had landed a 200-foot-high sheer cliff. We never saw it trying to have a controlled crash. We all made it home that day.

When we landed, I tried to catch up with the maintenance officer, but he was too quick. Good thinking!

Tom McGurn was born and raised in Yonkers New York and attended Sacred Heart High School.

He is a combat veteran of two wars and has served his nation for forty years as an Army Aviator. Tom served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970. After arriving home from Vietnam, Tom attended and graduated the US Army flight instructor pilot course and immediately started to train young pilots. He attended numerous US Army sponsored courses including the Electronic Warfare course. He served in the Iraq War (2004-2005) where he was assigned to the G3 Air section of the Division TOC to coordinate the 42nd Divisions air movement assets. Based on his training, he was the Tactical Operation Officer.

In addition to his active duty, Tom was in the New York Army National Guard. He is a retired supervisor of the Westchester County Police Department where during this dual career path he was a Detective, and Detective Sergeant in Narcotics along with many varied police assignments.

Chief McGurn retired in 2008 from the United States Army as a Chief Warrant Officer Four.

BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY / Military HISTORY / Military / Vietnam War

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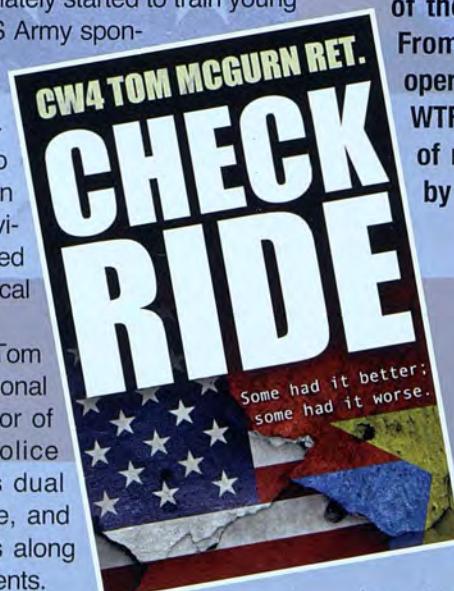
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**CHECK RIDE** is the raw, true story of one Army Aviator's time in Vietnam from 1969-1970. While Tom McGurn was only one young pilot, thousands shared his experiences in the Army. In Check Ride, he recounts previously undisclosed details of flight missions, giving the reader a taste of the everyday flavor of life during those times. From ranger insertions/extractions to shipborne operations, combat assaults, SEALS, and the usual WTF! missions, this era created a new generation of mobile warfare warriors who were fine-tuned by the needs of the United States Army.

**Some had it better.  
Some had it worse.**



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284 pages | 6 x 9 | \$31.95

*Tom will be donating a portion of the proceeds  
from the sale of this book to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund*

# AN ITTY\*BITY INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT

1971, the American part of the war was winding down and Vietnamization was under way. Soc Trang was now a Vietnamese airfield and its units had stood down or moved to other areas. At Vinh Long, the 175th AHC (Outlaws) were given the extra mission of training Vietnamese pilots. These pilots would fly as co-pilots and would gain combat experience. They flew very well and with the advantage they could talk to the ground troops. In IV Corp, the ground troops were Vietnamese.

Our slicks were D and some older H models. We started getting new H models, but it turns out we were just test flying them because after the first few hours of flight time the Vietnamese air force would take the ones they wanted. With a stroke of luck, a new H model arrived just as my ship needed its 100-hour service. I smoked cigars and that day I did not clean out the ash tray. When the Vietnamese air force inspected, they turned the aircraft down. They did not like the dirty ash tray. We got to keep the ship and several more before someone found us out and required the entire helicopters, including the ash trays be cleaned before they were inspected.

One of the Vietnamese pilots who had flown with me a few times was excellent on the controls, but he was always lost. After one very long day I told him that before we flew together again, he was to go to operations and get a map. I would help him fold it and show him how to best use it. He should at least know how to find his way around the Delta. A couple of weeks later he was assigned as my copilot again. This mission was for support in the Plain of Reeds. The Plain of Reeds is like a slow-moving river many miles wide with almost no reference points and nothing to mark the Cambodian border.

As we left Vinh Long I asked him where his map was. He still didn't have one. A few minutes out of Vinh Long I asked him where the airfield was located. He had no idea and couldn't even point in the right direction. We were single ship and if something happened to me, he would have to be responsible for the safety of the crew and to get them home. At this point, I turned back to Vinh Long and called operations to have another co-pilot ready. We arrived at our reporting station about 15 minutes late and shut down to wait for our missions. About a half hour later we had our assignments and the rest of the day was uneventful.

Returning to Vinh Long at the end of the day I called operations to report we were inbound. They told me I was

to report to the CO as soon as we landed. I replied that I would report to the CO right after the post flight. At the 175th the aircraft commander did a post flight inspection, the copilot cleaned the aircraft, the gunner serviced the guns and the crew chief did necessary maintenance. When the aircraft was ready for the next mission the entire crew would leave the flight line together.

Operations said I was to report IMMEDIATELY, and while parking the helicopter a jeep arrived to take me to the commander. No one ever had a jeep ride from the flight line. This didn't look good. The company CO asked me about my decision to return the Vietnamese pilot and then he told me I was in serious trouble and had to report to the battalion CO.

Maybe it was that I didn't salute when I reported to the battalion CO. We never saluted in the AO and I probably should have. I did stand at attention which it turned out was not attention enough. After an eternity of pure vile the commander asked why I refused to fly with this pilot. I tried to explain about the safety of the crew and that this pilot could be part of the crew in the future. The CO spent a good part of the rest of the evening trying to figure out how to hang my skin on his door (his stated objective) and teaching me new derogatory words.

It probably would not have been so bad if the Pentagon and the State Department had stayed out of it. I didn't think the US apology to Vietnam was warranted. In my opinion, the later visit from a high-ranking Vietnamese Officer went fairly well.

As a sequel, the Battalion CO ordered that reporting late would not be acceptable except for extreme bad weather or in-flight mechanical failure. I told our pilots not to worry. Everyone knew that maintenance would list aircraft as mission ready that would turn out to be not ready to fly. The solution was simple. Call operations and tell them you were off, wait a few minutes and call them with your "in flight" mechanical failure. Maintenance would back you up.

This advice saved our butts, but other battalion units had several crashes and the Battalion CO was on notice his command was at risk if he had another crash. That's when I over-torqued an H model while landing on the pinnacle on top of Nui Coto. For the record this was not recorded as an accident or an incident. My skin remained on my body and the CO retained his command.

*by Ken Bradley*

# HOW THE GUYS IN BLUE IMPRESSED ME

*By Doug Moore*

When I arrived in Vietnam in 1964, there were no American combat units in country. Instead it was still an advisory effort and the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam had small teams of officers and non-commisioned officers (usually three to five men) scattered around the countryside advising Vietnamese Army units and militias. There were a few Special Forces Detachments along the border with Cambodia and Laos and a few thousand support personnel were in the major cities. Finally, there were a handful of helicopter and small fixed wing units scattered around the countryside supporting the war effort. When I arrived, the American presence was only about 20,000 compared to a peak of 549,500 in 1968.

Flying in those early days was considerably different than what I experienced when I returned to support the 25th Infantry Division in 1968-69. Many of our early medevac missions covered long distances and required that we refuel on the way home. For instance, if we went north to Bu Gia Mop and there were any tactical delays getting the patients loaded, we would have to call a Special Forces unit at Song Be and ask them to refuel us. Their tiny airstrip was located outside their compound, so that meant they had to send out a combat force to secure it and that sometimes proved problematic, especially at night. It was rather exciting to watch tracers go flying by while the crew chief used a "wobble pump" to transfer fuel from 55-gallon barrels.

One mission that caused me quite a bit of concern occurred in early 1965. Lieutenant Mike Trader and I were flying together and received a call that a U.S. soldier had been wounded near the Cambodian border and the instructions were for us to land at the Moc Hoa Special Forces camp to pick-up an American guide. Those instructions seemed strange because we usually flew straight to the battle site when an American was wounded. The only time we picked up a guide was when there were no U.S. personnel on the ground at the pick-up site and the American guide was usually accompanied by a Vietnamese interpreter.

When we landed at Moc Hoa, we got an even bigger surprise. A Special Forces captain ran to our helicopter and handed me a handwritten set of map coordinates. As he climbed in the back, I checked the coordinates on my map and noticed the pick-up site was at least five miles inside Cambodia. It was supposedly neutral in those days

and we weren't supposed to cross that country's border.

When I asked the captain about it, he simply smiled while handing me his map and said "Hey, use this one!" I don't know where he got it, but the Cambodian border on his map was considerably farther to the north than what my aviation map was showing. Since the area north of Moc Hoa was mostly swampland with no discernable markers on the ground showing where the border was actually located, we launched and headed north.

Along the way, the captain told us a Viet Cong unit had been harassing them for some time but would flee back across the Cambodian border each time they tried to respond. On this occasion, one of his lieutenants was leading a small force that was in hot pursuit and were gaining on the enemy unit. While running after the bad guys, the lieutenant apparently stepped on some sort of land mine and was injured.

As we flew farther to the north, the Air Force Air Traffic Control Center in Saigon (Call Sign: Paris Control) called, "Dust Off, be advised you are approaching Stormy Weather." That was the code word for the Cambodian border, so I acknowledged his call and told him we were only going a few more miles further north. A couple of minutes later, Paris Control called again and said, "Dust Off, we show you over Stormy Weather."

We were still short of where the wounded lieutenant was supposed to be, so I began losing altitude while hoping Paris Control would not report us to higher headquarters. About that time, the captain we picked up used his radio to call the ground element and we landed near their red smoke. The medic and crew chief jumped out, placed the wounded officer on a litter, and began carrying him toward our helicopter. I could tell from his grimaces that he was in considerable pain and there was blood all over both of his trouser legs.

As soon as he was loaded, our medic, Specialist Fourth Class Bill Hughes, began cutting away the lieutenant's clothing and found several fragment wounds. The lieutenant then began complaining that his foot was hurting and was concerned that part of it might have been blown off, but when his boot was removed, there were no visible injuries other than considerable swelling. His good fortune was that, a few weeks earlier, he had received a new pair of jungle boots with steel inserts and they probably saved his foot. All he got was a severe jolt when the mine exploded and his foot probably ached for several days, but he was overjoyed that it was still intact.

As we were lifting off from the pick-up site, we noticed the Vietnamese soldiers the lieutenant had been with were turning back towards Moc Hoa, apparently giving up their chase for the bad guys. We probably hadn't reached more than a hundred feet in the air when Paris Control called, "Dust Off, you have company about 25 miles behind you and approaching fast." That meant a Cambodian fighter plane out of Phnom Penh was likely pursuing us as they did on occasion. The Cambodians had several T-28s that had been left behind by the French and, even though they were old, they could still outrun us. A couple of months earlier, another of our Dust Off helicopters flown by Si Simmons had been shot at several times and chased all over the northern part of the delta on a dark, moonless night and, in March of 1964, a L-19 observation plane had been shot down by a Cambodian T-28 killing both men aboard. I stopped my climb at 500 feet and planned to drop down to tree top level if he got any closer, hoping I could out-maneuver him at low altitude.

Just as we were crossing the border back into Vietnam, Paris Control called to tell me my "Company" was about 15 miles behind us and still headed our way. Then something absolutely mind-boggling occurred that makes me forever grateful for the men in blue.

Paris Control called again and said "Dust Off, maintain your same altitude and heading because I've got some "friendlies" coming your way. In fact, if you look to your left, you might be able to see them now." We looked to the east and saw two long smoke trails about the same level as us and, within a split second, two Air Force F-102 "Delta Dagger" fighter planes bracketed us. One went over us and the other went under us about 100 feet away. The pilot who went under us waved and gave us a thumbs up signal. As they passed, they must have hit their afterburners because they began climbing like homesick angels and turned north toward the Cambodian airplane. Paris Control called a minute or so later saying it appeared the Cambodian pilot was RTB (returning to base). Apparently, his mother didn't raise any dummies, so he decided rather quickly that he wasn't going to tangle with those bad boys.

We thanked Paris Control for their help, dropped the captain off at Moc Hoa, and then headed for the U.S. Naval Hospital in Saigon where the lieutenant received treatment for his wounds. We then returned

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1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.

1971-74 Osan AB, ROK

1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca

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	- William C. Brooks

#### KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

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

"Mr. Morton, the results of your hearing test was only fair, but the VA is currently not awarding disability compensation for hearing loss."



to our unit with an increased respect for the US Air Force and a new "war story" to share with others.

# CRASH II

It was 1-27-69 at 0800 on a hot, sunny day with a bright blue sky in Phu Loi, Vietnam. All the mechanics from the 15th TN BN who worked on the 100-hour PE, inspection and repairs made on Mag Gen George I Forsythe's Huey, were in formation. The UH-1H tail number was 67-17157 and it belonged to the 11th Avn GS Group of the 1st Air Cav. We were all waiting for the test pilots to come and pick three or four of us to go on the test flight. This was a new policy, because someone had crossed two hydraulic lines a few weeks back on a helicopter which caused it to fly backwards or opposite as it should. CWO Cole, the pilot had just got the Huey to a hover when he discovered the issue and set the Bird back down. He was mad as hell and with input from the other pilots, decided that if a few mechanics had to go on each test flight, it would improve the quality of workmanship. We all liked the idea, because it gave us a chance to fly. The view of Vietnam from the air was far better than on the ground. We brought cameras along to take pictures. I am SP4 Garst and writing this story for my children and grandchildren with input from the pilots and mechanics on the ride.

CWO Clinton Cole was walking across the flight line with WO Ken Butters. CWO Cole had done a tour in Vietnam before as an enlisted man. He was a flight engineer on a CV2 Caribou in the 17th Avn Co of 1st Air Cav. He was a crew chief for the Commanding General in Co A 25th Avn Group in the 25th Inf Div. The General got him into Flight School. Part of his duties were rigging crew for crash recovery. He was well respected by the troops for being one of us on his first tour. He was a great pilot and maintenance officer. We did not know much about WO Butters. He had only been in Vietnam for a couple of weeks. This was going to be his first test flight.

CWO Cole barked out, "Stuckey, Ruble, and Garst, load up." We were the lucky ones who got to go flying that day. That's like saddle up, which means to put your fatigue shirt on, grab your hat or



Cole.



Ruble and Garst.



Stuckey & Ho the Dog.



Butters.

bucket and put it on your head. Grab your M16 or .45 in your hand and your camera and jump onboard.

Cole and Butters did the pre-flight while the flight line fuel truck filled us up with JP-4. SP4 Ruble buckled up in the seat where the door gunner would sit. SP4 Stuckey sat in the bench seat behind the pilots and fastened his seat belt. SP4 Garst jumped in the crew chief seat so that made me responsible to watch the tail rotor. Cole strapped in the aircraft commanders pilot seat and Butters in the co-pilots seat.

WO Butters fired up the Huey, or in pilot's terms, cranked up the Huey. Cole and

Butters did the pre-flight check list. CWO Cole brought the bird to a hover and bounced it back and forth and dropped the nose down and we were off. Cole took the Huey up to 2000 feet doing a big circle around the flight pattern. Cole was putting the Huey through all the paces checking all the required flight test procedures and check list. It checked out

ok, so he turned the stick over to Butters to redo all the procedures and check list. I heard the engine shut down, but just figured he was going to practice an autorotation. I looked at the instrument panel and every light on it was flashing. I knew the engine must have flamed out. Cole took over the controls. Butters made the May Day call and gave our grid coordinates on the map. At this point, I thought oh shit, we are going down. Cole was strug-

gling with the controls and Butters kept repeating the process to get the hydraulics working, to no avail. Cole had to put the Huey in three dives to keep the air speed up, so we wouldn't spin with the main rotor. It was a good thing that Butters was a big dude, because he was helping Cole with the sticks to muscle the Huey down. The ground was coming to meet us fast because we were going like a bat out of hell. This was turning into quite a ride; we were head-



UH1.



Flight Line.

ing for a dry rice paddy. Cole flared, but we were coming in hot and slightly sideways. I knew this wasn't going to be good. The dirt was flying up with grass and weeds and I couldn't believe how fast we were going on the skids. The left skid tube and gun mount hit the rice paddy dike. The left skid tube peeled off and the right tube banged against the belly and bent up to the right. We rolled instantly on the left side and I bounced off the gun mount and was looking right at the ground and getting a dirt bath. The main rotor blades hit the ground and broke and bent up on the end. It straightened up the fuselage, but cut off the tail boom about three feet behind the attach points. Butters said part of the blade almost came through the right-hand door glass. I remember being dazed but knew I had to get out and away from the Huey. They always burn when they roll over. I took about four steps when I knew I should have opened Coles door and pulled back the plating shield so he could get out. He passed me at that time. He was a big guy; I don't know how he got out. Ruble had to crawl over the bent skid tube. Butters told him he couldn't get the door open because it was jammed. Rubble had to force it open and pull back the plating shield. Ruble went around to the nose and took out the radios and avionics. Stuckey was out and said he wished he had his M16, so he could fight if the Viet Cong got to us before the rescue helicopter. He said, he would rather shoot himself than to be captured. Cole had a .38 pistol in his survival kit and Butters had a .45 pistol, but it jammed when he tried to put a round in the chamber. Ruble and Stuckey both had cameras, so they took some pictures. Ruble and all of us decided we should get out of the open area and to the tree line on the rice paddy's edge. I saw a farmer with a water buffalo off to our left. With all that noise and commotion, he was not paying any attention to us. That made me wonder if VC were in the area.

Stuckey and I were getting a little nervous. It seemed to us we had been down for an hour. Butters and Ruble reminded us it had only been 15 minutes. At that time, we heard a Huey coming, it was from the 1/4 Cav. It came to a hover and landed. We all sprinted over and jumped in. We all sat on the floor board, but no one cared, because we were rescued. Off we went back to Phu Loi; our flight line

never looked better.

Accident investigators or the CID were there to chat with us about the crash. They took the cameras and film. They promised to give them back, but that didn't happen. I guess they did not want the pictures getting home of the damaged Generals helicopter. The General was angry because of his destroyed helicopter. The crew chief was mad because of all the work he had done to keep it shining. The pilots told them that it was better us than them. Butters told me that he had to pick up a new helicopter for the General later that afternoon at Hotel 3 in Saigon.

We were later told the fuel was contaminated with water and sediments. That caused the engine failure. I guess the water had never been drained from the sumps or filters changed on the fuel truck. We were never given a reason why the hydraulics did not work. W/O Cole and Butters are my heroes because they got us down safely with only a few bumps and scuff marks, and we all walked away.

Clinton Cole retired from the Army as a Lt Col. He had many assignments. His last combat assignment was in Desert Storm where he commanded the 7th Postal Bn., in the 7th Corps. He ran the JROTC program at FT Payne AL High School where he lives. Ken Butters did a couple of tours in Vietnam. He said he had a few failed marriages, so he moved to Eagle River AK. He was a bush pilot and test pilot for helicopters there.

Trey Ruble went to Ft Rucker after Vietnam. Then to West Point for a transportation driver for the cadets. He worked for a computer company and the Post Office. He lives in Crows Landing CA.

EF Stuckey worked on the family farm after Vietnam. Later he ran a bar, Circle G Café, Cowboy Corner, volunteer fireman, EMT and retired as Texaco Transport driver. He passed away in 2005 and his wife Sharon shared this information. They lived in Arnett OK.

Joe Garst went to Ft Stewart after Vietnam. Then to Germany at Gabligan a NATO air base. I worked 44 years at Beech Aircraft after the Army. Managed the Liaison Engineering and Repair Design Office and retired as an Engineering Fellow. I live in Augusta KS.

# USMC ASRT Flight, February 5, 1969

In February 1969 while flying H-46s with HMM-161 out of Quang Tri, I volunteered for an interesting emergency mission deep in Indian country which nobody else wanted. Why didn't they want it? Primarily because it was to be all actual-IFR, but mostly because of the recent introduction to northwest I Corps of the NVA's truck-mounted, radar-controlled quad 37mm AA, and new Russian SA-7 shoulder mounted heat-seeking missiles, neither of which were expected be very healthy for an H-46.

The mission was to be flying low on instruments in the soup well up into a deep east/west valley somewhere south of Khe Sahn, dropping pallets of resupply by parachute to a battalion of stranded ARVN grunts. At this point I was 12 1/2 months into my tour and senior squadron pilot in terms of in-country hours flown.

Being monsoon season, the weather was crap, and had been for over a week, which was why the ARVN were in bad trouble. They had been unable to get resupplied by truck or helicopter or receive any fixed wing support due to the weather being consistently 0/0. Their battalion was surrounded by an estimated NVA regiment, cutoff by road, virtually out of ammo, food & water, and in imminent danger of being overrun.

Meanwhile, the Marine Air Wing had been working for years with the tactical radar boys using Air Support Radar Teams (ASRT) to guide bombers for pinpoint ordnance delivery. They had also been considering the idea of using ASRT for guiding helicopters and when this ARVN situation came up it was quickly decided to test the concept.

It was fun for awhile. We'd set the transponder, then



A CH-46D Sea Knight from HMM-364 at Duc Pho, November 1970. This photo is owned by VHPA member Fred Thompson who took a lot of good pictures while flying for the Army in I Corps. This picture was taken at the refuel point at Duc Pho.

The Marine Corps acquired the Boeing Vertol-built CH-46 as the turbine powered replacement for the venerable UH-34. The A model was first delivered to operational squadrons in June, 1964. HMM-164 brought 27 CH-46As to Marble Mountain, Vietnam on 8 March 1966. On 28 October 1967, HMM-364 arrived as the first CH-46D squadron in Vietnam. The Marines generously supply nicknames to everyone and everything. HMM-364, officially known as the PURPLE FOXes, was denoted by the white circle around the fox's head on the rear pylon. This aircraft has the same emblem painted on the front pylon immediately over the windshields. The PURPLE FOXes stayed in Vietnam until March 1971.

wasn't too much fun IFR. "Uh, Cattlecall 1-0, come right 3° and down 75' please..." Then, "You're 1,000 meters out, come right 2°... 500 meters, down 50'... 200 meters... steady... DROP!" At that point I found I had to pull the nose up high to get the pallet sliding down the ramp, coming almost to zero airspeed while holding altitude. I was quite relieved when the pallet was clear and we could resume normal flight, still in the soup & still talking to ASRT. Because there were two pallets on board we had to drive around for a while before dropping #2. The delay was so the ARVN could let us (ASRT) know where the 1st pallet had landed, and to make adjustments.

About this time, I got to wondering what would happen if a pallet got hung up on the ramp and the chute popped, somehow getting sucked up into the aft rotor blades. It didn't take much imagination to see little pieces of H-46 scattered all over the ARVN base. But the real possibility of being tracked by quad 37s and/or SA-7s was always lurking, not that there was anything we could do about that except pucker up a little.

the ASRT with their portable radar in a truck somewhere would vector us around until we were headed up the valley. They could tell exactly where we were, and our altitude within a few feet. "Uh, Cattlecall 1-0, up 50' please..." Up 50 feet? Holy crap, has this guy ever been in a helicopter in a rain storm? It was a bit tricky approaching the drop point in the soup because we had to lower the ramp to get ready to push the pallet out. Which altered our aerodynamics and usually the altitude. "Uh, Cattlecall 1-0, down 100' please..." We also had to drop the airspeed down to about 40 kts, which

After flying all day long (we had twice returned to Quang Tri, reloaded and refueled & went back out for a total of six drops) our radio starting crapping out (as usual in those days). Not long after the last drop it was totally unreadable, which was spooky because we were still very low between those mountains and in the soup up that valley with no ASRT to direct us. Fortunately, I'd asked the co-pilot to track our ground path on a map as best he could. It wasn't that I didn't trust ASRT, but we were well below the mountains on either side of us in order to make the drops as accurately as possible, and a little DR in the cockpit seemed like a good idea. By then the sun was going down so that being in the soup, at dusk with no radios, and mountains on either side, was a bummer. Since the tops were nowhere to be known, and by that time we were getting low on fuel, climbing out was not an option. Instead, I decided our only real option was to hold altitude and fly east until clear of the mountains, then just let down blind and see what happened.

When our DR indicated we were well clear of the mountains, and SA-7s, I put it into a 500'/min descent with a moderate spiral and just waited till we saw something. I had also slowed to 40 kts figuring that if nothing else, we would pretty much be in a landing attitude if we ran out of altitude before knowing it. I told the crew to be on the lookout and call the clock location of the first thing they saw, or to simply call, "shit!" if we were about to crash into something lurking in that cloud/fog. After what seemed like forever, we finally broke out at 150' directly over Highway 1, just as I had planned (ha, ha). It had taken a while to get down and was almost dark under the crap, plus we were now really low on fuel, so I flew south along the road looking for an Army helicopter base which I thought was around there somewhere. We eventually found it, got in there on fumes and no radios, and received a royal welcome from our Army buddies. The Army pilots all loved the story. Between all the drinks they bought us, and being wiped out from driving around all day in the soup, I was a goner by 9 pm... When we re-fueled the next morning, we actually took on more JP than the tanks supposedly held.

We heard the next day that the ARVN recovered all we had dropped. Hallelujah. A week later an ARVN Infantry General came to Quang Tri to explain that those supplies most certainly saved over 300 of his troops' lives and, at a makeshift squadron awards ceremony, he proceeded to present me with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star for our efforts. At the same time

my CO announced that I was also getting a DFC for that mission, I guess he was not to be outdone by the ARVN General. From a purely piloting viewpoint I'm as proud of that day as I am of any I've ever flown. Saving lives is always a helicopter pilot's best mission. I rotated home later that month with over 800 hours, two purple hearts and 40 air medals.

Later I learned from the book "US Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment" (pp 286-287) that following our successful experimental use of ASRT on that flight, its use with helicopters was further developed such that by early 1971 it was successfully being used around Da Nang to precisely guide helicopters to preselected landing zones in the field. They commented, "With the ASRT, the Marine Corps made a unique contribution to the air war; no other Service had facilities comparable in both accuracy and displacement ability." So, our experimental use of ASRT to accommodate the emergency operational necessity of saving hundreds of ARVN lives also opened the door to significant advances in combat helicopter operations. All in all, a very good day.

~ Fred Pratt

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# CRASH INFORMATION ON U.S. MARINE CORPS HELICOPTER

## CH-53A, TAIL NUMBER 153710

The aircraft crashed into mountain during IFR flight. There were no survivors. The five crewmen included aircraft commander CAPT Frederick L. Schram, pilot CAPT John T. Chapman, crew chief CPL Philip S. Strand Jr., and gunners SSGT Bennett W. Olson and CPL Vernon B. Venegas. There were also 41 passengers aboard the aircraft.

The MAG-16 Command Chronology for January 8, 1968 reads: 'At 1915H one HMH-463 CH-53A (YH-37 Bureau Number 153710) was declared overdue and missing after disappearing during an IFR flight. Search and rescue operations commenced. On the 9th and 10th, the search for the missing CH-53A aircraft continued with negative sightings and search operations hampered by inclement weather. On the 11th, the wreckage of the missing CH-53A aircraft was sighted by search aircraft at coordinate YD234260, with no apparent survivors.'

Adverse weather conditions precluded a search of the crash site until January 19th when a recon team was inserted. The aircraft suffered severe burn damage and there was no possibility of survivors. In the casualties (hostile) section, the names of the five crew members are listed and the place is described as 18 miles south of Dong Ha, RVN.'

*A personal account of the incident:* "The cause of the accident, in my mind, would be attributable to 'multiple factors', including poor ground communications, poor aircraft antenna design, combat environment, weather and, most regrettably, pilot error. It pains me to say the last, as Fred was my great friend and companion but, nonetheless, it is regrettably true.

The story unfolded something like this: Fred and his co-pilot, CAPT John T. Chapman, were flying a reasonably routine logistics flight. As I recall, they had a mission flying out of Dong Ha for the day with resupplies to the Demilitarized Zone and/or Khe Sahn. In the afternoon, at the end of their mission, they were returning to Da Nang from Dong Ha and were requested to take a load of passengers from Dong Ha to Phu Bai.

It was monsoon season and the weather was over-

cast with the ceiling at approximately 1,000 feet. The Marine Corps insisted on proving its full capabilities by running air traffic control for all of I Corps and refused to turn air traffic control over to the Air Force, even though the Air Force wanted to take over the job and had the communications and personnel to do the job properly. One result of having Marine Corps air traffic control was that they could only communicate within one sector and had no land line communications to the next sector. Therefore, when we took off IFR (instrument flight rules), we did not have a through clearance to our destination, as we normally would have, if we were flying IFR in the United States or any place else in the world. In other words, you had a flight clearance to the end of a sector, then you had to call the next sector after you were already airborne IFR to tell them where you were and to get flight clearance into the next sector.

Thus, for Fred's flight from Dong Ha, he would have anticipated receiving a clearance from Dong Ha departure control for their area, and a second clearance from Hue approach control for clearance into the Phu Bai airport for landing. On the flight from Dong Ha to Phu Bai (based on my discussions with Paul Walton, who was our squadron's safety officer and who did the accident investigation), the tapes showed that Fred was cleared out of Dong Ha on the 180° radial at 2,000 feet for 10 miles, with instructions to contact Hue approach control for further clearance. Fred took off at 16:40 (local time) and flew the route for which they had been cleared. (I have checked my Vietnam diary notes to verify Fred's take off time, radials, DMEs and some of the other details).

Once they were airborne, they called Hue approach control for further clearance. They were in the clouds at this time and unable to see the ground. They reported-in to Hue approach control on the 310° radial of the Phu Bai Tacan at 21 miles. Hue approach control cleared them for IFR flight and an approach to the Phu Bai airport but instructed them to remain clear of various 'save-a-planes'. ('save-a-planes' are live artillery firings which are underway in an area and approach control would give us the location from which artillery was firing, the height of the

firing and the impact of the firing or, alternatively, give us designated radials to fly to avoid the artillery). According to the tapes of the conversations, the save-a-planes apparently were complicated, and it took some time for Fred and John to read them back to make sure they had them correct. In the process of continuing to communicate with Hue approach control (and presumably because they already had a flight clearance in hand), they continued past the 10-mile flight clearance limit which Dong Ha had given them and continued to fly on the same heading and altitude. Dong Ha approach control was tracking them as they flew. When they did not change heading and apparently had not started to climb, Dong Ha approach attempted to call them on 'guard' (emergency) frequency to warn them that they were approaching mountainous terrain.

On the CH 53As which we were flying, there was only one UHF antenna and it was located in front of the 'dog house' (the Plexiglas area that surrounds the hydraulics in front of the rotor mast). As a result of the location of the antenna, if a ground station was calling you from directly on your tail (which was

Dong Ha departure control's location relative to Fred's aircraft), you often could not hear the transmission. You would have to turn 30° to allow the antenna to receive the message. This was a reasonably well-known phenomenon amongst those of us in HMH 463, and the Naval Systems Command had ordered a fix, with a second antenna to be installed on the horizontal stabilizer.

While some of the aircraft on the mainland had been retrofitted to solve this problem, none of our aircraft in Vietnam had been retrofitted as of January 1968. As a result, despite repeated calls from Dong Ha departure control attempting to warn Fred of the hazard, Fred and John apparently heard none of their transmissions. Dong Ha departure control lost radar contact with the aircraft on the Dong Ha 190° radial at 17 miles. At our normal cruise speed in the CH 53 we flew about two-and-a-half miles per minute, so the time involved to go from 10 nautical miles to 17 nautical miles would have been a little less than three minutes.

Although Fred reported into Hue approach control on the 310° radial at 21 miles, Hue never made radar

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# THE CREW



CAPT. Fred Schram  
Aircraft Commander



CAPT. John Chapman  
Co-Pilot



SSGT. Ben Olson  
gunner



CPL. Vern Venegas  
gunner



CAPT. Peter Starn  
Author



CPL. Philip Strand,  
Crew Chief  
photo not available.

contact with Fred. Fred never canceled his instrument flight plan, never landed at Phu Bai, and Hue approach never reported them missing. When Fred's helicopter did not return to Marble Mountain, the squadron tried to locate him. Jerry McClees was the operations duty officer that day. When I heard Fred was overdue, initially, I was not too concerned. However, as the evening wore on without any word from his flight, I went down to the ready room. Jerry was there with Vic Lee, our operations officer. They had called every airfield in I Corps and Fred's helicopter had not landed at any of the other airfields. SAR (search and rescue) boats were launched up and down the coast without results. The weather was low overcast with rain and Phu Bai operations deemed the weather conditions too bad to launch SAR flights that night.

According to my diary, I checked on the maps in our ready room and determined that in the area where Dong Ha departure control last had contact with Fred, the three highest mountain tops were at 2,800, 3,000 and 3,200 feet. The next day and the day after, the weather remained too bad to conduct SAR flights. A number of crashes occurred in Vietnam where the effort to find the wreckage was fairly limited, if the crash site location was not readily ascertainable. For instance, Bill Dietz and Lou

Tessier's crash site was not found until several months after they crashed. However, in the case of Fred's crash, with the SAR flights grounded, a force of recon Marines and a Marine engineering company made efforts, on the 9th and 10th of January, to find Fred's crash site from the ground.

This amount of effort was unusual. We were later told that the reason for this extraordinary effort was not due to the large number of people who were on board the helicopter, but instead was due to the fact that one of the people on board was the G2 officer for the Third Marine Amphibious Force, a bird colonel, who had a fire-proof attaché case with him which contained all of the defensive maps for the entire DMZ (Demilitarized Zone), including the locations for all of the defensive mine fields. This was the reason for the Herculean effort to locate the crash site from the ground during the bad weather. General Walt wanted to know whether the security of the DMZ had been compromised by the North Vietnamese finding the crash site first and getting the maps.

On the 11th, the weather improved enough, for intermittent brief periods, so some limited SAR flights could be launched but the crash site was not located. The crash was found on January 12 on the Dong Ha 202° radial at 16 nautical miles at an elevation of 3,100 ft. on the 3,200 ft. mountain. They had just missed clearing the mountain! I flew over the crash site a day or two later. It was clear that there had been a devastating impact and explosion and that everyone must have died instantly. The crash site was clearly visible through the 60-foot jungle canopy on the mountain. By the way, I understand the recon Marines recovered the Colonel's attaché case with the maps intact. Fred's crash remains one of the worst military helicopter tragedies in the history of the world (the worst being in 2002 when 127 Russian soldiers died in a shoot-down in Chechnya).



This Sikorski CH-53A was photographed by Robert Brackenoff at Quang Tri in Feb 71 during Lam Son 719.

I guess two other footnotes may be worth mentioning. Because the Marine Corps' terrain maps were designed for the infantry, they were awkward to work with in the cockpit. Fred went over to the Air Force facility at Da Nang around November or December and acquired Air Force VFR maps for Vietnam which showed both the airways and terrain for all of I Corps in a very usable format. Fred and I had studied these maps, including circling minimum safe altitudes in each quadrant and carried them with us so that if we inadvertently went IFR, we would always know what our minimum safe altitude was.

This, of course, turns out to be an ironic initiative, since at the crucial moment, Fred was preoccupied with save-a-planes, as opposed to minimum altitude. I presume this is because he felt he was in an IFR environment, and about to fly a flight clearance which should have protected him from the terrain, as opposed to improvising for minimum safety altitude in an inadvertent IFR situation. I assume, based on his movement from the 180° radial to the 202° radial and his 3,100 ft. altitude at the time of impact, that they had started to climb to a new assigned altitude and were navigating to a new fix assigned by Hue approach. It's hard to know for sure.

The other footnote is that we had been flying both VFR and IFR up and down the coast of I Corps for seven months and knew the terrain well. However, I think most of the pilots subconsciously thought of the coastal route as being north-south, which basically it was. However, between Dong Ha and Hai Van Pass, (south of Phu Bai), the coastline compass heading goes slightly north-

west-southeast by about 30°. If one remains along the coast, all of the terrain is flat, basically at sea level. After Fred's crash I asked 10 of our squadron pilots, without a map in front of them, what they thought the course heading was up and down the coastline below Dong Ha. Nine out of ten of them replied 'north-south or 360° 180°'. That was also my impression prior to Fred's crash. My point is that while Fred had flown over this route for over seven months, in both VFR and IFR conditions, I believe his mental mindset was that when leaving Dong Ha on the 180° radial he would be flying over the lowlands and rice paddies. I think this mistaken assumption may have meant that clearing terrain was not even a concern in his mind. Obviously, it was a very fatal mistake, one which apparently 9 out of 10 of us might have made. When you're flying, preoccupation with one safety item can cause another one to reach up and grab you with a true vengeance."

Semper Fi,  
February 13, 1998,  
Peter Starn



# How we got here...

by Ralph Weber

The stories of 'How we got here' are as many and varied as the people and regions of the United States. I have extracted these stories from a remarkable email chain that started as one member of the North Alabama Chapter (NAVHPA) remarking on the general email how he had gotten started in Army Aviation and served in Vietnam. For the next several days many others chose to share their experiences, even after I clearly told them I would use their words for an article for the Aviator. The original post gave me the title of this composite story, 'How we got here.' I will not identify the authors of each segment. I believe it is sufficient that they will recognize their stories. All the quoted material is their words, not mine.

*This first part looks at how we entered the Army and flight school.*

**The Navy wanted me** in their Submarine program, and I just stomped on the floor of the recruiting office and told him, 'I have to do that on solid ground at least once a day,' and walked out. The Air Force recruiter just laughed at me and, 'Son, we have a two-and-a-half year waiting list. The Draft will get you before we need you.' I tiptoed past the Marine Recruiter's Office. I was afraid he'd come out and tackle me and make me sign up. And, the Army offered me this great future...

**I enlisted in the Army** in 1967 for Rotary Wing Aviator Training. Many of my friends were Vietnam Vets, who had gotten out and were back in school or working. I thought they'd be excited for me when I told them I was going to learn how to fly helicopters in Combat.

When I told them, I had just enlisted to be a helicopter pilot, they uniformly yelled, 'ARE YOU FREAKING NUTS !!!' They used a different word than 'freaking,' but I think you get the idea.

I replied, 'Yeah!!! the Army NEEDS Helicopter pilots, and I passed all the tests!!!' They ALL (the Vietnam Combat Vets) looked at me and said, almost in unison, 'You DO know WHY the Army NEEDS Helicopter Pilots, don't you!!! You're a freaking DEAD MAN !!!!'

I replied, 'But, I'm excited!!!' They all walked away with, 'You're still freaking NUTS!!!'

True story. None of them could believe I was still alive 2 years later, when home on leave after Vietnam.

**I wasn't even smart** enough to see what was in front of my face. I just got drafted! Then, about half-way through Infantry AIT at Fort Polk LA, the in-service recruiter came to me and made an offer. 'But you've gotta decide right now because the class starts in five days!' The rest is history.

**I received my draft notice** in November 1965. Did not know squat about the Army or any service. I spoke to a couple of guys who

were drafted and they recommended to enlist and get a specialty other than grunt. I took their advice and enlisted in the Army, based mainly on the advice of those who just showed up on Whitehall Street and were told they would be going to the marines. That did not appeal to me, so I enlisted to go to 67N crew chief school, and by the way, my older brother by two years received his notice after losing his football scholarship for football had also enlisted. While enjoying the two-story barracks at Rucker, where my brother was also located after basic training. While at Rucker I kept noticing all these young guys driving around in all these new cars/convertibles. I started asking questions and lo and behold I found out that these guys were at Rucker on a TDY basis going through flight school. After learning this I inquired as to how you could do this. I was informed that I could apply for WOC flight school or I could apply to go to OCS and go through flight School while making more money. After growing up in austere circumstances, I weighed the options and good or bad I decided to apply for Infantry OCS. That was not a great move, I should have looked into Transportation Corps., but it all worked out and by the way, my older brother went to Field Artillery OCS. We both graduated, but while being treated like dogs, we were given the opportunity to fill out a dream sheet. My sheet went bold, Jump School, Special Warfare School, and to top it off with Flight School.

Now it gets interesting, when I graduated jump school and prior to going to Bragg, I made a trip home and treated myself to a 1967 Firebird Convertible, since the car I had been driving was over 10 years old. That was the way to go to Ft. Bragg. I did all the requirement while in the 7th SFG at Bragg and lo and behold, I received orders for Flight School, then Vietnam. From there it is just history, but I would not change a thing. Initially I went to flight school for the money, but it was the best decision I ever made.

**Drafted in December 1965**, after earlier flunking the flight physical for WOFT. Did basic at Ft. Polk complete with pneumonia. Sent to Ft. Sill for AIT to train as a gun bunny. One day at formation ten names were called out, mine among them. They had quotas for OCS and our group had qualifying test scores. That sounded like an opportunity and I said fine. During the battery commander's interview, I asked if a person could go to flight school after being commissioned. He said, sure – but go to Transportation OCS. So, I did, but not until being sent through OCS Prep at Sill. Two months of Chinese fire drills and sleep deprivation, plus weekend trips up Medicine Bluff 4 double timing with M-14s at port arms, in the summer Oklahoma heat. Total 4.2 miles with a steep hill climb in the middle. Exactly the same as the regular Artillery OCS. That was called the 'Jark.' Makes me sweat just thinking about it, even now.

After that, Transportation Corps OCS at Ft. Eustis was a breeze.

After a month's worth of pushups and low crawling, we got to do fun stuff: load up C-130s with vehicles and go flying. Went to the docks and load cargo on ships as our own stevedores. And there was a real steam railroad on post they called the 'FG&B' (front gate and back). Got to drive that, too. The goal of some of the candidates upon graduation was to command a 'floatin' boat company. The reality was many of the newly-minted 2LTs would go lead truck convoys in Vietnam. For some reason I was assigned to Ft. Campbell. There I wangled a flight physical by a SP5 impersonating a flight surgeon. It got me to flight school, thank God.'

**'In 1961, LTC Bill Weand (US Army, IN, Ret)** was in RVN. Some years later he visited his brother/my dad and warned that, 'If I had to go to RVN then I should go as an officer, because I would have a better chance.' When I graduated High School in 1965, the School Superintendent awarded my diploma and at the edge of the stage, Mrs. Goodman, secretary of the local selective service board, gave me a II-S classification slip. I was enrolled in Chipola Junior College (now Chipola College). She gave me a stern warning not to quit or flunk out as I would get the lucky 1-A classification like some of my other classmates.

Chipola is in Marianna FL, just a hop, skip, and jump from Ft. Rucker, the old Air Force training Base, Graham AFB, plus several stage fields. The constant wop-wop of Hueys permeated the air day and night.

While there in my sophomore year the Navy recruiters showed up. I talked to the them as I thought their A4 jet looked like a real flying hot rod. I signed up to take the AVSBAD, but did not pass it as I had zero flying experience/knowledge. They said no problem, just enlist in the Navy and I could retake the test then. I politely declined. The Air Force wasn't interested in any undergraduates and I don't recall them even showing at Chipola.

A few weeks later the Army recruiter showed up and I talked to him about flying. He said no problem, just pass the AVSBAD, finish college and I would go to flight school. I told him I had not done well on the previous attempt and again he said no problem. He spent about 30 minutes going over aeronautical terms and air-field terminology. Then he folded a paper airplane from a sheet of paper. He held it on his nose and pointed it up, down, left and right describing what he saw. He then had me do the same, explaining what I saw in each attitude. He told me to just image me sitting in the paper airplane and answer the flight attitude questions based on that. He even said I could take a piece of note paper to use during the test, but I had to turn it in after completing the test. He then set the timer and walked out of the room. I passed the test.

About six weeks later, I was dropped off at the front gate of Ft. Benning GA and went through Basic Training (B Company, 8th Battalion 2nd Training Brigade, in Harmony Church area) along with about 450 other draftees and enlistees, and surprisingly about 90 others who like me, would go into the inactive reserve upon graduation under the proviso that I/we graduate university to be com-

missioned a 2LT in the Army. The other condition was I had to join ROTC for the final two years. I walked out of Ft. Benning in civilian clothes the day of Basic Graduation and was at FSU as a junior a few weeks later. I found the studies to be challenging, but ROTC was somewhat sophomoric after basic training. For whatever reason, one of the Majors in the department took an interest in me and ensured I got into a flying program and the local airport, which the Army (or Air Force one) paid for. I got my Private License in that program.

I did well in ROTC and was designated a Distinguished Military Graduate which meant I would get a 'Regular' Commission, vice the normal 'Reserve' Commission. I was happy about that until that same Major pulled me aside and explained I had the right to decline that and I asked him why would I want to do that. His response was that I would have to go into one of the three combat arms (IN, AR, ARTY) and do a year utilization tour, which meant going to VN before being allowed to go to flight school. He suggested I might consider the Reserve commission and the Transportation Corp as a branch as they had 'all the helicopters and pilots.' I declined the Regular commission and went to Ft Eustis for Officer Basic. I didn't get to drive the train as Gil did, but I did, at a later date, have the last rail detachment in the US Army under my command there.'

**'When I enlisted in October of 1965,** I was interested in going to Army flight school and took the Flight Aptitude Skills Test and did an introduction ride in an OH-13, both with good results. I was told to expect orders for Flight School at my next training post. Not to delay my adrenalin rush I volunteered for Airborne School and reported for Basic at Ft. Leonard Wood. At my next two training posts (Ft. Gordon – Advanced Infantry & Ft. Benning – Jump School) I was told to expect orders at my next assignment (RVN)! After about four months in country and a witness to how small arms could easily bring down a helicopter, I decided my survival chances were somewhat enhanced by staying with my infantry company. I DEROsd, went to college, got my degree and then went back to Vietnam as an aviator!

'In October 1967 I reported to Fort Wolters for flight training. During preflight I was appointed as the company commander for my WOC company. For reasons I no longer remember we decided to wear our aviator sunglasses in one of the evening formations. A senior whose name I can't remember was observing and didn't think it was appropriate to wear sunglasses in formation and he ordered me to have everyone take them off. I called to company to attention and gave the order, 'Remove Sunglasses, MOVE!' The entire company took off their sunglasses simultaneously. It was beautiful. Except this senior wasn't impressed. He demanded to know what I was doing. I replied, 'Sir, we removed our sunglasses in a military manner.' I guess he had no sense of humor and he chewed me out up one side and down the other and gave me so many demerits I would never get a weekend pass again. But it was worth every demerit and I would do it again.'

**'I always loved airplanes** (note: airplanes, not helicopters). I

began flying when I was in high school using \$150 my Dad gave me for Christmas. After that, my boss let me work out my flying time by sweeping hangar floors, washing and polishing airplanes, and all the miscellaneous stuff required to run a small-town flying service. Menial tasks morphed into working as a 'semi-A&P' meaning my boss pretty much just checked my work and signed the papers. As flying time built up, I got a Commercial Pilot License then added a CFI. My primary flying in those days was flying fire patrols for the Mississippi Forestry Commission, Power Line Patrols for the Mississippi Power Company, charter for English Flying Service, and taking the occasional student through the hoops to get a Private Pilot's License. All this while completing a BS in Mathematics at the University of Southern Mississippi and going through their ROTC program. But the most important thing I did was to get married to the lovely lady who has been my bride for 56 years now, and counting.

Upon graduation and commissioning into Air Defense Artillery, Mary and I began a weird odyssey that took us to Gunter AFB and a tour as an ADA Director in a Semi-automatic Air Ground Environment (SAGE) blockhouse working alongside a bunch of Air Force Intercept Directors who ran F-104s out of Homestead AFB FL, and F-102's out of New Orleans. As they got to know me, and a couple of them were my students at the Maxwell-Gunter Aero Club, they began to let me run intercepts for them. Remember this was just as the Cuban Missile Crisis was winding down and we were very careful about who was flying in our airspace. Imagine intercepting and identifying by tail number a Piper Caribbean, who was off of his flight plan a bit, and you are flying an F-104, gear down, flaps down, speed brake out, and near full afterburner trying to stay in the air while reading the tail numbers of the Piper. And imagine I did. I so much wanted to do that.'

'So, it's early 1966, I'm 19 and I'm getting close to finishing my apprenticeship as a barber. I have a 55 Chevy Bel Air 2 door hard-top, 1958 Corvette, someone 21 buying me booze, and a girl-friend. And I get a draft notice. Now my friends and neighbors would not have selected me as this letter says. I gave a frantic call to my WWII P-51 pilot dad!! He says, 'you can get drafted and become a grunt or enlist for aviation.' I stopped at the Navy recruiter and he immediately wanted me on a ship as a barber. Hell no, too much water. Saw the Army recruiter and said he couldn't process me quick enough for flight school BUT how about becoming a Mechanic/crewchief. I signed on the dotted line.'

May 27, 1966 I was at Logan Heights, Fort Bliss TX doing push-ups. From there to beautiful Fort Rucker. Flew from Atlanta to Rucker on a fine DC-3 and two of us EM got a ride from two Warrant Officer Candidates to Rucker for money. Had to hide on a dirt road because they were speeding and being chased by some bubba cop. We got to Rucker with no ticket. While attending Huey training, we had to work the mess hall for those Warrant Officer Candidates. How disgusting.

Did a tour in Korea, 1966-67, crewing OH-23G Ravens. From

there I was assigned to the 40th Artillery Brigade (Air Defense) at the Presidio of San Francisco, crewing OH-23G on floats. It was 1967-69 and Height Ashbury was in full swing. While there I got married in 68 and gave myself a choice. Become a California Highway Patrolman or see about flight school. My mentor, CW4 Perry D. Leonard called branch. I did all the stuff needed to attend and in May 1969 I reported to Fort Wolters TX. I had my SP/5 rank on, ribbons and CE wings. That worked until I signed in. Then those TACs ripped into me. Get all the crap off my uniform and get a haircut. I headed to the barber shop and it was closed. I made the error of going onto the wrong floor of my building and saw all these guys with BLACK TABS. Crap! Senior Candidates! They pulled me into the latrine and I got my first haircut for flight school.'

'I dropped out of college in 67 and went down to the recruiter because I felt guilty being in school and others having to risk their lives. I took all the necessary tests and the recruiter asked me if I would be interested in being a helicopter pilot, so I thought, well I've seen them flying out at the local navy base so what the heck. No one ever told me of the longevity of flying helicopters in combat. Went to Fort Polk, then on to Wolters.'

'If you can stand one more story, I graduated high school in 1968. Sometime during my senior year, I ran across a flyer from the Army recruiter advertising their flight school. I couldn't believe it when it said that I could sign up with only a high school education, and not only would I get paid to fly, I would also get extra money on top of my regular pay. Sign me up! Later I found out that I had to fly four hours per month to qualify for flight pay. I thought they would have a maximum number of flying hours, not a minimum. This is too good to be true.'

'It's December '65 just flunked out of Tri-State College, Angola IN, and looking for a job in Indianapolis. Walked into a recruiter's office in a converted warehouse. He has a 6x12 foot picture of a Huey coming out of the sky with guns blazing and in one-foot letters it said IF YOU HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, WE WILL TEACH YOU TO FLY. I looked at the poster and then at the recruiter and said, 'I want to do that,' he said, 'Sit down son.' Fort Knox then Wolters for my first close look at a helicopter. Class 66-3 had 90 starting pre-flight and 60 at the end, most of the 30 were prior military. E-6s & 7s did not take to the candidate life well. The class behind us, I think was the First WOC Company, had 400 in the class and most were flying 55s. We flew the 23s and chased around Possum Kingdom and under Brazos bridges, not the safest thing but I also took one to 10K and autorotated back down. Way too much solo time to burn off. Rucker, then the 281st AHC supporting Project Delta and under the wing of a crusty W-3 & W-4 who transitioned me into Charlie model gunships, just like the poster! On to Savannah as the 50th Army Officer to sign into Hunter. Through instrument instructor training and planning on getting out in 23 days with a job dusting rutabaga in Minnesota and flying the state fair circuit. When a call comes in saying how would you like to be a 1LT,

had already turned down 2LT, so I told Maj Parrish if he could do it in 23 days, he had a deal. 45 days later; married, direct to 1LT TC, AMOC, second tour replaced the OH-6 with OH-58s, immediately killing 12 or so Scout Pilots due to differences in performance. Out at 20 after Germany, Texas and 5 years working with the Reserves in Birmingham, still here in fact.'

*Then there was flight school. Most NAVHPA email posters went to WORWAC but several were already commissioned officers when they attended ORWAC. The experiences were, to say the least, different. First, the Warrant Officers...*

'After basic training at Fort Polk, they bussed us to Fort Wolters. Of course, we were having a good time, being real army troops on the way to flight school. When the driver parked the bus in front of 4th WOC and opened the door, on walks 'Granny' Griggs and screams 'SHUT UP!' The noise level on the bus went from 110db to zero in a heartbeat. Then Granny said, 'When I say go, you've got 30 seconds to get off this bus, grab your duffle bags and get into some kind of formation.' Needless to say, it took us a little longer than 30 seconds with the tac officers (turn coat Warrant Officers) screaming in our faces.'

'Later I met the guys in my section, including Sam Maki (who is this old guy?) (by the way Sam, it was early March 1969), Les Haas, and Mike Nord. I had a difficult time in flight school mostly because I, along with Les and Mike, had to carry Sam through the program. Due to our diligence, we got him to graduation. Just kidding, Sam.'

'If I remember correctly, after we went through the wringer for the first many, many hours. Our TACs then gathered us up in a gaggle, and then went through something like five or six guys as WOC Company Commander before they kept one for 'awhile.'

It was like:

'Candidate Adams, form up the company!!!'

'Sir, Candidate Adams, Yes SIR!!!'

'Ah, Um, Ah...'

'RELIEVED !!!!!'

'Candidate Brown, form up the company!!!"

'Sir, Candidate Brown, Yes SIR!!!'

'Ah, Um, Ah...'

'RELIEVED !!!!!,

'Candidate Coonce, form up the company!!!".

'Sir, Candidate Coonce, Yes SIR!!!'

'Ah, Um, Ah...'

'RELIEVED !!!!!'

'Candidate Dykes, form up the company!!!"

Ad Nauseum, until SOMEONE finally formed up the Company...or the TACs just got tired.

I had to lead PT one day, and as you know, you are always being called out, without warning, to do stuff. Leading PT that day was one of those.

My TAC called me later that day to go over my rating on it (and, as you know EVERYING was graded and rated at ALL times. My TAC went over how I did, and then he looked at me with that

TAC Officer glare (they must teach it as TAC Officer School, and he said, 'Glasier! Nothing we do seems to faze you!!! Why is that!!!'

I replied (probably unwisely), 'Sir, Candidate Glasier, my Fraternity was tougher than you guys are, Sir!!!'

That was probably NOT a wise thing to say as things turned out, but I did notice a twinkle in his eye.'

I was in class 68-11 at Wolters. Should have been in the previous class but they were overloaded so they held 30 of us back for two weeks before we could start training. We called ourselves The Dirty 30 and became the Purple Hats. We were not idle, however. Work detail after detail, police call, spit and polish etc. However, there were busy and creative minds at work. One day, when the Tac Officer was out, someone had the bright idea to move his office into the latrine. We then left for our assigned work detail. We were all braced for a large reaction which we figured would be endless pushups, demerits etc. When we returned from our work detail, we looked in his office and discovered it as we had left it — empty. At first, we thought he had not returned. Then a couple of us looked in the latrine and there he was. 'WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT CANDIDATE,' he boomed. Everyone snapped to attention. Pause...'WELL?' Then someone meekly said, 'permission to piss sir.' 'PERMISSION DENIED.' We had to use the facilities in the next building (Red Hats, I think, and they weren't sympathetic to our plight). At the end of the day we had to move his office back. Then he called us all into the latrine. While we were all standing at attention, he conducted an inspection and found lots and lots and lots of dirt. 'DO YOU SEE THAT?' An imaginary fly spec. 'SHAMEFUL,' pointing to an imaginary flaw on the floor. Then touching a mirror and leaving a smudge, 'DISGUSTINGLY FILTHY.' He walked into the hall and said, 'I WANT EVERY INCH OF THAT LATRINE SCRUBBED AND I BETTER NOT FIND ONE SPEC OF DUST.' I think we had to scrub it three times before he was satisfied. Our 'creativity' was severely diminished. As Shakespeare put it, 'And enterprises of great pith and moment, with this regard, their currents turn awry, and lose the name of action.' Anyway, we were soon in our flight training and too busy for any such mischief.

While in class 68-505, after being recycled from 68-3, my IP was demonstrating max performance takeoff and flew us into power lines in an OH 23 at Palo Pinto airfield. As we were taking off, I saw the wire and was trying to tell the IP, but figured he knew what he was doing. We caught the wire right in the center of the bubble just below the center window frame. It must have broken about four telephone poles back because as we pitched forward at about a 60-degree nose down attitude, we felt the aircraft finally lurch and catapult forward. The wire, still connected on the right side sawed through the bubble and was against the center console, where I, the student, sat. I can still remember the sound of that wire zinging through the cockpit. It was pulling the console slowly against my legs. Somehow the IP maintained control of the aircraft and it pretty much levelled out before we made a forced landing in a clearing outside Palo Pinto Lake with

only enough clearance for the blades to not hit trees. The tower must have seen what was happening and tried to contact us but the wire that snapped was the power to the airfield.

We got down safely, jumped out of aircraft and by habit, I tried to slow the rotor by lightly holding on to the angled driveshaft. I was fine until after it was over. Too dumb to know any better. Tower called on land line for Flat Iron to come get us. We had to walk out to another clearing so he could land. Once on board my nerves finally let go. Later, we were told it was the first survived power line strike in Wolter's history. My IP had to take a check ride to make sure he was still qualified, and I had a check ride to see if I was too afraid of flying. I would always joke that he had coke bottle glasses because the lenses were so thick like the bottom of a Coke bottle. I had only A rides for the rest of my time at Wolters. And I hadn't gone to combat yet!

*The commissioned officers (known as RLOs or Real Live Officers) had a much different experience in flight school.*

**From Officer Basic** I went to Ft. Wolters, 70-26 Brown Hats, and lived in a trailer in a cow pasture along with many other students. As an interesting aside, we always knew when we would get a 'raise' in TDY as the rent would go up by the exact amount about two weeks prior. I then transferred to Ft. Rucker getting married enroute. I graduated from Ft. Rucker, then went to Cobra transition at Cobra Hall / Hunter Airfield and Ft Stewart ranges. From there I went to AMOC enroute to Vietnam.'

'Then I got orders to Ft. Wolters TX, and USAPHS. Helicopters!! There must be some mistake! I was supposed to be going to Fixed Wing then Mohawks. Man did I have a lot to learn about flying and the helicopter would be the one to square away my attitude. Fortunately, my first IP, John Fouche, was the best all-around helicopter pilot I have ever flown with, and I have flown with a bunch of them.'

Like we all experienced, graduation from Ft Rucker meant go to Vietnam, do not pass Go, do not collect \$200! Assigned to A/101st Avn Bn in Soc Trang, I flew UH-1D (Warriors) slicks for about a month and then begged to go immediately to fly UH-1B gunships (T-birds) both in A/101st Avn Bn. later the 336th AHC. My boss was Teddy Allen and I am eternally grateful that he took me into the T-birds a month early. Perhaps it was the steely glint in my eyes, or more likely it was the way I was sobbing and licking his boots. It was one or the other, I'm sure. Teddy protected young 1st Lt Stewart to keep me as a fire team leader when a bunch of Captains wanted my job. Later I became the Company SIP for UH-1 B/D. Guess that CFI in my back-pocket helped that along. I pictured myself staying close to the airfield at Soc Trang, giving the occasional AC check ride and working on my tan. Then Teddy told me that the SIP thing was an additional duty that I could do on my off days, or after flying my gun missions. I looked it up in the dictionary to find out what an 'Off Day' was. Oh, well, I guess it was for the honor of the thing!'

*After Vietnam, our experiences ran the gamut of ordinary to the Space Shuttle.*

'Graduated in December 1969. Attended AMOC phase I

enroute to RVN May 1970. Went to Camp Evans for SERTS training. Later a two-week in country Cobra transition and test flew snakes for 101st units. The rest is history with 21 years, 7 Months and 4 Days, according to my DD-214.'

**'After my first tour** I was assigned back to Fort Wolters and I was the company commander of the 10th WOC and then when we started closing down the WOC companies I was the company commander of fifth WOC. I have been reliving some of the experiences through reading your emails. I have really been remembering the parties done at the WOC Recreation building and some of the shenanigans the candidates pulled.'

**'Returning home,** I became an IP in Pre-solo Primary 1 at Ft Wolters then commander of an MOI flight. Then mostly Army stuff. ADA Career Course, followed by the Guided Missile Systems Office Course, followed by a Master's degree program at the University of Texas at Arlington. All this time kept me out of a second tour in Vietnam. I had two sets of return orders cancelled because of the drawdown, so I ended up at the 309th Avn Bn in Korea, very nearly ending my Army career. It wasn't the Army; it was some of the people that did it. I figured that if some of these people could get promoted in the Army, then I didn't want to be a part of it anymore.

But then I got orders to the US Navy Test Pilot School, so I decided to stick it out. This led to me flying five prototype helicopters in 4 1/2 years at Edwards AFB (YAH-64; YAH-63, YUH-60, YUH-61 and AH-1R) as well as several fixed wing airplanes. I finally did get to fly that Mohawk! My Mohawk qualification course consisted of one dual flight at USNTPS. (My second flight was solo, to determine single engine VMC in all normally encountered configurations.) I was selected to be Chief Test Pilot and Project Officer for the Government Competitive Test of the YAH-64 which ultimately became the AH-64 Apache. I got some pretty good report cards and survived my first (but not last) 4-star ass chewing.

This led me to NASA and becoming the Army's first Astronaut. My two space flights saw me flying solo, 1,000,000 ft above the Earth, at 17,500 mph, as pilot of NASA's MMU.

I left NASA when the Army selected me for promotion to BG and finished my military career as Director of Plans for the US Space Command, Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs, CO. Retirement was forced on me. The Army said I was the only General Officer who had not served in Washington, DC. I would not get a second star until I had served in DC, so my next tour WOULD be in DC. Those experienced Washington folks would have eaten me alive. So, I talked it over with Mary, and together we decided to retire, and I would become a ski bum. The Ski Bum trade doesn't pay well, but the fringe benefits are AWSOME!'

*I hope you have enjoyed reading some of these experiences from members of the NAVHPA. Perhaps, by next year after we beat COVID-19, we can have more social encounters and get Buc-3 out of storage and continue our mission to educate the younger generations about how it was, if we can just remember it correctly.*

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALAMO CHAPTER  
Mike Law  
830-730-0950  
mglaw@earthlink.net

ALASKA CHAPTER  
Lynn Kile, President  
12243 W Skyline Dr.  
Eagle River, AK 99577  
Phone: 907-696-5453  
Email: llkile@aol.com

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER  
Chuck Canfield, President  
3225 Selkirk Bush Rd. SW  
Warren, OH 44481  
Cell: (330) 984-0889  
Email: muskets176@gmail.com

ARIZONA CHAPTER  
Position Open

CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER  
Ken Fritz  
5341 W Riego Rd.  
Sacramento, CA 95837  
Phone: 916-768-1675

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER  
Tom Mc Millen, President  
17 Broad St.  
Morris, NY 13808  
Phone: 607-263-2551  
Email: tomgenevamcmillen@yahoo.com

FLORIDA CHAPTER  
Gary Harrell, President  
4149 Gevelia Drive  
Brooksville FL 34604  
352-586-2562

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER  
Richard Gaurkee, President  
1917 E. Henderson  
Cleburne TX 76031  
Phone: 817-556-2598  
Email: president@fwcvhpa.org

GEORGIA CHAPTER  
Chuck Stoudt, President  
Phone: 770-846-4413  
Email: chuckgavhpa@gmail.com

HAWAII CHAPTER – Provisional  
Ken DeHoff - POC  
Email: khdehoff@gmail.com  
808-754-6871

LOUISIANA GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Victor Lent, President  
P.O. Box 111  
Arabi, LA 70032  
Phone: 504-201-9070  
Email: VHPA-NewOrleans@earthlink.net

MICHIGAN CHAPTER  
Richard Deer, President  
308 W 4th St  
Charlotte, MI 48813-2186  
Phone: 517-543-2962  
Email: richdeer@att.net

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER  
Marshall Eubanks, President  
217 Golden Harvest, New Market, AL 35761  
Phone: 256-527-5900  
Email: usandmel@mchsi.com

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
Gerald Phelps, President  
118 South Pine Cove Lane  
Macon, NC 27551  
Phone: 252-257-2544  
Email: s22comet@centurylink.net

OHIO RIVER LZ CHAPTER  
Dan S. Gulley, President  
Phone 812 948-1357  
Email dan.gulley@att.net  
www.ohrivlz.org

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
Mike Sloniker, President  
3909 Creek Bank Rd,  
Edmond, OK 73003  
Home: 703-690-5856  
Cell: 703-395-5147  
Email: mikesloniker@yahoo.com  
www.okvhpa.org

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER  
Don Agren, President  
13712 Sandy Oak Rd.  
Chester, VA 23831  
804-691-3002  
Email: dnaagren@comcast.net  
Facebook: Old Dominion Chapter VHPA

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER  
Dale E House, President  
14520 Akron St.  
Brighton, CO, 80602  
Phone: 303-659-8754  
Email: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER  
Jim Miles, President  
610 N. Summit Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
Phone: 605-338-8288  
Email: DustOff1525@Yahoo.com

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER  
Ron Clifton  
cliftonron@yahoo.com  
417-462-7837

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER  
(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter  
Roger Lone, President  
2533 B Airport Blvd  
West Columbia, SC 29170  
Phone Office 803 822-8812  
Cell 760 851-5220  
rdlone@hotmail.com

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
Jim Davidson, President  
PO Box 3219  
Crestline, CA 92325-3219  
Home: 909-338-0907  
Cell: 909-633-4427  
Email: jimdavidson007@hotmail.com

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER  
Tim C. Callister, President  
Email: tim\_callister@comcast.net

UTAH CHAPTER  
Steve Jackson  
armyav8r11@msn.com  
801-647-5532

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER  
David Swanson, President  
Email: desch47@hotmail.com

## 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 ka5hzd@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

Two months have passed since our last article, and everything has changed. With all the closures that have taken

place and changes to how we interact with each other, getting anything done as a chapter project or luncheon has been impossible. Needless to say, we have maintained some communications by email, but nothing in person.

As we arrive at the doorstep of June, plans are now being made to start having luncheons again. These will be somewhat limited for now, but more changes should begin in June and July. Our quar-

terly business meeting should be taking place sometime in June, but nothing has been planned at this time. With social distancing in place, the meeting will be more difficult, but can be done. I would expect that restrictions will begin to be lifted as we get through these summer months, but only time will tell. I hope all the other chapters are able to make their adjustments, and be effective at the same time. I would expect that most chapters are faced with the same challenges at this time. I hope and pray that all chapter members on a national basis are safe and well. Have a great summer.

Mike Patterson

## AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

### Our Flying Season: April ~ October

Unfortunately, our first five flying events (through June), in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, were canceled by the Covid-19 pandemic. But we're hopeful of resuming in July, with three events through August.

**July 25th - Fly-In/Drive-In - Peru Municipal Airport - membership flights available, weather permitting - Peru, IN**

**August 8th & 9th - 14th Annual Gathering of Veterans & Patriots - American Huey Museum - on the new museum property - membership flights available, weather permitting - Peru, IN**

**August 14th, 15th & 16th - Fort Fest - Fort Jennings Park - membership flights available, weather permitting - Fort Jennings, OH**

**NOTE:** Our big annual event at home, The Gathering, is NOT canceled. For the second year, it will be held on the 33-acre site of the future 30,000 square-foot National American Huey History Museum, located across U.S. Highway 31 from Grissom Air Reserve Base.



On the right side of the aerial photo, the 60' x 120' Storage Building is nearing completion. It will house four operational Hueys, 10 more non-flying aircraft, equipment, parts, etc.



The project site has been busy the last three months.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Several chapter members helped perform annual inspections on the three flying Hueys; the first one was completed on 369 in early April; 803's annual was completed in mid-April; and Gunship (UH-1B) 049's was performed in May.



## Recent Activities

### •• May Activities

Picnic and litter pick-up at the site of the future Huey History Museum.

A chance to enjoy the 33-acre property, socialize, and see the new Storage Building.

Barbecue, burgers, hot dogs, and bratwursts were the fare, and for added fun: ridding the fence lines and woods of litter, dismantling long wooden pallets, collecting firewood; with a bonfire and fireworks in the evening.

Memorial Day: morning - finish the annual on Gunship 049; afternoon - 369 and 803 were flown around surrounding counties as a memorial tribute and to render the wop-wop sound of hope.

## Museum Fundraising

It was learned earlier this year that eight buildings in the area of our temporary museum and hangar are too close to the runway, and Air Force policy is to soon remove them. Although there is no timetable, demolition is eventual. Thus, it has suddenly become prudent to expedite the construction of the American

Huey History Museum.

Over the last five years, through regular, active 1st, 2nd and 3rd Phase fundraising, \$1.4 million has been raised through donations. No taxpayer monies have been received, nor has any money through grants or loans. Much more is needed. A big fundraising push was started a few months ago and will continue energetically. In 80 days, almost \$80 thousand has been raised, mostly through \$1,000 "Museum Founder" donations.

From our membership dues, the chapter recently donated \$2,000 toward the project. Construction is planned to begin next spring.

## Near-term Activities

•• We will move Huey 959 (donated last fall by Lockheed Martin) from the downtown pole barn to our temporary site and begin her annual maintenance; then begin the steps to get her airworthy.

•• Static Aircraft, vehicles and equipment will be moved to the new Storage Building.

•• And last but not least, we will schedule a couple of work weekends to prepare Cobra 435 for paint and TEETH!



## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

The California COVID-19 "Stay-at-Home" order is now completing its 11th week. Chapter members have been communicating by email, text, and voice and so far, all members appear to be doing well. Some of us have taken on home improvement projects, completed many puzzles, scanned up to 9000 online movies, and watched maybe 80. A few are grateful that some golf courses are just opening up!

Our chapter President, Ken Fritz, is "staying-at-home" in FIJI. He and his wife Marcia have owned a vacation home on Kadavu Island, FIJI for a number of years and try to vacation there for up to a month at a time. They traveled to FIJI at the end of February this year, planning to return the first week of April. COVID-19 has changed their DEROs date and left them marooned on the island since! They

are hoping the air travel from Fiji to the US will open again on July 1st. They have survived both primary and standby generator failures, loss of comms when a hurricane destroyed the island cell towers, and low alcohol reserves, but the nearest village store (a few miles by boat - there are no roads) has always had TP!

We hope we can all catch up together again, when it is deemed safe to do so.

Please check our website [www.vhpaccn.org](http://www.vhpaccn.org) for more info and photos of past events.

ps. I served in the 1st Signal Brigade Aviation detachment in 1971-72 and have been recruited by Mike Law to help document the role of aviation in the Signal Corp in RVN. Not much is recorded, but I know UH-1Bs were used prior to 1966, and fixed wing support started in 1962. If anyone who reads this has any info, please contact me through our Contact page at website above.



Ken with his boat, heading out on a resupply mission and to get internet access at a resort 10 miles away.

**Dave Anderson**  
**VHPA-CCN Secretary**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

*Editor: Due to oversight, Michigan's following May/Jun report was not published. The Jul/Aug report is below. Our apologies.*

The Michigan Chapter's winter activity has mostly consisted of monthly lunch gatherings at Brady's in Traverse City, hosted by Chapter Member At Large Mark Benjamin.

February 6th had good attendance with 10 participating. Since most of those present were "regulars" the camaraderie immediately flowed. Conversation may have strayed a bit to health issues, but the war stories continued as well.

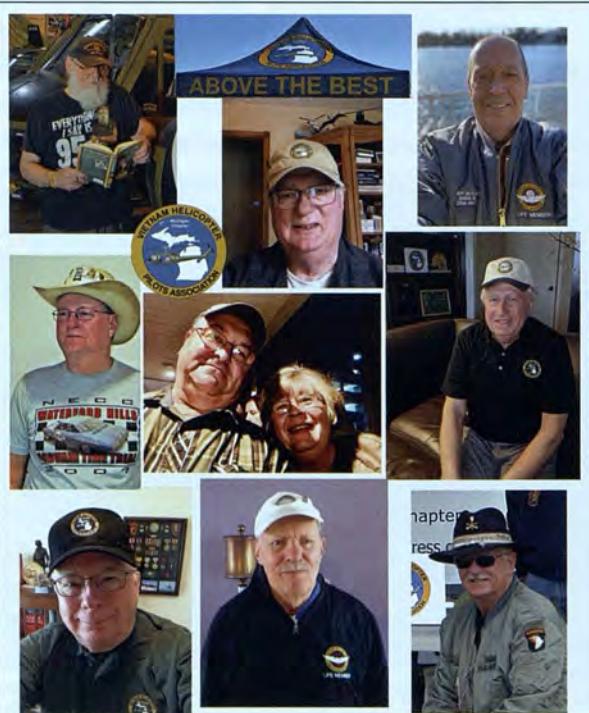
A visitor, Chuck Benson, was among those present. He did a bunch of planning on the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial so is familiar with our group. He has a company, Bay Supply, which does a bunch of things including embroidery, logo lapel pins, signs, and similar items. Mark will be coordinating with him on the possibility of creating lapel pins and patches with our MI VHPA logo. Stay tuned for developments.

March 5th at the next gathering Mark advised they had a long discussion about units and history of Lane Army Airfield. Pat Mullen brought his laptop with a couple of 8mm films converted for viewing from his computer. Lots of Hueys in formation as well as B model gunships as well as guns.

At this writing, while tentative plans have been started for some activities later in the year, the Covid-19 outbreak has stalled discussion.

Chapter members have been provided a long list of potential events if conditions allow our attendance. Members should monitor their emails for any developments.

For any VHPA members in



Michigan Chapter spring meeting virtual group photo.

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 and on Facebook at Michigan Chapter of the VHPA.

*Submitted by Rich Deer, President*



May 22 Flags on veterans graves.



February 6th at Brady's L-R Denny Klein, Bob Matlis, Mark Benjamin, Bart Holiday, Chuck Benson, Paul Fitzsimons, Walter Topp, Ron Hofmeister, Pat Mullen, Ed Canright.



March 5th at Brady's L-R Ed Canright, John Johnson, Linda Johnson, Walter Topp, Bruce Whipple, Bob Matlis, Mark Benjamin, Linda Maxwell, Clay Maxwell, John Lefler.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## July/August Report

The Michigan Chapter's activities have been largely paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with other impacts, our annual spring meeting had to be canceled. But a group photo was still possible for those submitting a photo. Participating were John Akley, Mark Benjamin, Jeff Butler, Ken Hand, John & Linda Johnson, Bob Rich, Rich Deer, Walter Topp, and Glen Veno. Looking forward to a full gathering in the future.

Michigan Chapter did have members participate in placing flags on the graves of veterans on May 22nd. This project is organized annually by the local area American Legion chapters. Nearly 1700 flags were placed on the graves of Traverse City area Vets in honor of Memorial Day. Michigan Chapter members

participating were Walter Topp, John Lefler, Ron Hofmeister and (pictured) Mark Benjamin and Don Pond. They were joined by about 50 members of the various veterans groups in the Traverse City area.

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. Michigan Chapter of the VHPA.

More information on our chapter can be found online at vhpami.wordpress.com and on Facebook at Michigan Chapter of the VHPA.

*Submitted by Rich Deer, President*

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

There is a new word associated with the Corona Virus Pandemic, it is "ZOOM". We were able to hold our May meeting via "Zoom" video conferencing. It went very well with 18 participants. When physical distancing rules permit, we may have our future meetings back at American Legion Post 1, In the meantime, we will continue to "Zoom". When we begin physical meetings again, we anticipate "Zooming" those meetings in addition to the physical meeting. We hope to gain virtual attendees thus expanding our reach.

Memorial Day activities took on a whole different look this year as many events were canceled across the country. The two examples in the attached pictures show the crowds at the Colorado Freedom Memorial on Memorial Day where we participated in ceremonies last year in 2019, and what it looked like this year.

At this writing we are all safe and practicing physical distancing. We've only had two combat casual-



RMC Zoom meeting.



Memorial Day in 2019.



Memorial Day in 2019.

ties, Phil Lanphier and his wife, Connie, both contracted the Corona virus but have fully recovered. They have each donated blood plasma to the Denver Children's Hospital on several occasions. Ken Hamburger had many of the symptoms associated with the virus but was not tested but he was down for a couple weeks. Hopefully, we will all remain healthy.

We are happy to report that toilet paper has returned to the shelves here in Denver, albeit it is rationed? There are some items still missing from the supply chain, Lysol Spray and Excedrin Aspirin. All Quartermasters take note of those items that became in short supply as the Pandemic spread across the country, and respond accordingly should this happen again. Of course, the last time the world experienced a pandemic of

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

this magnitude was 100 years ago, it was "The Spanish Flu" or "Influenza".

I'm still being hopeful that a treatment and vaccine for the corona virus will be developed soon. It is on track and could be out by the end of this year. Stay Hopeful, Stay Safe, and above all Stay Healthy.

Upcoming Activities: We do have two activities scheduled toward the end of the year pending the outcome of the pandemic. The Ward Bird and Antique Car Show at the Colorado Space Port at Front Range and the Denver Veterans Day Parade. We are also hoping to bring our Helicopter War Museum to the Wings over the Rockies Museum to have a joint exhibit with

Sweet Sioux (UH1-M) which is permanently on display at Wings Over the Rockies. Any upcoming activities will be announced on our Web site: [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com)

## Meeting Schedule and other Information:

We have suspended all meeting and activities except for video and telephone conferencing. Visit our Web site at [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com) for any updates. 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*

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter had to cancel our May meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are currently planning an outdoor meeting in June so we can see old friends again and get some future meetings and events planned.

At the present time, the next special event on our schedule is August 1, in Fairmont Minnesota. There was a press release on this event in the March/April issue of The VHPA Aviator magazine. There will be a dedication of Cav Cobra 66-F-15327 at a currently under-construction veterans memorial.

From what we have heard, the memorial will be impressive and will also include a 2/3 scale replica "Wall". Fairmont is in southern Minnesota along Interstate 90, so it has good access to those of you in Iowa and eastern South Dakota. We will keep you updated on this event on our Facebook page, Upper Midwest Chapter Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

To all of you, your family and friends, the UMCVHPA wishes you good health and to keep a positive outlook, we've done it before.

*Article by Dave Larson*

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# TAPS

**Basinger, Bailey N. USA; Flight Class: 65-6W; RVN: 65-66 114 AML; Callsign: White Knight 3.**

Bailey Bassinger died on May 5, 2020.

**Baskin, Michael D. USA; Flight Class: 68-23; RVN: 69-70 61 AHC; Callsign: Star Blazer 22.**

Mike Baskin passed away on April 1, 2016 in Tyler, TX. He was born on September 8, 1948 in Houston, TX.

Mike grew up in Houston and attended San Jacinto College. He joined the Army in 1968 and served as a pilot for over 30 years.

He is survived by his wife, Kathy.

**Boivin, David L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 55-B; RVN: 65-66 227 AHB 1 CAV, 66 243, 67 52 CAB ASHC, 67-68 HHC/228 AVN 1 CAV, 68 HHC/52 CAB; BS (2OLC), MSM, PH, ACM (3); Callsign: Buccaneer 6.**

David L. Boivin of Naples, FL, and formerly West Woodstock, CT, died February 14, 2020 in Naples, FL. He was born October 17, 1931 in South Woodstock, CT.

David attended the University of CT on a full scholarship for track and cross country and graduated in 1953 with a B.S. in Physical Education.

**Brandt, Robert J. USA, MG Ret.; Flight Class: 61-2; RVN: 62-63 573 TC 33 TC, 62-63 33 TC CO, 63 118 AML, 67 1 TC BN; MSM (3), PH; Callsign: Thunderbird.**

It is with deepest sympathy that I (CA Army National Guard Adjutant General) announce the death of Robert John



Brandt, age 82 on 3 April 2020 in Rocklin, CA, from complications related to Parkinson's disease.

Robert was born in Anaheim, CA. He began his military service as an enlisted soldier in the California Army National Guard on 1 September 1954. He received his commission on 26 March 1958 and served until his retirement on 31 May 1999. At a time when many were actively avoiding military service, he volunteered for active duty in 1961 and his unit, the 33rd Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) was deployed to Vietnam from January 1962 through August 1963. He was the first National Guard officer to serve in Vietnam and the first National Guard soldier awarded a Purple Heart for service in Vietnam.

He commanded at every level and served as Director of Army Aviation and Deputy Commander for Support, 40th Infantry Division. In January 1993, the Governor appointed him as Assistant Adjutant General of the California National Guard.

He is survived by Jacqueline.

**Brown, Ricky C. USA/USAF, CPT Ret.; Flight Classes: 71-1/70-47; RVN: 70-71 C/7/1 CAV, 71 A/7/1 CAV; BS; Callsign: Comanche 28.**

Ricky C. Brown (Rick) passed away at Duke University Hospital on May 12, 2020 with his wife, Deborah (Deb) at his side. He was born in Roxboro, NC. For more than 29 years, Rick lived with Deb in Angier, NC on a pond, which they considered their retreat place.

After graduating from Frank L. Ashley High School in Gastonia, NC, he enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Two years later, he entered the US Army and became a helicopter pilot.

Rick returned to UNC-Chapel Hill after serving in Vietnam and completed his



undergraduate degree in psychology while flying helicopters with the NC National Guard on weekends. His education also included a masters degree from the University of Mississippi in Clinical Psychology and a clinical psychology internship at Wilford Hall, Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX. Rick retired from the military as a Captain in the Air Force Reserves.

His professional career included Chief of Mental Health at Seymour Johnson AFB and director of the psychology department at Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, NC, during which he was awarded Psychologist of the Year. Rick also had a part-time private practice at a local mental health clinic. Loving travel, he taught psychology classes part-time to sailors on US Navy ships which took him around the world. Later on, he was a teacher at Harnett County schools before he retired.

**Burns, Johnny J. USA; Flight Classes: 71-29/71-23; RVN: 71-72 135 AHC, 72 120 AHC; SS, DFC; Callsign: Red 19.**



Johnny Jay Burns of Oklahoma City, OK, died there on February 20, 2020. He was born November 13, 1951 in Hutchinson, KS.

Johnny was a medical helicopter pilot at several hospitals in different states, most recently with Oklahoma Medi-flight for many years.

He went to school at Burrton, KS. He worked as a helicopter pilot for nearly 50 years, including on offshore oil rigs, Alaska bush flying, and medical air transport. He was also an incredible musician who wrote dozens of original songs and lyrics on the guitar.

He is survived by his wife, Debbi.



# TAPS

**Chesser, Conrad F. USA, LTC Ret; Flight Class: 56-15; RVN: 65-66 B/227 AVN 1 CAV, 67-68 17 AHC, 68-69 195 AHC; Callsign: Brave 8.**

Conrad F. Chesser, age 84, of Enterprise, AL, passed away Sunday, October 21, 2018 at the Enterprise Medical Center.

Conrad spent many years instructing U.S. pilots and NATO pilots. He remained in close contact with many of his students.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Fran.

**Colavolpe, Ralph J. USA; Flight Class: 67-15; RVN: 67-68 1/10 CAV 4 INF; Callsigns: Shamrock/Green Tape.**



Ralph Colavolpe died on April 20, 2020. Ralph was born in New Haven, CT on November 7, 1937. His active duty and National Guard service totaled 35 years.

**Drozdz, Dennis T. USA; Flight Classes: 67-17/67-15; RVN: 67-68 117 AHC; DFC (2 OLC), PH.**

Dennis Drozdz of Houston, TX, died July 18, 2010.

He is survived by his wife, Cheryl.

**Dyer, George D. Sr. USA; Flight Class: 67-18; RVN: 67-68 D/3/5 CAV; DFC, BS, PH; Callsign: Spook 5.**



George Dickerson Dyer, Sr., of Raleigh, NC, and formerly of Danville, VA, passed away peacefully at Transitions Life Care in Raleigh, NC on May 19, 2020. George was born on April 29, 1944 at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem, NC.

Growing up in Danville, he graduated from George Washington High School in 1962 and then attended Virginia Military Institute (VMI) graduating with the Class of 1966. After ending his military service,

he then began his career as a Special Agent in the F.B.I. from 1970 – 1995 retiring as a Supervisor. He loved serving as a helicopter pilot and Special Agent throughout his life-long career. He always spoke proudly of his many adventures and the special friendships that he made in which he cherished so much.

He was a member of Edenton United Methodist Church. He was also a proud member of Retired Special Agents Association, The Knights Templar, Vietnam Veterans of America and Sons of the American Revolution.

**Falbo, John J. Sr. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 58-1; RVN: 66 HHC 10 CAB, 70 ATC BN (PROV); Callsigns: Fox-trot/Vagabond 3.**



John Joseph Falbo Sr. of Williamsburg, VA, passed away on May 9, 2020 at his home. He was a first generation Italian and born the youngest of seven children, on December 2, 1933 in Everettville, WV.

After graduating from West Virginia University (WVU) in 1955, John was commissioned as an officer in the Army (Signal Corps branch). John also served as a military aviator, flying both fixed wing and helicopter aircraft missions during three tours of overseas duty in Korea and Viet Nam. John retired from the military in 1978, when he was stationed at the Pentagon on the staff of the Joint Chiefs. John continued his distinguished career by taking on executive positions with AT&T, ARINC, and Satellite Business Systems (SBS).

**Fox, Ronald E. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-508/68-12; RVN: 68-69 68 AVN; Callsign: Tiger Tail.**



Ronald (Ron) Eddie Fox passed away on January 24, 2020. He was born October 29, 1946 in Carbondale, IL. Ron received

his B.S. degree in Business Management. He retired as a commercial airline pilot after 22 years. Ron learned to fly at age 16. He was an avid sailor and cyclist and a world traveler, visiting all continents except Antarctica and all 50 U.S. states.

**Gudvangen, Jerome L. USAF, Ret.; Flight Class: 68-F; RVN: 72-73 21 SOS; DFC (OLC), AFC (2 OLC).**



On January 27, 2020, Jerome Gudvangen, loving husband, father of three, grandfather and great-grandfather, went home to be with the Lord. Jerome was born on January 5, 1940 in Powers Lake, ND.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Math with a minor in Business Administration from Dickinson State College in 1963. He later earned a master's degree in political science from Troy State University and a degree in Construction Management from the University of West Florida. He joined the Air Force May 10, 1963. His first assignment was as a Missile Launch Officer in Okinawa. Upon returning stateside in 1967, he attended flight training and was assigned to B-52 Strategic Bombers for 28 months. He served a six-month ARC Light tour of duty in 1970. He was then assigned to helicopter school and was assigned to the Huey UH1N where he performed missile site support in 1971 and 1972. Late in 1972, he trained in Utah for a new assignment in HH53 Helicopters and went to SE Asia where he served in the famed 21st Special Operations Squadron. His final 10 years in service were spent with the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field Florida.

Upon retiring after 23 years in the Air Force, he let no grass grow under his feet and began working with Lockridge & Associates in Construction Management. He traveled to Turkmenistan, Russia, China, Korea, and England during this time.

# TAPS

**Hammond, Douglas P. USA; Flight Class: 67-18; RVN: 68-69 C/7/17 CAV; Callsigns: Ruthless Rider/White 6.**



Doug passed away on May 18, 2020, from COVID 19 paired with Alzheimer's following a lifetime of leading, loving and helping others. His success was a result of hard work, a competitive spirit, and creativity.

In 1965, he told his basic training commander, "I don't want to be a cook." This boldness got him into the armor officer course. Rather than serving in a tank, he earned an assignment to helicopter flight school, which launched the career he relished. The Army selected him to qualify in the new AH-1G Cobra gunship. In Vietnam, he led gunship platoons. His careful mentoring and his heroic rescues saved many lives. He finished his military career by teaching new AH-1G pilots battle-tested techniques that increased their chances of survival.

He leveraged his creativity, trustworthiness, and aviation expertise to boost Bell Helicopter profits. He was later recruited by the founder of McDonald's franchisee, Ray Kroc, to make site selections, and again by the founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, Ken Olsen, to start a flight department. Later, his effective management together with shrewd strategy advice sparked McDonald's to become one of the nation's largest companies and DEC the second-largest computer company in the 1990s.

To have more time for his children, and care for both his wife and mother who had Alzheimer's, Doug retired from flying and corporate advising to begin a less demanding career as part owner of a marina.



**Herbert, Bentley J. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 57-9/58; RVN: 65-66 B/15 TC 1 CAV, 69-70 HHC/15 TC 1 CAV; DFC, BS (3 OLC), DSM; Callsign: Tailwind 6.**



Bentley Herbert of Methuen, MA, and formerly of Cape Neddick, ME, died February 28, 2020, at Lawrence General Hospital, after a period of declining health, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born in Bangor, ME, on January 26, 1932. He graduated from Bangor High School in 1950. He later went on to earn a degree in Business Economics from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

After proudly serving his country, Col. Herbert owned and successfully operated a life insurance agency in Lowell, MA until 1992. He and Marilyn retired to Cape Neddick, ME.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Marilyn.

**Henry, Terence M. USA, BG Ret.; Flight Class: 64-1; RVN: 67-68 116 AHC, 70-71 361 AWC; Callsigns: Stinger 96/Pink Panther 6.**

Terence McGovern Henry, 79, of Daytona Beach passed away on December 25, 2019.

**Hernandez, Victor M. Jr. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 61-2FW; RVN: 65-66 161 AVN, 68-69 B/4/77 ARA, 69-70 DIV ARTY 101 ABN; DFC, BS; Callsign: Toro 6.**



Our Lord welcomed his caring, selfless, courageous and loving son Victor M. Hernandez, Jr. on February 20, 2020, into his loving arms. Vic departed this world peacefully at home with his loving family and friends.

Vic was born on April 12, 1935. He

earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio in May 1958 and, through his enrollment in St. Mary's R.O.T.C. program, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Vic was accepted into the Army Aviation program. Vic graduated from the prestigious Command and General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, KS. He went on to earn his Master of Arts degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio in 1975, while still serving in the military.

After 24 years of distinguished service in the military, Vic retired. He then went to work with his wife at The Prudential Insurance Company for 17 years where he retired and was honored with the Certificate of Emeritus.

**Hoffmann, Raymond E. USAF; Flight Class: 57-Q; RVN: 68 20 HS; PH.**



Raymond Eugene Hoffmann 86, of Kennewick, WA, died peacefully at home surrounded by loving family on February 2, 2020. Ray was born in Emmetsburg, IA on June 23, 1933. Ray attended schools in Emmetsburg where he participated in music and sports. Ray attended Iowa State College (University). As soon as Ray received his B.S. in Industrial Arts education in 1955, he joined the US Air Force where he trained to be a jet pilot. After three years in Germany, he became a helicopter pilot and served in Thailand and Vietnam during the war. He survived a helicopter crash in Vietnam and was honorably discharged in 1971 with the rank of Major. Ray became certified as a financial counselor and assisted his clients until he retired in 2000. Ray volunteered his services in many charitable ways.

He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Marcia.



# TAPS

Johnston, Francis E. III USA, LTC, Ret.; Flight Class: 58-5 VN: 66-67 161 AHC, 67 17 CAG, 69-70 268 CAB, 70 XXIV CORPS; LM, BS.



Francis Edward Johnston, III "Ed", died May 20th at St. Joseph's Hospital following a short illness. He was 86 years old. He was born in Savannah, GA.

After graduating from Fishburne Military School in Virginia, he returned to Georgia, graduating from the University of Georgia in 1955 earning his Bachelors Degree in Business Administration. Following his undergraduate studies, Ed joined the U.S. Army.

In 1975, Ed retired from the military and returned to Savannah where he worked as Chairman and CEO of a family-owned pharmaceutical company, Shuptrine Company, for the next fifteen years. An avid photographer, he also later owned and operated Coastal Camera Company, a camera repair business in Savannah.

Ed was a member of St. George Episcopal Church, where he served on the vestry as Senior Warden, sang in the choir, and was the Treasurer for many years.

Kruse, Michael C. USA; Flight Classes: 68-521/68-39; RVN: 69-70 195 AHC; Callsign: Thunder Chicken 29.



Mike was born on December 10, 1946 in St. Louis, MO.

A native of Missouri, he grew up hunting, fishing, and spending time outdoors. Mike was a police officer in St. Louis, and he loved to skydive. Mike worked in the floorcovering sales industry for many years.

Mike was a good man, an accomplished aviator, and valiant soldier.

He is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 48 years, Barbara.

Latimer, Larry D. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 66-19; RVN: 67-68 B/3/17 CAV, 70-71 B/2/17 CAV 101 ABN; DFC (2 OLC) BS, MSM, ACM; Callsigns: Burning Stogie 23/Banshee.



Larry Deward Latimer of Oklaunion, TX died on April 7, 2020, in Vernon, TX. Larry was born September 20, 1943 in Vernon, TX.

He was a retired farmer and Business Administrator for Texas A&M Research Center from November 1988 to Present. He was manager of Radio Shack in Vernon 1986 to 1988. He was a member of Fargo Church of Christ. He was an Elder of the church.

He is survived by his wife, Diane.

Law, John L. Jr. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-10/69-2; RVN: 71-72 229 AHB 1 CAV, 72 273 HHC.



John Latta Law died unexpectedly on March 5, 2020 in Tryon, NC. John was born on June 24, 1944 in Gaffney, SC. He attended Columbia, SC. schools graduating from Dreher High School in 1962. He then attended The Citadel, was a member of the Summerall Guards, and graduated in 1966 with a BA HIST.

After Vietnam he served as an officer of S.C. National Bank from 1973 to 1983 in the international division. He then returned to duty as an officer in the S.C. Army National Guard at McEntire Joint Air Base from 1974 until his retirement in 2004. Not yet ready to give up flying, he worked for Providence Health Hospital in Columbia, SC in the air ambulance service until 2006.

John was central to the successes of the Save Hwy. 108 and Hwy 108 Scenic Byway Projects.

He is survived by his wife, Claudia Lucy.

Melin, Thomas G. USA; Flight Classes: 68-515/68-27; RVN: 68-69 176 AHC; Callsign: Musket 38.

Thomas George Melin passed away September 28, 2019 at the Billings Clinic Hospital from illnesses related to Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL), attributed to his exposure to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam.

Tom was a lifetime resident of Park County, born at the Chico Hot Springs Hospital July 22, 1947; a 4th generation Melin to live in Paradise Valley.

Tom started school in Emigrant, walking from the Emigrant Store and Post Office along the railroad tracks to the one-room schoolhouse. He continued school in Clyde Park, and graduated from Clyde Park High School (now Shields Valley High) in 1965. He attended the Church College of Hawaii (now BYU-Hawaii) 1965-1967.

Tom became an apprentice carpenter with Martel Construction Company in Bozeman after his military service, eventually becoming a master carpenter which served him well the rest of his life. In 1980, Tom decided that construction was too seasonal and too hard on his body, so he became a licensed insurance agent. He built the Melin Agency, now Big Sky Insurance, from the ground up.

Tom served on the Livingston School Board and coached his children in T-ball and baseball for many years. He served as a BSA Scoutmaster for 12 years, where he blessed the lives of dozens of young men in Troop 524. He also served on the Water Board for the Paradise Valley Irrigation Ditch and volunteered much of his time in the community through Kiwanis, The Senior Center, and The Food Pantry.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Rosalie.



# TAPS

**Miller, Donn L.**  
USMC/USA, MAJ  
Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-503/68-1; RVN: 63-66  
1 MAW, 70-71 62  
CAC; PH (2 OLC)



NCM; Callsign: Royal Coachman 22.

Donn Miller, decorated war veteran, passed away on May 14, 2020. Donn was a long-time resident of Copperas Cove, TX, and lived in Austin his final years. He was born in Cody, WY on May 24, 1942.

Before enlisting, Donn held various jobs in Cody from bus boy at the Irma, clerk at the J.C. Penny's on Main, to driving trucks over the Bear Tooth Pass. On December 10, 1962 he followed family tradition and enlisted in the Marines for his first Vietnam tour, transferring to the Army in 1966 to fly helicopters for a second tour. He served in the Army until 1984.

After retirement, he served at the U.S. Army Operational Test Command until his reluctant second retirement in April of 2017. Combined, he had over 50 years of public service. He worked hard and loved all things military.

**Moore, Larry E. USA;**  
Flight Class: 66-10; RVN:  
66-67 282 AVN; Call-  
sign: Black Cat.



Larry Moore of Des Moines passed away February 23, 2020 at Taylor House Hospice following a brief illness. Born in Ft. Dodge in 1943, Larry spent his younger years in Gilmore City where he graduated from high school. He continued his education at the University of South Dakota before transferring and graduating from the University of Iowa.

Following his military service, Larry joined the family business, Midwest Limestone, which he expanded beyond quarrying by starting Calcium Products, a business he grew into a world-leading manufacturer of granulated limestone and gypsum.

His wife Susan will miss his gentle companionship and good humor.

**Mulholland Kenneth S.**  
USA; Flight Class: 62-8;  
RVN: 67-68 A/25 AVN  
25 INF; BS, PH; Callsign:  
Little Bear 3.

Ken Mulholland went to Jesus May 16, 2020 after battling multiple illnesses over the last few years

Ken was born in Tampa, October 11, 1936 and attended Cleveland Elementary, Memorial and Sligh Junior Highs and Hillsborough High School. He graduated from Georgia Tech with a Bachelor of Industrial Engineering degree, Cooperative Plan. He was a past president of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida, VHPAF. Ken enjoyed the camaraderie in VHPAF, especially when he could say "Welcome Home" to another Vietnam veteran.

He retired from Davy McKee Engineers & Constructors in Lakeland and Badger/Raytheon Engineers & Constructors in Tampa. He was an independent consultant during the 1980s DBA Mulholland Planning. His consultant work was in Norway, Quebec, Australia, Venezuela and Florida. Later he flew an Enstrom helicopter for his brother Richard's land development business. In 2012, the Tampa Egypt Temple Shrine presented Ken with their Community Service Award.

He is survived by his faithful and lovely wife of 63 years, Charlotte.

**O'Grady, George L. USA,**  
LTC Ret.; Flight Class:  
58; RVN: 65-66 114  
AVN, 68-69 B/1/9 CAV  
1 CAV; SS (3 OLC)  
DFC; Callsigns: Cobra  
Lead/Sabre 6.

George O'Grady passed away in his sleep on April 1, 2020 after years of suffering from the effects of Agent Orange. He is recognized in the U.S. Army Hall of Fame for his contributions to Army aviation and the advancement of the Attack Helicopter and its weaponry. He was an outstanding Cobra pilot.



**Palascak, Ronald USA;**  
Flight Class: 65-11;  
RVN: 65-66 281 AHC,  
68 361 AWC; Callsigns:  
Mardi Gras/Pink Panther.



Ronald George Palascak was born on December 18, 1942 in Braddock, PA. He passed away on April 8, 2019 from the effects of Parkinson's Disease. After completing High School in 1960, he attended the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics (PIA). Upon graduating he was recruited by United Airlines as a mechanic to work at Chicago's O'Hare Field in 1962. He was drafted while still with United and immediately went to the local recruiting office to sign up for the Warrant Officer flight training program.

After his service, he returned to United Airlines and retired after 41 years of service as a Lead Aircraft Mechanic in the Sheet Metal Shop. For twenty years he worked building an Acrosport 2 experimental aircraft. It was 98% complete when Parkinson's took his dream away.

He is survived by his wife, Kim.

**Post, Alton G. USA,**  
MG Ret.; Flight Class:  
58; RVN: 68-69 34 SP  
GRP, 70-71 USARV  
DCSLOG; DSM (2)  
LM (2), DFC, BS (V) 2  
ACM.



Alton Gustav Post died peacefully on March 2, 2020 at the Mayflower Retirement Center in Winter Park, FL surrounded by his loving family. A highly decorated Army veteran of three wars, Alton was a charismatic leader who inspired the highest standards in every endeavor during his long life.

He was born and raised in Zumbrota, MN on December 26, 1920. Alton began his military career as a private with the Minnesota National Guard after graduating from high school. His division was called to service at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana in 1941 to prepare for World

# TAPS

War II. Alton graduated from the Army Command and Staff College in 1958. He attended Flight School and received his wings as an Army Aviator in 1959. He commanded an Army Helicopter Company and later took command of a Battalion in the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. Upon his return from Hawaii, he served at the Pentagon as an Army Staff Officer and was a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

During his military career, General Post received a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska, Omaha and a Master of Science in International Affairs from George Washington University in Washington, DC. He retired in 1978 after forty years, two months and twenty-two days of honorable service in his beloved Army.

Following his retirement from the Army, General Post excelled in his civilian career for eighteen years, working for DynCorp, a large government service company, where he specialized in aviation maintenance matters and traveled worldwide.

Among the many additional honors he received was his induction into the Transportation Corps Hall of Fame in 2006. His commendation noted that he was one of the few remaining officers of any branch of service to have fought in all three major wars of the United States -World War II, Korea and Vietnam - serving in all ranks from private to Major.

He is survived by his wife, Ardis.

**Powers, John S. USA;**  
**Flight Classes: 70-15/70-13; RVN: 70-71 HHT/2/17 CAV 101 ABN DFC, BS, PH.**



John "Steve" Powers passed away peacefully from a short battle with cancer at his home on February 16, 2020 with family by his side. He was born on December 6, 1949 in Elmira, NY.

He loved aviation and retired from Sikorsky (formerly Schweizer Aircraft) where he worked as a loftstman and sailplane instructor pilot for many years. He had

many fond memories of his time as the proprietor of Roadhouse 352 where he hosted many events and benefits. Steve was a member of the Big Flats American Legion, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and the VFW.

**Richardson, Charles E.**

**USA, MAJ Ret.: Flight Class: 67-13; RVN: 67-68 11 GS 1 CAV; BS, PH, ACM; Callsign: Jaguar 12.**



Charles Edward Richardson (Chuck) passed to eternal life with His Savior in the very early hours of April 20, 2020. He was born June 10, 1940 in Oklahoma. He graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School in Fresno, CA, in June 1958, followed by enlistment into the US Army.

Trained as a helicopter crew chief, Charles served a tour in Korea as a part of KMAF, finishing his early enlistment at Fort Sill, OK. He returned to Fresno and worked for several years as a helicopter repair specialist at the California Army National Guard Transportation Aircraft Repair Shop near Clovis.

Chuck, re-entered the U.S. Army in 1966 to attend flight school. After Vietnam Chuck was assigned to Fort Wolters, TX as an IP. Direct commissioned as a 1LT, Transportation Corp, he was the last CO of one of the WOC companies at Fort Wolters in 1972-73. When the USAPHCS at Fort Wolters closed and its function transferred to Fort Rucker, Chuck became the first CO of the first primary WOC at Fort Rucker. CH-47 transition and Maintenance Officer qualification led to another stint in Korea in 1977-78. and an assignment at Fort Ord, CA.

Following his military career, Chuck worked for Martin-Marietta (later Lockheed as the follow-on contractor) at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California as a Reliability Engineer during the build-out of the West Coast Shuttle Launch facility.

He later became a successful businessman in the Santa Maria Valley, near Vandenberg, where he developed a nursery soil supply business. He liked to say he "made dirt."

He is survived by his devoted wife and best friend of 55 years, Susan.

**Russell, Luther M. USA; Flight Classes: 68-521/68-39; RVN: 69 C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 72 C/16 CAV, 73 18 CAC; Callsign: Cavalier 14.** No obituary located.

**Salger, Glenn A. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class:**

**66-11; RVN: 66-67 D/229 AVN 1 CAV, 70 116 AHC, 70-71 52 CAB; BS (OLC), MSM (2 OLC) ACM (3 OLC); Callsigns: Tiger 56/Bee Keeper 56/Dragon 56.**



Glenn A. Salger of Leesville, LA passed away on April 25, 2020 at his home. He was born on May 1, 1942 at Red Bud, IL.

He attended Southern Illinois University and joined the Army in 1964 where he received helicopter flight and maintenance training. He served assignments twice in Vietnam, twice in Germany, in Peru, and in various Army locations in the US before retiring at Ft Polk, LA in 1984.

After retirement from the Army, he worked as a mud logger in the off-shore oil industry, taught classes for this occupation, and during this time compiled family genealogies and regional history for the Red Bud, IL area.

He is survived by his wife, Peggy.

**Salyer, James D. Jr. USA; Flight Class: 69-11; RVN: 69-70 B/7/17 CAV; Callsigns: Pallbearer 33/Scalaphunter 15.**

James Salyer Jr. died on February 22, 2020. He grew up in Dola, OH. He earned a BS in Political Science from St. Leo University. He served 20 years in the U.S. Army from 1968 - 1988 in Germany, Korea, and the U.S., as well as three tours in

# TAPS

Vietnam as a highly decorated helicopter pilot and war hero.

After retiring from the Army, he became a landscape contractor, real estate broker and general contractor. He was a member of the Freemasons, Savannah Shriners, and the Savannah (Cleveland) Browns Backers Club.

He is survived by his wife of 15 years, Joy.

**Sandmeyer, Ralph W.**  
USA; Flight Class: 68-21;  
RVN: 69-70 D/3/4 CAV  
25 INF; DFC, BS; Call-sign: Centaur 24.



Ralph (Dusty) Sandmeyer Jr. passed away at home surrounded by his family on May 13, 2020 after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. Born October 23, 1946, Dusty grew up in Cornwall, CT where he lived most of his life. As a boy, he attended Rumsey Hall School and later Kent School.

Upon his return from Vietnam, Dusty enrolled at the University of Hartford, graduating Magna Cum Laude. After graduating with an MBA from Babson College, Dusty returned to Cornwall where he started a business: Northwest Lumber and Hardware. Over the next 20 years he built a successful company. Never content to sit back in an office all day, you could often find him sweeping the stoop of the store, loading trucks for deliveries, or talking to customers. He was an active member of the Cornwall community, involved in many town organizations and boards.

He is survived by his wife, Sandy.

**Siegman, Jim E. USA,**  
COL Ret.; Flight Class:  
67-6; RVN: 62 339 TC  
CO, 67-68 195 AHC; SS,  
PH; Callsign: Thunder  
Chicken.



James Edward Siegman, 78, of Elizabethtown, died Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019. He was a native of Sewickley, PA. He was a former manager with the Federal Aviation Administration.

**Smith, Charles W. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-19/66-17; RVN: 67 189 AHC, 67-68 129 AHC, 68 192 AHC, 70 11 GS 1 CAV, 70 D/227 AWC 1 CAV, 70-71 E/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 71 D/227 AWC 1 CAV.**

Charles W. (Chuck) Smith passed away at home in Chancellor, AL. on December 20, 2019 after a long fight with cancer. Chuck virtually flew all over the world. His last assignment, for 23 years, was as a DAC at Fort Rucker. He instructed in Contact & NVG in the TH-67 & the OH 58 A/C. He was awarded the 10,000-hour pin from Bell Helicopter. And he received a 15,000-hour accident free award upon his retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Pat.

**Smith, James M. USA,**  
LTC Ret.; Flight  
Class: 69-38; RVN: 70  
187 AHC, 70 HHC  
269 CAB, 70-71 3/17  
CAV; LM, BS, MSM;  
Callsigns: Crusader 39/Red Horse 8.



James Myron Smith of Lawrenceville, GA and formerly of Attica, passed away at his residence in Lawrenceville, on May 1, 2020 following an illness with cancer.

Jim, as he was known to family and friends, was born in Danville, IL on December 17, 1941. Jim was raised in Attica, graduating from Attica High School in 1959. Jim went on to work as a welder at Harrison Steel Castings Company in Attica. While working at Harrison Steel, Jim joined the Indiana National Guard. He later entered the Indiana Military Academy and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the Indiana National Guard. In 1968, Jim volunteered for active duty and was stationed at Ft. Gordon, GA. Shortly thereafter he entered flight training in Texas and Alabama to fly Huey and Cobra helicopters.

After his tour of duty was complete in Vietnam, Jim was assigned as company commander at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO from 1971-1974. In 1974, Jim went to Ft.

Benning, GA for his officer advanced courses and later that year went to Ft. Rucker to obtain his instructor pilot rating and later became head of the instrument training program. Before his retirement, Jim served as professor of military science at the University of Cincinnati and was in charge of the Army ROTC from 1978-1982.

Following his retirement from the military, Jim worked in real estate in Indiana and later as a mortgage broker in Georgia. He worked at DeKalb Technical College in Georgia Quick Start as a program director.

**Smith, Karl G. USA;**  
Flight Class: 69-21;  
RVN; 70 C/1/9 CAV  
1 CAV.



Karl George "Smitty" Smith of Spokane, WA died March 19, 2019. Karl was born July 5, 1950 in Provo, UT.

As a Warrant Officer Scout Pilot with 1st Squadron 9th Cavalry Charlie Troop, he miraculously survived his aircraft being shot down ten times when many of his fellow Cav soldiers did not survive.

Following his military service as helicopter pilot, Karl embarked on a career path in computer technology.

**Strobel, Francis J. USA;**  
Flight Class: 69-37;  
RVN: 70 114  
AHC; DFC, BS Call-sign: Knight Hawk 6.



Francis Strobel died on February 15, 2020.

In 2014, he was inducted into the Four Chaplains Society and is a former officer of the 114th Aviation Association. He was a member of Sacred Heart Church, VFW Post 470, and the North East American Legion. He was the author of the book "The Devil's Disciple: Different Sides of War."

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Lucille.

# TAPS

Tuttle, Fredrick M.  
USA; Flight Classes:  
68-509/68-13; RVN:  
68-69 C/1/9 CAV 1  
CAV.



Fredrick Michael "Mike" Tuttle of Milligan, TX passed away January 27, 2020 in Tampa, FL.

Mike Tuttle was born on July 12, 1947 in Pensacola, FL. After graduating from Union Grove High School, Mike joined the Army and trained as a helicopter pilot and was highly decorated for his skill and valor as a scout pilot. After leaving the Army, he flew helicopters along the Texas and Louisiana coasts and eventually became a sales representative for Texas Helicopter and Air Logistics providing helicopters to the oil industry drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. His humor and charm and his bigger-than-life personality made him the perfect man for the job.

Vereen, Carlisle M. Jr.  
USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight  
Classes: 67-501/67-21;  
RVN: 68-69 61 AHC,  
71-74 RAC, 71-72 187  
AHC; Callsigns: Star



## OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

Individuals wishing to supply a notice of death and/or information such as online link(s) may do so by email to [aviator@vhpa.org](mailto:aviator@vhpa.org). Those wishing to write their own obituaries may submit same to that email address as well. Space constraints may limit the amount of text allowed. For self-produced versions, any edited narrative will be provided to its author for review as soon as feasible.

Pilots meeting VHPA membership criteria, but have never been a member, will have a one line entry. Regardless of whether or not an obituary is abridged, an unedited version (full text) of all submitted obituaries will be posted on our web site at <https://www.vhpa.org>.

## PASS THE HAT

It has been a tradition at all VHPA Reunion Business Meetings, as far back as memory can go, for a Cav hat to be passed throughout to all the members in attendance. This year because of the cancellation of the Denver Reunion this tradition was not followed...Until now!

The funds collected with the passing of the Cav Hat are earmarked for the VHPA Scholarship Program. Usually, there is from \$3,500-\$5,000 donated by the members and it is then matched by the VHPA EC to be added to the Scholarship Fund which now totals \$375,000.

Well...as you can now guess, the Cav Hat is NOW BEING PASSED and it is hoped, no, expected that many, many members will write a



## Blazer/Aloft/Crusader.

Carlisle Vereen Jr, or Corky as he was known to his friends, passed away November 26, 2019 in Daytona Beach, FL. He was born October 25, 1943 in Stuttgart, AR.

Corky grew up in Latta, SC, and attended the Citadel before enlisting in the US Army to fight in Vietnam. He spent three years in Special Forces before going to flight school and becoming a Warrant Officer, flying both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft for the remainder of his career.

Corky retired to North Myrtle Beach, SC after 20 years of active duty and began a career as a charter boat captain and pilot for hire. He spent the last 20+ years of his life in Daytona Beach, FL.

Warfield, Willard W.  
USMC, MAJ Ret.;  
Flight Class: 45-53;  
RVN: 68 HML-367;  
PH.

Willard Walter Warfield of Pensacola, FL died February 7, 2020. Mr. Warfield was born January 7, 1933 in Pensacola, FL. Willard went to college at The Citadel and took Navy



flight training at Pensacola. He received his wings on June 3, 1955 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the US Marine Corp.

Wasick, James E. USA; Flight Classes: 67-3/67-1; RVN: 67-68 57 AHC, 68 B/4 AVN 4 INF.

James E. Wasick, age 74, passed away April 19, 2020. He graduated West Allis Central High School and entered the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

After receiving an Honorable Discharge, he worked for the Journal/Sentinel as a supervisor in the circulation dept. After that, he was employed for 20+ years with Time Warner Cable as a construction expeditor, retiring in 2011.

Williams, Robert D. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 50-CL/52-L; RVN: 66-67 HHC/12 CAG; Callsign: Blackjack 13.

Robert Williams died on/about April 16, 2020. He was born September 6, 1926.

He served as a medical corpsman in WW II and as an aviator in both Korea and Vietnam.

personal check to the VHPA Scholar Fund and send to HQ. But, be advised that the HQ address has changed and is now:

VHPA, HQ  
1601 E. Lamar Blvd, Suite 117  
Arlington, TX 76011

Alternately, donate online: login at [VHPA.org](https://www.vhpa.org), and in the left hand column, under Other Services, click Make Donations. And remember, all donations to the VHPA Scholarship Fund are Tax Deductible.

Tom Payne  
Chairman  
Scholarship Cmte

Mike Sheuerman,  
Fund Raiser  
Scholarship Cmte

# 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.

Baenziger Wayne A. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 65-13W/65-13; RVN: 65-66 254 MED DET; SS, DFC (3 OLC); died in October 2019.

Boyle Willard F. Jr. USA, LTC Ret.; DFC, BS; died on March 9, 2020.

Brush, Michael B. USA; Flight Class: 69-29; died on February 17, 2020.

Burkholder, John D. AA; Flight Class: 63-3; RVN: 66-74 AIR AMERICA; died on February 6, 2020.

Carwile, Jacob T. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 68-69 37 ARRS; died on April 12, 2020.

Clemens, Paul J. USA, LTC Ret.; BS (4 OLC); died on May 4, 2020.

Coakley, Stephen A., USN, CPT Ret.; MSM (2), NCM (2); died on March 26, 2020.

Collins, Benjamin L. Sr. USA, LTC Ret.; died on April 3, 2020.

Coover, Paul H. USA/USMC, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 69-9; died on March 31, 2020.

Davidson, Kenneth E. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 61-6Q; died on April 12, 2020.

Fletcher, Carroll N. USA; Flight Class: 70-22; died on March 28, 2020.

Flint Robert W. USA, COL Ret.; died on May 14, 2020.

Garrett, McLain G. USA, COL Ret.; LM, BS, MSM, ACM; died on March 31, 2020.

Greenwell, Alan D. USA; Flight Class: 67-3; died on February 6, 2012.

Greer, George D. USA, LTC Ret.; SS (2 OLC), DFC, LM (2 OLC), BS (3 OLC); died on May 13, 2020.

Hartley, Charles R. USA; Flight Class: 69-26; RVN: 67 A242 5 SF, 67 A246 5 SF, 68 B24 5 SF, 71 B/7/17 CAV, 71-72 HHC 52 CAB; DFC, BS (4 OLC); died on April 14, 2020.

Haughey, Lawrence R. USAF, LTC Ret.; died on April 29, 2020.

Lawrence, Miles E. USA; Flight Class: 67-11; RVN: 67-68 92 AHC; died on April 21, 2020.

Ludwig, John D. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 71-16; died on April 20th, 2020.

McWaters, John D. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 70-39; LM, BS; died on April 5, 2020.

Miller, Douglas M. USA; Flight Class: 69-20; SS, BS; died on April 22, 2020.

Moore, David J. USMC, LTC Ret.; RVN: 68 HMM-163? HMM-362 (3 tours total); died on May 5, 2020.

Mueller, Richard M. Jr. USA; Flight Class: 69-24; died on 24 Feb 2020.

Newton, Paul L. USA; Flight Classes: 68-523/68-43; died on April 6, 2020.

Palmer, William R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-514/68-24; died on May 26, 2020.

Patterson, David W. USN; RVN: 69-70 HC-7; died on April 2, 2020.

Peel, William B. USAF, LTC Ret.; died on January 3, 2020.

Rabideau, Francis S. USA; Flight Classes: 67-19/67-17; died on November 2, 2016.

Robinson, Benjamin B. USMC; died on November 29, 2019.

Robinson, James C. USN, LCD Ret.; RVN: 68-71 HC - 7; Callsign: Seadevil; died on February 6, 2020.

Rolfe, Brian W. USMC, LTC Ret.; died on May 3, 2020.

Rumney, Russell E. USA, LTC Ret.; died on May 11, 2020.

Schaal, Thomas A. USA; Flight Class: 63-4WT; DFC, BS; died on February 2, 2020.

Shultz, Ray L. USMC/USCG, LCR Ret.; died on May 23, 2020.

Smith, Clarence L. USMC, LTC Ret.; DFC, PH; died on February 19, 2020.

Smith, Robert L. USAF, LTC Ret.; SS, BS, MSM, AFC; died on April 3, 2020.

Stubbs, Donald E. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-32/69-28; died on or about May 17, 2020.

Suber, Carson G. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-12/67-10; died February 1, 2020.

Thompson, Evan G. USAF, MAJ Ret.; RVN: 67 37 ARRS DET 2; DFC (3); died on January 30, 2020.

Thompson, Leroy A. USMC; RVN: 67-68 HMM-265; died on April 8, 2020.

Wegner, Louis R. USA; died on April 1, 2020.

Wikstrom, Raymond M. USN, CPT Ret.; RVN: 69 (HAL)-3; Callsign: Seawolf; died on May 20, 2020.

Williams, Sanford L. USA, CW4 Ret.; died on April 21, 2020.

Winfrey, Reverdy E. USA; Flight Class: 66-4; died on April 24, 2020.

Weitzel, Dennis C. USA; Flight Class: 69-34; died on February 6, 2020.

Williams, Jeffery L. USA; Flight Class: 71-25; died on December 25, 2019.

Young, Robert J. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-20; RVN: 68 D/1/10 CAV, 70-71 A/2/17 CAV; died February 11, 2020.

# UPCOMING REUNIONS

Sixth Annual Reunion of the 119th Assault Helicopter Company  
**When September 15-17, 2020**

Where: Radisson Branson Hotel,  
Branson Missouri

Contact: Spencer Gardner at  
[Spencerhgardner@gmail.com](mailto:Spencerhgardner@gmail.com) for details

134TH Assault Helicopter Company Reunion  
(Devils and Demons all years)

**When: SEPT 16 -20, 2020**

Where: Clemons, NC

Contact: Terry Branch

[HellsHalfAcre134@GMail.com](mailto:HellsHalfAcre134@GMail.com)

Ph: 336-998-6136

Vinh Long Outlaw Association  
(VLOA) reunion  
62nd AVN CO  
CO A 502 AVN BN  
175 AHC

*And all attached units*

Where: San Antonio TX

**When: September 17 – 21, 2020**

Contact: Bert L. Rice 410-507-3366

[bert07@comcast.net](mailto:bert07@comcast.net) or

[www.vihnlongoutlaws.com](http://www.vihnlongoutlaws.com)

132nd "Hercules" and the 178th "Boxcars"  
" 2020 Reunion

Where: Savannah GA, Hampton Inn and Suites

20 Johnston St. 31405 (912) 721-3700

*Call NLT September 18,*

*refer to 178th/132nd ASHC Reunion*

**When: 19 – 23 October, 2020**

Contact: Bill McRae, Hercules 18

770-843-3973

*Additional Details: [www.132ASHC.org](http://www.132ASHC.org)*

192nd Assault Helicopter Company Reunion

Our Reunions are open to all who served  
in the 192nd no matter what you did.

Where: The Crown Plaza Hotel, Charleston SC

**When: November 6-9, 2020**

Contact: Dennis Javens for details

[Dennisjavens43@gmail.com](mailto:Dennisjavens43@gmail.com)

805-903-3967

D/3/5 & C/3/17 Reunion

Where: Daytona Beach, Florida

**When: 4/29/21-5/2/2021**

Contact: H.H. (Rick) Roll - [rroll@comcast.net](mailto:rroll@comcast.net)

Website: [www.lighthorseaircav.com](http://www.lighthorseaircav.com)

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