



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



Cover story... page 16



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



CHANGE – Fight it, or Embrace it?

I understand – some people just do not like change. Most of you remember the talented and soulful black singer Sam Cooke (from our day). One of his top hits was, “A Change is Gonna Come.” Well, my friends, if 2020 tells us anything, we’ve been under profound change, and it “ain’t over yet.” In preparation (and in anticipation) of the 2021 Charlotte Reunion, our reunion advance team of Chairman John Powell, Sherry Rodgers, and Ashley Bird have just made their site visit to the Westin Hotel to line up all the logistics. However, the specter of COVID remains, which means we must also consider certain contingencies, including local health mandates. The point is that adjustments will likely have to be made for our visit, but rest assured, we are monitoring the situation closely, and will keep you apprised in a timely manner.

Army Change: In between my two exciting Vietnam tours of 1968 and 1971 (a real bonus for me – I got to do both Tet and Lam Son), I spent almost two years as the Assistant S-3 Air (The Aviation Officer) for the 10th Special Forces Group out of Fort Devens, MA and Bad Tolz, Germany. There was a crusty old SF Sergeant Major there who had begun his military career as a Ranger climbing the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc on June 6, 1944. He was all about flexibility and adaptation. His favorite saying was, “If you don’t like change, you’re going to like being irrelevant even less.” The naturalist Charles Darwin put it differently, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives, it is the one most adaptable to change.”

When situations, conditions, circumstances, or events dictate that changes or adjustments must be made, there are naturally those who will resist. When opportunities present themselves where things can be improved or refined, there are naturally those who not only fear the change, but vigorously reject it. You often hear things from this group like:

- “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
- “It was good enough then, and still good enough now.”
- “You can’t and shouldn’t change history.”
- “There’s a lot of tradition you’ll upset and destroy.”

Aren’t you glad that our aviation leaders in Vietnam in the early days were not like that? They saw the need to adjust and did so, otherwise we would all be wearing reunion shirts with CH-21s on them!

There’s a saying in business that applies elsewhere: “The only constant is change.” My civilian consulting work revolves primarily around marketing, competitive, and selling strategies for high tech firms. Trust me, their products and strategies are always evolving. If you try to stand still in high tech today,



you’re going backwards – neutral or status quo is not an option. The key is to adapt how you operate while maintaining your principles and your history. I have one client whose core values are Integrity, Intelligence, & Innovation. Their operating philosophy is, “If it ain’t broke, TRY to break it now and then – and see if there’s a better way.” Their strength and their success are directly attributable to their resiliency. Their products and their operating procedures have evolved, while they have stayed true to their values. Accordingly, here’s what we know as absolute truths regarding our VHPA future:

- We’re getting older and not able to do the things we used to.
- Our reunions will shrink in size.
- We will need help if we want to keep our reunions going.

It is the duty of the Executive Council to prepare for our future while maintaining our core principles and values. Those values will not change, but we will all have to adjust to how we conduct ourselves – adjustments with our general welfare in mind. Our world has changed, and in that way, Charlotte will be much different than Kansas City in more ways than one.

My colleagues and I on the Executive Council see our mission for the VHPA to act on your behalf with a philosophy of continuous improvement – evolution, not revolution – change where it makes sense while always remembering our history and our heritage. We shall endeavor to implement any changes in as seamless a manner as possible in order to minimize any disruptions or discomfort. However, as human nature tells us, in doing so we may displease a few in our ranks. (But perhaps those same folks also thought that Blockbuster would last forever, and that Amazon should have stuck with just selling books!)

I’ll leave you with another favorite quote from the old SF Sergeant Major, “If you’re not living on the edge, you’re taking up too much space.”

*Art Jacobs VHPA President
PRESIDENT'S CORNER*

FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

Due to COVID 19 we will not have anything regarding R2021 available until after the first of the year.

REMINDERS:

★ Paper 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 on line directory is free at:

<https://directory.vhpa.org>

★ Dues can be paid and a directory can be ordered on line via the On Line Directory at :

<https://directory.vhpa.org>!

PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF REMAILING ITEMS! If you move, PLEASE go on line to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under

"Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information. You can also call HQ with an update to your contact information!

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

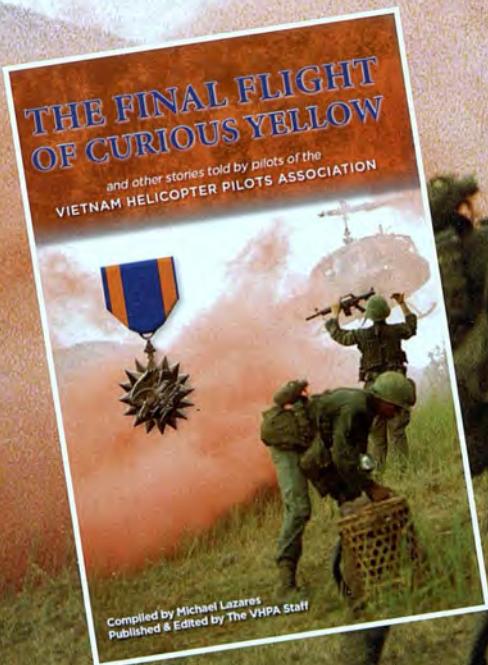
As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything that we can do to make that happen, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

Sherry Rodgers
VHPA Office Manager

Sales to date of the Final Flight of Curious Yellow

Have generated over \$6500 for the VHPA Scholarship Fund!

*We thank those who contributed to the book,
and those who purchased it!*



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amazon.com
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TODAY**

VHPA NEW HQ DIGS

1601 East Lamar Boulevard, Suite 117, Arlington, Texas 76011-4463

The new VHPA Headquarters Office is open! With the lease on our old space in Grand Prairie expiring, the VHPA Executive Council began the process of deciding whether we would extend that lease, or look for a new space nearby with more favorable terms and amenities. Current Vice President Art Price, Past President Mike Sheuerman, and our HQ Office Manager Sherry Rodgers began the negotiations with our landlord while at the same time

looking at a number of alternative locations. Our decision criteria were a convenient and cost-effective utilitarian space. When our current landlord was unwilling to meet our requests for certain repairs, upgrades, and concessions, we were ready to pull the trigger on moving, which was seamlessly accomplished with no member service interruptions.

Joe Kline of Gilroy, California has graciously donated the artwork for our new signage above. We know that many of you did not fly a Huey in Vietnam and that many of our members were not U.S. Army, but a Huey on a Combat Assault was chosen for two primary reasons: First, the Huey is the single-most recognizable icon or symbol from the Vietnam War (which is also why it was chosen for our monument in Arlington, and on our Life Member cards). Second, no matter what we flew, it was in direct



combat support of the guys on the ground, who we wanted to feature in the illustration.

Joe is a long-time loyal supporter of the VHPA, a popular reunion vendor, and our favorite helicopter artist. Joe was an H Model Crew Chief with B Company, 101st Aviation Battalion (The "Kingsmen") with the 101st Airborne Division in 1970-71.

Note: Mike Sheuerman has respectfully requested that all house warming gifts be sent directly to him. He is registered at "Bed, Bath, & Beyond."



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.

See my other available prints, and place orders, at www.joeklineart.com.



Joe Kline Aviation Art

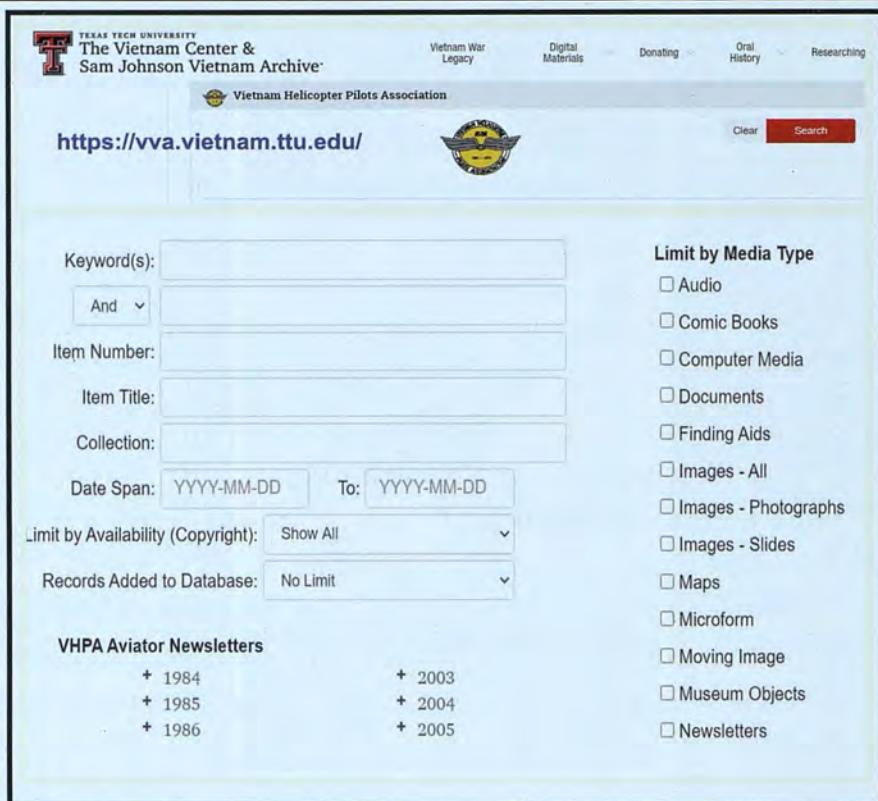
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An Update on The Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech

Before the COVID pandemic closed the Texas Tech University (TTU) campus, including the Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive (VNCA), in the Spring of 2020, the VHPA's student hire program was at nearly peak performance. We had:

- Two trained and fully functional students working on the VHPA tasks plus the funds to not only pay them through the end of the school year but also have one work during the summer.
- Leveraged our tasks to take good advantage of a large third-party grant to get at least two HUGE collections scanned.
- Scanned and completed 32 collections during our 5-year program.
- Scanned all VHPA Newsletter/Aviators magazines, Membership Directories, and Calendars, along with creating a custom table of contents feature for the Aviators, and data entry for all image captions for the calendars.
- Had a healthy scan queue of 15 collections and a processing queue of 10+ collections with the student staff to work them in priority order.
- After a multi-year wait, completed scanning the images from 4 collections (35mm slides and photographs) containing 2,754 images.



long term.

Then everything shut down! Everyone had to work from home. Needless to say, one can't load a document scanner remotely! The VHPA students were paid for an additional six weeks after the shutdown, however no scanning was done. After that, the VHPA project was halted until the VNCA could reopen.

The TTU campus carefully opened for the Fall semester with restrictions plus the possibility of having to return to another 'work from home' scenario. For 'spacing' reasons, the VNCA opened with 50% staffing capacity, meaning the students work 20 hours a week on campus and the full-time staff work a rotating schedule splitting half their time between working in the office and working from home. Therefore, the VNCA implemented a new routine, where the students are spending the first two months of work only scanning materials, with no database records being created. That

- Had a nice oral history and AV (moving images and audio recordings) queue.
- Had a fully funded endowment (\$250K) that will generate the funds to pay student workers to process and scan VHPA materials for the

way, if a student was put into quarantine or the university shut down, the scanners would be able to work from home creating the database record for the scanned material and uploading everything into the Virtual Vietnam Archive (VVA). The VHPA has two really good students. One is assigned to document scanning and one to image scanning. FYI, they can work about 350 35-mm slides or about 250 photographs per months depending on captions. Thus, while Jack Swickard's collection of documents and museum items is complete; his 102 photographs and 29 slides are still in the image scanning queue along with 13 others.

Finally, the VNCA's 8mm and 16mm film scanners stopped functioning about a year ago. Parts of two VHPA collections were digitized before then and we have at least 7 more in the film scanning queue. The VNCA is looking for a \$40K to \$100K grant to acquire a replacement scanner.

Now there is the painful subject of 'aban-

doned unit websites' because no one is willing or able to take over their stewardship. As you might surmise, there is A TON of history on those websites that can be lost. Please know that while the VHPA is not currently able or authorized to 'take over' unit websites; our relationship with the VNCA is such that we can help the unit 'archive their website' so that the history is not lost.

Please feel free to contact me at calendar@vhpao.org or 830-730-0950 if you want to donate materials to the archive, have questions about collections already in queue at the archive, etc. Remember the bitter and cruel rule when you read the TAPS section ~ there are dozens of stories, documents, photos, histories that most likely will go to the dumpster or never be recorded; but could have been added to the VHPA's legacy at the Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive.

Mike Law

mglaw@earthlink.net

Vietnam Heli Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

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MCNAMARA'S FOLLY

By Doug Moore

Shortly after arriving for my first tour with the 57th Dustoff, I learned the Viet Cong were employing several different methods to destabilize the South Vietnamese Government. One tactic was ambushing military and commercial vehicles on the highways north and east of Saigon. Those "hit and run" ambushes were difficult to predict and harder to prevent because heavy jungles grew right up to the edges of many of the roads.

In late October of 1964, two Air Force pilots stopped by our unit asking for help. At that time, the Air Force had no crash-rescue capability at Tan Son Nhut, so they asked whether one of our Dustoff helicopters could fly cover while they sprayed weed killer in the III and IV Corps areas. They said they would be spraying something called 2,4-D, a product that was widely used in the United States for weed control and their plan was to kill vegetation for 200 yards or so along both sides of the roadways to reduce the number of ambushes that were occurring almost daily.

One of our pilots, Lieutenant Walt Harris, went to an initial meeting at their operations center and then Walt and I attended a second meeting where we learned they would be using old C-123 cargo planes. Each plane was fitted with a large plastic tank inside its cargo bay and spray booms were attached along the underside of the wings.

Although the Air Force unit was known as the "Ranch Hands," they preferred to use a different codeword to coordinate our support. Since Walt attended the initial meeting, they decided to use his last name when we talked over the phone or by radio. Once or twice a week for the next few months, I would get a call from their operations officer telling me they were planning a "Harris Mission" for the next day. Because they were faster, he would give me an airborne rendezvous point where we would link up near



the target area. With that, our involvement in the controversial "Agent Orange" program began.

After many of the roads had been sprayed, someone decided to hit a few jungle sanctuaries where enemy forces were known to concentrate. Not long afterward, I attended a meeting and learned an extremely large tract of jungle known as the Boi Loi Woods was to

be sprayed. The Boi Loi, located about 30 miles north of Saigon, was interlaced with tunnels left over from the French-Indochina War and recent intelligence showed the Viet Cong were digging even more and larger tunnels to shelter troops, establish hospitals, and to store food and war supplies.

The enemy reacted strongly when spraying of the Boi Loi began and the slow flying C-123s took hits nearly every time they flew over it. To keep the mission going, the Air Force mechanics began cutting corners when doing repairs. Their major effort was on internal systems and less time was spent patching bullet holes in the outer skin. As many know, aircraft grade aluminum is covered with a red, corrosion-resistant paint to protect it during shipment and storage. Because of the need for quick repairs, the mechanics stopped removing the red paint as they quickly patched bullet holes in the outer skin. In short order, some of their planes began to look like they were suffering from a bad case of measles and one took so many hits that the crew proudly painted the name "Patches" across its nose, and it became famous during the war.

"Patches" almost did not make it home from the Boi Loi one day. Paul Bloomquist and I were flying cover and watched as a steady stream of tracers came up to meet them. We were told it took more than 100 hits and the pilot was wounded when a bullet ricocheted off the console and struck his chin. Then the left engine began smoking badly

and had to be shut down. Moments later, the copilot reported they were leaking every fluid aboard the aircraft and he was having difficulty maintaining altitude. We suggested he head for Bien Hoa Air Base and we would follow. Paul and I pulled the power up to the red line on our old “B Model” Huey and managed to stay close behind, but became concerned because “Patches” kept losing altitude to the point that we didn’t think they would make it. By some stroke of luck, the co-pilot managed to nurse his badly shot-up plane over the fence at Bien Hoa and landed safely.

For the next couple of months, we watched the Boi Loi slowly turning brown. Then, in March of 1965, I went to a meeting where I learned it would be burned. The plan called for Air Force cargo planes to drop barrels of diesel fuel in a long “V” shaped pattern. The “V” would be about 10 miles wide at the mouth and would taper to several hundred yards wide at the pointed end. The “V” would be set on fire and the planners believed the prevailing southwest winds would drive the fire down the long axis of the “V” and create what is called a “venturi” effect. The planners believed the “venturi effect” would greatly increase the air-flow and drive a raging firestorm across the entire forest.

On the day it was to be burned, we launched two Dustoff helicopters to provide cover. Jay McGowan was flying on the eastern side of the “V” and I was on the western side, so we had ringside seats as pallets loaded with 55-gallon barrels of diesel fuel were dropped. The pallets had flares attached which ignited when the barrels hit the ground and ruptured. For a short time, it looked like it might work because enormous flames began shooting hundreds of feet into the air.

As the fire began moving down the long axis of the “V”, its tremendous heat created strong updrafts and severe turbulence. Within a few minutes, the air became so disturbed that clouds began forming and soon boiled skyward much like you see during a violent Texas thunderstorm. In less than 30 minutes, rain began pouring down and the fire was extinguished before any real damage was done. Whether it



was true or not, we were told the order to burn the Boi Loi came from Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, so that failed operation quickly became known as “McNamara’s Folly.”

In 2017, my wife and I had an opportunity to visit the incredible Air Force Museum in Dayton, OH. While walking through its Vietnam section, we were surprised to see “Patches” on display there. I rushed over and began telling her stories about that particular airplane, and the fact that I had a chance to fly it once and the Air Force pilot let me land it at Tan Son Nhut. Made a fairly good landing too! One of the things that I quickly noticed was the fact that, even though it still has the name “Patches” painted across its nose, its outer skin looks brand new. When I asked one of the museum docents why they did not leave the hundreds of patched bullet holes, he told me quietly that the “brass” in the Pentagon wouldn’t allow it to be placed on display with all of the bullet holes showing. I am not being critical, but I think the Air Force leadership missed a great opportunity to show what some of its brave pilots and crewmen went through during the Vietnam war.

A final note about the Boi Loi. During return trips to Vietnam in 2014 and again in 2019, my wife and I drove through much of the forest and found it has grown back to its original state. In fact, its southern end has now become one of the most visited places in Vietnam because thousands flock there annually to see a major attraction known as “The Tunnels of Cu Chi.” That particular tourist site is located just outside the little village of Phu Hoa Dong which many old Army pilots will remember by a different name. During the war, we called it “Hotsville” because so many of us got shot up while flying in that area and too many brave Americans died nearby.

Crash! Crash!

"We're hit! We're hit! Crash! Crash!" screamed the Navy aircraft commander as his helicopter gunship plowed into the shoreline of a muddy lake in the IV Corps area of South Vietnam. A shiver ran up my spine as I listened to his transmission over the Guard frequency. A moment later, I heard the stressed voice of an Army Medevac pilot urgently requesting assistance in rescuing the wounded. The Navy had two UH-1 Huey gunships down, seriously damaged by Communist 12.7 mm (.51 caliber) machinegun fire. Our Army UH-1H aircrew had been monitoring Guard while moving supplies between a military base at Binh Thuy and the village of Dam Doi. It was late afternoon and we were returning home with an empty helicopter; fellow Americans were in real trouble.

Our mission on September 15, 1970, had begun at 0800 when we lifted off Castle Airfield at Bien Hoa in III Corps, home of the 20th Engineer Brigade's Aviation Detachment. I was Castle 12 (one deuce), a peter pilot who had joined the unit five weeks earlier. Two crewmembers manned the M-60 machine guns, one on either side of the aircraft. First Lieutenant James Ellsworth, a former chief warrant officer and Medevac pilot, was the aircraft commander. He was on the short-side of an eighteen-month tour. Lieutenant Ellsworth's character and flying experience garnered my respect. I had full confidence in his judgement.

Like all military personnel, our aircrew had been drilled from the time we were basic recruits to work as a team, to respond to orders without hesitation, and to support our comrades at all costs.

After departing Castle Airfield, we low-leveled under the final approaches to Runways 27L and 27R on the east-side of busy Bien Hoa Air Force Base, popped up a couple of hundred feet, then skirted around Saigon with its French, red-tile roofed, colonial-era buildings easy to spot in the morning light. Once clear of these congested areas we climbed to 3,000 feet. As we flew southwest a panorama of the vast expanse of the Mekong River delta and intersecting manmade canals lay before us. The low-lying land produced rich crops of rice that farmers and merchants transported along the many waterways. No surprise, Charlie



Seawolves gunship courtesy of USS Hornet Sea, Air and Space Museum.



20th Engineer Brigade Aviation Detachment Huey near Bien Hoa 1970, Paul Sailer photo.



Mekong River Delta, 1970, Paul Sailer photo.

maneuvered sampans through these inland waters as well, carrying supplies, ammunition, and personnel. Interdiction by Navy Swift Boat sailors hindered this activity. The Riverines were supported by the Seawolves of Navy Helicopter Attack Squadron (Light) 3, the most decorated Navy aviation unit in



LT JG William A. Pedersen from:
www.virtualwall.org/dp/PedersenWA01a.htm



PO3 Jose Pablo Ramos:
www.virtualwall.org/dr/RamosJP01a.htm

the Vietnam War.

We arrived in Binh Thuy after an hour-and-a-half flight, picked up the first of two loads of cargo, then continued on a southwesterly heading to a desolate 20th Engineer Brigade outpost at Dam Doi, a few miles from the coast. Off to the east lay the shimmering South China Sea, and to the west, the enchanting waters of the Gulf of Siam. An awareness of the lurking enemy below spoiled

the peaceful scene along our one-hour flight path.

We tried to hurry the loading and unloading of supplies but circumstances beyond our control slowed the process. Lieutenant Ellsworth wanted to clear the area by mid-afternoon before the early evening onset of potentially violent monsoon weather, a predictable occurrence at that time of year in South Vietnam.

By late afternoon we were finally outbound from Dam Doi

with an empty aircraft, low on fuel, when we heard distress calls over the Guard frequency. Four Navy Seawolves and an Army Medevac helicopter, attempting to remove wounded ARVN infantry twenty miles from our position, were caught in a withering heavy machinegun crossfire. One Huey had already slammed into shallow VC Lake when we heard a Seawolf pilot's urgent transmission that his aircraft was about to crash along the water's edge.

Lieutenant Ellsworth responded instantly to a plea from the Medevac pilot, Dustoff 86, for help in extracting wounded Navy flight crews and ARVN soldiers. He radioed the pilot that our ship would be available as soon as we refueled at an airfield ten miles distant. When we landed a few minutes later to take on POL, the place hummed with activity. As a door gunner topped off a nearby Navy gunship with JP-4, a bearded, sweating pilot ran over to our aircraft and asked me for an update on the fighting. After a brief, shouted exchange, he hurried back to his crew. The gunship soon thundered away. Moments later, we followed in the Huey's wake. Once airborne we could again pick up Guard transmissions. When Lieutenant Ellsworth contacted Dustoff 86, he learned other helicopters had already arrived at the scene and that we were no longer needed.

Like their forefathers in other wars, Army and Navy crewmembers in the area had responded instinctively to rescue those in danger. Although Lieutenant Ellsworth's desire to help would have put our crew and aircraft at serious risk, it was the right thing to do. The tension of impending combat that I had been feeling subsided, but not the anxiety for those injured.

The Vietnam edition of the Stars and Stripes later reported that eight helicopters had been damaged in the battle and two destroyed, "in one of the worst attacks on U.S. aircraft this year." Significantly, three Seawolves crewmembers were wounded and two were dead. They were Lieutenant Junior Grade William A. Pedersen, a graduate of John Muir High School in Pasadena, CA, and Petty Officer Third Class Jose Pablo Ramos, a basketball star in his hometown of McAllen, TX. After all these years, it was a moving experience for me to discover the names of these men while researching the Battle of VC Lake for this story.

Our mission did not end until well after dark on that fateful day. Heavy rain and lightning bursts forced us to vector by radio signal via Cu Chi to reach Castle Airfield. We had flown nine tiring hours. For me, I had experienced the first sensation of the true meaning of comradeship, that stirring emotion servicemen and women feel for a person wearing the same uniform. I would experience it again and again in Vietnam.

*Paul M. Sailer (CWO), Lifetime VHPA member
For further information see: www.lodenbooks.com*



20th Engineer Brigade Aviation Detachment Huey near Bien Hoa 1970, Paul Sailer photo.

~ LOOKING FOR ~

Hello,

My name is Hayden Lee Frier. I have stumbled on this website (VHPA) after doing research about my grandfather and his time in Vietnam. My grandfather or as I called him Papa's name is James Jarrett Frier. Over the past few months, I have been intrigued about the war and what my grandfather went through. I have been



James Frier in flight school.



James Frier in Vietnam.

trying to find anything related to him such as pictures, people he served with, or any info that I don't have so far. My Mama, his wife Martha, is still here very healthy and has pictures of his time in Vietnam which I want to send to you all as I know my Papa was a member of the VHPA. The next time I visit her I will definitely take snaps of some of those photos on slides. I have a few that we found on his email/photo books which I will attach to this email.

I know it's a longshot seeing if there is anyone who knew my Papa in those days but for me it is worth every try. Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon.

CPT James "JJ" J. Frier USMC, Flight Class 03-67 was a VHPA member who died after his tour in Vietnam on 07/06/2018 at the age of 75.4 in Warner Robins, GA. If you can provide any information, **please contact Hayden at haydenfrier@gmail.com** Ed.

Looking for Classmates

I'm researching flight class # 66-11. We are planning a 55th class reunion next spring, 2021.

Any class member interested and/or who has contact information for other classmates, please get in touch with me.

Thank you,

Ed Duke 134 Duke lane, Huntsville, TX 77320, 936 291 9229 or 936 6611516 anitaed62@suddenlink.net

Looking for my Dad's helicopter pilot.

I'm not sure that his pilot is still alive or that there are any records which might be helpful. My Dad (George M Tronsrue Jr.) was the Battalion Commander for 1/18 INF, 1 INF Division in Vietnam from November/December 1967 to June/July 1968. I'm most interested in finding and talking to his helicopter pilot from April to June 1968, which is when the Battle of Tan Hiep and the subsequent action occurred:

My Dad was the BN CDR for 1/18 during this battle and I've recently written a story published in Charlie Co,

"Swamp Rats" by 1st INF DIV Society. My father, who died in Dec 2013, had earlier written a less detailed version (which I have a copy of), but leaving out many details as to why this battle was not more well-known or better publicized. It was one of the most lopsided US victories in the Vietnam War. My version is based on numerous conversations with him, and we actually walked the battlefield together in 1997, so these comments address some of the issues.

Through the entire Tet offensive, it is the opinion of many of his soldiers (as related to me) the poor relationship between my Dad and his Brigade Commander (Col Norman Allen) resulted in his combat leadership not being adequately recognized for his actions in this battle, although he did receive the Silver Star.

A week later, when D Company conducted an air mobile assault operation, they landed in a minefield and were ambushed, after the company commander's RTO stepped on a mine and was killed, my Dad flew in, landed and personally led people out of the minefield under enemy fire. He rescued them from a very bad situation that was getting worse. He decided to abort the mission and went out of channels to the air mission commander, who was a friend and recalled the birds that had dropped D Company and got them and the wounded and KIA out of this situation. His S-3/XO (Col (Ret) Philip McGuire) told me a year ago that he should have received the DSC or MOH for this action, but given Allen's intense dislike and prejudice against my Dad, they didn't write it up, as they figured nothing would happen. It still bothers Phil deeply to this day, 52 years later.

I'm sure that my Dad's helicopter pilot (if still alive and of sound mind) would be able to validate these two actions, among others. I would greatly appreciate this contact info or information as to how I can locate and contact this person on behalf of my Father.

Any help or assistance you can provide would be very helpful and greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

George M Tronsrue III
President & Owner
MFSI Government Group
www.mfsigovgroup.com
Contact me: 206-679-0454

Note: Initially, I intended to simply post a request for the above-mentioned individual (the pilot) to reply if available. Upon further reflection, I decided to qualify the purpose of the outreach to underscore the nature of the request and its importance to the requestor for whatever recourse may be available. Tom Kirk

Prairie Fire. FOB 2 Hatchett Team.

Somewhere across some border. 25/26 October 1969
by Mark Keeney

"Disclaimers:" I'm older, left-handed, and retired infantry. I was shot at and hit; crashed (14,200 ft on the top of Moana Kea volcano, Hawaii), but did not burn. I was on pretty strong meds for three months after being shot over Dak To five days after the incident related below. Others who may, or may not, have been there may have their version of the story. This is my version based on: the fog of war, overlapping similar over the border missions, and romanticizing a hairy moment in my life.

I was a 26-year old infantry captain who had spent two years in the DMZ of Korea as an infantry platoon leader and subsequently infantry company commander when I got orders for flight school, Cobra transition, and assignment to the 361st Aviation Company, Escort (ACE), Pink Panthers, in Pleiku. I learned our primary mission was to fly Cobra gunship support for insertion and extraction of Kontum based Special Forces Command and Control Central (CCC)/Forward Operating Base - 2 (FOB - 2) cross border operations in the tri-border of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The SF missions consisted mostly of 10 to 12-man Recon Teams (RTs) with three to four US and seven to nine indigenous personnel, and occasionally larger 30 to 40 person Hatchett Teams (HTs) with four to six US and the remainder indigenous personnel. It was very seldom that they were not in contact: upon insertion, during operations, and for sure upon extraction, often under code Prairie Fire which signified a request for immediate extraction and the diversion of all available air assets to assist.

The 361st would join the teams at a forward launch site, primarily Dak To, sometimes Dak Pek in the highlands. The gunships and crews on one side of the runway, the teams and lift ships (VNAF King Bees, Gladiators, Bikinis, among others) on the other side, until mission brief. There were a couple of CONEX containers for coms and ready room on the team side. I have this early, faint recollection, maybe a fantasy over time, of my first trip over to the briefing area a little early one day. When I walked into one CONEX. In the dim,

Coleman lamp lit room I saw a metal cot with a young-looking, blond-headed, greased painted SF kid soldier, reading a comic book, and drinking a Coke, waiting to be called to load up and move out. For the purpose of this story, my reality, this was the first time I saw 1 Lt William M. "Mike" Hatchett (with two t's). A young, all-American boy heading out to slay the dragon, with not a care in the world, until it was go-time. Mike had turned 23 three weeks prior to this mission. In reality it could have been any of the young (22-24 year old) team members, but for me it was Mike, although I was not on a first name basis with him or any of the team members at the time.

On the morning of 25 October 1969, we met up with a 30+ man Hatchett Team at Dak To. It was a large insertion. Mike was not the team leader, nor a member of the team, and I did not really know he was on the team until after the extraction. I found out later he was within 30 days of his DROS and was in a team ops officer job, not slated for this mission, but he volunteered because one of his best friends, Clinton Davis, was and Mike wanted to go on "one, last, mission" with his friend (I asked Mike about the DROS legend of this mission and he told me, DROS "yes", but he had already put in an extension request that had not come in yet). We launched around 3:00 PM heading for "someplace across the border/Laos (?)." There was no fire during the insertion, so we stood off a couple of clicks for about 15 minutes and headed back toward Dak To. Within 30 minutes, we got a call that the team was in contact so we re-fueled and headed back. By this time, the team was in heavy contact. A Prairie Fire was called by the team. We expended and rearmed a couple of times trying to suppress the enemy enough to get the lift ships in, to no avail. We had encountered moderate machine gun and anti-aircraft fire. Dak Pek sits in a bowl, surrounded by low mountains. It was dark when we made our last re-arm. The low clouds and rain added to the drama of climbing out of Dak To. We almost made it to mountain clearance altitude when we encountered my first settling with power situation.

With somewhat calm resignation I said over a hot mike, "I think we're going to die." We recovered and continued to the AO but could not get down through the rain and clouds, although we could hear the team over their radios.

SF command requested that the flight assets that inserted the team be the one that extracted the team. We were back at Dak To before daybreak. Some strangers gave us some "special" flight gear and directed us not to remove it until we were back in Dak To (all will be revealed). We were at the extraction site by 7:00 AM. Covey had its hands full with all the air assets on station. Fast movers bombing the crap out of everything. CWO Jim Meyer was PIC. I

was front seat. We were holding in a race track pattern a click out. "All of a sudden" I felt the cobra shudder and looked back over my shoulder. There were about a dozen balls of black smoke with bright red and yellow fire. Unconsciously I uttered over the mike "these bastards are really trying to kill us." My first exposure to WW II-type flak. Shortly thereafter "somebody" did something "special" to the area surrounding the extraction site....and ALL the AA and ground fire went from 100 to about 10, very quickly, permitting the lifts, including Vaughn Ros and Mike Walters of the 57th AHC, to get in and get the team out. We exited at a directed altitude of 11,000 ft. I recall looking across at the lift ships. Some team members were sitting in the door, legs swinging in the breeze, enjoying the ride back to base, some to the Pleiku 71st Evac hospital. This 30+ man team had five to seven KIA and 23-25 WIA. Mike was wounded in the side (fragments of which still remain) and ended up



Cpt Mark Keeney, 361st Avn Co, Escort (ACE), Panther 26 '69 combat loaded, Pleiku, Sep 1969.



1st Lt William M. "Mike" Hatchett, Forward Operating Base (FOB) 2, RT Hawaii/HF Co B, between missions, Sep 1969, Kontum.

in the hospital where a couple of us Panthers went to visit him and gave him a Pink Panther patch, which he still has. He was evaced to the States but was back in country within four months. Mike joined the Guard then the Reserve in '72. He spent many years with the Defense Contract Auditing Agency, seven years in Iraq and Afghanistan. He retired from the Reserves as an O6 in '98.

Five days after the October 26 '69 mission I was wounded over Dak To and evaced to the states. Fast forward 40 years. I had not seen or heard of Mike Hatchett in all that time, although I had occasionally reminisced about the young blond haired "kid" and the hairy mission, and the wonder of it all. At the 2009 VHPA reunion in DC the Panther "historian" Hal Manns brought in a several hundred-page draft of the unit history and asked us to look it over. I was pleased and surprised to see the 25/26 October '69 mission included, having been evaced five days after the mission. I noted several DFCs were issued to members of the 361st for that mission (Pete Daily, Larry Braun, Bob McFall, Carl Sheron, Don Lautenschlagaeer, and Jim Meyer). I knew Hal was the awards officer for the unit back then and asked about this. He realized that I was also put in for a DFC that was not processed, for whatever reasons (nor was my combat tour OER, which I learned about in 1974 when passed over for O4, but corrected thanks to then 361st CO John "Dusty" Deryck). Hal worked tirelessly to reconstruct the recommendation that was eventually approved. In that process I had to contact people with knowledge of the mission. That put me back in touch with Mike, who was off in



1st Lt Mike Hatchett combat loaded, Sep 1969



We Remain Patriots, Now,...and Older.
Forty-five year reunion dinner, Commander's Palace, NOLA, Feb 2014.. Mike Hatchett and Mark Keeney.

Iraq and Afghanistan, as DAC auditor or logistics consultant, and still is occasionally even now. The award was finally approved in 2011.

As life would have it, Mike continued to live in NOLA and I spent every winter in Venice, FL, a 10-hour drive away. In February 2014 I decided I wanted to buy Mike a long overdue thank you drink for the DFC support and his FOB service. We ate at one of my favorite places, The Commander's Palace. I wanted to know Mike's SF story and about that mission and asked if I could record the conversation, for a possible article for the Aviator, to which he agreed. I got out the recorder in April 2014 when I had returned to NH for the summer. It was blank, operator error. I did not have the courage to fess up to Mike and ask for a do over, until last December, 2019. I reached out, with the whole truth, to him via email. He was in Afghanistan but would be home in January 2020. I told him that due to recent left hip replacement I could not make a 10-hour drive to NOLA, so he graciously consented to a phone "interview," which we conducted on 12 February 2020. I wrote this article in April 2020 but did not submit it because I wanted to include the picture of Mike and me at the 2014 dinner, which I looked for every year from April 2014 until September 2020. Last week, as a COVID quarantine project, I downloaded photos from two digital cameras, two cell phones, and four thumb drives and downloaded them to my hard drive and started sorting and filing them. After a week, and more than 9,000 photos, almost asleep from the effort, I almost passed it up. There it was, and now included in this story.

Post Script. Many of us FOB supporters have read, or heard of, FOber John Plaster's 1998 SOG book. Mike suggested I look at a book, *Uncommon Valor*, by Stephen



CWO Jim Meyers in 'special' SF issue gear, day of the extraction.

Moore. I bought it and spent the next two days reading it. Moore's 2018 book is the history of FOB 2/CCC (created May '66, stood down Jan '70) and Dak To, and Leghorn. It is almost a day by day, team by team history of over the border insertions and extractions, and team KIAs and WIAs: five MOH, eight DSC, too many Purple Hearts to count (eight for one member alone). Although not cited by name, if you read this book you will know the Panther (or your unit's) missions you flew for them. It includes an appendix

listing every member who served, including rank, position, and awards. By my best count, 730 men total during FOB's three and a half year existence, 80% Spec or NCOs; by my best guess with an average age of 24. Mike Hatchett was 23.

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It is what you get when the Cobra engine quits. This past May 30th marked 50 years since Tim Locke and I experienced a Cobra engine failure. We had just departed LZ Blackhawk (located several miles west of the Mang Yang Pass) after taking on a load of fuel and were orbiting north of Highway 19 a few miles east of the LZ waiting for the scouts to move out. Everything was as it should be and then it was not. With a suddenness like I had never experienced, the whine of the engine went to total silence. We went into autorotation and put out a mayday call and headed toward Highway 19 which offered us the best possible area to finish the autorotation. We landed on Highway 19 about 100 feet from a ditch that had been cut across the highway for a culvert that was being installed. Only damage to the aircraft was a bent tail stinger from the final flare while landing.

Tim and I could not believe our good fortune in being where we were at the time of the engine failure. Had we been just a mile or two farther north we would have been over some heavy jungle and our landing might have been a bit more of a problem. The Lord above was surely with us that afternoon.

Bill Beddow



Tim Locke and Bill Beddow.



The engine failure was a result of compressor blade failure. You can see the bits and pieces of the compressor blades on the deck below the engine air inlet in the plenum chamber.



ON THE COVER
Before the Cobra could be slung out back to An Khe all the ordnance had to be off loaded.

MY FIRST MISSION

It was 1969. I was a brand new 19-year-old helicopter slick pilot assigned to A troop 7/1st Cav in the Mekong Delta outside a village called Vinh Long. I had been in country about a week and did not know my ass from a hole in the ground. We were in a staging area when the flight lead came up to tell Norm (Norm Peebles is a PIC - a tall good-looking guy with a no-nonsense attitude). Go down about 10 Clicks south of Soc Trang and pick up a lerp (LRRP long range reconnaissance patrol) team. Take the nugget with you." (New Guy - me).

Norm looked at me and it is clear I am going to be dead weight, so he says, "Just sit in the right seat. Don't touch anything and only talk if you see little red things coming up at us from your side of the aircraft."

Before I knew it, we were in the air going to pick up this, unknown to me "lerp" team.

There were a lot of things I did not know. How are we going to find it, what it is, and what if we could not? I began to realize for the first time, but not the last, that my life was dependent on the ability and skill of someone else. Combat has a way of driving this fact home. This is the reason veterans hold a lifelong bond with each other.

So, as we approached the general area Norm tuned the FM radio to a frequency and said, "Red Team, you copy?" The next thing I heard scared the shit out of me. Over the radio came the reply, "Red team reads 5 by 5. You are approaching from our North." What he said did not scare me - what scared the s*** out of me was the fact he was whispering. Norm said pop smoke, and in less than a minute I saw smoke in a clearing about four miles ahead of us. On short final I could see the remains of smoke begin to swirl and trees and grass blowing around - but, no LRRP team, - nobody. Just as the skids touch the ground, four guys, from I don't know where, were climbing in the UH-1 and the crew chief was yelling, "We're up. - Go Go Go."

Flying back to the staging area I looked back over my shoulder. All I could see was a mass of bodies lying on the floor of the helicopter. They were all in one big pile and they were all sound asleep.

When we returned to the staging area, for the

first time Norm looked at me and gave me something to do. As he climbed out, he said, "Let it idle for two minutes and then shut it down." As I unassisted the helicopter I could see one of the LRRP guys coming straight toward me. He is big - He is very big - and muddy - and bloody; a Big, Muddy, Bloody, LRRP soldier coming straight toward me. And by the look on his face I knew he was focused on me and whatever was about to happen was out of my control. When he was in front of me, he grabbed my head like it was a basketball and he gave me a kiss - right on the mouth, a wet muddy, bloody kiss. I have never been kissed like that before or since.

It was about this time when I began to realize Vietnam was going to be the adventure of my life.

I was not wrong.

*By Doug Gandy CWS
Oklahoma Natl Guard Retired
DLGandy@yahoo.com*

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Politics aside, that exciting ride
Of life and grim expectations,
Showed me how (and even now
I know) I had limitations.

Twelve long months, and more than once
I'd sat in the hands of Fate;
Why was I there? Why should I care?
Just rely on your mate.

Aussies and Yanks of various ranks,
We were a mixtured crew;
From one of each we learned to teach
Each other of what we knew.

Fear and pride, both taken in stride,
Humbled me...that's for sure;
I felt aloof and bullet-proof...
While death hovered right next door.

At times I'd fly, at times I'd cry...
Frustration reigned supreme;
Friend or foe?... 'twas hard to know...
For both wore black or green.

Back at base, sometimes I'd face
Questions from a mate;
"How'd it go?" and words would flow
While drinking beer 'til late.

He also flew, that's how he knew
The right words so to speak;
And words so said erased the dread
Of future flights so bleak.

It made me proud I was allowed
To call this bloke a mate;
I knew him well and I could tell,
To me, he could relate.

A gentle man from a southern land,
I got to know him well;
A willing bloke who loved a joke...
Who'd fly with you through hell.

At times we flew in a four-man crew
O'er lands of trees and rice;
'CHARLIE' would hide and our luck would
ride
With 'Death'... and the throw of his dice.

When holes appeared, (then tape adhered),
Like a badge... our 'ship' was honoured;
We hadn't heard strikes to our bird...
So, "Lucky again!?" ... we pondered.

When we put down in a mud-surround
'Twas a place not meant to be;
Miles from home and all alone...
It scared the hell out of me!

When we set down in a dry-surround
Our choppers numbered ten;
When mortars rained our engines strained
To get airborne again.

While six flew on, the rest prolonged
Their stay upon the ground;
In injured state they could but wait...
With wounded men all round.

"What rotten luck," for a pilot struck
In the head while flying high;
These words you'd think... and dared not sink
To thinking your time was nigh.

Five 'ships' set out and went about
Their duties for the day;
Four 'ships' returned... that's when we learned
That one was not okay.

'Twas a mission 'hot', and 'CHARLIE' had shot
A crew and a 'ship' that day;
In an old bomb crater I learned much later. . . .
That upside-down they lay.

The daily plan for 'ship' and man
Was making a safe return;
But then again, "of mice and men"
The "best laid" takes a turn.

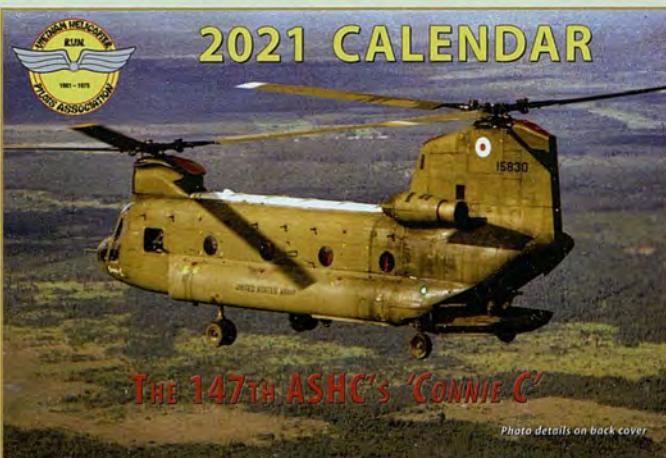
Should someone say, "a quiet day,"
And, "missions should be short;"
'Twould often play the other way...
And peacefulness abort.

Some daily flights stretched into nights...
The "quiet day" was wrong:
And in a bind our crews would find
Their strengths and carry on.

I'll not repent the whole year spent
At war in a foreign land;
I'm proud I flew as an EMU crew...
And I'm proud of the EMU man.

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VHPA 2021 CALENDAR



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SELECTIONS FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

THIS COLUMN IS FROM JUNE/JULY 1996

DOGS GET CHARGE FROM FLYING IN HELICOPTERS

Dogs were used quite a bit in Nam as guard dogs or as part of a tracking team. The ones we dealt with were used for tracking. The teams consisted of a dog and a handler.

The dogs were trained to be loyal to their handler and it was very difficult for anyone else to get close to the dog. Many times, when a handler was wounded or killed, the dog would have to be killed because it would not let anyone near the wounded or dead handler. The dogs underwent training in the World separate from the handlers, then the teams would be formed for more training.

It is a well-known fact that dogs love to stick their head out of the window of a moving car. It did not take them long to discover a helicopter in flight is a whole lot better. We almost always flew with the cargo doors open, and they would like to fly with their front paws on the edge of the doorway and their head sticking out in the slipstream.

One day we had a mission to pick up two dog teams at Americal and take them out to field locations. When we got to the pad, we were told to shut down for a few minutes to wait for something.

It was obvious the handlers were both new guys and were not aware of the dogs' love of helicopters. As soon as we landed, the dogs started to get excited about the possibility of a helicopter ride. It also was obvious the handlers were misinterpreting their excitement.

My co-pilot and I got out of the aircraft and started toward the dogs. As we got closer, the dogs started jumping around and barking. The handlers were becoming more nervous and told us to stay away, that no one could get near the dogs, especially as excited as they were.

We, of course, knew why the dogs were excited, so we kept on coming. The handlers told us we were going to get attacked by the dogs if we got much closer, so please stay away.

Just then, we got to the dogs, and they started whining and licking our hands. The look on the handlers' faces was priceless. It took quite a while to explain the

dogs associated us with the fun of a helicopter ride and that's why they acted like they did.

Drew Boudrieau

THIS COLUMN IS FROM JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1999

SCOUT DOG, HANDLER FLY HOME IN COBRAS

I was a scout dog handler with the 37th IPSD, 1st Cav from September 1970 through August 1971 in III Corps.

I had just finished pulling a rather tough mission . . . I guess that all missions were tough just by the nature of being combat missions. I cannot remember exactly when, where and with what units I worked or the aviation units I flew on during that year. They all seem to run together now. This story I do remember, and I tell this story to you because I want to find two Cobra pilots and say, "Thanks."

I remember getting a log bird out of the bush early in the day. I loved that feeling of sitting in the door of the chopper with my dog, Prinz, cruising the canopy. There was always a feeling of mutual respect and admiration between the dog handlers, pilots and crews.

My mission was over, and I was looking forward to some R&R back at Bien Hoa . . . only I couldn't seem to catch a ride, which was very unusual.

I had gotten bumped off the bird I had been scheduled on by some wigs in starched fatigues. I was left sitting on the tarmac in Song Be, watching rhinoceros beetles and ants while waiting on another bird to land.

While I was sitting there, a couple of Cobra gunships flew in to refuel. There was only one pilot in each of the Cobras. They approached me . . . evidently because of my dog. They were real happy to check him out.

Prinz really hammed it up, shakin' hands and performing eagerly, as was his nature. The pilots loved it.

Somehow it seemed to make them forget about the war and the Army for a while. Or, maybe they remembered their own dogs back in the States. They took a few photos and we exchanged some standard comments

about the heat, rain, bugs, etc. It was apparent that they were very close buddies by the way they joked with each other in a typical "nut-bustin" kind of way.

I explained my unfortunate predicament and they offered to give us, me and Prinz, a lift back to Phouc Vinh! I thought they were joking, but they were serious.

With their help, I lifted and put Prinz in the gunner's seat of one Cobra and then I climbed into the gunner's seat of the other Cobra. One of the pilots took some more photos of Prinz in the gunner's seat.

Man, what a sight. Off we went, only a few feet apart in formation, cool in the air-conditioned environment inside the cockpit. We flew side by side at what seemed like at least 1,500 feet up. Just cruisin'.

I remember looking over at Prinz and he had the most beautiful slobbering "grin" on his face. . . . he was truly happy. In fact, I would say he was about as happy as I could ever remember him being.

It ended all too soon with our arrival at Phouc Vinh and we didn't seem to create very much excitement as we landed, which I am sure they were worried about.

Prinz and I got out and saluted and waved goodbye

as they left.

When I think back, after 27 years, what a cool story. I very much want to meet again and thank those Cobra pilots for that special moment we all shared together.

It was certainly one of the most wonderful memories anyone could ever have coming out of a war where there were so many things we would like not to remember.

And, I am sure that Prinz would want to say "thanks," too, if he were still alive. I am not sure what ever happened to him because most of the dogs never left Vietnam after the war. (Scout dog web page at: www.vdhaonline.org/)

I remember that the pilots took some photos and I am looking to see if I have any in my slides. And, I have always wished that I had taken the pilots' names, so that I could hook up with them now.

Maybe, you can help me find them. Prinz would appreciate it, too.

Again, I salute you all, pilots and crews alike. Thanks for being there.

Paul V. Weismann (a.k.a. "Jingles") Alabaster, AL

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CROCODILE

I flew for the 68th AHC, Top Tigers, out of Bien Hoa. One day in December of '69 when I wasn't on the flight schedule, I took the opportunity to catch a hop into Saigon to do some Christmas shopping for my sisters back home. I bought some jewelry and then stopped by the USO center to use the radio-relay telephones back to the world to call my family. While I was there, I was approached by a sergeant who recognized me as a pilot from Bien Hoa. He was the motor pool sergeant for the 118th, Thunderbirds, one of our sister companies. I don't remember his name but anyone from the 118th may have known who he was. He asked how I was getting back to Bien Hoa; I told him I would simply go to Hotel 6 and try to hitch a flight. He said he had driven into Saigon, and he'd be happy to drive me all the way back to Bien Hoa. That's when the story gets interesting.

The sergeant had a 5/4 ton truck and we got underway. But before we got more than a few blocks in Saigon, we had a flat tire. Now, you'd think that a motor pool sergeant would have a spare, but he didn't. He also didn't seem to be very concerned by that. I stayed with the truck while he went around bargaining on the local market to get a replacement tire and wheel. Then after we made the change, we had to take the flat back to the shop to complete the exchange transaction. That all took quite a lot of time and now we were "who knows where" in Saigon and it was getting late in the day. But that didn't faze my companion either. I thought he knew where he was going, but it turned out he only reasoned that if we just headed in the right direction, we'd find our way back to Bien Hoa.

It was getting into the evening and there was no other military traffic leaving the city for us to follow. Once we got out of the city, it became apparent we didn't know

where we were. And, of course, we didn't have 'no stinkin' map. We were lost in the countryside and it was getting dark and it was starting to rain. We rolled through some little village when I saw a South Vietnamese officer huddled from the rain under a corrugated awning. I told the sergeant to stop, and I leaned out the window and hollered out, "You know Bien Hoa? Which way Bien Hoa?" The ARVN got really excited and hollered back, "You go Bien Hoa. You go Bien Hoa. You take me Bien Hoa." I told him we'd take him if he knew the way and we loaded him in the middle between us.

The little ARVN turned out to be a warrant officer band leader in the South Vietnamese Army and he was in the village chasing some skirt and had gotten stranded. He was terrified to be out in the countryside. He kept holding the rank on his collar and saying, "Me chuan uy; VC catch me, VC crocodile me," while he made a slashing gesture across his throat. At least it sounded like crocodile to me, but it turns out he was saying 'cac cai dau', which is slang for cut your head off. I showed him my collar and said, "Me chuan uy, too; VC catch me, VC crocodile me." And I made the same slashing gesture. Of course, none of us were armed and I've never felt so naked. We weren't supposed to carry weapons into Saigon and our new friend wasn't accustomed to being armed anyway.

So, there we were. I was way out of my aviation element and trying not to get too unnerved. We had no choice but to trust our guide. The ARVN had done some training in the US and he spoke broken, but fairly intelligible, English. He said he knew of John Phillips "Sooo-Zaa", and to prove the point and allay his fears he loudly hummed some of Sousa's marches. He hummed Stars and Stripes Forever - forever. I mean he hummed it over and over and over again. Then he got frightened by the sergeant's driving. By this time, the sergeant was getting more angst by the situation and once we had a clear direction he put the hammer down. He was



driving faster and faster and starting to slide all over on the wet clay road. He was barely keeping us out of the ditches. The ARVN started to holler, "Too fast, too fast." I don't think he knew what he was most afraid of by that time, the VC or the sergeant's driving. So, to calm him down, I repeatedly told him, "It's OK. Back in the US he number one race car driver." I was pretty frightened myself, but I knew somebody had to at least appear to be in control. The cycle repeated and the whole thing was becoming insanely comical, although it didn't seem so at the time. All I could think of was what an incredibly stupid thing I had gotten myself into on a day I had off and should have been out of harm's way.

To our great relief, we found our way back to Bien Hoa and rolled up to the gate from out of the dark to the amazement of the security detail. I persuaded them to let us in without too many questions. The ARVN didn't seem



to know where he wanted to go on Bien Hoa. He was just happy to be behind a secure barrier. So, we left him with the security team, and he seemed happy with that. I have no idea whatever became of him. Once we got inside the Battalion area the sergeant and I parted company. I also have no idea whatever became of him. I may have seen him once or twice on the flight line,

but I think we were both too chagrined to recount our experience. But, I do know that I never went anywhere again without being armed, even to the latrine. I had acquired a Belgian-made Browning 9mm, and if I was not supposed to be armed, I carried it under my shirt. I still have it today.

By: Ed Burns, Top Tiger 11.



The kids are back in school, with masks

Since being founded in 2005 by men who had served in Vietnam, FVSO has raised funds to help support the 850 Montagnard children who live in seven Vinh Son orphanages, located in the Kontum and Pleiku regions. FVSO provides dental care, food, shelter, medicine, & education. Contributions directly support the children and their caregivers. Because FVSO is a non-profit organization, your donations are tax deductible. Our 2020 fundraising period is ongoing and runs through the end of the year. THANK YOU!

For more information or to donate, contact FVSO at:

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Web: FriendsofVSO.org

Email: FriendsofVSO@gmail.com

A POW Story – 1973

By Doug Madigan

While serving as a tank company commander in Germany, my battalion commander had me and the other two line-company commanders against the wall in his office. He told us we needed to volunteer for flight school and Vietnam. We all saluted and said, 'Yes Sir!' No way to argue with a man who already had two Aviation tours in Vietnam. I was in the only flight school class that was part of the turbine test program flying OH-58As at Ft. Wolters and Hueys at Ft. Rucker. We were on an accelerated schedule, which got me

to Vietnam earlier than some of the regular classes that started before mine. Luck of the draw!

I was the Aeroscout Platoon Leader flying OH-6A scout helicopters for F Troop, 9th Cavalry, from 7 Sep 72 until the Vietnam cease fire announcement by President Nixon on 23 Jan 73. I had the honor to replace CPT John Whitehead, a friend and American hero. John was also an OH-6A SIP, so he transitioned me in the OH-6. While still learning the ropes from the veteran scout pilots, I was flying as co-pilot in the left seat with the pilot CW2 Tim Knight on 26 Sep 72.

We were on a mission in the eastern part of our area of operations when the Troop Commander gave a radio call for all of us to head west to Lai Khe for refueling and then fly to the Michelin rubber plantation to rescue a



Co-pilot Doug - 1972.

Marine A-4 pilot who ejected from his aircraft after it was hit by anti-aircraft fire.

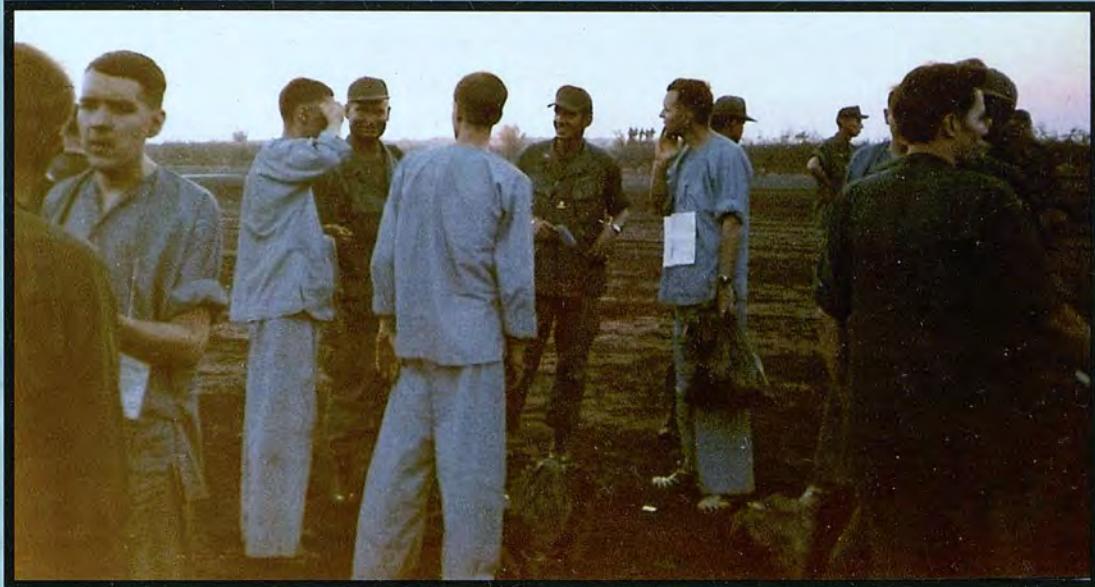
An Air Force Forward Air Controller (FAC) saw the pilot parachute into the rubber trees and had a good idea of his location. Our plan was to fly to that location at tree top level in a V formation led by the scout with two AH-1G Cobras slightly behind and on the scout's left and right. Above us at 1500 feet was the Troop Commander (our Command & Control) in a UH-1H Huey and a Medevac Huey.

The OH-6A had no doors so I searched to the front and left, the pilot front and right plus flying the aircraft, and our enlisted man gunner on the floor in the back right side looking right and to the rear. I had a CAR-15 with three 30 round magazines taped together for easy

loading. Our first pass over the area was incredible – there were NVA soldiers in blue uniforms looking and shooting at us, trucks, picnic tables, and 55-gallon drums all over the place. We could hear the A-4 pilot's survival radio's beeper, but he did not answer our calls for him to come up on voice. We did not return fire because of con-

We still could only hear the beeper from the survival radio, but no voice and we could not locate him visually. Before initiating our next pass, the Troop Commander ordered us to come up to altitude and informed us that we needed to return to our home station. A Jolly Green USAF rescue helicopter was coming on station and would continue the search. All of us felt terrible because we failed in our mission. The Troop Commander, among the bravest of all, had to make a hard decision. Both Cobras had multiple bullet holes – things were starting to go completely downhill.

After the 23 Jan 73 cease fire announcement (the cease fire went into effect on 27 Jan 73), I was assigned to Saigon to the Four Party Joint Military Commission (JMC) flying UH-1Hs. Our mission was to fly US, ARVN, NVA, and Vietcong (VC) leaders to negotiate prisoner releases (usually VC releases). I experienced VC releases out of C-130s and led one out of CH-47s. But the best was yet to come! On 15 Feb 73 our aviation group received the mission to fly to Loc Ninh the next morning and bring back 29 American POWs to Saigon!



Some of the released POWs courtesy of Doug's Indonesian photographer.



Hooray! Doug's Special POW is Free.

cerns about our A-4 pilot on the ground somewhere nearby. Our next pass from a different direction was even more difficult because the enemy gunfire was now intense, and the Cobras were now getting hit. We realized we needed to protect ourselves. The gunner in the back of the aircraft fired at the enemy with his M-60 machine gun and I fired all 90 rounds from my CAR-15.

However, out of the woodwork the morning of 16 Feb 73 appeared many senior officer aviators who took the mission instead. Since we had no mission, my co-pilot 1LT Ray Dabney and I went to the Tan Son Nhut Officer's Club and started drinking beer. Around 1500, our boss burst into the bar and told us that the POW release had still not happened. Looking at us and our

beers, he sheepishly asked, 'can you guys fly'? Of course, we answered, 'YES'!

We flew a US LTC and Sergeant interpreter, two senior VC officers, and an NVA liaison with the 'real paperwork,' so we were told, to Loc Ninh. Upon landing at Loc Ninh, Ray and I had to stay on the helicopter. Our passengers got out and met with their counterparts. I gave my camera to an Indonesian photographer (a member of the other post-cease fire organization – the UN International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS)) so he could take some pictures of the POWs for me. Within minutes, out came the US POWs in trucks from the woods nearby. I saw them get out of the trucks, greet the senior US officers, and walk by me, including a POW on a stretcher, to the helicopters that would fly them to Saigon.

At the club that night, one of my old Scout platoon pilots grabbed me and said we needed to meet a Marine COL, who was the wing commander of the A-4 pilot shot down in Sep 72. We sat with him at the bar and re-lived our failed rescue mission. He told us that he had good news: his A-4 pilot was in the group of 29 POWs just released! He must have been able to see him. The lists of to be released POWs were provided to the senior Four Party JMC officials prior to all POW releases in Vietnam. If I recall correctly, the COL told us (or someone else did later) that his pilot crashed through the rubber trees with his parachute and broke his leg. He hunched himself up, sat with his back against a tree, pulled out his .38 caliber pistol, and shot two NVA before they overpowered him and clubbed him unconscious. His leg was badly damaged, and he did not get much medical support in captivity.

That POW on the stretcher was the young man that we tried to rescue in Sep 72. Learning this brought tears of both joy and thanks to my eyes. Hooray!

After being contacted about my POW story, I decided to do some 'Google research' about the Vietnam cease fire agreement, the Four Party JMC, and the ICCS. The research was fascinating, especially the New York Times 25 Jan 73 article entitled 'The Vietnam Agreement and Protocols'. I had never seen any of this information before. The article contained the 24

Jan 73 White House release of the texts of the Vietnam cease fire agreement initialed by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho and the four accompanying protocols detailing the means of carrying it out.

It sure would have been helpful to have seen this information when it was released in 1973 instead of seeing it for the first time in 2020! The other exciting document was a book written by LTC Walter S. Dillard, USA, the chief historian for the US delegation to the Four Party JMC under the command of MG Gilbert Woodward, USA.

LTC Dillard's book, '60 Days to Peace', contained an interesting section describing the subject of my POW story.

I learned from the book why there was such a long delay (at least seven hours) in the US POW release, which is what led to my involvement. The author stated there were differences of opinion or misunderstandings within the Vietcong and South Vietnam delegation leaders. The US POW release per the cease fire agreement was to be an independent action. The Vietcong believed that the US POW release at Loc Ninh was contingent upon their own VC POW release by the South Vietnamese at Bien Hoa. From there the VC POW return was set to occur at Loch Ninh on the same day as the US POW release. So, at Loc Ninh the morning of 16 Feb 73, the VC refused to release the Americans until their own POWs were returned. The Vietcong blamed the South Vietnam leaders for delaying the VC POW release at Bien Hoa. However, it was actually delayed because the Vietcong POWs staged a sit-down strike. They did not believe that there were actual VC or NVA members in the Four Party JMC. This confusion led to messy and frustrating negotiations among all parties of the JMC to reach a final resolution. The US prevailed mostly because of the leadership of MG Woodward who took a tough stand with the Vietcong senior leaders, finally leading to an agreement. This long delay is what led to Ray Dabney and me getting the mission to fly the five liaisons from the Four Party JMC to Loc Ninh with the actual agreement to release the US POWs. Pretty amazing to learn the real story 47 years after the fact!

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.

AVIATOR REPORT completed for 4 New Members and covers the period 8.20.20 to 9.24.20

Line 1 has the last then first names plus middle initial or name with the nickname in quotes VHPA Life Members have ** at the end of line 1, Line 2 has his city and state, Line 3 has his military branch of service, Line 4 has his flight school number or wings date, Line 5 has his Southeast Asian tour information where the unit abbreviation is followed by the YEAR(s)

This roster is presented in alphabetical order by last name

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alexander Jimmy D ** | Bryant William K. 'Ken' ** | Kahley Fritz E. ** | Sledge Joe C. ** |
| Decatur Texas | Clarksville Tennessee | North Little Rock Arkansas | Missoula Montana |
| Army | Army | Army | Army |
| 69-6 | 67-18 | 69-29 | 69-40 69-44 |
| 498 MED CO in 69-70 | HHC/23 INF in 67-68 | C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 70-71 | E/82 ARTY 1 CAV in 70-71 |

CLOSE CAMARADERIE OF THE THIRD KIND

It was my good fortune to command a Chinook company in the 1st Air Cav Division in 1969/70. Initially, I wasn't at all thrilled with the unit's name, Crimson Tide, since I was on the Fighting Illini football squad during my University of Illinois college days. But then, the commander of the Alabama Crimson Tide, Bear Bryant, had led his teams to twenty-four straight bowl appearances and eight National Championships. Everybody loves a winner and I quickly got to love my call sign, Tide 6. While Bear Bryant didn't win a National Championship in 1969, Charlie Company, 228 ASHB was the Crimson Tide Champion in '69, albeit in Vietnam. We had a great unit and this is a story about one of our outstanding pilots and his crew that occurred during that championship season.

While Charley company pilots flew all of our unit's sixteen aircraft, flight engineers, crew chiefs, and gunners worked on assigned aircraft as teams. There were exceptions, particularly with gunners. A gunner was generally an Infantry 11 Bravo (Rifleman) who came from one of the Division's Infantry or Cavalry field units. One gunner, Private Doolittle, would not fly with anybody except CW3 Harry Stevens, a New Englander, and a particularly popular officer among the enlisted crews, and our entire unit for that matter. Whenever Harry went up, Doolittle went with him – no arguments were ever attempted. That's just the way it was. You would have thought Private Doolittle was Harry's aide-de-camp as he was constantly in the presence of Harry. The gunner on a Chinook mans a M60 7.62mm machine gun on a swivel and is stationed on the left side of the fuselage, directly behind the aircraft command-

er's seat. A firewall separates the two. The aircraft commander and co-pilot change FM frequencies constantly and UHF frequencies less frequently, but there is always on-board intercom between crew members.

On one mission, CW3 Stevens and his crew were flying supplies to a non-divisional unit, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (11 ACR) which was attached to the 1st Air Cavalry Division and assigned a screening and reconnaissance role. The season was dry, and landings in a Chinook could sometimes be hazardous because of the blowing dust and debris from the rotor wash. Harry made his approach into one of the few areas of the 11 ACR encampment where he could release his sling load of ammo and supplies. He also had some internal cargo and needed to land from a hover.

During this process, Harry's aircraft was creating a huge dust storm, and that didn't bode well with one 11th ACR trooper who had been sunning himself on the top of an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC). He jumped off his APC and ran toward the Chinook. He then attempted to punch Harry through the open cockpit window. He had to literally jump off the ground to deliver his blows to his target, Harry's head, which was a good seven or eight feet off the ground. The blows, even if they found their mark, could not have inflicted pain as Harry was wearing his flight helmet, every bit as protective as a football helmet. Harry had just transmitted over the intercom something to the effect of, "Look at this crazy SOB!" Private Doolittle, with his gun trained on the deranged soldier, transmitted over the intercom to his aircraft commander, "Sir, do you want me to blow his S**T away?" Harry's immediate reply was, "No, don't shoot!" There could be no doubt that if Harry's command had been to the affirmative, there would certainly be one more name inscribed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall today.

Bob Lanzotti, Tide 6.

JERRY DALY'S LAST FLIGHT ON HIS SECOND TOUR

The article "A Date with An Old Girl Friend UH1B 13972" by Fred McCarthy in the May/June 2020 issue of The VHPA Aviator brought back many memories of those 'days of yore.' I am also a member of the 121st AHC (Vikings) fraternity, and Fred and my tours overlapped as I was in-country from July 1967 to July 1968 and flew with the Vikings for the last eight months of my tour. However, Fred was still a "new guy" when I left the platoon.

Fred's mention of CWO Jerry Daly and his Easter Sunday 1967 mission where he flew our specially equipped UH-1D helicopter, callsign Viking Surprise, to smoke a tree line on numerous passes while the crews of previously shot down aircraft were rescued was of particular interest to me. This mission is relatively well known, and I believe has even been described in this publication. I would like to tell a little more about Jerry (now more appropriately addressed as Father) Daly and another similar mission he flew in 1967 that most readers probably haven't heard about.

A little background information on Jerry to start. Jerry was back on his second tour as a Viking gunship pilot when I was invited to join the platoon. You quickly recognized that he was the primary 'mentor' for new pilots joining the Vikings. He had been instrumental in developing our gunship platoon tactics during his first tour to include writing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that we were expected to study and understand. Your first few flights in the platoon were typically with Jerry and you could not help but be impressed with his leadership and knowledge. He always seemed to know how to react to any problem to include what we should do next. He had a very distinct voice on the radio which was recognized by almost all aviators in the Delta. In retrospect, I can truthfully say that he was the most natural leader that I served with in my 20 years on active duty.

Although I don't recall the exact date, but sometime after I had joined the platoon, he was recognized as the 'Army Aviator of the Year.' I believe at that point in time he had been awarded every medal for heroism except the Medal of Honor. He had recently been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for the Easter Sunday mission mentioned previously. Along with this recognition as Army Aviator of the Year came a direct promotion to Captain.

On to the mission I want to describe. In sorting through

some flight records, orders, and other military paperwork recently (something to do during the Pandemic) I found a copy of my eyewitness recommendation for an Award for Jerry for the mission I will now describe. Following is basically what was in the statement I had written.

On 30 December 1967, I was witness to the heroic actions and professional performance of Captain Jerome R. Daly. I was acting in the capacity of Pilot aboard a UH-1D helicopter from the 121st Assault Helicopter Company of which Captain Daly was the Aircraft Commander.

At approximately 14:30 hours on the above date, we were scrambled from Soc Trang Army Airfield Republic of Vietnam in support of an airmobile operation North of Vinh Long. Upon our arrival at Vinh Long, we received a briefing on the operation. Four transport helicopters had been shot down by enemy fire earlier in the day, and earlier attempts to extract the crews by air were not successful. Friendly troops were trying to get there, and now a second attempt by air was being made. The aircraft we were flying was known as 'Viking Surprise' and it was equipped with a smoke generator, a .50 caliber machine gun in the left side of the cargo compartment and a 40mm grenade launcher in the right side of the cargo compartment.

Arriving on station in the operational area, we were informed by the Command and Control aircraft that the friendlies were pinned down by heavy enemy fire and were still some distance from the airmen. As we watched, two fighter/bomber airstrikes were put in on the enemy positions, and one of the A1E fighters was shot down during the second strike. However, the troops were able to start advancing again using the support of helicopter gunships and finally reached the downed crews. The Command and Control decided to attempt their pickup and dispatched a "Dust-Off" aircraft into the area.

Captain Daly immediately located the Dust-Off visually and placed our aircraft in a position to screen his approach with smoke. The Dust-Off was able to make a successful landing in the vicinity of the crews. During the time the medevac helicopter was on the ground, Captain Daly remained in an orbit over him and continued to screen his position with smoke. Each time we came between the enemy positions and the Dust-Off aircraft, we could hear the Viet Cong placing heavy fire at us but due to the evasive maneuvers and superb low-level flying skill of Captain Daly, we were able to successfully cover the extraction of the crews without receiving any hits.

Once the first Dust Off aircraft was fully loaded and had departed, a second one was sent into the same area to make sure that all of the Americans had been picked up and to also evacuate the casualties the ARVN's had suffered while securing the area. Again, Captain Daly completely disregarded his own personal safety by continuing to screen the second medevac aircraft with smoke until he was ready to depart.

After returning to Vinh Long to refuel, we again proceeded to the operational area. Arriving overhead, we were informed that the friendlies had been driven back from an attempt to secure the one downed aircraft which had not burned. Captain Daly quickly volunteered to place suppressive fire on the enemy positions and began making target runs. Each pass was met by heavy enemy fire to include 50 caliber-type machine gun tracers as darkness set in. Even though we received one hit during the attack, Captain Daly elected to remain on station as long as his fuel would permit in case we were again needed.

When the Command and Control aircraft had to return to Vinh Long for fuel, Captain Daly immediately assumed control of the operation and directed helicopter gunships in against the enemy positions. As complete darkness engulfed the area, he directed a flare ship which had arrived overhead as to where to drop the flares and continued to adjust them to meet the changing situation. Only after the Command and Control aircraft had returned to the area, and he was satisfied that he was no longer needed, did Captain Daly return to Vinh Long.

Captain Daly's heroic actions on this day were well above and beyond the call of duty. At the time of this action, his flight records had been closed out the previous day pending his DROS back to the states. His professional leadership and flying ability acted as an inspiration to all who were present during the operation. His actions on this day were another testament to his exceedingly outstanding Army career and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Signed Jerry D. Esmay, 1LT, Air Defense Artillery

As a postscript, I don't know if the above statement resulted in another award for Captain Daly or not, but it should have. Jerry continued on in his career with a third tour to Vietnam as a Cobra Company Commander. Later, he



Author Jerry Esmay.

responded to a call from on high and became a Catholic Priest. Now retired, he lives near Fort Belvoir the last I have heard.

I must also add that I am certain that we were also being covered by other B & C model gunships from the various gunship platoons in the Delta. I suspect Jerry and I were flying Viking Surprise because we were

the only two Viking pilots who weren't already participating in this operation when the request came down to our Operations. Finally, I believe I remember that the pilot of the A-1E shot down during the operation was actually picked up by one of the other Viking aircraft. His controls had been shot out and he was wounded but had been able to parachute out of the aircraft before it crashed.

Jerry Esmay
Viking 25

121st Assault Helicopter Company

July 1967 to July 1968

VHPA Life Member L03743

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—VHPA 2020 Scholarship Awards—

The AAAA received more than 600 applications and made 312 awards totaling \$535,000 in 2020. The VHPA awarded ten (10) \$2,500 Memorial Scholarships in 2020. This year's recipients of the VHPA Heritage Scholarships of \$2,500 for one year were:

(1) Ella Levickii,

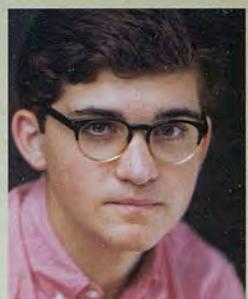
Grandchild of COL John Marcy, Hudson OH;
attending Univ. of S. Carolina



Ella Levickii

(2) Peter Daood,

Grandchild of COL Curtis Herrick, Jr., Wichita, KS;
attending Creighton Univ.



Peter Daood

(3) Benjamin Hansen,

Grandchild of CPT Mike Law, New Braunfels, TX;
attending Brigham Young Univ.



Benjamin Hansen

(4) John Hutton,

Grandchild of CPT Michael Hutton, Dallas, TX;
attending Univ of Texas, Austin.



John Hutton

(5) Amanda Varela,

Selected for the VHPA Memorial Scholarship
(honoring the 361st Avn Co. "Pink Panthers")
Grandchild of Pedro Rodriguez, Miami, FL;
attending FL International Univ.



Amanda Varela

(6) McKenzie C. Cox,

Grandchild of COL David Sale, Mesa, AZ;
attending Univ. of Kentucky



McKenzie Cox

(7) Elyse Youngstedt,

Grandchild of CPT Glen Youngstedt, St. Josheph, MI;
attending Purdue Univ.



Elyse Youngstedt

(8) Ridge Powelson,

Grandchild of LTC Earl Fossum, Warner Robbins, GA;
attending Univ of Georgia.



Ridge Powelson

(9) Isabel Scott,

Grandchild of CW2 Andrew Fennel, Jacksonville, FL;
attending Salem College.



Isabel Scott

(10) Price A. Straley,

Grandchild of CW4 Ronald Maisch, Louisa, VA;
attending Christopher Newport Univ.



Price Straley

It is estimated that an additional 39 VHPA related applicants also received other AAAA Foundation Scholarships.

One was a \$12,000 award to Aurora J. Trani, the grandchild of CW4 Gary Vollendorff of Lacey, WA.

Congratulations to all the applicants and to the 27, or so, VHPA members and wives who participated in the grading and evaluation process for AAAA.

Tom Payne, Scholarship Chairman.

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Notice to all Members of the VHPA

The liaison between the national HQ of the VHPA and the independent Chapters has reverted to Tom Payne of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. Tom can be reached at 918-813-5132 (cell) or 918-298-5132 (home) or via E-mail at 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



ALASKA CHAPTER

Great Chapter President meeting in September; it is always nice to know what other chapters are doing. Sounds like most are in some state of quiet, but I salute those who are still reasonably active and carrying on the VHPA name. Our state has reopened, partially, but we have chosen to cancel our fall dinner. Unfortunately, the current Covid rules make it hard to do inside gatherings of any size, so we wait!

Our only activity lately was to raise a few bucks to support our legacy going forward with a donation to the American Huey 369 Museum. Success and a big thank you

to all the members who donated making this a nice gesture by our chapter members to support the efforts of the Museum and the VHPA Legacy.

We do plan to support Wreaths Across America on December 19th as it is an outside, chilly, but an exhilarating and meaningful Memorial event.

So, we continue to Hunker down to a reasonable degree and look for outside events that might allow us to gather safely. Until later, there is Pride in Knowing We Flew.

Lynn Kile, Nomad 23

www.VHPA-Alaska.org

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

The pandemic threw us some tough pitches, but we've been able to stay in the batter's box. Typically, most of our annual events are scheduled in advance of our six-month flying season (April-October), and occasionally, one or two event sponsors will invite our participation later. Last year, 17 events were scheduled and completed. This year, 13 events were on the schedule before the pandemic evolved. Our hearts sank several weeks before our first event, scheduled for April 3-4 (the Spring Machine Gun Shoot at the Knob Creek Gun Range, West Point, KY) was cancelled. Other event hosts soon followed suit, culminating in eight of the 13 events cancelled. Our flying season of five events ended September 20 as our three-days with a few thousand Vietnam veterans came to a close.

Chapter membership continues to grow, now numbering 207.

Also noteworthy, has been the success of our Facebook page – an excellent tool for camaraderie, outreach, and marketing the Huey gospel – now at 1,200 members.

Recent Flying Events

August 8-9 14th Annual Gathering of Veterans and Patriots - Peru, IN, on the 33-acre site of the future National American Huey History Museum (VHPA members attending for the first time included Mike Law, J.C. Pennington (Shark 4), and Richard Deer (Michigan Chapter President).

Saturday highlights: Opening Ceremony, with the National Anthem performed by USAF TSgt (Ret) Felita LaRock, who also sings at Cincinnati Reds baseball game National Anthem flyover by four Vietnam veteran helicopters: our two slicks, 369 and 803; our UH-1B Gunship 049; and chapter member Peter Bales' OH-6 Benefit Auction of many outstanding donated items; Catered lunch, followed by a flying reenactment of a "downed pilot rescue mission", involving a scout OH-6 (026), a Huey gunship (049), a troop-carrying slick



American Huey Chapter - VHPA

Public group · 1.2K members

(803, with grunts of the Wolfhound Living History Group), and a Huey medevac (369); narration was by chapter member Phil Marshall (past VHPA President); several membership flights with 369 and 803 Evening: pizza party, music by a hel-luva good "Time Traveler Band", fireworks display in front of the three flag poles near the front of the property, and hanging out. Throughout both days, Vietnam veteran and DJ George Mize provided Vietnam-era music like we heard while flying, broadcast by AFVN radio over the ADF receiver.

Sunday highlights: Morning service by Guest of Honor John Steer (173rd Airborne Brigade, 1967 survivor of the Battle for Hill 875, near Dak To Catered lunch, followed again by the same flying reenactment several more membership flights with 369 and 803; then teardown, return of the aircraft to Grissom ARB, cleaning them and moving into our temporary hangar ending with dinner at Half Moon Restaurant in Kokomo.

A special event on Sunday: After John Steer's morning service, he presided over the formal presentation of the POW medal to Vietnam veteran SP5 Charles Simmons – 52 years after being rescued, at the beginning of the Tet Offensive.

Soon after arriving in-country as a UH-1 Helicopter Repairman (67N20), Simmons was assigned as a door gunner on a UH-1B gunship with B Troop, 1/9th Cavalry. In the early morning of January 31, 1968, his first mission involved reconning bridges in the vicinity of Hue. At the time of launch, the crew did not know that the NVA had taken Hue during the night. Soon after reaching the Perfume River, they followed it and were soon engaged by heavy fire. The aircraft incurred serious damage, but was still flyable. The AC made a Mayday call as he headed southwest, but controllability diminished, forcing a landing into a rice paddy. All crewmembers were captured by 30-40 VC, who attached charges to the B-model and detonated them. The explosions caused the onboard rockets to begin going off, causing the VC to scatter in two groups – the P and CE with one group, the AC and G with the other group. The group that held the P and CE executed them rather than be

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encumbered. The group that held the AC and G headed toward Hue. Gunships responding to the mayday call were attracted by the black smoke of the burning gunship and were soon engaging with minigun and M-60 fire, affording the AC and G the opportunity to flee. They were soon picked up by one of the gunships. Simmons' AC, 1LT William Babcock, soon left the unit. He now lives in Alaska and Indonesia. He never knew the name of his door gunner (Simmons). Belatedly, Babcock received the POW medal in 2008. Wishing to inform the families of his P and CE so they might likewise receive their POW medals, he visited the website of The Virtual Wall and found the entry for his CE, Richard Delgado. Delgado's niece saw it and contacted him. In 2017, a DAR chapter held a Vietnam War Commemoration event attended by Simmons. That interaction began a relationship with DAR's Kathy Cox, whom Simmons asked to tell his story – that even his family had not known. Over the next three years, several people, intrigued by Simmons' story, became involved in the piecing together bits of information that would lead to a formal presentation of the POW medal to Charles Simmons – on stage at The Gathering. Kathy Cox's dogged determination and patience, luck, and divine oversight led to accomplishing the mission. Additionally, chapter members Tim Cahoon and Phil Marshall played key roles. Details of this amazing story will appear in Phil's next book.

Following the presentation, Charles was invited to sit in the gunner's seat on a flight of UH-1B Gunship 049, an aircraft identical to the one he was on when he was shot down in 1968.

In the photos below, Charles Simmons is in the blue shirt. In the middle photo, Charles is flanked by Phil Marshall and Kathy Cox.



September 12 Rottors Over Mentone – Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum, Mentone, IN.

Lawrence D. Bell was an industrialist, one of the foremost aviation pioneers, and the founder of Bell Aircraft Corporation. Advanced aircraft manufactured included Bell helicopters, America's first jet, and the Bell X-1 – the first plane to fly faster than the speed of sound. Rottors Over Mentone is a celebration of the history of Mentone, IN, held at Bell Aircraft Museum. While the celebration is relatively small, lasting from 10am to 1pm, it is significant in preserving an important part of history that is close to our hearts. Huey 369 joined a Robin-

son R44 from Cleveland Helicopters as attractions.

The last two annual events are held at the same location, a large campground of several acres in the middle of an agricultural area outside Greentown, IN. The campground, owned by the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization (HCVVO), is known as The Healing Field. As seen in the photo, the fenced perimeter encloses approximately 37 acres in an area approximately 5,000 feet x 350 feet – divided into five rows of campsites, with permanent structures, including a large stage, scattered about. This year, the Vietnam Veterans Organization shared the campground with veterans of Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan for a two-day reunion in advance of the 38th reunion of Vietnam veterans. A large marquee sign, atop a wall of sandbags, read "Welcome Home Vietnam & Sandbox Veterans, Sept 14 – 20".



The Healing Field

Our LZ was located 500 yards to the south in a horse pasture on the farm of Todd & Claudia Eads.



September 14-15

Howard County Vietnam Veterans (HCVVO) Sandbox - Reunion of veterans of Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan.



September 18-20

Bringing the Sound of Hope (HCVVO's 38th Annual Reunion) – 38th Reunion of the largest reunion of Vietnam veterans anywhere (a few thousand). We were pleased to be a part of the opening ceremony on Friday morning, as the large American flag was hoisted between two 40' poles. A Vee of three, led by Gunship 049 and flanked by 803 and 369 paused at a high hover in front of the hoisted flag toward the end of the National Anthem, with the two slicks breaking in opposite directions as Gunship 049 bowed briefly and departed.

The opening was continued by placement of white crosses in

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The opening was continued by placement of white crosses in the ground beside the red brick memorial plaza.

Aircraft 803 and 369 did 44 membership flights throughout the event while Gunship 049 was on static display. As always, she garnered a lot of attention and fostered much discussion. The grunts that visited with us and flew with us enjoyed our

participation almost as much as we enjoyed them. No other event reflects the bond we had with the grunts like this one. The campground is known as The Healing Field. It certainly is!

Robert Fureigh, Secretary – Treasurer

CALIFORNIA NORH CHAPTER

All chapter activities have been suspended until further notice due to the on-going pandemic. We have been in touch by phone and email during the COVID-19 isolation, and we're looking forward to a party as soon as it's prudent.

In September, we lined up a special private tour of the Woodland firehouse museum with physical distancing and masks, to be followed by a good Mexican lunch, but smoke from the fires caused seven of us to cancel. The rule here is no indoor seating in restaurants. Who wants to eat outdoors in all that smoke? Nobody! We'll do the tour and lunch some other time.

Our chapter President, Ken Fritz proposed to our members that we donate \$1,000 to American Huey 369's building fund. It was approved through email voting. We wish the American Huey chapter the best of luck in accomplishing their goal of building their new facility.

In other news, our ex-CCN Gunship 563 that was donated to the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) in Mesa, AZ has a new temporary indoor home at the LT Paul Luke museum at Goodyear, AZ. It is inside



Huey 563 next to a model of the USS Arizona.

out of the sun and weather. It has been outside the CAF museum in Mesa, but has moved just down the road to Gilbert. FYI - Mesa is just NE of Phoenix and Gilbert is just SE of Phoenix. The AAHF UH-1B Gunship remains at CAF in Mesa.

We hope we can all catch up together again, when it is deemed safe to do so. Please check our website www.vhpaccn.org for more info and photos of past events.

Dave Anderson, Secretary

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MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter is staying connected during the pandemic including a couple of locations holding gatherings.

Member-At-Large Mark Benjamin had lunch on August 5th at the Hotel Indigo in Traverse City. He filed this report: The attendance is going down. I suspect the Covid-19 is having an effect. Attending were Bob Matlis, Richard McGuire, CDR Chuck Webb, Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Air Station, Traverse City, Ron Hofmeister, Mark Benjamin. Not pictured, Doreen McGuire. Note social distancing in the photo. Conversation again centered on old and new aircraft technology. Good time.

On September 2nd, Mark Benjamin held another lunch gathering at the Hotel Indigo and six joined him. He's not in the photo, I suspect that's because he's multi-tasking as host and photographer, but you can see his paperwork and beverage in the foreground.

A new offering of the Michigan Chapter was held on the upper outside deck of The Buck Restaurant in Saint Joseph on Thursday, September 24th. Due to the pandemic this was the first time in 2020 that the Michigan Chapter has held a lunch gathering outside of northern Michigan. Nine former Vietnam pilots and three wives attended along with a special guest, Pat Hall, a Blackhawk pilot who flew two tours in Afghanistan. One of the things that made the meeting special was three pilots (Mark Benjamin, Art Fantroy, and Glenn Youngstedt) who flew with the 128th AHC in Phu Loi in the 1970-71 timeframe were present. Art and Glenn flew together in March 17, 1971 while flying an airmobile assault near Snuol, Cambodia where they were shot down. Based on the positive feedback, meeting in southern Michigan will become a regular occurrence. We encourage other pilots to join the group in the coming months. Those interested should contact Glenn at glennyoungstedt@aol.com.

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.

Submitted by Rich Deer, President



August 5th Traverse City L-R Bob Matlis, Richard McGuire, CDR Chuck Webb, CO, USCG Air Station Traverse City, Ron Hofmeister, Mark Benjamin



September 2nd Traverse City L-R Bob Matlis, Joe Meredith, John Lefler, Barry Witt, Ed Canright, Bart Halliday. Not pictured Mark Benjamin.



September 24 128th AHC Tomahawk Reunion Art Fantroy, Mark Benjamin, Glenn Youngstedt



September 24 St Joseph L-R Denny Klein, Bob Matlis, Paul Boggs, John Bolger, Mark Benjamin, Ken Hand, Dave James, Glenn Youngstedt, Art Fantroy

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

Still "Zooming" our meetings. Participation has leveled off and, as one member put it, "It just isn't the same as a physical meeting." Agreed. We have gained a few new members despite the Pandemic. People are reaching out: Don Kent Class 67-19, Larry Tomek Class 69-4, Tim Smith Class 69-49. We have gained 14 new members since January. That is Fantastic! At this writing we are all safe and practicing physical distancing.

We had our Chapter Officer vote in August. Our elected Chapter Officers are: Dale House-President, John Hargleroad-Vice President, Jim McNamee-Treasurer, and Doug Neil-Secretary. Doug was previously our Vice President and agreed to be the Secretary so that we could fill all our positions. Terry Olson remains our Operations Officer who coordinates our Events.

Upcoming Activities: Greg and Deborah Mann have offered to host our annual Christmas gathering again. We are in the process of evaluating that. It all depends on several factors as

you might imagine. Any upcoming activities will be announced on our Web site: 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 for any updates. We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum. We recently received an M44 Russian Mosin/Chinese Type 53 variant with a folding bayonet on loan from Col Jacquie, former Company Commander of the 336th AHC, Soc Trang, RVN, 1967. It will go on display next year when we are up and running again. 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

In the meantime, Stay Hopeful, Stay Safe, and above all Stay Healthy.

**Dale House
President**

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Like everyone else, things are not back to normal, but progressing slowly or maybe just using good sense and do what we need to do on a smaller scale.

Our hangar is over-full as seen in the pictures Huey H model, Kiowa A/C, Cavalon pro, Auto Gyro, B 47J, Cobra and on the other side and HU-A/B 25 serial number B model reworking for static display. Outside are four more Cobras and a T-34. We have more aircraft than crew chiefs, so if you know of any crew chiefs in Columbia, SC area, please steer them our way!!

Hovered both the Cobra and H model last month for a documentary by Nicole Emil Casper on PTSD called *Hidden Wounds*; part of series "The Journey Back to Normal." Will try to let you know when the documentary is coming out and where to see it.

So, we are moving slowly along and hope that Charlotte happens next year, so we get to see everyone. Take care, stay healthy.

**Roger Lone, White, 20 C Trp 7/17
and H/10th.**



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The third quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA was held on September 26th, in Rolla, MO. After a tour of Culver Props, where wooden airplane props are made, the members moved to Matt's Steakhouse where lunch was enjoyed and the business meeting followed.

Alaina Lewis, owner of Culver Props, showed the members every aspect of her operation, from purchasing the various woods (some boards cost over a thousand dollars for 48 board feet – 6 boards!) to the finished propeller. This young lady is the third generation of her family to own and run the business and spits out numbers like we do our grandkids' names – proper degree of pitch based on engine and airplane type, reduction ratios to go from engine rpm to the correct prop rpm, etc., etc., and her standard is "no margin for error". In an adjoining picture, Chapter President Ron Clifton and V. P. John Sorensen are shown presenting Alaina with a lap quilt made by their wives.

Following lunch, Don Merritt was elected Vice President and Ralph McClurg was re-elected Chapter Secretary. After thanking the members and their wives for their support during an extraordinary year Chapter President Ron Clifton handed the Chapter Colors to John Sorensen, signifying the Change of Command. After a few opening remarks, he announced information about the fourth quarter meeting: After a decade of having this meeting at The Keeter Center, on the campus of the College of the Ozarks, because the campus will remain closed to the public through the end of the year, the meeting will be held in the Banquet Room of the Best Western Plus Landing View hotel, 403 W. Main Street, Branson, MO, on November 7th and will begin at 11:00 AM.

As of this writing, Veterans Week activities in Branson, November 5th – 11th, are happening as scheduled. If you plan to attend, or participate in any of these events, and you stay at the above-mentioned hotel, a credit will be made toward the Banquet Room charge for each room night used by our members. You can call the hotel direct at (417) 334-6464 to make your reservations. Be sure to indicate that you are with the South Missouri Chapter of the VHPA. A luncheon meal will be catered for the meeting.

During the meeting, members and guests will have their last opportunity to buy raffle tickets for an oversized lap quilt which will be given away during the meeting. The quilt was made by wives and friends of the chapter. Tickets have been sold at each of our quarterly meeting and the proceeds are used to enlarge the endowed scholarship we have established at the College of the Ozarks. We are also hoping this year's winner(s) will be able to join us and be recognized.

The first quarterly meeting of 2021 is scheduled to be held in The Keeter Center on Saturday, March 27th, 2021. If necessary, the meeting will again be moved to an alternate location. Regardless of the meeting site, you will want to mark this date on your calendar and be at this meeting! Thanh Boyer, who was born in Vietnam and was scheduled to speak at our Annual Reunion in Denver, will be our guest speaker. Encourage your kids, your grandkids, and other Vietnam vets to join you to hear her amazing story, as she escaped communist Vietnam at age 12, came to the U.S., became a citizen, and worked tirelessly to bring other family members to the States. You DO NOT want to miss this one!



John Sorensen, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter was invited to join the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) in Trimble, WI on Saturday, August 8, 2020, for their annual China Beach event. We had several members in attendance. Once again, the flyable Huey was there, along with the towed Huey. There was a kids' baseball tournament underway at the same location. The kids were all over the towed Huey and asking questions.

That is the towable Huey's job, and she did it well! Keeping the youngsters out of the operational area for landings and take-offs for the flyable Huey was a full-time job for a couple of adults.

The lunch was great, and we look forward to doing it again next year!

The chapter had its September meeting on Thursday, the 10th, at Eagan's Central Park. Ten members attended and we had a very productive meeting. We discussed our call list, the August 1st Cobra dedication in Fairmont, MN, and the China Beach event in Wisconsin. Several projects are on



Upper Midwest Chapter—Flyable Huey at China Beach Event.
Photo courtesy Jim Bankston

hold due to the pandemic and we are planning on a virtual meeting in November. We are hoping for more member participation with a virtual meeting and it also is an opportunity for more out-state members to be involved, since travel is not necessary. Both the flyable and towable Hueys were at the Neillsville, Wisconsin Highground Veterans Memorial on October 3. The flyable Huey also participated in a Patriots Day flyover at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. We are planning for November 19th for our next chapter meeting.

By Neal Powell and Dave Larson



*The folks at the Aviator
wish you a
Happy Thanksgiving,
Merry Christmas,
& a Happy Hannakah.*

Tom Kirk, Managing Editor

Tom Hirschler, Editor

Kay Taylor, Graphic Designer

Coast Guard Helicopter Operations

Members of the USCG served in Vietnam but have had little mention. The numbers were small, due to their service's continued need in maritime safety. Their overall accomplishments, however, using the helicopter in life-saving missions in many locations, is a proud and illustrious history. Using the URL below, one can access an excellent article detailing some of that history. ~Ed

<https://cgaviationhistory.org/historical-narrative/coast-guard-aviation-in-vietnam/>

TAPS

AWARDS LEGEND

MOH = Medal of Honor; **DSC** = Army Distinguished Service Cross; **NC** = Navy Cross; **AFC** = Air Force Cross;
DSM = Distinguished Service Medal; **SS** = Silver Star; **DSSM** = Defense Superior Service Medal; **LM** = Legion of Merit;
DFC = Distinguished Flying Cross; **SM** = Soldier's Medal; **NMC** = Navy and Marine Corps Medal; **CGM** = Coast Guard Medal;
BS = Bronze Star Medal; **PH** = Purple Heart; **MSM** = Meritorious Service Medal; **AM** = Air Medal; **CM** = respective service Commendation Medal

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

Beginning with the September/October 2020 issue of the Aviator, we are recognizing VHPA Life Members in the same manner as in the printed Membership Directory, with an asterisk.



***Andree, Robert G. Sr. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 57-1; RVN: 63-64 117 AHC, 68-69 229 AHB 1 CAV; BS, MSM.**

Robert Glen Andree, Sr. passed away in Crown Point on June 6, 2020. Bob was born in Rensselaer, IN on December 1, 1934. He graduated from Rensselaer High School in 1952 and went on to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1956. Following graduation, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and sent to Aviation School where he learned to pilot helicopters and fixed wing airplanes. Bob served in the Army for over 21 years.

In 1972, he was assigned to the 3rd Army Student Detachment at University of Georgia where he studied computer science and earned an MBA. He served with U.S. Army Computer Systems Command at Fort Belvoir, VA until he was honorably discharged in August 1977.

Following his retirement from the military, Bob served as the Director of Computing Services at I.U. Northwest until 1995.



Baca, Thomas D. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-5/66-5W; RVN: 66-67 118 AHC, 67 IIFFV, 70 138 ASA; DFC, BS, SM; Callsigns: Thunderbird/Vanguard/Xray/Pink Panther.

Thomas Delfin Baca was a man to whom gravity meant nothing. From joining the Army at age 17 to fly helicopters, to his life-long career as a pilot, to his six-month battle with cancer, nothing could keep him down. He knew he belonged in the sky and on August 30th, 2020, early in the morning, he decided to make that his home. Tom was

born September 6, 1945 in Albuquerque, NM.

Tom joined the Army one week out of high school. He served as an enlisted aircraft mechanic for 18 months and was appointed Warrant Officer on completion of US Army Flight School.

He was a graduate of the University of Southern Colorado, and served as Aviation Director, New Mexico Department of Transportation from July 2004 to his retirement in October 2009. He was highly active in his community and is responsible for grants to the 59 federally funded airports in New Mexico.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Janet.

Barthel, Charles W. USA; Flight Class: 68-521; RVN: 69-70 176 AHC, 70 62 CAC; Callsigns: Minuteman 13/Coachman 21.

Charles Barthel was born in Los Angeles, CA and passed away February 11, 2020 in Tulsa, OK. He sustained combat injuries that required him to recover in Japan where he met his wife of many years, Akemi.

After serving in RVN, Charles served with the U.S. Air Force as a pilot and later flew as a pilot for Braniff Airways. Later Charles worked in the computer field until his retirement.

He was an active member of the Broken Arrow chapter of the Oklahoma VHPA Chapter.

Brown, Kenneth D. USA, Flight Class: 69-13; RVN: 69-70 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; Callsign: Apache 33.

Kenneth Brown passed away on July 6, 2020. He is survived by his wife Teri. No further details.



Bloom, Mark C. USA; Flight Classes: 70-11/70-7; RVN: 70 2/1 CAV, 71 7/17 CAV; Callsign: Blackhawk.

Mark Bloom passed away peacefully on July 23, 2020 surrounded by family after a long battle with melanoma. He was born on December 29, 1949 in Augusta, GA.

After graduating high school, Mark attended NC State's Forestry Program for a spell, but soon world events would lead him to the military. In 1970, Mark joined the Army.

He returned in 1971 and graduated from Mars Hill College with a BS in Psychology. A short stint in graduate school at University of Oregon introduced him to the wild beauty of the Western United States. He worked as a helicopter pilot in Alaska and Oregon - eventually chartering scientific expeditions following the Mount St. Helens eruption in 1980.

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Nan.



***Boggs, Joseph C. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 55; RVN: 66-67 118 AHC; Callsign: Thunderbird 6.**

Joseph C. Boggs of Kansas City, MO passed away June 5, 2019, at the Cameron Regional Medical Center in Cameron, MO. He was born August 18, 1932 in Barnesville, GA.

Following his graduation from Gordon Military College, Barnesville's high school, he attended Southern Technical Institute in Atlanta, GA before entering the Army's Infantry School in April 1954 as a Second Lieutenant. After infantry school he completed paratrooper training, and became a pilot certified for both aircraft and helicopters. While in the service, Joe earned a BA from the University of Omaha-Nebraska and would later use that degree as a Trust Investment Officer at UMB Bank in Kansas City after retiring.

He is survived by his wife, Janet.

TAPS



Caldwell, Paul C. USA;
Flight Class: 67-20;
RVN: 67-68 B/1 AVN 1
INF, 68 A/1 AVN 1
INF; Callsign: Longhorn
78.

Paul Chandler Caldwell passed away on July 22, 2020 in Corpus Christi, TX. He was born on December 14, 1943 in Trenton, MO. He attended the University of Missouri and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. Upon his graduation from college, Paul was quick to enlist in the U.S. Army, opting immediately for Officer Candidate School.

Paul applied his leadership abilities in his professional life, most often in the hospitality industry. He enjoyed a career with Whataburger before deciding to become an independent businessman as owner/operator of the Roadhouse Restaurant which he operated for 17 years. Upon his retirement, he resumed his flying career as a pilot for Halo Flight air ambulance service.

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



***Cox, Marvin B. USA,**
MAJ Ret.; Flight Class:
63; RVN: 67-68 200
ASHC, 69 SOC
TRANG AAF, 69-70
147 ASHC, 70-73
AFAT HQ; Callsigns:
Pachyderm 1/Hill Climber.

Marvin Bedford "Jack" Cox, a resident of Dothan, passed away August 27, 2020 in a local hospital.

Jack was born on September 11, 1937 in Atlanta, GA and lived the early years of his life there. He joined the US Army and completed five tours in Vietnam where he served as a Chinook helicopter pilot.

Following his retirement from his military service, Jack spent 20 years managing Country Clubs, including Colonial Country Club in Texas. Jack owned and operated a realty company in Bald Head Island, NC for several years.

He is survived by his wife, Judy.



***Davis, Perry J. USA,**
CW2 Ret.; Flight
Class: 67-19; Callsigns:
Dustoff/Wingnut.

Perry Jason Davis passed away August 4, 2020. He was born September 5, 1933, in Saunimin Township, IL and was a longtime resident of Weatherford, TX.

Upon graduating (1951) from Caneyville High School in Caneyville, KY, Perry entered military service. He served in the U.S. Air Force and then the U.S. Army as an accomplished helicopter mechanic and pilot for 22 years. During his distinguished military career, Perry did one tour in Korea and two in Vietnam. After retiring from the military, he attended Central Missouri State University where he graduated with a Master's degree in aviation. Following University, Perry worked as a Quality Control Engineer of F-16 Fighter Jets at General Dynamics in Ft Worth, TX.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy.

Dillon, William P. USA; Flight Class:
65-19W; RVN: 66-67 IIFFV, 69-70
D/1/10 CAV 4 INF; Callsigns:
Xray/Shamrock 20.

William Dillon passed away on March 21, 2019. No obituary provided.



Farmer, Marvin A.
USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight
Class: 56-8; RVN: 62-
63 8 TC CO, 68-69
144 RR; BS, PH.

Marvin Abshire "M.A." Farmer, Jr. of Altavista died on September 14, 2020 at Centra Lynchburg General Hospital. He was born April 16, 1930 in Lynchburg, VA.

He entered the U.S. Army at the age of seventeen rising to the rank of Master Sergeant at the age of twenty-one. He became an Army Aviator in 1956. He retired in 1974. After his retirement from the military, he moved to Altavista and worked as a Trust Officer Auditor and Branch Manager for First National Bank. Later, he was the co-owner of Staunton River Hardware from 1978-1981.

He was a member of Franconia Baptist Church in Alexandria, the D.A.V., the Viet-

nam Helicopter Pilots Association, the Purple Heart Association, and a former member of V.F.W. #4155. M.A.

He is survived by his wife of sixty-nine years, Velma.



***Garman, Brian E. USA;**
Flight Class: 67-17;
RVN: 67-69 176 AHC;
Callsign: Minuteman 20.

Brian Evan Garman was born in Oxnard, CA in 1943. In 1966, he enlisted in the Army as a helicopter pilot. He was shot down many times.

Because of his missions in Vietnam, he was exposed to Agent Orange. Physically, he suffered greatly throughout his life as a result. But that did not prevent him from living life to the fullest.



Gruetzmacher, Friedrich
L. USA, COL Ret.;
Flight Class: 66-14;
RVN: 66-67 227 AHB 1
CAV, 69-70 C/17
CAV; DFC (3 OLC) BS
(3 OLC) PH 3.

Friedrich (Fritz) L. Gruetzmacher passed away August 23, 2020 at his home in Sequim, WA, after an 11-year battle with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (Agent Orange associated). Fritz was born in Chemnitz, Germany in 1939. He immigrated to the U.S. after serving in the West German Air Force as a flight Sergeant with a Master Aviation Badge. Upon coming to the U.S., he joined the U.S. Army and dedicated his life, personal and professional skills to this nation.

Fritz served in the Army for 27 years in a variety of flying, transportation, and logistical positions, including management of U.S. port facilities in South Korea, and in logistics for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

For his dedication to developing the Army's Transportation Regiment Fritz was named a Distinguished Officer of the Regiment. Following his retirement from the Army as a Colonel, he worked an additional 20 years in international logistics as a civilian.

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***Grushetsky, Philip J. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 59-2; RVN: 62-63 AIR AMERICA, 65-66 155 AHC, 67-68 353 MNT 1 INF; BS, MSM; Callsign: Falcon 5/Red Hat 6.**

Phillip Grushetsky age 84, passed away September 23, 2020, due to complications from Covid-19. He was born in Nanticoke, PA.

Phil was a 1954 graduate of Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, PA and a 1958 Graduate of John Carroll University in University Heights, OH. He was Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army in 1959 and headed to Helicopter School in Corpus Christi, TX to begin an extensive military career.

After Vietnam, Phil earned his Master's Degree in education from William and Mary College in Williamsburg, VA. He later became a certified test pilot for Dornier Aircraft in Germany and Boeing Vertol in Philadelphia, PA. Phil's last assignment was with NATO SHAPE, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, in Brussels Belgium. He retired after 25 years of Army service in 1984, and became a Guidance Counselor in Elmira, NY, a job he loved.

***Herzig, Lawrence H. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-5W/66-3W; RVN: 66-67 174 AHC, 69-70 C/4/77 ARA 101 ABN, 70 B/4/77 ARA; DFC, BS, ACM (PLC), PH; Callsigns: Dolphin/Shark/Griffin/Toro.**

Lawrence H. Herzig, 84, of Castle Pines, CO, died August 14, 2020, at Legacy Village of Castle Pines with family by his side.

Larry was born in Pittsfield, MA, in 1936 and graduated from Pittsfield High School. He would later earn his associate degree from Mt. Wachusett Community College in Gardner, MA. Larry enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1958, attending basic training at Fort Dix, NJ. After several years in the enlisted ranks, he entered the warrant officer ranks after earning his aviator wings as a helicopter pilot.

He retired from the service in 1984 with more than 26 years of steadfast service.

Thereafter, he worked mostly as an independent contractor until 2015.

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



***Howlett, Byron P. USA, COL Ret.; RVN: 67-68 498 MED CO; SS; Callsign: Dustoff 6.**

Byron Howlett passed away on September 18, 2015. He was born on July

1, 1929 in Charleston, MO and moved with his family to Monticello, AR, when he was three. He received a B.A. in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas at Monticello in 1951. He was drafted during the Korean War. After commissioning and flight training, he flew medical evacuation missions for 16 months in Korea. He did graduate work at the Harvard Business School and received an MBA.

He remained in the Army for 31 years and retired as the Assistant Commandant at the Academy of Health Sciences at Fort Sam Houston. After military retirement he felt privileged to have a second career with USAA, which he considered one of the nation's most honorable companies.

Byron was a member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church where he had served on the vestry. He had served on the Boards of the DUSTOFF Association, MOAA, the Harvard Club of San Antonio, the USAA Golden Eagles, and the Bexar County Appraisal Review Board. He was a member of Sons of the American Revolution.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Billee-Kite.



Jackson, Ralph R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 54-E; RVN: 65-66 A/228 AVN 1 CAV, 68-69 B/228 AVN 1 CAV, 69 HHC 228 ASHB 1 CAV; DFC (3 OLC), BS (2 OLC); Callsigns: Wolverine 1/Wolverine 6/Longhorn 6.

Ralph R. Jackson passed from this life July 13, 2020 in Oklahoma City, OK. He was born September 11, 1927, on a farm in NE Arkansas.

Ralph joined the Navy on his 17th birthday in 1944. He served as a Gunner's Mate on an LST during the last month of World War II. Serving in the military became the key theme in Ralph's life. Ralph later enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1948 and fought in the Korean War, landing at Inchon in September 1950. He progressed through every enlisted rank and was appointed Warrant Officer in December 1951. Ralph eventually became an Army Aviator.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley.



***Knight, James L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 56-9; RVN: 65-66 255 TC DET, 67-68 611 TC CO; BS; Callsign: Tailboard 6.**

James L. Knight passed on August 27, 2020 in San Antonio, TX. He was born on February 10, 1931 in Oklahoma City, OK.

With his mother's consent, LTC Knight began his military career at age 17 by enlisting in the U.S. Army. His first duty appointment was as a Military Police Officer but quickly decided to attend jump school and become a paratrooper and proud member of the 82nd Airborne Division. Later he attended Infantry school, numerous aviation & flight schools becoming both a fixed wing and rotary wing pilot.

After retirement from the Army in 1972, Jim worked at Bell Helicopter and later with General Electric.



***Leister, Richard W. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 55-C; RVN: 65-66 A/502 AVN, 68 ACTIV; Callsign: Outlaw 6.**

On July 9, 2020, Richard W. Leister passed away at age 90 surrounded by family at his home in San Diego, CA. He was born in Kittanning, PA. During his sophomore year at Kittanning High School, he was accepted on a full music scholarship to Valley Forge Military Academy in Wayne, PA. Dick transferred to Michigan State College (now University) where he played clarinet in the Michigan State Symphony. He graduated in 1954 with a commission as Second Lieutenant

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in the United States Army, Infantry Branch. Dick's military career began at the Infantry Basic Officers Course in Fort Benning, GA and was immediately followed by admission to the first flight class held at the newly opened Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, AL. When he concluded his fixed-wing training he was admitted into helicopter training at Gary A.F.B. in San Marcos, TX.

In 1969, Dick was assigned to his alma mater, Valley Forge Military Academy as the Professor of Military Science where he was a member of the Superintendent's Advisory Group. During this four-year period, he also assisted with the selection of cadets to attend Service Academies and was advisor to the Cadet Honor Council.

Upon his retirement from the Army, he was employed for 15 years by General Dynamics Electronics Division in San Diego, CA from which he retired in 1989.

Dick strongly believed in giving back to his community. During his retirement, he volunteered for 17 years with the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) of the San Diego Police Department and was a volunteer docent for 15 years at Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial, for which he was awarded Veteran of the Year in 2013.



Loeffler, John USA;
Flight Class: 70-20;
RVN: 70-71 C/2/17
CAV; BS, ACM; Call-
sign: Condor 42.

John Richard Loeffler was born April 14, 1946 in El Campo, TX, and entered his eternal rest on January 25, 2020, at his home in Junction, surrounded by his family.

John attended Junction schools and graduated in 1964. He attended Texas A&M University, where he was a member of the Corps of Cadets and graduated in 1968. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the US Army.

When he left the military, the couple moved to the Houston area and he worked for the Ford Motor Company. The family moved to Junction where John joined his father and uncle in Loeffler Motor Company. John was a partner in Metco Supply. He also assumed responsibility in the Loeffler

Ranch. John joined the Board of Directors of Junction National Bank in 1996 and served until his death. John was a long-time member of the Hill Country Fair Association and Junction Volunteer Fire Department.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Bonnie.



Loos, Richard E. USA;
Flight Classes: 68-
519/68-35; RVN: 69-70
187 AHC; Callsign:
Lancelot 00.

Richard was born in Duncan, OK. He died of sudden heart failure, July 14, 2020, in Rockport, TX.

He graduated 1966 from Durango High School, then attended New Mexico Military Institute. In 1968, Richard enlisted in the US Army, going on to complete helicopter pilot training. Following his service, Richard obtained a BA degree from Ft Lewis College in 1973. He was employed by Amarillo Hospital District. The family relocated to San Antonio, TX in 1978, and Richard was employed by IBM.



Marsh, Leroy B. USA;
Flight Class: 67-3; RVN:
67-68 16 CAG; Call-
sign: Falcon 2.

LeRoy Bradbury Marsh III was born Aug. 9, 1947, in San Francisco. He attended Catholic schools through the eighth grade and graduated in 1965 from Mills High School in Millbrae. He died on August 10, 2020 at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital from complications of a medical trial intended to help him avoid a recurrence of the cancer discovered last December in a lymph node above his right lung.

Marsh grew up in Millbrae and was a young Vietnam veteran when he made a start in law enforcement with a Bay Area narcotics task force in 1972. Marsh worked nearly every position in the department: patrol officer, investigations and motorcycle traffic-enforcement supervisor, narcotics officer, detective. Stephanie Marsh said the work he found most fulfilling "is probably what took the biggest toll on him."

He is survived by his wife, Stephanie.



Mason, James W. USA,
CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes:
66-21/66-19; RVN:
67 128 AHC, 69-70
COMMAND AVN
CO; LM, DFC, BS (2
OLC), MSM; Callsigns:
Gunslinger 33/Long Trip.

James (Jim) Welborne Mason of Texarkana, TX passed away on August 3, 2020. Jim was born in Silver City, NM, in 1941 and moved with his family to Albuquerque when he was fifteen.

In 1965, he volunteered for U.S. Army Helicopter Flight School. At the time of his retirement, he was the oldest Army helicopter pilot on active flight status, flying 1789 combat flight hours during his career.

He is survived by his wife, Marianne.



Mazurak, Peter A.
USMC; RVN: 69-70
HMM-263, 73 AIR
AMERICA; Callsign:
Peach Bush 23.

Peter August Mazurak of Monticello, IL, passed away July 26, 2020 at his residence. Peter was born September 6, 1942 in Berkeley, CA.

He grew up in Lincoln, NE and graduated from the University of Nebraska with a degree in Chemistry. Upon receiving a Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin, he taught chemistry at the UW Center in Marinette, WI before receiving a commission from the US Marine Corps.

He joined the Marines in 1967 out of a "sense of patriotism and adventure." After the completion of his enlistment, he flew for Air America of the CIA in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam before returning to Wisconsin.

He received his PhD from the Institute of Paper Chemistry. He went on to become the Technical Director of the Neenah Paper Division, Kimberly Clark Corp, where he held two patents for the highly absorbent material in diapers.



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***McGovern, Joseph D.
USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight
Class: 67-3; RVN: 67-68
117 AHC, 69-70 18
AVN; Callsign: Beach-
bum.**

Joseph Dennis McGovern passed away August 24, 2020 after a battle with the Corona Virus at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta. He was born in Philadelphia on October 22, 1945. Joe grew up in Maple Shade, NJ and graduated from Merchantville High School.

Joe graduated from Trenton State College Summa Cum Laude with an Accounting degree. He then graduated from Rutgers University School of Law and returned to Glennville and has practiced Law Since 1977.

Joe has served as Municipal Court Judge of Glennville since 1982. He was recently serving as Municipal Court Judge of Reidsville. He represented the Board of Governors' for the State Bar of Georgia from 1995 until 2008. He also served on the Board of Governors' of Pinewood Christian Academy from 2003 until 2015. He was the Tattnall County Attorney from 1989 until his death.



***McMaster, Arthur T.
III USA; Flight Class:
69-46; RVN: 70-71
B/7/1 CAV; DFC.**

It is with great sadness that the family of Tom McMaster of Lincoln, NE, share that he passed away September 5, 2020. Tom's battle with Parkinson's rapidly progressed during his last weeks of life. He passed peacefully in his home surrounded by his family.

Arthur Thomas McMaster III was born September 14, 1944 in Galesburg, IL. He attended ROVA High School. He went on to attend University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana and joined ROTC. He graduated with a degree in civil engineering and received officer's commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Tom began his work career as a civil engineer which took to various places in the Midwest: Kansas City, MO; Hastings NE; Lakewood, CO; Houston, TX; and Carthage IL. He was instrumental in designing natural gas pipelines and ensuring

their quality and safety.

He is survived by his wife, Deanie.

***Miller, Mervin W. USA, CW4 Ret.;
Flight Class: 58-1; RVN: 62-63 8 TC
CO, 67-68 196 ASHC, 68 HHC 17
CAG; BS, MSM (2), ACM (2); Callsign:
Flipper.**

Mervin Wade Miller passed away on September 12, 2020 in Ocala, FL. He was born on April 17, 1935 in Shipshewana, IA.

He served in both Korea and Vietnam.

He retired to Ocala, FL, in 1978 and operated a lawn service for many years. He was an active member of the Ocala Elks Lodge 286 and the Ocala VFW Post 4209.



***Moore, John T. SR.
USA, Ret.; Flight Class:
67-11; RVN: 68 7/1
CAV, 68-69 336 AHC,
70-71 101 AVN 101
ABN; Callsign: Warrior
10.**

John Thomas Moore, Sr., 84, a native of Thomaston, GA and resident of Houma, LA passed away on, August 3, 2020.

He retired from the US Army in 1975 after serving 23 years and was employed as a pilot for a local company until he retired in 1999.

He was a member of Bayou Blue United Methodist Church, the Regional Military Museum of Houma, and a life member of the Blackhawks Helicopter Association, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and Military Officers Association of America. He was also a member of NOSOTROS cancer support group, Relay for Life, TGMC rehab support group, and Veterans Administration support group.

He is survived by his wife, Libbi.

**Moore, Thomas C. II USA MAJ,
Ret.; Flight Class: 70-30.**

Thomas Coburn Moore of Indianapolis, passed away June 30, 2016. He was born October 6, 1946. Tom graduated from Clewiston High School (FL) in 1964, The Citadel Military College in 1968 and the I.U. School of Law (Indianapolis) in 1986.

Retiring with 20 years of military service, Tom was an attorney for 25 years, retiring from Moore & Associates.

He is survived by his loving wife of 47 years.



**Opheim, Glen I. USA;
Flight Classes: 67-1/66-
23; RVN: 67-68
C/7/17 CAV, 68 F/8
CAV 23 INF; Callsign:
Blue Ghost 24.**

Glen Irving Opheim, or "Ope" as he was known to friends, of Fort Collins, CO died from complications of a massive stroke on August 31, 2020. He was born on February 8, 1946 in Williamsburg, VA.

He attended Old Dominion College before entering the service and graduated from William and Mary College in 1974 after being medically retired from active duty because of wounds received in Vietnam.

He had a thirty-year career in ground operations management with United Airlines at Dulles International Airport and retired from that position in 2003.

He is survived by his wife, Paula.



***Ozmon, Nat P. USA;
Flight Classes: 70-
27/70-29; RVN: 70-71
162 AHC; BS, PH (2)
Callsign: Vulture 23.**

Nat Peter Ozmon, Jr., age 72, of Columbus, NC, died August 22, 2020. He was born in New York City, NY.

He is survived by his wife, Beverly.

**Patterson, Jimmy G. USA, LTC Ret.;
Flight Class: 69-16; RVN: 69-70 326
MED 101 ABN; Callsign: Dustoff 98.**

Jimmy Grant Patterson died unexpectedly August 24, 2020, at Clay County Hospital, Ashland, AL. He was born April 17, 1942 in Clay County, AL. He attended Clay County High School. He was also a graduate of Auburn University, as well as Gupton College in Nashville, TN with a degree in Mortuary Science. He spent his military career serving active duty Army and full time with the Alabama Army National Guard in various administrative and logistics positions.

After retirement from the military he became the first director of the Clay County Emergency Management Agency and served a term on the Clay County Commission.

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***Paulson, Philip T. USA, CW5 Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-39/69-37; RVN: 70 F/8 CAV AMERICAL; Callsign: Blue Ghost 39.**

On September 6, 2020, the Paulson Family and the world lost a true hero. Philip had a 30 plus year career in the Active Army Guard with Night Vision Goggles being his expertise. Upon retiring from the military, Tom also flew for the state of Wisconsin for one year, while Governor Tommy Thompson was in office.



***Rains, Thomas D. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-9/67-11/67-13; RVN: 67-68 334 AHC, 71 221 AVN, 72 164 AVN GRP; DFC (2 OLC), BS (OLC), MSM (OLC); Callsigns: Gangbuster 43/Raider 27/Shotgun 13/Shotgun 3.**

The Lord called Thomas Dee Rains home on August 25, 2020, in Williamsburg, VA. He passed suddenly and unexpectedly, though peacefully, following a minor back surgery, soon after getting home from the procedure.

Tom was born on July 14, 1944 in Antioch, CA. He spent much of his childhood in Fairbanks and Anchorage, Alaska. Tom graduated from high school in 1962, in his native California, from Antioch High School. After attending a pre-med program at San Jose State University for one year, Tom took a job in 1963 at Vandenberg Air Force Base, near Santa Maria, CA. He was subsequently drafted into the U.S. Army, beginning active duty service on September 7th, 1965. He earned a Bachelor's degree in 1976 in International Relations from Monterey Institute of International Studies, and a Master's degree from the Naval Post Graduate School in National Security Affairs in 1983.

Tom served as an Instrument Instructor Pilot, Hunter Army Airfield (Savannah, GA) between combat tours.

Upon his retirement from the Army, Tom transitioned to the corporate world but stayed close to Army aviation. He

worked at McDonnell Douglas and Boeing, in Mesa, AZ as the Director of Business Development, selling the AH-64A and AH-64D Apache helicopter to allied nations such as the United Kingdom, South Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. He later served on RAH-66 Comanche developmental program in Ridley Park, PA.

He is survived by his beautiful bride of 53 years, Lynn.

***Rennacker, Gregg A. USA; Flight Classes: 66-21/66-19; RVN: 67-68 128 AHC; Callsign: Tomahawk 27.**

Gregg Rennacker died on July 29, 2020. No obituary has been provided.

Seidel, Al W. USA/USCG, CDR Ret.; Flight Class: 70-20; RVN: 70-71 A/3/17 CAV, Callsign: Silver Spur 36.

Alfred Woodrow Seidel, II, 67, of Camden, NC died October 6, 2014 at his home. He was born in Danville, PA.

Mr. Seidel received a B.S. degree in physics from the Citadel. He was the first American pilot to earn his British Wings. He is survived by his wife, Kathryn Leigh Seidel of Wilmington.

***Shearer, Vance USA; Flight Classes: 66-21/66-19; RVN: 67-68 175 AHC; Callsign: Maverick.**

Dr. Vance E. Shearer passed away on March 19, 2016.

He is survived by his wife, Terri.



***Simmons, Douglas J. USMC; Flight Class: 68-30; RVN: 69 VMO-2, 69-70 HML-367; Callsigns: Hostage Alpha/Scarface 37.**

Douglas James Simmons passed away July 24, 2020, at St. Vincent Hospital. He was born September 21, 1945, in Clinton, IA.

Doug was a self-employed lobbyist for numerous clients. He was past-president of the American Epilepsy Society.

He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Cheri.



Springer, Dennis F. USA; Flight Classes: 68-15/68-25.

Dennis F. "Denno" Springer passed away August 14, 2020. He was a member of the American Legion Post 721, Sons and Daughters of Ruth and retired from the USPS after many years as a clerk.

He is survived by his wife, Sandra.



Stansell, Harold D. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 65-66 13 CAB, 68-69 101 AVN 101 ABN; BS.

Harold Dean Stansell, 87, departed our world on May 2, 2020. Dean was born and raised in Greenville, SC. He graduated from Clemson A & M College and earned an MBA from Mississippi College.

As a second career, he worked 20 years in real estate sales with Chapman Realty, Florida Living, and Murphy-Matthews & Assoc. in Tampa.



***Tickner, Arthur J. USA Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-11/68-15; RVN: 68-69 17 AVN GP.**

Arthur J. Tickner, Jr. of Syracuse, passed away peacefully on May 3 at the VA Medical Center. Art "Artie" was born in Syracuse on October 11, 1947. He was in the first graduating class out of Corcoran High School in 1965.

After retirement, Art was employed with Terpening Trucking Co., where he worked for several years before moving on to ExxonMobil as a truck driver and dispatcher.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years,



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Treat, Donald E. USA;
MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 55; RVN: 65-66 10 AVN BN; BS; Callsign: Atom 3.

Donald Earl Treat of Bellingham, WA, passed away peacefully with his loving family surrounding him on July 29th. Don was born on March 29, 1928, in Beardon, OK. He graduated from Bakersfield High in 1946 and enlisted the United States Army as a private. Shortly after enlistment he attended Officer Candidate School (OCS) graduating in 1949 as second Lieutenant. He began his military career in the Armor branch.

Following his military service, he worked as a regional manager for State Farm Insurance for 25 years before finally retiring in 1994.

He is survived by his spouse, Bobbi.



Wall, Larry W. USA;
Flight Classes: 69-49/69-47; RVN: 70-71 C/229 AHB 1 CAV; DFC.

Larry W. Wall passed peacefully in Loma Linda University Medical Center on August 12, 2020, with family members at his side. Larry was born May 25, 1950 in Clovis, NM, and attended High School in Westminster, CA. He studied for one semester at Orange Coast Community College in Costa Mesa, CA, before enlisting in the Army to fly helicopters.

He left the US Army shortly after returning from Vietnam and trained as a plumber. Larry later enjoyed a long career as a vocational instructor for the California Department of Corrections – teaching plumbing skills to inmates.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy.



Wallace, Leroy G. USA; Flight Class: 69-27; RVN: 70-71 175 AHC; Callsign: Outlaw 22.

LeRoy Wallace of Galatin, MO., formerly of Hamilton, MO., and Rock Island, IL, passed away on April 23, 2017, at North Care Hospice, North Kansas City, MO. Leroy was born on August 26, 1948, in Moline, IL. He graduated from the Rock Island High School

in 1966.

Leroy had been a welder and worked with his Uncle Vernon Wallace at United Welding for 17 years in Trenton, MO, before working and retiring in 2012 from I & M Machine Company in St. Joseph, MO, as a machinist. He was a member of the Jesus House of Prayer Church in Breckenridge, MO, and a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He is survived by his wife, Velma.



***Weathersby, Robert E. Jr. USA, MAJ Ret.;**
Flight Classes: 60-4/65-2QFW; RVN: 63-64 114 AHC, 67-68 175 AHC, 68 164 CAG, 72-73 12 CAG, 73 JMC AVN DET; DFC, BS (OLC), MSM, PH, ACM (2 OLC); Callsigns: White Knight/Outlaw 3/Delta 3W.

Robert Edward "Bob" Weathersby departed this life on May 14, 2020 after failing health for over a year. He was born on December 20, 1937 in New Hebron, Lawrence Co., MS. Bob graduated from New Hebron High School in 1955, received his B.S. in Industrial Engineering from Mississippi State University in 1959 as an ROTC student and immediately upon graduation entered active service in the U.S. Army. His distinguished military career included three tours of duty in Vietnam.

Not the retiring type, Bob had a 15-year career with Billy Hughes at Rosehill Furniture before again retiring. He spent his last working years as an employee of Walmart in Tupelo.

He is survived by his wife, Stella.



Wilder, James D. USA;
Flight Classes: 68-507/68-7; Callsign: Ghost Rider 47.

James Donnell "J.D." Wilder, 71, of Brunswick, died on August 6, 2020, at Southeast Georgia Health System, in Brunswick, after a brief illness. Mr. Wilder was born and raised in Brunswick.

After high school, he joined the United States Army, where he served in Vietnam and worked his way up to the rank of Captain.

He is survived by his wife, Linda.



Wisecup, James O. USA;
Flight Class: 69-23; RVN: 69-70 C/101 AVN 101 ABN SS, BS, PH.

James "Jim" Oliver Wisecup passed away surrounded by his family, from cancer on July 30, 2020. Jim was born June 17, 1949 in Racine, WI. He grew up in Houston, TX, where he got his first taste of flying in 1966. After high school, he attended the University of Houston for one year before joining the U.S. Army to become a helicopter pilot.

After his Active Duty Army service, Jim continued his career as a helicopter pilot for another 50 years, flying for the Department of the Interior, then the offshore oil industry in Texas, Scotland, Malaysia, and California, before transitioning to air medical service with Rocky Mountain Helicopters and Air Methods in Tulsa, OK and across Utah. His professional career culminated with his retirement as Assistant Chief Pilot for Air Methods in 2019 and as Chairman of the Board of Helicopter Association International in 2020. He also received the Federal Aviation Administration's prestigious Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of professionalism, skills, and aviation expertise while piloting aircraft.

He also enjoyed his time as an instructor, evaluator, and student at Southern Utah University (SUU), completing his degree after a 50-year hiatus.

***Wisener, LaRue D. USA, CW4 Ret.;**
Flight Classes: 70-11/70-9; RVN: 70-72 361 AVN; DFC (4 OLC); Callsign: Panther 37.

Lash Wisener passed away September 16 after a long fight with several ailments and a short skirmish with an unknown illness. It wasn't the way he should have gone out.

He extended two times so he and his best friend, Woody, could visit Bangkok six times. He retired in 1989 and went to work at Redstone Arsenal as a DAC for another 16 years.

He leaves behind his loving wife, Dang (the reason he went to Thailand so many times).

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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. 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>.

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.

Acosta, Daniel J. USA, LTC Ret.; died on September 3, 2020.

Adams, Roy C. USA, CW3 Ret.; RVN: 62-63 57 TC CO, 63 120 AVN; BS (V), DFC w (OLC); died on July 23, 2020.

Allen, John A. USA; Flight Class: 70-16; died on August 15, 2020.

Barr, James N. USA; Flight Classes: 68-511/68-19; RVN: 69-69 116 AHC; DFC, PH (2); died on September 4, 2020.

Bireley, Richard E. USA; Flight Class: 67-17; died on August 4, 2020.

Bradshaw, Edward G. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 70-8; BS (V), PH; died on September 14, 2020.

Brown, Terry R. USA; DFC, ACM; died on March 14, 2020.

Chalfant, Owen L. USA; Flight Classes: 68-1/67-25; died on September 1, 2020.

Dean, David F. USA; Flight Class: 69-3; DFC, BS (2 OLC); died on August 29, 2020.

Erskine, Edwin USA; Flight Class: 66-21; RVN: 70 HHC/229 AHB 1 CAV; died on September 9, 2020.

Herndon, Carlton E. USA; Flight Class: 66-15; died on January 3, 2018.

Heron, Robert USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 68 ARRS; died on July 28, 2020.

Hinds, William H. Jr. USMC, LTC Ret.; died on July 1, 2020.

Kramer, Ronald T. USA; Flight Class: 67-24; died on August 26, 2020.

Lorimer, David S. USA, RVN: 65-66 A/101 AHB 101 ABN, 68 AIR AMERICA died on July 31, 2020

Marpole, Harry USA, Ret.; Flight Class: 63-3W; died on July 28, 2020.

Mayer, Roland N. USA; Flight Classes: 66-17/66-15; RVN: 121 AVN; died on August 2, 2020

McCulloch, Ben E. USA; Flight Class: 66-10; died on September 3, 2020.

Miller, Huey P. USMC, LTC Ret.; RVN: 69-70 HML-367; DFC, BS; Callsign: Scarface; died on September 1, 2020.

Norris, Wilton J. USMC, MAJ Ret.; died on August 20, 2020.

Northington, Richard M. USA; Flight Classes: 70-17/70-15; died on September 14, 2020.

Orton, Rodney L. USA; Flight Classes: 67-1/66-23; RVN: 67-68 B/7/17 CAV, 68 192 AHC, 68 145 AVN PLAT, 69-70 243 ASHC; Callsigns: Red 19/Polecat/Blackship/Freight Train; died on April 22, 2020.

Paczak, Thomas M. USA, LTC Ret.; died on July 27, 2020.

Perry, Ronald C. USA, COL Ret.; SS, DFC, BS (3 OLC), PH; died on July 30, 2020.

Sheldon, Charles R. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-1/66-23; RVN: 67 A/7/17 CAV; died on August 4, 2020.

Spivey, David L. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 65-19W; BS, MSM, ACM; died on August 5, 2020.

Springston, Thomas M. USA; Flight Classes: 66-23/66-21; died on July 30, 2020.

Treazona, Robert W. USA; Flight Classes: 68-501/67-25; PH; died on July 30, 2020.

Woodward, Ronald L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 68-36; died on September 10, 2020.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

While driving around over the last few years I started to notice automobiles with license plates with military medals on them: DFCs, Silver Stars, Meritorious Service Medals, Purple Hearts, ARCOMs, Bronze Stars, one CMH and even a National Defense Service Medal we commonly refer to as the "alive in '65" medal. These license plates are commonly referred to as "VANITY PLATES." And, in Texas, there is no additional charge for them, the State only requires a copy of your DD-214 to prove you were awarded "the medal." Well, like most of you, my Unit was in the right place at the wrong time on several occasions and someone higher up would decide that most or all of those involved deserved to be recognized for their efforts. And, since I was there a time or two, they had no choice but to give one to me also (for participation only, of course.)

After much prodding from my Son, I agreed to apply for one of these plates for each of my two vehicles. To my surprise I was turned down for both. I called and found out it was because I had put down "for Valor" thinking all

DFCs awarded by the Army are for valor. I told the nice Lady at the Texas State Automobile License Plate office that all Army DFCs are for valor. She corrected me with the fact the Army did not specify valor for the DFC. Absent the "for valor" she approved the two plate orders.

Now, here's the really good part of this article. My Buddy, Mike Dean, a VHPA member, told me you could park FREE at any Texas airport with your Vanity Plates. All you have to do is call at least three days ahead and let them know your plans and approximately how long you will park at the airport. Last Christmas the Family went to Cabo San Lucas for the holidays, we were gone eight nights. The bill was \$177. When we drove out the gate the attendant thanked me for my service and waved us through.

I love my VANITY PLATES! And, if you don't already have one, get one! You've earned it.

Mike Sheuerman
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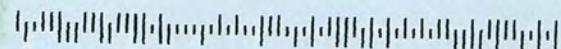
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