



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



*Cover story by Mark Brennesholtz, page 8*

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## *Lest We Forget ~*

Each of us can automatically recall specific and incredibly significant dates from our time in Vietnam. We might not remember if it was a Tuesday or a Thursday (the seemingly endless days of flying did have a tendency to blend together), but the "month and day number" of those events are indelible.

There were those events that happened directly to us – particular missions, especially being shot down or wounded. But I'd like to talk about a different but related date. Those dates are the ones when the guys we knew from flight school, or the guys we flew with were killed.

If it was a pilot you knew in your unit, you most likely knew the same day they were killed (or you were even on the same mission), but for a flight school buddy scattered across various AO's or in a different Corps, sometimes the back channel took days or even weeks. But when we did hear, we always asked how and when. And then that date, their date, was added to your permanent memory.

If you're like most of us, you may have a little ritual or tradition on that date, even these 50 some odd years later – a moment of silence, a quiet toast, or just saying their name. We do these things to honor their sacrifice and to remember their friendship. We do these things because we got to come home and live a life and they did not. We do these things because when we say their names they get to live on in our hearts.

I'd like to share just one of too many dates that I have: 19 May 1968, Camp Evans, 15th Medical Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Division, I Corps. WO Thomas R. Pursel (Flight School Class 67-19) from

Yakima, WA, born 17 September 1948, KIA on 19 May 1968. That's right, if you've done the calculation, Tom was four months short of turning 20 years old when he was killed. Tom arrived in Vietnam 18 January 1968, went to An Khe for the obligatory in-country 1st Cav "charm school" and got to Camp Evans just a few days before Tet, so his Peter-Pilot time was intense quickly. Despite his relatively short time in country, Tom was promoted to AC the end of April, and shortly thereafter sent to the A Shau Valley on the Laotian border (another intense learning ground).

After sustaining multiple hits on rescue missions on multiple days in a row, it was decided to rotate Tom's crew back to the relative safety of Camp Evans for a much-deserved break. On 19 May a call came in to evacuate an engineer whose bulldozer had tripped an anti-personal mine near the coast. Minor shrapnel wounds, LZ secure, no enemy action. Bored from drinking coffee for two days, Tom said he'd take the mission. Less than an hour later Tom died on a litter at the 15th Med Company Aid Station.

On a cross-country road trip in 1996 from Chicago to Seattle on the way to the VHPA Reunion in Santa Clara, California (I had never been to Mount Rushmore or Yellowstone), I decided to stop in Yakima, Washington to visit Tom's parents. They had never been told the details of his death. They were so thankful. They told me stories, and they took me to see his grave. You've done those visits too, a sort of pilgrimage. They can be heart-warming and heart-wrenching at the same time. They were glad I came, and so was I.

*I wrote the following when I returned home. A similar story could be told about so many of our young friends from that time:*

Growing up strong, Tom built treehouses,  
Did well in school, good with horses,  
Knew how to hunt, was a good son,  
The pride of Yakima, his future bright.

A natural in the cockpit, good under pressure,  
Situational awareness we call it,  
He wasn't just respected, he was genuinely liked,  
Oh, that Tom – his boyish charm and ever-quick smile.

Went to that awful dark valley – the A Shau,  
Day after day he dodged most of the bullets,  
His aircraft battered but he flew on still,  
The flight hours built quickly – more than his share.

From up the chain the decision was made,  
Tommy, time for you to take a little break,  
Rotate back to base camp and get some rest,  
You'll still fly, but just the safer stuff.

A lone soldier wounded in a rice paddy,  
Good old Tom will go – back in a jiffy,  
The LZ is green – all is secure – smoke popped,  
Everything quiet on landing, patient on board.

Then one lone rifle shot from 300 meters,  
Could have hit anything – could have been a miss,  
Caught poor Tom near the back of his head,  
He simply relaxed his grip on the cyclic and looked down.

Momentary chaos, hurried radio calls, red-line airspeed,  
Medic on board doing all he can – doctors standing by,  
Hot landing, we carry Tom inside in our arms,  
His eyes roll back, shallow breathing, a low moan.

Frantic desperate measures – every attempt made,  
To no avail, our young Tom was gone,  
We stood silent, staring at our helplessness,  
Nothing now except the painful ordeal of a body bag.

The pride of Yakima – good with horses, knew how to hunt,  
Going home now, soon just a flag for his family,  
The pride of Yakima – always the good son, his future bright,  
Our poor Tom, but his memory lives on – and resides in us all.

At each reunion we hold a Memorial Service to honor our fallen. If you have not attended one of those, I invite you to come and share the story of a comrade and his fateful date. When we speak their name and remember them, we keep them alive in our hearts.

Art Jacobs, VHPA President

# FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL, IT IS STILL UNCERTAIN IF WE WILL BE ABLE TO OPEN REGISTRATION IN MARCH. THE REUNION PAGE AT VHPA.ORG WILL BE UPDATED AS SOON AS WE CAN GET MORE DETAILS SO PLEASE VISIT THE WEBISTE FOR YOUR MOST UP TO DATE INFO. AN EMAIL BLAST WILL ALSO BE SENT AS SOON AS WE HAVE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION SO BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR EMAIL.

**THE OFFICIAL REUNION DATES  
ARE JUNE 29 THRU JULY 2, 2021**

## 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



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# The Enlistment or... How I Was Shanghaied

A recent article by Ralph Weber caused me to reflect on my own experience. I knew I was going to get drafted and I was broke. So, in December 1966, I decided to enlist in the military. In our small town all service recruiters were located in side-by-side store fronts on Main Street.

The first recruiting office was the Navy. My father was in the Navy in World War II. He had two ships blown out from under him. I thought he would be proud if I joined the Navy. I opened the door, noting the recruiter had upside-down stripes on his sleeve. I could never figure out Navy ranks. Without bothering to look up from his desk he said, "What do you want?" "I was thinking about enlisting."

"Get out of here!" Well, that was rude. Perplexed, I did as he instructed.

The next office was the Air Force. I had never been off the ground, but I used to draw pictures of airplanes. These two facts alone surely qualified me for a career in the Air Force. I received the same cold shoulder from the Air Force recruiter and I was back on the street in five seconds. I started to get discouraged. "What the hell is going on?" It wasn't until months later when I finally understood what happened that day. All the services had a monthly quota, and everyone was trying to avoid the draft and the Army.

I moved briskly past the next station - the Marine Corps. This brought me to the last door on the block. I stared at the entrance contemplating my fate. I started to get cold feet and it had nothing to do with the weather. Finally, I resolved to go in. I might as well have this over with.

As soon as I opened the door, the Sergeant First Class jumped up from his desk and bolted across the room. Shaking my hand, he said, "Come in. Come in. Have a seat. Do you want a cup of coffee or a coke? We also have donuts." "No, I'm fine. Thank you." "Well, what can I do for you?" "I was thinking about joining the Army." "That's a good decision. It's better to join than wait to be drafted.

When you volunteer you can choose your job specialty." This was a surprise to me. I said to myself, "I thought everyone was in the infantry."

Over the next hour or so the sergeant showed me all manner of pamphlets and brochures explaining various MOSs. Everyone remembers the movie scene from Private Benjamin where her recruiter shows Goldie Hawn the picture of yachts at Fort Ord. I swear my recruiter showed me the same picture.

The sergeant sensed I was becoming overwhelmed, discontinuing his well-rehearsed, high pressure sales pitch.

Closing the big three ring binder he leaned back in his chair and stared at me. Finally, he broke the silence. "You seem like a bright young man. How would you like to fly helicopters?"

"Helicopters?" I said. "Yes, the Army has more helicopters than anyone in the world." He went on to explain the qualification process for flight school. I would take a lot of written examinations at the Induction Center in Cleveland. If that went well, I would appear before an Officer Review Board in Columbus. The flight physical would happen while in Basic Training. He said, "The flight physical is a piece of cake. Don't worry about it." I visualized a doctor thumping my chest a couple of times and saying, "You pass."

The sergeant asked, "How does all that sound? Do you want to be a helicopter pilot?" I answered, "Okay, I guess." After we signed a bunch of papers, he walked me out, his arm around my shoulder. Standing in the open doorway he said, "Do you know the best thing about flight school? It's a very long school. There's a good chance the war will be over by the time you graduate." Then, he physically pushed me outside. I heard the door lock and the window blinds close behind me.

I stood on that street corner paralyzed with self-doubt. What have I done? The wind was blowing. The snow was falling. Christmas shoppers were scurrying by. Suddenly, I said aloud, "What war?"

**Bob Eustice Class 67-23B**



# 162nd Assault Helicopter Company (Vultures and Copperheads)

By Tom Melville

On January 5, 1972, I went to Company Operations to look at the schedule for the next day. Captain Steve Sanford was Vulture 3, Operations Officer. I was listed on the board for a "Special Mission". Captain Sanford said he did not have details, but our mission was to fly from Can Tho (IV Corps) up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh and land at the Military ramp where someone would meet us. Flight time was about 75 minutes.

We were met by a US Army Major, two Cambodian Officers, and a civilian whom I assumed was CIA. Once the Huey was refueled, we headed North into east-central Cambodia. After a 45-minute flight, I had the compound in sight. I started a straight in approach for the landing pad located in the center of the compound. At about 800 feet AGL, we were hit by ground fire. The trusty Huey was still running. As we inspected the damage after landing, we noticed Cambodian soldiers rolling 50-gallon drums toward our Huey. They stood the drums up on end and refueled us with hand pumps.

The Major gave us directions to fly farther north a short distance and pick up five Cambodian soldiers near a village. On arrival, we saw a small clearing near a mostly deserted village where the soldiers on the ground were waiting. What we did not expect was frightened women and children too. Eleven desperate souls crowded onto the helicopter. With no other space, a bare-bottomed toddler sat on the console. Once everybody was onboard, I pulled pitch, and we were at a three-foot hover with the Torque red-lined at 50 pounds. We started forward, hitting translational lift just before touching the ground. The next thing I remember we were headed toward some trees but managed to clear them with only inches to spare.

Having taken fire on our earlier approach, we stayed at 2000 feet until directly over the helipad then laid the Huey on its side and did a cork-screw to the pad. All at once, the crew chief was yelling over the hot mic that there was panic in the back. I realized that these folks had never been in a helicopter before. The doors were open and most of them were sitting on the floor with no understanding of centrifugal force. Terror of falling out of a helicopter replaced their fear of being killed by the NVA. I flew the



Cambodian National Guard troops with whom we worked. photo by Tom Melville.

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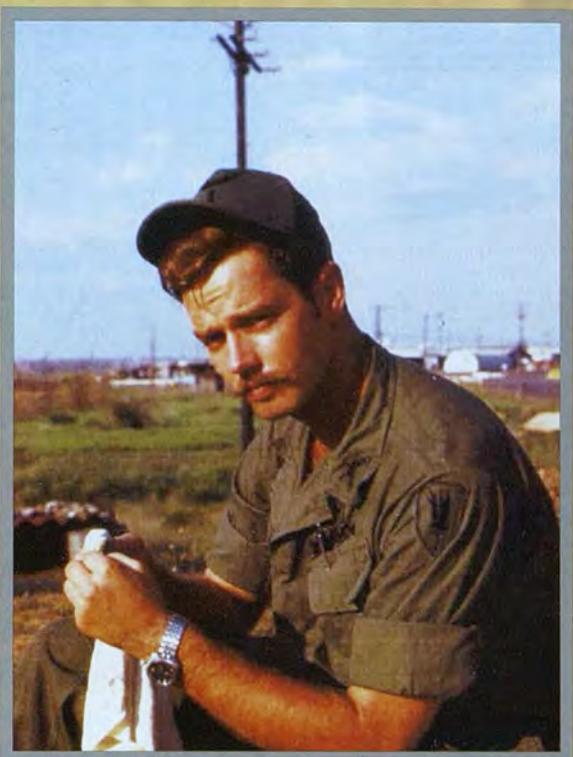
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**Tom Melville in front of damaged A/C in Cambodia.**  
Photo by crew chief Walter Sharpes.

Special Mission six times. It was a lonely feeling knowing if something happened to the Huey, we were literally on our own.

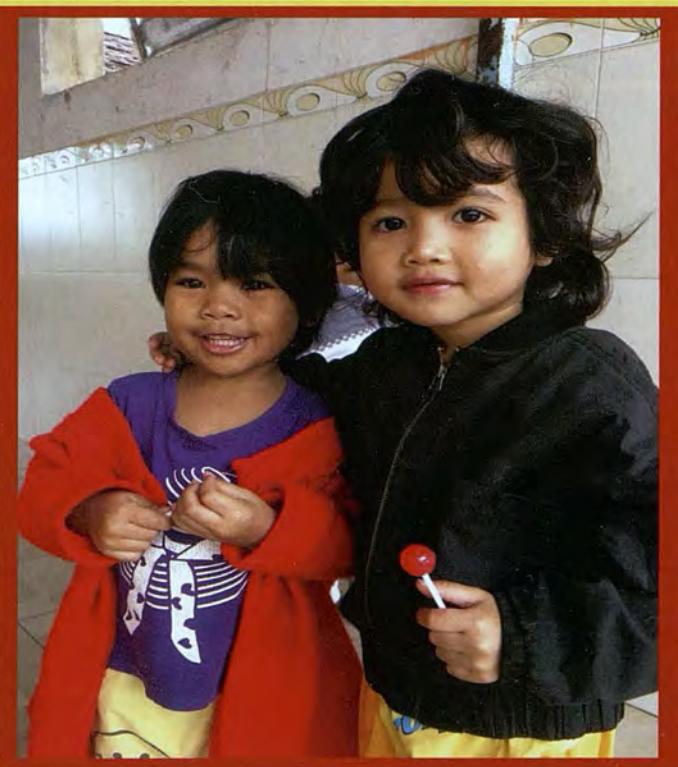
In 1975 when the Khmer Rouge (Pol Pot) took control, an estimated 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians died from execution, starvation, disease, and overwork. Having worked with the US Military, I assume many of the troops in the photo and their families were some of those included in these numbers. These people found themselves in an unfortunate situation through no fault of their own. I weep every time I think of them.



**Tom Melville at Can Tho 1971.**

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

**Patrick Leary, FVSO President and VHPA Life Member**



Since being founded in 2005 by men who had served in Vietnam, FVSO has raised funds to help support about 850 Montagnard children who live in the Vinh Son and Sao Mai orphanages located in the Kontum & Pleiku regions of Vietnam. FVSO provides annual dental care, education, food, medicine, and shelter for these special children. All donations support them and their caregivers. Since FVSO is a non-profit organization, all donations are also tax deductible. Our monthly newsletters tell their story and are available for free on-line. **THANK YOU!**

**For more info, contact FVSO**

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# A Different View

As a fairly long-time member of VHPA, I have read with great interest and admiration the heroic feats of my comrades, especially Huey aviators. I had my moments, but what sticks most in my mind were my dumb mistakes, including a couple that could have hurt lots of folks.

As an ROTC commissioned officer in 1967, my first stop was Fort Knox for Armor Officer Basic. Winter at Fort Knox was cold with coal dust everywhere. A maintenance test program for the OH-6 Light Observation Helicopter (LOH or Loach) was there, however. It gave me the chance for a little hovering stick time before flight school. That served me well and I was top of my class at Rucker.

That said, Vietnam proved that flying skills are different from leadership skills.

## Screwup #1.

In Phan Thiet on the South China Sea in II Corps, I was assigned with a WO1 to fly the flare ship one night. Routine was to check that flares were loaded aboard, pre-flight, and crank the engine. Good, good and bad. The engine whined but would not start. The flight line was only a few hundred feet from the officers' hooches, and our CW2 IP sauntered out to the aircraft, opened the co-pilot door, pushed in the overhead igniter circuit breaker, said "Now try it." Of course, it started easily. Rich walked away shaking his head. Never made that mistake again.

## Oversight #2.

The mission of the Cav at that time was recon in force, and we normally ran missions with four Hueys with our Blues infantry platoon, four Loaches, and four Cobras plus C&C (aka "Super Loach"). I was pilot (not yet A/C). My copilot and I preflighted, loaded eight Blues, cranked and took off with the gaggle. At 500 feet, the hydraulics locked up. I called an

emergency landing and flew the very stiff controls in for a running landing. Actually, I was able to hover and get off the runway. Turns out neither of us checked the hydraulic sight gauge, and the fluid was low. No sign of leakage. A quart of fluid was enough to set everything right, but since it was an emergency landing, the Huey was grounded for inspection. The CO was very pissed to lose the aircraft and the troops for the day's mission. Luckily, they were not needed that day and my ass was the only casualty.

## Dumb Sh\*t #3.

Not long after #2, I was now A/C. We were on a mission that required rappelling Blues into the woods (not really jungle) to cut out a LZ/PZ with chainsaws. There was no enemy contact. We descended vertically about 50 feet with less than 10 feet clearance all around and hovered over the stumps. With me on the controls, we made a good descent to drop off the Blues, and pulled up to go refuel and stand by. When it came time to extract our infantry platoon, I made the same approach and started down. Both the crew chief and door gunner were talking on intercom giving me clearance info. Unfortunately, I drifted to starboard and began hitting branches. Both crewmen were yelling so I could not tell which way to go. After chopping up several trees, I pulled up and bailed. There was a lot of vibration so I headed to the standby area. One blade main spar was dented and the black rubber composite behind it was torn. The crew chief was in tears since 723 was considered to be a hangar queen and had just come out to full duty after weeks of losing cannibalized parts. With some hundred-mile-an-hour tape on the blade cut, we flew home with no pax on board and a lot of vertical vibration. My Blues were spread out in the flight. The Major was pissed. This was actually the only time when my aircraft handling and crew management was the culprit, but it still gives me pause.

## Romeo Foxtrot #4.

B Troop was ordered to relocate from Phan Thiet to Pleiku in my fourth month in-country. I was ordered to take a flight of about 10 Hueys and Loaches to Camp Enari. Going up the coast, we passed Phan Rang AFB (where we had worked a couple of times – our boys in blue lived very well). A normal but unnecessary technique when crossing their control zone was to go low level under the traffic pattern of the fast movers. To avoid small arms fire, our choice was to fly above 1500 feet or go low level. Now, every helicopter pilot loves to fly “nap of the earth” at tree top level. Those who deny it are lying. So, I chose to take us low level, after advising the tower of our plans and getting permission. Unfortunately, one of the OH-6s (was that you, Ricky?) got a little close to a tree and knocked out a chin bubble. After refueling in Nha Trang, we made it to Pleiku with no more incidents except for the drafty Loach. I reported the incident to the maintenance officer, but when the CO found out the aircraft was grounded, I was in his office with heels locked. Low level was a bad call on my part as leader.

## SNAFU #5.

Nine months into my tour, we were working out of Ban Me Thout in support of a Special Forces camp

surrounded by Cambodia on three sides. On one occasion I was flying seven or eight pax and supplies into Bu Prang when they were receiving sporadic small arms fire. I decided to do a high overhead approach rather than setting up a normal glide slope. At Rucker, we practiced it. Cut the power, kick the Huey out of trim, and spiral down very rapidly – up to 4000 feet per minute (normal autorotation without power is about 1100 fpm). What didn’t dawn on me was that the aircraft was an awful lot heavier now than at Rucker. As the rate of descent went over 3000 and the ground was coming up very quickly, I got scared and began pulling pitch and getting back in trim. For sure, I sucked all the power out of the aircraft, but since I’m not a black spot on a mud runway near Cambodia, we did make a controlled landing. No one noticed except me.

Luckily, my brushes with non-professionalism did not cost any lives and little damage, but I still shudder thinking about what could have happened. Though not a career soldier, the lessons I learned in Vietnam stayed with me in the corporate world. Lots of different mistakes there, too, but that’s another story.

Mark Brennesholtz

B/7/17 Air Cav

RVN 1969

## 2021 VHPA/QUAD-A SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROGRAM NOW OPEN

The 2021 VHPA /QUAD-A Scholarship program is now accepting applications from our descendants for one of our twelve (12) \$2,500 awards or, if not selected for one of those, an award from QUAD-A. Last year VHPA had 112 applicants, 111 were vetted as eligible to receive an award and 49 received awards totaling \$91,500, the ten (10) VHPA Scholarships of \$2,500 each and an additional \$66,500 of Quad-A awards.

All applications must be to QUAD-A by April 30. All VHPA applicants will be vetted by the Scholarship Committee. Each application submitted will be reviewed by 8-10 different individu-

als. The names of the applicants are removed so the ratings are done fairly. With such a high number of total applicants, over 600 last year, a great number of "Application Reviewers" are needed. Last year 22 people, VHPA members and wives, volunteered as Reviewers. VHPA needs the same or more people to volunteer this year. Last year I reviewed 149 submissions. It took me 3 or 5 hours a day over a weekend, about 5-10 minutes per application, to complete the review process and submit. It's an enjoyable thing to do. Some of the required essays are unbelievable.

**Mike Sheuerman,  
Scholarship Committee Chairman**

# History of the USAF Helicopter Pilots Association

by KV Hall and Mike Law

This article contains ideas extracted from an Oral History interview of KV Hall done by Mike Law in Great Falls, Montana on 7 Sep 2020 plus items from their website <https://usafhpa.org/> and from other sources. For ease and clarity for this publication, we use a Question and Answer format; where Mike asks and KV answers.



## Mike Law: Thanks, KV, for letting me visit with you in Great Falls. So, how did the USAFHPA begin?

**KV Hall:** When the Air Force moved its helicopter school from Randolph in Texas to Stead near Reno in 1958, the base commander made the school cadre live in base housing. So, the guys all worked together, played golf together, fished together; while the ladies drank coffee, played cards, and watched the kids together. This was the basis for some strong camaraderie that still exists today. In 1965, the Southeast Asian War expanded, the school moved to Sheppard and we all moved on. For many years, 'the Stead guys' talked of having a reunion. In 1984, Bill Waters and others started gathering names of pilots came from old Christmas card lists, old rosters, word of mouth – asked "Want to have a Reunion?" Response was good. James Carroll, then Vice Commander at Sheppard AFB, offered to host it with other friends in the area assisting. The first reunion was held over the July 4th weekend in 1985 at Wichita Falls, Texas. Over 200 attended! Overwhelming success!

## Mike: How did the USAFHPA get organized?

**KV:** After the first reunion, it was decided, "Let's do it again!" The motivating themes: continue the tradition of helicopter operations, preserve the esprit de corps, and renew past social contacts. Over the 4th of July 1987 weekend we met in Reno for the second reunion. Since there had been a helicopter school there, the 'San Antonio group' said they would host the third reunion plus develop plans for a formal organization. That happened at the October 1988 Reunion in San Antonio.

## Mike: What is the story behind that cute eggbeater logo?

**KV:** The eggbeater being flown by a gremlin was the Air Force Helicopter Pilot School patch. So, we adopted that as our logo. As best I understand the design's history, some-

time in the '50s a guy name of Joe Kusy drew up the idea and sent it to the Walt Disney folks. Disney artist(s) returned the artwork we still use today. I first saw the eggbeater in 1955 at Gary in San Marcos.

## Mike: Who can be a member of your Association?

**KV:** While we started out with mostly school cadre, we decided to open the membership to any helicopter pilot who served with the U.S. Air Force. This included 'exchange guys' from the RAF and RAAF plus the U.S. Coast Guard. We now have Auxiliary membership with dues waived to the widows of those eligible for regular membership.

## Mike: It seems that your Association is very Reunion centric?

**KV:** Yes, for sure. At each Reunion we elect a Board of Directors but their primarily focus is the next Reunion. We still use the Association governing documents developed by the San Antonio gang. I am the Historian and maintain the rosters. George Lightner is our treasurer and works our PO Box. Bob Putlock is our chairman/president. We lovingly refer to Bill Waters as 'Doctor Death' because he receives all the deceased notifications. Even today it takes at least three guys to work with Gray Line Gatherings Plus to pull off a Reunion. Usually, we have a newsletter or two plus some emails ~ again getting the word out about the Reunion. If someone offers a new story, we'll put it in the newsletter but usually it is all about the Reunion.

## Mike: So quickly recap your previous Reunions:

**KV:** OK, we try to have a Reunion about every 12 to 18 months. 1985 was in Wichita Fall, TX, over 200 attended. '87 in Reno, 370. '88 San Antonio, 373. '90 Ft Walton Beach. '92 Dayton for the 50th anniversary and a monument dedication at the Air Force Museum. '94 Albuquerque. '96 San Diego. '98 Orlando. 2000 Tucson. '02 Biloxi, 362. '03

Ogden. '05 Reno again, 330+. '06 at Orlando again, 238. '08 San Antonio again, 365. '09 Colorado Springs, 266. '11 at Jackson Hole, WY. '12 Branson, 226. '13 San Diego, 200+. '15 Charleston, SC, 240. '16 Great Falls, MT, 150. '17 Washington, DC, 188. '19 Spokane, only 75. '20 was scheduled to be Kansas City but that got rescheduled to next year. For each Reunion, we publish a Reunion Photo Album. These help us keep track of what everyone looked like, especially couples.

**Mike: So, tell me about the Jolly Green Association (JGA)?**

**KV:** Well, the JGA started in 1969, so they predate the USAFHPA by several years. Their membership is restricted to H-3 and H-53 rescue crews. They've always held Reunions at Ft Walton Beach. I believe at their last Reunion in 2019, they decided to disband because of lack of interest.

**Mike: Now the USAF uses helicopters today for Missile Support, for Rescue, and VIP support in Washington, DC. Have you guys had any success in recruiting those folks as they retire?**

**KV:** I have visited the 40th at Malmstrom numerous times and actually did enlist the first two female helicopter pilots to the organization. But even the Majors and LTCs about to retire don't join us. We have run ads in AF Times and other pubs with little response.

**Mike: What do you think is the reason behind this trend?**

**KV:** We lost the generations after SEA. No wars. Units were cut. None of the camaraderie from OCS, flight schools, units, overseas tours, etc. The young folks have no interest in associating with a bunch of old fogies. They have other interests, like family and careers after retiring. I can understand that. They lose out on a lot of history.

**Mike: What about Associate Members or something like "Friends of the USAFHPA?"**

**KV:** We have about 12 Associate Members – former enlisted guys for SEA tours, a chaplain, and some grandchildren. We have 155 Auxiliary Members – all widows of deceased members. While they are great guests at the Reunions and provide some nice support and assistance; the dedicated ones are our age. There isn't the camaraderie motivation there.

**Mike: So where is the Association heading?**

**KV:** Three points please: (1) The IRS non-profit organization status was obtained when the USAF Museum at Wright Patterson AFB was designated as the recipient of all property of the organization in case of disbandment. So, our history and our names won't be lost unless the Museum drops the ball. (2) No one raised their hand for another Reunion. Indeed, we had to make calls and beg for the folks to host the KC Reunion even with Gatherings Plus doing the heavy lifting. Health, travel, aging issues not to mention COVID-19 are real impediments. (3) Like other associations, we are having website maintenance issues. Emails and our website really helped us for the last twenty years; but the technical details are really over our heads now.

So, the simple answer is I don't know where the USAFHPA will be even five years from now!

Closing comments from Mike Law. Besides the 'education,' his Oral History (90-min recording with transcription of 11K words on 15 pages), KV loaned the VHPA Calendar committee 476 35-mm slides mostly from his 1968 tour flying CH-3Cs for the 20th SOS out of Udorn (and lots of places to the north). He also 'pointed out' several individuals and subjects that could be a great interest to the VHPA's legacy gathering efforts. **Thank you KV!!!**

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## Medevac Pilot

*This column is from May/June 2000*

I arrived in Vietnam on the Fourth of July, 1969, barely 21 years old.

It was an average age for most of the other Army helicopter pilots I flew with.

One guy was 19, while the oldest — not counting our commanding officer — was 28.

Back home in the real world, my buddies were at the drive-in, drinking beer or looking for a carload of girls, just as I had been doing a year or two before.

Even though I had yet to fly my first hour of combat, I had done many incredible things my high school friends could not even dream of. I couldn't have been more proud of myself and my flight school class-mates for having come this far.

With a fair amount of apprehension, it was now "the moment of truth." Could we really do what we had been trained to do without letting anyone down? We especially were concerned about the troops we were there to support.

It was finally time to find out if we had what it took to be combat helicopter pilots.

When I learned I was assigned to be a medevac pilot, I was devastated.

In my mind, the only way I would survive the 365 days in Southeast Asia was to be a gunship pilot, blazing my way back to the States, defending myself with miniguns, rockets and grenades.

Throughout flight school, we were taught by gun pilots, slick drivers, scout pilots (although not as many of them) and oh, yes, ONE dustoff pilot. He was an instructor pilot at Downing Army Airfield at Fort Wolters in May 1968.

I remember my first primary flight instructor pointing at him as I listened intently to his every word.

"There walks a dead man. He was a dustoff pilot."

"A dead man" meaning he should never have made it back since dustoff aircraft were unarmed, medevac helicopters and flew single-ship missions.

I never forgot the reverence with which that statement was made, as I began to form a "survival plan of action" in my mind. I would not fly unarmed helicopters!

Shortly after arriving at Fort Rucker, I learned those of us with the highest flight grades would attend a two-week gun school near the end of training, while the rest learned formation flying.

I wanted that top 20 percent and focused all my abilities and energy on making gunship training.

I did well enough to make that school, along with about 25 of my classmates. But, as the Army would have it, during Friday night formation of the middle weekend of gun school, 24 of us, including 12 in the gun school, received orders to attend medevac school at Fort Sam Houston, TX, immediately after graduation.

I told my roommate, "This is it. I won't make it back."

Obviously, I was wrong, but I didn't know it then. It turned out to be the best thing that happened to me, even though I was wounded before the year was out and sent home before my tour was over.

I had no idea of the satisfaction, pride, sense of accomplishment and even elation I would feel in the next six months.

As I look back on my own experiences, two things stand out in my mind that I consider "young and stupid."

First of all, there was landing on the Navy Hospital ships U.S.S. Repose and U.S.S. Sanctuary in the South China Sea very near the Demilitarized Zone.

While the actual landings were not stupid, the way we got there was.

Our single engine UH-1H Hueys did not float in the water very well. In fact, not at all since we usually flew with the doors open, even at night.

And what was even "stupider," I suppose, was the fact that if the doors were closed when we reached the water, we opened them so we could get out easier if we did go down.

Okay, so the Hueys were extremely reliable and I still love those incredible machines, but for the moment let's discuss navigation equipment on a Huey.

The answer is: "There is none!"

Sure, we had a compass and an automatic direction finder, but in the event of an engine failure on the way to the hospital ship, this probably would have been my emergency call: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, Dustoff 7-1-1, we're going down over the sea. We're about five miles out."

Five miles out from where? Maybe it was only three miles . . . no, seven! Shoot, I had NO idea! But come look for us, will ya?

But I suppose we would have survived; we had water wings! Mine were draped over the back of my seat, along with my M-16 rifle. It was a well known — and very true — fact that during an emergency exit from an aircraft, if

you don't have it strapped to your body, you won't take it with you.

If I had gone down over land, I probably wouldn't have taken my weapon with me. I wouldn't have grabbed the "wings" either, because not only had I never tried to inflate them, I had never even tried to put them on.

Well, maybe we could have used our survival radio once we were in the water or forced down over the jungle.

Hehehehe . . . survival radio, what's that? Is that AM or FM? Can I pick up Armed Forces Radio on it? We HAD no survival radios in those aircraft. (So I guess that makes three "Young and Stupids.")

Once out to sea, landing on the ships was an interesting experience in itself, especially when the decks were bouncing up and down like a fishing bobber with a carp under it.

I already knew the difference between port and starboard and it wasn't that hard to figure out "beam" and "quartering" approaches. I used to laugh at the occasional slick driver who flew out to let guys from his unit use the shopping facilities on the ships.

The radioman on the ship would tell them: "Cleared for a port quarter approach."

The silence on the radio was the proverbial "pregnant pause" when the ship would radio to the helicopter again: "Just land to the back of the boat from the left side."

It always got an immediate: "Roger!"

It has been said many times by Navy and Marine jet pilots that landing on an aircraft carrier is like landing on a postage stamp. I would never dispute that, but I would argue that putting a helicopter on the tiny pad of the hospital ship is like landing on a corner of that postage stamp. And at night it was worse.

The first time I tried to land on the ship at night, I terminated at a 30-foot hover over the deck instead of on the deck and the aircraft commander had to take over and hover us down to the ship.



UH-18 #63-08717 from the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) - July, 1965. VHPA Life Member CW4 Don Joyce took this picture at Tan Son Nhut in July 1965. By this time, the 57th had been flying in Vietnam for three years. The only other DUSTOFF unit in Vietnam was the 82nd Med Detachment at Soc Trang. But the Air Ambulance platoon of the 15th Med Battalion, 1 st Cavalry Division was on the way as were other medical evacuation units. The VHPA Helicopter database shows that this aircraft was destroyed on 22 September 1965 with VHPA Life Member 1 LT James Truscott as the Aircraft Commander.

That was probably the lowest point of my Vietnam flying experience, and I never forgot it. I promised myself it would never happen again, and it didn't.

It wasn't easy and I will now confess that my depth perception almost was not good enough to pass my initial flight physical, but I made it.

Knowing my depth perception left little margin for error on the night approaches (especially), I had to totally concentrate on what I was doing and not relax for a second until we were down on that rockin' and rollin' ship.

The night I was wounded, my new co-pilot put us right on the deck, but all the while I had visions of my first 30-foot hover when I was a Funny New Guy. I knew that if Don Study got in trouble on the approach, I could not be of much help, but we were young and stupid and we made it.

I will always thank Don for his late night "picture perfect" landing on the round end of the boat.

Oh, were we young and stupid on hoist missions, too; the second Y&S thing we did!

The most incredible, dangerous, high pucker-factor, exhilarating thing a man can do with a helicopter is to pull an insecure hoist mission, day or night.

Add to that, it is also the most unforgiving mission flown in a helicopter.

First, one has to understand what a hoist mission is and why we did them. Usually, someone is badly wounded in jungle or mountainous (or both) terrain where a helicopter cannot land on the ground.

The tactical situation is such they cannot get him (or them) to a secure open area for evacuation.

We must now hover over the trees or rocky terrain while we let out as much as 150 feet of quarter-inch cable with a jungle penetrator or a Stokes litter attached to it.

Translation: There's bad guys all around, we've got wounded, get in here NOW before they die or we have more wounded and you have to come back again. We don't have any place for you to land, so just hang your butts out in the open sky for several minutes so any kid with a bow and arrow can shoot you down and, Gee, those red crosses on your helicopter sure make great aiming points, don't they? When you crash, we'll try to recover your bodies.

We were unarmed and experience taught us that usually we were better off to quickly fly to the landing zone, get in and get out as fast as possible, while avoiding the bad guys, and fly straight back to the hospital.

If we waited for gunship support, it may be too late for the wounded, so most times we tried to "sneak in" and "sneak out" (if that's possible in a clattering helicopter) and complete the rescue before the enemy had TOO much time to shoot us up . . . or down.

A hoist mission was just the opposite.

We still got there in a hurry, but once there, we hovered over the trees like a target at the county fair 25-cent shooting booth.

Five minutes or more seemed like hours while we sat in the air over the ground troops, taxing every bit of professionalism we had.

And the reader better believe we had the utmost professionalism.

The crewmen I flew with on hoist missions (like me, in their teens and early 20s) were absolutely the best and I wish I could shake every one of their hands and hug them today. I am so very proud to have served with them.

It required every skill we had. If we had been shot down on virtually any hoist mission, our high hover would not have allowed us to make a safe landing and many would surely die.

It happened many times, and their names are on The Wall in Washington.

One particular mission I recall was a day hoist. We were an easier target during the day, but unlike at night, we

could see what we were doing.

When we were on short final over the landing zone, I heard small arms fire and the crew chief yell, "We're taking fire!"

I pulled power into the rotor system to get out of there as quickly as I could when the radio operator on the ground called out, "Dustoff, where are you going?"

"We're taking fire," I said.

"That was us giving you covering fire!" he replied.

"OK, I'm turning around", and I did another young and stupid thing: I made a pedal turn (U-turn) about 200 feet in the air, probably over some bad guys, and hovered back in over the trees.

Normally, you have to push a button to talk over the intercom in a military aircraft, but on a hoist mission, we turned it to "hot mike" because we all needed our hands for other things.

Everything that was said, every noise, every round fired, every grunt and groan was amplified and trans-mitted into everyone's headset.

A constant line of chatter was transmitted from the medic and the crew chief to the pilots, who were both on the flight controls in case one of us got shot.

"The cable's going out . . . about halfway down . . . come right . . . it's on the ground . . . looking good . . . come forward just a little . . . keep your tail straight . . . come left . . . they're on the penetrator . . ." was typical of the continual commentary from the enlisted crew members.

As the aircraft commander in control of the helicopter, my eyes never left the tree branches that were touching the nose of my aircraft, but made flight adjustments according to the guys in the back.

During a hoist mission, we flew with one finger on a button on the cyclic stick that operated an electric solenoid. It would instantly cut the cable should any part of the lift apparatus get snagged in the trees. Otherwise, if we got tangled up, it could cause the aircraft to crash.

I wonder how many guys would have gotten on the hoist had they known that.

On this particular mission, we knew it was going to be an insecure hoist, so we grabbed some unsuspecting "schmuck," told him to get his weapon and some ammo and run with us to the aircraft.

We put him in the back of the cargo compartment with his M-16 and a helmet, hooked him up to the intercom and we were off.

I have no idea who he was, but we logged his flight time as "PP — Patient Protector."

After the first of the two injured soldiers were hoisted on board, the din of the covering fire began to register in my head.

With the front of my Huey still kissing the tree leaves and my crew keeping me posted as to what was going on, I took a quick, curious look out my left window to see where the friendly fire was impacting.

"Oh, Sugar!" (Not my exact word.) "I can throw a rock in there, it's so close!" was the rest of my thought.

I then realized that old PP back there was just sitting in the hell hole taking it all in, not doing a thing!

Put some fire in that bunker!" I yelled to Private What's-His-Name. I guess that woke him up, as the next thing I heard was his rifle plugging away at a mound of dirt just outside his door and 30 feet down.

The rest of the mission went as expected with no more surprises.

We took no hits on that mission and as we lifted out of the landing zone, the fact that we "cheated death" again left me with all the exciting feelings I mentioned before.

There was an adrenaline high, too, and a tremendous sense of accomplishment that I have yet to experience since flying my last mission in Vietnam. The emotions are almost indescribable, but there was one more feeling: Relief.

In retrospect, I think that's what happened to one of the pilots in our unit a few months after I left.

WO Jim Gaddis was a tall, curly haired kid as I remember him. Always smiling and he never hurt anyone, I would guess.

On what turned out to be his final mission, his aircraft was to pick up wounded on a mountain top, but got caught in heavy fire while making its approach.

Whether the aircraft took hits at this time is speculation, but Gaddis tried another tactic: He dropped to the deck a couple miles out and then screamed up the hill at 120 knots and treetop level, trying to "sneak in" past the enemy.

But this time he definitely took hits in a .50-caliber crossfire and, as he peeled off from the mountain, fuel was streaming from the aircraft.

The gunships escorting him told Jim to put it on the ground right away because of the serious leak.

"I think I can make it back!" was his last message as the aircraft caught fire, rolled inverted and crashed in flames, killing all on board.

My opinion is he was as afraid he couldn't complete the mission as he was afraid to die. At least, I believe that's how I would have felt had it been me.

We always tried to complete the mission and felt we let

someone down if we didn't.

So, were we really young and stupid? Yes, most definitely young, but stupid? I don't think so.

We all volunteered to do some-thing that only a year or two before we could not have even dreamed we would be doing. Something only very few could ever experience; something for which few could even qualify.

Those of us lucky enough to come home learned from the excursion, and were without question, changed men and no longer wide-eyed boys.

Some of us changed for the better, some of us didn't, but I used the opportunity to prove to myself I could accomplish the goals I set for myself and do them well. We all did well.

As a group, we helicopter pilots did what we had to do and then some. We sacrificed our youth and innocence; we achieved above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis.

Not only were we not found to be lacking as youthful aviators, as a whole, we far exceeded the expectations. We are now older and wiser, and for that I am very thankful.

**By Phil Marshall**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Phil Marshall flew as "Dustoff 711" for the 237th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) out of Camp Evans and Quang Tri, Vietnam in 1969. Marshall is a Former president of the VHPA.*

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# An Orphan Named Gigi

Most stories published in The VHPA Aviator tell of the sacrifices, courage and valor of the helicopter pilots and crews who served our nation during the Vietnam War. This is a different type of story about Dustoff pilots; one of which, in particular, displayed extraordinary compassion in caring for a young Montagnard orphan in the Duc Pho region of Vietnam for several months in late 1967 and early 1968.

All wars take a huge toll on civilian populations and the Vietnam War was certainly no exception. Estimates of the war's impact on the South Vietnamese civilian population put the number of dead at between 500 to 600 thousand over the period 1954 to 1975. The vast majority of these deaths occurred from 1965 to 1975. In the aftermath of all the death and suffering visited on the civilian population, countless family units were destroyed, and innumerable children became orphans. My personal experience as a Dustoff pilot involved the evacuation of many Vietnamese civilians to medical facilities. Those who were seriously

ill/injured and taken to Vietnamese-run facilities were far less likely to survive than those who were fortunate enough to receive American medical care. The following story is about one child who was treated at the US military medical aid station at Duc Pho in late 1967 and early 1968.

Michael (Mick) McCollum was a Warrant Officer pilot with the 498th Medical Company (AA) and our tours overlapped. As a Captain, I was the senior officer of a two-ship contingent providing area support for the Duc Pho region on a rotating basis. Mick McCollum spent much of his field site duty at Duc Pho and was stationed there for weeks at a time as an aircraft commander (AC) of one of those aircraft. In late October 1967, Mick and his crew responded to a call from a Special Forces (SF) unit that had come upon a dead Montagnard mother in a rice

paddy. Huddled next to the corpse was her young female child, who seemed to be very ill, but not wounded. There were no other civilians in the area and the SF troops couldn't locate anyone who may have known the victims. The child was terrified, nearly in shock, and in need of quick medical attention.

Montagnards were (and still are) shunned by the majority Vietnamese population. They were routinely refused



Gigi's photo by Frank Pommett.

this unfortunate situation.

The physicians who examined the child found that she had no physical wounds, but was hungry/malnourished, dehydrated and suffering from a bad skin condition. She was treated by the physicians who began providing her with the best care they could. Because she was small in stature, many thought she was six or seven years old. Yet, after a more complete examination, physicians concluded that she was actually between 10 and 12 years old, due to the mature state of her dental development. The orphan child was immediately "adopted" by all the pilots and physicians at Duc Pho as efforts continued to locate her Montagnard "tribe". Initially she was very frightened by her new situation, surrounded by American soldiers who showed her every kindness while attempting to make her

situation as comfortable as possible.

The child needed to be protected and cared for, so Mick placed a cot next to his bunk for her comfort and security. That's where she slept under the watchful eyes of all of us in the large pilots' tent. She was initially a shy child but soon became comfortable with her guardians and grew more confident as she began to feel secure. Eventually, she developed a taste for American food, began to eat well, and started to gain weight. She spoke no English and the American SF soldiers, although skilled in languages, were unable to determine her tribal dialect. There appeared to be no way to return her to any surviving family until her tribe could be identified. The SF soldiers continued their search while trying to get her into a Vietnamese orphanage or an American relief system, but to no avail. Until her tribe was found she would have to stay in the pilots' tent at the Duc Pho aid station.

As her fear abated, communication with her improved. Soon she became known as "Gigi". The Americans would teach her their names by pointing at themselves and saying their name. She did the same and her response sounded like "Gigi", so the name stuck. She quickly showed herself to be a very smart and happy little girl.

Mick sent a letter to his wife, Sue, with Gigi's measurements and soon a care package of children's clothes and costume jewelry arrived, including a pair of black patent leather shoes which Gigi loved. The pilots and physicians doted on her and frequently brought her treats and gifts they had purchased at the Base PX.

The search for her relatives dragged on and Gigi was with the pilots at Duc Pho for many months. My last rotation at Duc Pho ended in early November 1967, so my time with her was brief. In early March 1968, Mick was transferred to the 57th Medical Detachment at Long Binh, far away from Duc Pho. He had to leave Gigi after spending over four months as her guardian. (All that time he continued to fly combat missions out of Duc Pho.) Mick even tried to adopt Gigi and bring her to the US, but his request was denied. So, Gigi's care continued to be provided by the doting pilots and medical staff at Duc Pho.

At some point toward the end of his tour in Vietnam, Mick learned Gigi's tribe had been found and she was



Michael (Mick) McCollum courtesy of Mick McCollum.

returned to their care. Because Mick knew the child so well, he realized that the return to the tribe would be another trauma she would suffer. Gigi had become very "Americanized" and accustomed to the love and attention the pilots had given her over those many months at Duc Pho. Nothing more is known about her life after that.

I took the attached picture of Gigi in late 1967 and kept it for many years wondering about "the rest of the story", and what had happened to her after I left the Duc Pho region. Recently, I was inspired to reach out for information about Gigi from my fellow pilots in the 498th Medical Company. This inquiry resulted in Mick McCollum sharing his poignant memories of an orphan named Gigi and how she elicited the many kindnesses shown her by a group of Americans who came to love her. God bless her.

Francis Pommett Jr.

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# “The Silver Fox”

He was something else. I first met him on March 3, 1961. He was very striking looking with a white silk scarf around his neck, dressed in a grey flight suit and a dark leather flight jacket as it was rather a rather chilly Texas day that first morning of Flight School. We met in the briefing room where the students were assigned to their Instructors.

The H-23 had a bench type seat for three people side by side in a row. The IP sat on the left, the student that was being trained sat in the middle-seat and the extra student sat in the right seat. The IP and the student he was training both had headsets on and they could easily talk to each other; the extra student could only watch outside and listen to the engine run. I just sat there, fat, dumb and happy until the IP gave the student a forced landing, i.e. cut the power to the engine and the H-23 started falling out of the air. At this time, I just

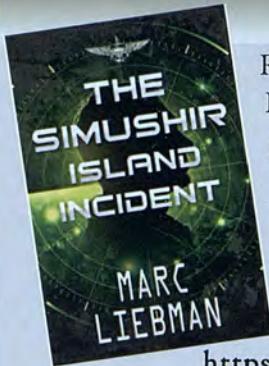
knew we were going to crash and die on our first day of flight school. When we were almost to crash, the IP did something to make us stop falling and to just slide along on the grass. I remember that I didn't have to change my underwear, but it is a wonder that I didn't.

He was the best H-23 pilot that I ever had the pleasure of knowing. He could show the different types of hovering autorotations, the various types of pilots would perform from the Nervous Nelly to the Over-Confident Charlie. If you hadn't known better, you would have thought the “Silver Fox” had been born flying an H-23. I was the only student who did not get crosswise with the Fox, and he really taught me a lot about flying a chopper. I really have no idea what ever happened to the Silver Fox, but he is probably flying an H-23 in heaven, as if he were still alive, he is over 100 and chopper pilots just do not live that long.

Pat Doyle ~ Class 61-9

## ~ BOOK REVIEWS ~

### *Aviator Staff Book Review – Tom Kirk*



Review of *The Simushir Island Incident*, by Marc Liebman 460 pages, published by Penmore Press 2020 ISBN: 978-1-9505867-7 Paperback \$15.02 \$2.99 eBook. Available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, book stores or Penmore Press  
<https://www.penmorepress.com>

The Simushir Island Incident, is a historical fiction novel, the last of a series with the principal character, Josh Haman. Marc's career as a Naval Officer and Aviator ensures the plot is not *historical fantasy*.

Within the description of historical fiction are elements of conventional military action, special operations, espionage and the criminal maneuvering of the

rogue state North Korea. Josh Haman is tasked with unravelling a complex scheme to enrich North Korea leader's personal fortune through the manufacture of drugs and eventual distribution to the United States.

The settings include North Korea, Hong Kong, Hawaii, a Russian island leased to the drug makers and the waters in between. Owing to Marc's realism, the talented Josh Haman, relies on a cast of professionals above and below him in the chain of command, SEAL teams, other agencies and high ranking defectors to expose and neutralize this plan.

The blending of locations and players as the story's elements come together is seamless and develops logically. In fact, the various elements create a compelling tale, with some events that will surprise the reader.

One will not be disappointed whether this is the first opportunity to sample a Josh Haman operation or a return visit to his unique skills.

# CONSIDER A RUN...

...for the VHPA Executive Council, that is. Elections are held each year at the Annual Business Meeting for two positions on the Executive Council: Vice President and Junior Member-at-Large.

■ **VICE PRESIDENT:** Serves for a three-year term (Vice President, President, Immediate Past President).

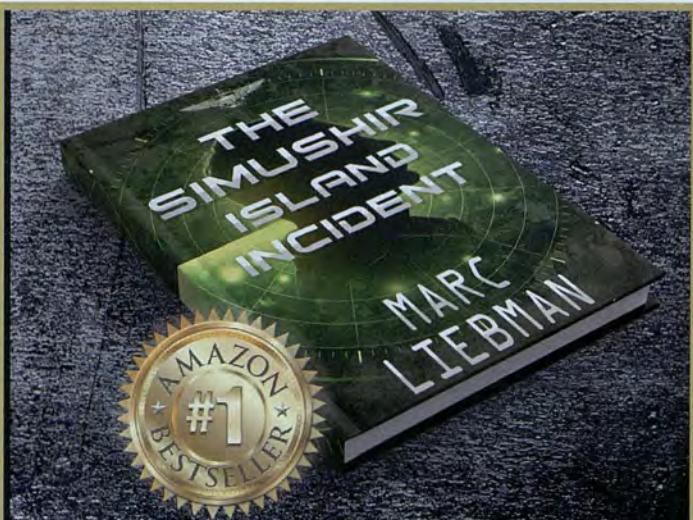
■ **JUNIOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE:** Serves for a three-year term (Junior, Mid-Term, and Senior Member-at-Large).

The VHPA has always rotated its Executive Council Members through these overlapping cycles to ensure that we have new members and new ideas with regard to how the VHPA manages its' business on behalf of the members and our mission.

We encourage you to consider contributing your time to this important, worthwhile, and quite frankly, rewarding experience. The Executive Council convenes monthly via telephone conference for about an hour to conduct the ongoing business of the VHPA.

Anyone interested in running for one of these two offices should submit their name in writing to Forrest (Frosty) Price, the current VHPA Junior Member-at-Large and National Election Chairman ([frostyprice@me.com](mailto:frostyprice@me.com)) along with a brief biography / resume (not to exceed 500 words) not later than thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the Charlotte reunion (must be submitted by 29 May).

Art Jacobs, VHPA President



## HEROIN, NORTH KOREANS, MISSILES...

North Koreans generals own a heroin in a factory on Simushir, a Russian owned island. Kim Il-Sung, North Korea's leader wants to turn Simushir into a ballistic missile base putting Josh Haman on the hot seat. He has to shut the base down without starting World War III.

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

## THIS COULD BE WHERE YOUR STORY STARTS!

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

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Tom,**

I'm the webmaster for the Washington State Chapter (vhpawa.org).

In each bi-month's VHPA Aviator Newsletter you have a section that features pictures and reports on the chapter meetings being held all over the country. The January/February 2021 edition was no exception. In virtually all of these pictures, we saw men about my age (I'm 74) sitting shoulder-to-shoulder across the table from their wives and friends with very few masks to be seen.

This is very disturbing. IMHO, this reinforces the attitude of so many members who refuse to accept we're in the middle of a deadly-serious pandemic - the worst in 100 years. It also means that even fewer of our members will be attending the next meeting or the reunion. Wearing a mask is not political commentary. The CDC and the VA have strongly endorsed the use of masks, social distancing, and avoiding indoor meetings of any kind - especially when they include people our age.

Thankfully, the majority of the Washington State Chapter decided early on that we suspend in-person meetings until the pandemic has run its course. As we're the most vulnerable to COVID, this makes abundant sense. Sadly, far too many other members across the country have not taken this precaution.

That said, I have encouraged our members to meet over Zoom. I'll be happy to write an article on how to set this up for anyone who needs more information. Perhaps the VHPA national organization can sponsor a Zoom account for the chapters to use.

*I hope you all are being careful.*

William Vaughn  
KJ7BIH (Extra) WREM314 (GMRS)  
[Http://betav.com/](http://betav.com/)

*William, I am certain your comments are offered in the spirit of concern for our colleagues. The practices of groups in other states, however, may be guided by different rules and the participants' actions may be the result of a posture they feel is adequate. In the absolute, social distancing and mask employment are ideal, but still not a guarantee of safety. In the event, other chapters may exhibit traditional measures within the general public, but are less strict in their group for reasons known to them alone. In general, there are countless variations of compliance in everyday activities by a majority of citizens.*

*~ Tom Kirk*

**To the Editor,**

Just a quick word of caution concerning Mike Sheuerman's great letter regarding vanity plates. All states are not equal! Each state has different policies when it comes to veteran license plates.

Texas has a great program, but my home state of Connecticut also considers veteran and purple heart plates as "Vanity Plates" and as such charge the normal registration fee PLUS \$94! They also do not offer additional benefits such as free parking. I guess they feel being a veteran is a privilege that you owe the state for.

Carl Kimmich  
Polecat 47,192 AHC

**Carl,**

*As a resident of Massachusetts for the first 30 years of my life, I find that the farther northeast one travels, the less consideration is exhibited for Veterans in general.*

*~ Tom Kirk*

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# LOOKING FOR

My C&C was shot down in Cambodia on 15 May 1970. With me were SFC Arnold Robbins and SGT Melvin Thomas...both of whom were killed...as was the aircraft door gunner, Sp4 John Stinn.

I'd like to reach out to the Pilot and Peter Pilot in order to thank them (again) for their handling of the aircraft. Their highly competent and instantaneous "immediate action" maneuvers saved their lives and those of the Crew Chief and myself. I don't know their names or even the unit from which the chopper came. All I know is that the bird's tail number was 68-15728. I believe it was assigned to the 229th Assault Helicopter Company. The incident report is in the VHPA data base.

**Please contact MG Smith tel. 307 742 3504**

Tom, I'm seeking any information on our Huey 67-17661. I have the gold book that shows it was in the 2/17 A troop and would like to see if anyone remembers her. Wondering if you might be able to put in looking for column? We think it could have been involved in the battle that Joe Lapointe earned the Medal of Honor. We are planning to restore it as a static display for the museum.

*Thank You,*

**Robert Rice**

**President, American Flight Museum, Topeka, KS.  
spooky14@cox.net 785-221-8914**

**To the Editor,**

Back in 1972, I was stationed aboard the USS Long Beach CGN-9 off the coast of Vietnam. We had a SAR helo go out of commission due to contaminated oil. We had to head to Da Nang to get the helo off our helo deck by use of a Sky Crane. (see photo below).

I'd like to find a record of that event through the Aviation Com-



pany to which the Sky Crane belonged.

Do you think those records still exist and if so, to whom do I need to address an inquiry. My limited research has listed the

273rd, 355th and 478th Aviation Companies having managed the S-64 or CH-64 Sky Cranes in South Vietnam. Not even sure if those units still exist.

Any direction your readers could point me in would be appreciated.

*Regards,*

**Gary Gray, Joplin, Mo. ggray1953@sbcglobal.net  
417-396-3373 (cell)**

***Tom,***

I recently received the following message from Sean Severin, the son of the founder of our Old Dominion Chapter Jerome Thomas Severin. His son Sean writes: "I was curious how much detail my father shared with you about his deployment, locations, battles etc. and if you recall any of the details that you can share with me. Sadly, even as I became an adult, there were never really discussions and questions that I was comfortable having with my dad because I knew how emotional it could make him."

My oldest daughter is now in high school and history is her favorite subject. She watches lots of documentaries on the various wars and the other night we were watching a documentary on Vietnam.

It saddened me to realize that I didn't have any of these details to share with her about her grandfather because I was never comfortable asking these questions myself and digging in when he was alive."

If you have info, flew with JT, were in his flight class, Sean would love to hear from you.

His email is smseverin165@gmail.com

***Hello Tom,***

I am Keith A. Porter from Bossier City, LA. I was a Gun Rat with Charlie Battery, 6th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, RVN from July 1970 until June 1971. We were an 8 inch/175mm self-propelled battery located in III Corp.

We had been at Camp Bu Dop for a while and traveled to FSB Wade outside of Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province for part of the time. We eventually traveled to the Vietnam/Cambodia border in the Fish Hook Region. We established FSB Haymaker on the west side of Highway 13 (Thunder Road) just as the roadway entered Cambodia.

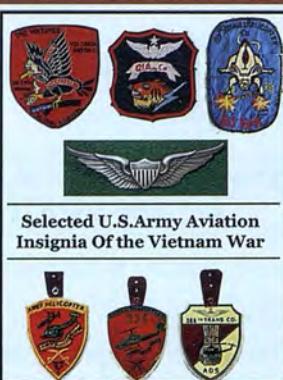
We were there from about January 71 until May.

I am trying to find out what squadron(s) the hunter-killer teams who helped us keep our opponents off of us were from. I have always believed they were with the 1st Cav, but not sure. I would also like to know what Dustoff unit was providing service to the Loc Ninh area January 70. I hope you can help me out. Thank you for your attention.

*Best Wishes,*

**Keith Porter porterkeithalan@gmail.com**

## The VHPA Calendar Project ANNOUNCES and WELCOMES John Jones to the team



Selected U.S. Army Aviation Insignia Of the Vietnam War

VHPA Subscriber John Jones lives in England, co-authored the CH-37 Mojave history printed in the 2019 Membership Directory, and has more than doubled the VHPA's collection of unit patches. He is younger than most Vietnam vets. His passion is Vietnam era unit patches ~ especially the weird (unique) variations often made by flight crews (mostly EM). A photo of you wearing the patch next to your helicopter REALLY makes John happy enough to add you and your patch to his most recent self-published book. Please consider working with John, Benjie Koon or Mike Law to get more of our history saved.

Mike Law, Calendar Project chair  
830-730-0950 [mglaw@earthlink.net](mailto:mglaw@earthlink.net)

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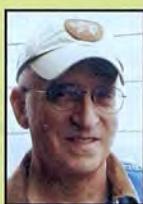
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Ned Crimmin  
TSgt, USAF, Ret  
USAFSS Intelligence Analyst 1964-74  
USAF Admin Supervisor 1974-83  
Tours of Duty:  
1963-64 Basic Lackland AFB, Tx  
1964-68 RAF Chicksands, England  
1968-71 NSA Ft. Meade, Md.  
1971-74 Osan AB, ROK  
1974-83 Vandenberg AFB, Ca



#### VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION SATISFIED CLIENTS

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

KOREAN WAR VET SATISFIED CLIENT

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

## UPCOMING REUNIONS

### POPASMOKE REUNION SQUADRONS 263, 364 & 262

Where: *The Beach House, 1S Forest Beach Dr., Hilton Head, SC 29928.*

Phone #: 877-935-1725

Mention the Swift/Peachbush Reunion when calling for reservations.

When: **Nov 11-14, 2021**

Information: [www.hmm-364.org](http://www.hmm-364.org)

Note: Featured speaker will be Navy Cross Recipient Col (Ret) Walt Ledbetter

### FIRST EVER COBRA HALL REUNION

Open to all Cobra pilots, maintainers, support personnel trained at HAAF, Cobra Training Team in Vietnam or other training sites, and Fort Rucker

Where: *Savannah, GA and Hunter Army Airfield (HAAF)*

Hotel TBA.

When: **5-8 October 2021**

Contact: Dave Sale at [daesale64@gmail.com](mailto:daesale64@gmail.com) or Ken Donahue at [rmeav8er@aol.com](mailto:rmeav8er@aol.com)

Note: We are working with key personnel in Savannah and HAAF for tours of HAAF, Cobra Hall, TF 160, flight simulators and aircraft tours.

We are also looking at the 8th AF Museum and Fort Pulaski to include Savannah Beach. In addition, fine tours of Savannah to include Ghost tours and many fine restaurants.

### THE SILVER SPUR REUNION FOR MEMBERS / FRIENDS OF A TROOP, 3/17TH AIR CAVALRY

Where: Branson, Missouri

When: **April 21-24, 2021**

Those interested should check our website, email our coordinator at [silverspur.dian@gmail.com](mailto:silverspur.dian@gmail.com) or contact the Reunion Chairman for details.

Bill McCalister

Reunion Chairman

[Silvertip\\_trading@yahoo.com](mailto:Silvertip_trading@yahoo.com)

# Save the Army's CH-47

I am a Chinook pilot. I always will be... Almost half of the 6,000 plus total hours I've flown in my career took place in the legendary Boeing heavy-lift Chinook.

During my second tour in Vietnam, I spent around 750 hours in the CH-47B while flying for the 132nd Assault Support Helicopter Company "Hercules". It kept me safe in the skies over Vietnam and I was proud to continue flying the Chinook when I got back stateside. My flying career with the U.S. Army and the California Army National Guard was defined by the CH-47. After returning home I continued to fly the Chinook for the National Guard, accumulating an additional 2,000 hours with the 49th Medium Helicopter Company "Delta Schooners" out of Stockton, CA.

I can confidently say the Chinook is the best, most versatile helicopter available to the U.S. military – thanks in part to constant innovations, modifications, and improvements incorporated over time. I flew the A, B, C, and D models and my time ran out before I could fly the CH-47F. In fact, the Chinook in use today has little in common with the helicopters I flew. It's been upgraded for the modern battlefield with a digital cockpit and advanced airframe. Right now, it is the strongest, fastest, and safest helicopter in the U.S. Army.

During my decades with the Army National Guard I not only became an instructor pilot, but also had the privilege of commanding a Chinook Company and Medium Helicopter Battalion. This wealth of background knowledge and experience instilled in me an enormous amount of pride and respect about my helicopter, its mission, those who flew the CH-47 and importance to America's national security.

Whether in combat or conducting stateside missions, there is nothing the Chinook cannot accomplish. Its heavy-lift capabilities, range, and speed enable it to get personnel, equipment, and ammunition where it's needed, when it's needed.

And I hear it is about to get an upgrade. Due to the Chinook's multi-mission commitments that have been added over-time, the Army needs to increase its heavy-lift capability to continue achieving the mission. This next-generation Chinook Block II would be able to lift an additional 1,500 pounds. When it comes to delivering soldiers into active combat zones with all of the

equipment, armor, and ammunition they need to get the job done safely, this 1,500 pounds could mean the difference between life and death.

Although I am now retired, my experiences with the Chinook will always be with me, as I know they are for everyone else who had the honor to fly, crew, and maintain the CH-47. I've heard rumors that the Army wants to prematurely cancel future Chinook manufacturing, but I know that cannot be true.

The Chinook will continue to be the enduring capability for heavy lift. There is no reason to stop building the best cargo helicopter available.

Boeing's CH-47 is the tireless and steadfast vehicle of heavy lift.... In war and peace, Boeing did it right with the CH-47. There is no replacement for my Chinook – the only replacement is more CH-47s.

LTC Tom Lasser, USA, Ret. (life member)

Vietnam Veteran- 67-68/69-70

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# 22 Jan 1971 Incident ~ Honoring Bill Seaborn

by Richard Toops, Sandy McLeod, and Mike Law

Bill Seaborn was not just another Huey pilot, along with my roommate Felix Bates, he was my best friend in Vietnam. We were assigned to the 240th AHC, Greyhounds, at Bearcat and arrived a few weeks apart in July 1970. I was a 21-year-old 1LT, squad leader in the first platoon, White Flight. Bill was a 23-year-old WO1 when he was assigned to my Squad. A month later, I made Captain. Bill and I pretty much hit it off from the very first. We played cards together, ate together, built a BBQ grill together, etc. I called him Bill, he called me Toops.

Because Bill and I got to Vietnam at the same time, we were both right seaters. Bill and I had never flown together until this one time in January 1971. Bill had just made left seat the day before. My flight leader was going to leave the day of our incident, so I would be a left seater in the C&C soon.

Our mission started on the evening of the 21st. We were playing cards. Bill and I were not scheduled to fly the next day. Then around 8 PM my roommate, Felix, came into the room and said he had just received a request for a direct combat support mission for the next morning. Usually, this meant going to an FSB with replacements, ammo, messages, etc. Since Bill just got his AC orders, Felix asked him if he wanted the mission? "Heck yeah," is what he said. Then Bill said, "Fly with me, Toops? Man, we have never gotten to fly together. This may be our only chance to fly together before I go to the guns." I told Felix, "put me down to fly with Bill." No way I would pass that up.

Around 0900, Huey #66-16356 flown by Bill and me, plus our other ship flown by WO Roger Moyer were refueling at Bearcat following a morning mission with the Special Forces at Long Thanh North. Our crewchief was SP4 Jimmy Lance and our gunner was SP4 William (Bill) Barker. I had flown with both these guys many times. I liked them and respected them very much. I am thankful to say both survived our crash.

While refueling, we received an urgent call from the

Bearcat tower requesting our assistance to extract the crew of a crashed D/3/4th Cav LOH. I later learned the tower received the call from 1LT Hugh 'Sandy' McLeod in the Cobra over the LOH crewed by CW2 Rog Johnson, SGT Michael Petty, and SGT Frederick Vigil. Bill and I did not have to think about what we were going to do. We looked at each other and just said, "Let's go!"

We flew to Long Thanh North, just a few thousand meters from Bearcat, to pick up the SF team that would be inserted to rescue the downed crew. There we picked up four SF troops: MSGT Virgil Glenn, SGT Hugh Opperman, SGT Frank Celano, and SGT Kenneth Lovelace. Roger Moyer picked up four as well: CPT Simpson, SFC Alton Monroe, SFC Martin Bennett, SSG Joseph Hill. I had flown with Roger many times and felt good that he was with us.

While Bill and I waited for the guys to load, Bill looked at me. Actually, he was staring intently at me. Then he asked me to put my chicken-plate on. I told him, "I never wear it, you know that, Bill, too hot." I had only worn it the first few weeks I was in country; many had tried to get me to wear it but to no avail. After all, I outranked them and could do as I wanted. I told Bill, "You didn't worry about me wearing it on our morning mission." Well, Bill looked at me as serious as I had ever seen him. The truth is he was staring me down again. And Bill said in a very somber way, "Do it for me." So, I did. This one seemingly simple act by Bill, thinking of me as his friend, was what I felt saved my life that day.

The SF had rigged the ships with ladders previously that morning during our original mission. We then flew to the crash site. We were following Roger in a loose, staggered trail formation. I said a prayer to myself, something short, something I had done before. "Lord, we are in your hands." Nothing unusual.

Even from a distance we could see the LOH smoking at the crash site. I later learned they had been shot down and crashed into a VC base camp, strewn with hidden enemy bunkers. From the SF statements I learned one of the crew

died in the crash; the other two survived only to be captured and killed execution style at close range by the VC only minutes before we arrived.

In retrospect, I am glad Bill and I did not know this at the time. In front of, and just short of the crashed LOH approximately 20 meters was an opening in the tree canopy separated in the middle by a couple of taller trees. Down below was the darker green of thick jungle vegetation, and the unknown. Roger went in first, dropped his ladders and troops on the left side of the opening; then pulled out. Nothing happened! I felt a new sense of security. Our Huey went in next. Bill was flying. We came to a hover about

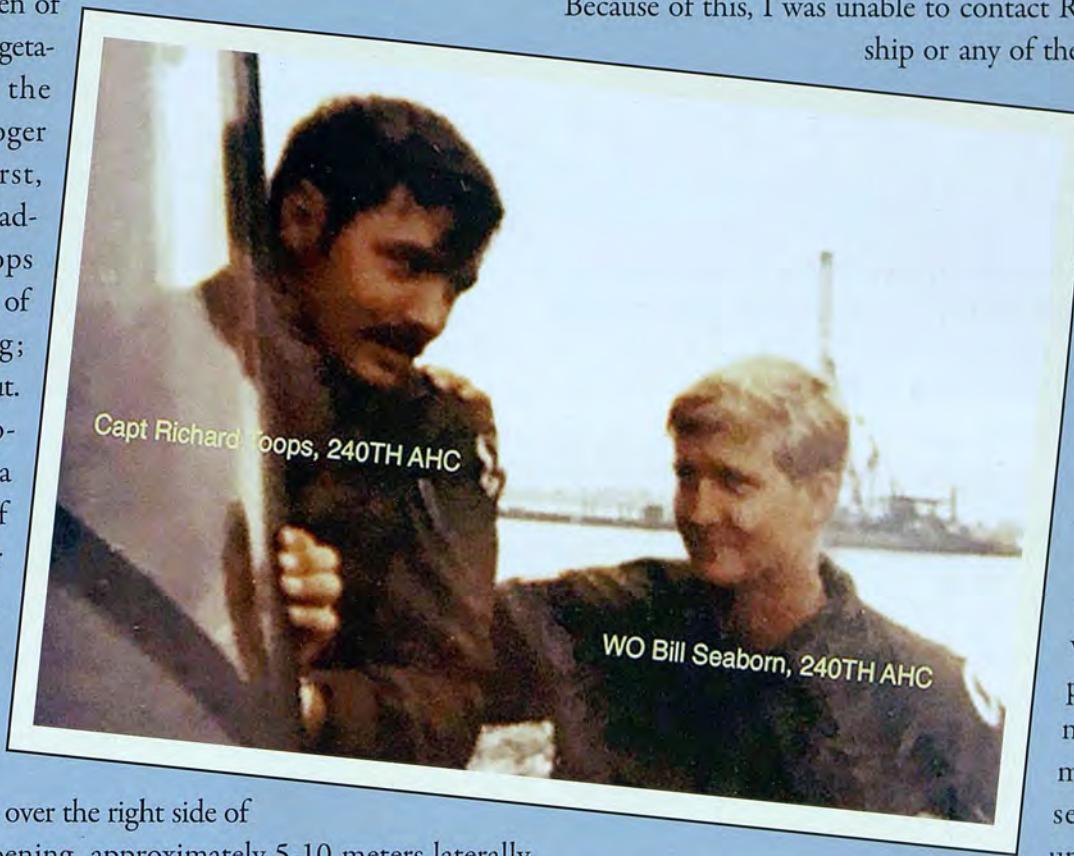
30 feet up and over the right side of the canopy opening, approximately 5-10 meters laterally from the first insertion. We were a few meters closer to the downed LOH, and unbeknownst to us directly above the enemy. I had my left hand on the hot mike switch on the radio control and my right hand loosely around the cyclic control as was our normal protocol. Bill and I were not talking to each other, only listening to our crew talking through the intercom to keep us from hitting the trees on both sides.

As our four SF troops descended the ladders, we came under intense and heavy AK-47 fire. MSGT Glenn, the only SF soldier from our helicopter who survived, later stated that we received fire directed at the men on the ladders, into our cockpit and at our tail rotor. MSGT Glenn was shot in the chest and his ladder rung was shattered by bullets. He jumped from the ladder and landed in some thick vegetation which saved his life. The other three, were shot and killed as they were climbing down the ladders.

In the intervening years, I've thought about the next minute hundreds of times and written dozens of paragraphs

describing the thoughts and emotions that went through my mind in fractions of seconds. Here is a brief summary: First, the very VERY loud noise of bullets coming into the cockpit at such a heavy rate. It was deafening and extremely violent! Everything in the cockpit was being hit, shredded, and destroyed. Second, my left hand was blown into the air and off of the radio switch, as bullets destroyed the radio console. Because of this, I was unable to contact Roger, the C&C ship or any of the gunships overhead. We were all alone now. Third, bullets were ricocheting their way across my chicken plate and splattering me with shrapnel. But thanks to Bill insisting I wear my chicken plate they were not going into my chest. It seemed like an unending attack!

Fourth, at the very same time, Bill and I turned our heads and eyes just slightly towards each other and exchanged a quick look. I know we both needed some comfort from the other. Some form of brotherly reassurance that this nightmare would end soon. Our commo system was gone so we could not communicate. Fifth, as we caught one another's eyes, Bill was struck and killed instantly. I knew it. Immediately I knew it! Sixth, my head exploded with emotions. I gasped for air. Oh My! It was such a terrible feeling. Deep sorrow - felt all alone - then so very mad - all these different thoughts in less than a second. I just wanted to go down there and kill 'em all with my bare hands. Just let me at 'em! Seventh, but time does not stop. My military training took over. The Huey was feeling the effects of the onslaught; it was getting unsteady. I had taken all the controls now. My mind told me, "Keep it together, Richard! Just get us outta here." I was going to try to bring us straight up. I did not know if the guys were still on the ladders or not. I knew I



would have to clear the trees before we could go forward to avoid dragging them thru the trees. Eighth, our crew chief and gunner were in tough predicaments: couldn't talk to anyone, couldn't fire their M-60s because the risk of hitting the 11 Americans on the ground, and listening to their Huey making terrible noises.

The Huey then lurched violently. The nose turned down and the ship started rotating to the right. I pulled additional collective and then pulled the cyclic back with my right hand to try to regain some control. I pushed the pedals to gain more stability but received no response. The engine was still running. We started quickly spinning toward the trees and I knew I was not in control. I remember thinking, "Lord, just make it quick." We then crashed very, VERY violently into the trees and I was immediately knocked unconscious.

I awoke from unconsciousness lying in the jungle not knowing how I ended up out of the ship. I remember having a fleeting thought that maybe I was wrong – maybe Bill was down here with us alive. Then my concern shifted to the guys in the back. Were Jimmy Lance and Bill Barton alive? I later learned that during the crash Jimmy was thrown out over his machine gun mount. His torso and stomach were split open. Bill Barton suffered broken bones and other injuries, as he was thrown out of the helicopter. He was the one, although terribly hurt, who risked his life to pull Bill and me out of the wreck.

While on the ground, I groaned in excruciating pain. My body hurt so bad! I could only see shapes and it seemed so dark. I was slammed in the back by what felt like a rifle butt and told in a low but forceful tone to shut up. I went back into the security of my unconsciousness.

The SF guys from Roger's ship came to our aid after finding the LOH crew dead. The bad guys were still there. My memory of the rest of the day is limited to a few brief periods of consciousness. I'd guess I was on the ground maybe four or five hours. For example, I remember being on the jungle penetrator hoist – because once I had the feeling of falling but didn't. Once in the Dustoff ship, the medic held me while we sat on the floor behind the co-pilot. I remember being the only WIA in the Huey and the AC kept turning to look back at me several times. I remember thinking does he think I'm not going to make it, or what? It would be only about an eight-minute flight to the 93rd Evac. I was out more than conscious. I remember coming to and seeing guys

with a gurney coming toward us. The next thing I remember, waking up in a hospital bed some hours later. I'd stayed at the 93rd about 10 days before going to Camp Zama, Japan. While still at the 93rd, Bill Barton came to see me and told me what went down from his perspective. Jimmy was too messed up to walk, so I never saw him again. Bill and I are still in touch even today. I also briefly saw the Dustoff AC – don't know his name. I think he was a Captain.

My injuries: (a) Left ankle bones were all shattered by bullets and ultimately would be fused together. (b) Toes on one foot were all broken and would never regain movement. (c) Tibia on one leg was broken and the femur was broken and twisted. That leg is an inch shorter now. (d) A deep hematoma on the inside of my legs that ran from my knee to my upper thigh. (e) My knee was badly damaged and had to be replaced; only regaining limited movement. (f) Was shot in the back. The bullet barely missing my spine, (g) My chest was bruised and beaten from bullets, but nothing got through my chicken plate! (h) Left hand sustained shrapnel wounds from the bullets coming through the radio console. (i) My face was smashed in like it had been hit with a sledge hammer from the crash. Would take over 50 stitches. My orbital bone, nose, septum, and jaw were all broken and flattened. (j) The skin above my brow was peeled back. (k) My eyes hemorrhaged. It would be many days before I could see more than a few feet. But I was alive! God was with me and all the good people that worked on me. After about a month in Camp Zama, I ended up at Beach Army at Ft Wolters for about five months. In July 1971, using a cane, I was assigned to an Avn Bn at Ft. Hood. In May 1972, I was medically retired.

The six SF participant account statements provide great insight into the events. Briefly, the four-man team from the first insert moved to the LOH and found the bodies of the three crewmen. SFC Monroe was the leader of this group based on his experience and he may have had the radio. The bodies were moved to their insertion point and a Dustoff ship arrived. It was then they learned the second insertion Huey had crashed. They followed the Dustoff to the downed Huey and arrived to see the ship's medic on the ground. They established some security, helped the medic with the Huey crew and MSGT Glenn, plus collected the SF bodies and Bill Seaborn. Two explosions, possible a B40 or RPG, near the Huey wounded CPT Simpson and SFC Monroe, so they withdrew toward the downed LOH. Not

long after that D Troops' Blues arrived, and everything was consolidated into their perimeter.

1LT 'Sandy' McLeod concludes a chain of Centaur (D/3/4 Cav) emails with: "Regardless of how anyone observed what happened that day, the 240th's and the SF guys were the heroes, and their stories need to be told." Initially, Sandy thought that Rog Johnson crashed by accident because there was no 'receiving fire' call. He called MAYDAY on Guard and his front-seater, 1LT John Taylor, alerted Centaur Ops. That call brought MAJ Tom Hamilton, the Troop CO, in the C&C Huey plus another Pink Team, and, eventually, the Blues to the scene. MAJ Hamilton alerted the 2nd Bde 25th Inf Div for reinforcements based on the size of the VC base camp. Two infantry companies were deployed – one to relieve the Blues and the other as a blocking force. A stream of

Dustoff ships pulled out the wounded. The SF and the Blues were extracted.

The Centaurs had a tradition of naming their aircraft. OH-6A #68-17337's name was Proud Mary. The day prior to being destroyed, Ed Wolfe flew her. See the video at:

[www.centaursinvietnam.org/Video8mm/VideoWolfeEd.html](http://www.centaursinvietnam.org/Video8mm/VideoWolfeEd.html)

\*\*\* READERS ~ we need your help!! \*\*\*

If you know how the VHPA can contact Jimmy A. Lance, Roger B. Moyer, or Tom Brown (Maddog 6) from the 240th AHC, please contact HQ 800-505-8472. Also, if this story "sounds familiar" to any Long Binh Dustoff crew, please "step forward" by contacting VHPA HQ.

# 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 7 New Members and covers the period 12.11.20 to 01.27.21

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*

Anderson James R 'Jim'  
Corrales New Mexico  
Army  
64-3FW 65-5QC  
25 AVN 25 INF in 66; 39  
SIG BN in 66; 2 SIG GP in  
66-67; 144 RR in 68-69

Bailey Thomas A \*\*  
Hereford Arizona  
Army  
68-17 68-29  
192 AHC in 70; B/7/17  
CAV in 71

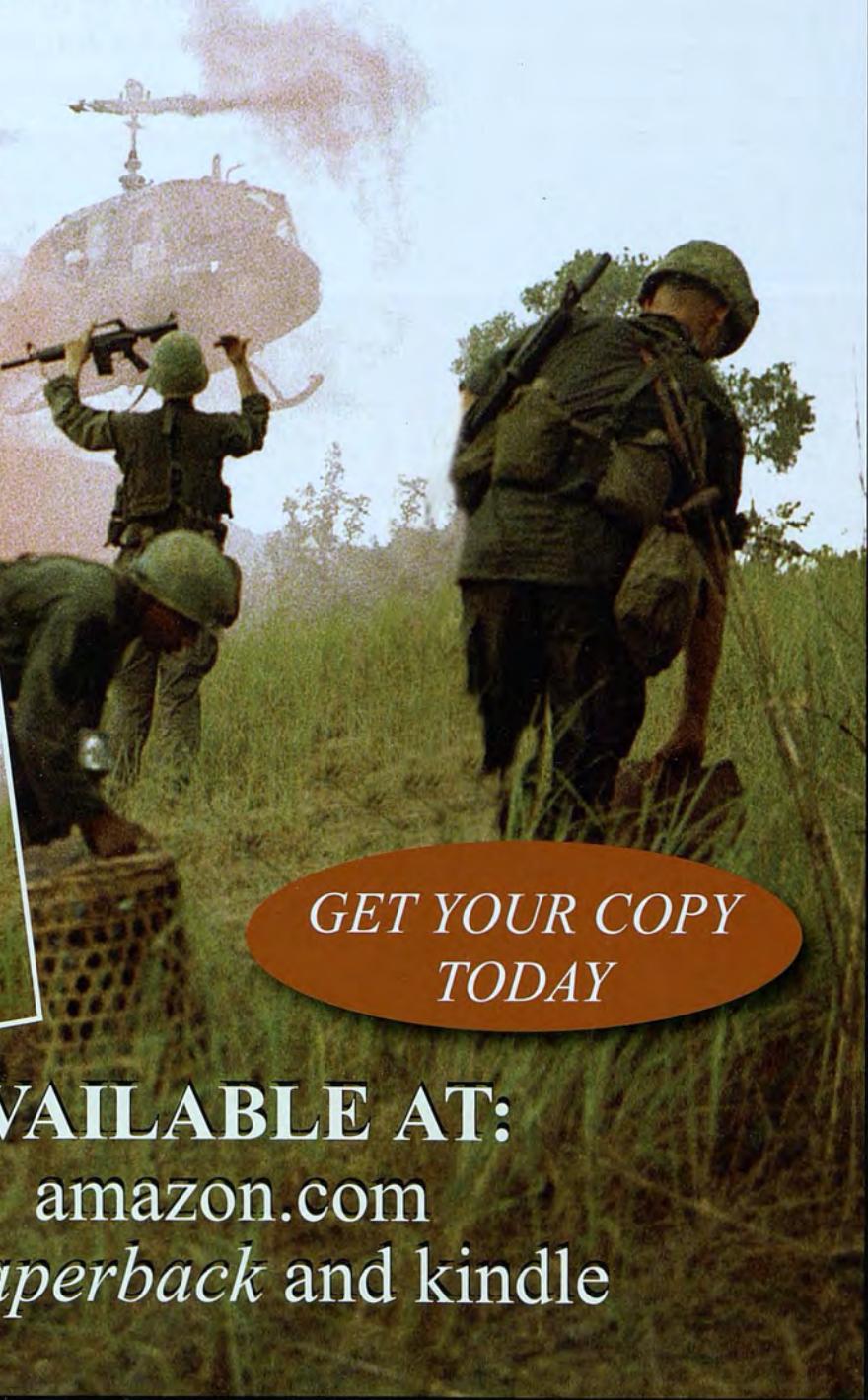
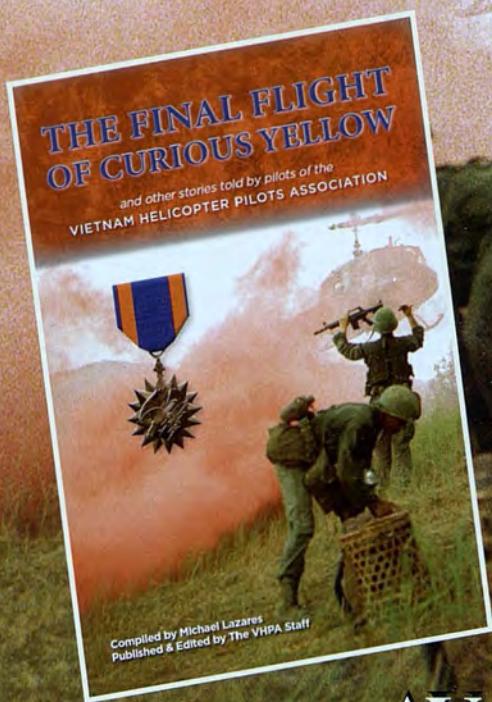
Botz Ronald I.  
Springfield Illinois  
Army  
67-25 67-23  
Forester Jerry D. \*\*  
San Antonio Texas  
Army  
68-2  
1/503 ABN 173 ABN in 65-  
66; 45 MED CO in 68-69

Hall Kyron V. 'KV' \*\*  
Great Falls Montana  
Air Force  
55-Q  
20 SOS in 67-68  
McCollum Michael E \*\*  
Fort Wayne Indiana  
Army  
67-5  
498 MED CO in 67-68; 57  
MED DET in 68

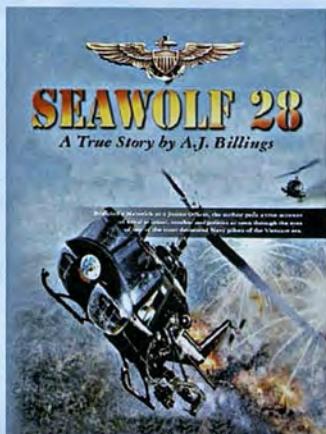
Sines Robert G. 'Bob' \*\*  
Kent Ohio  
Army  
67-13  
196 ASHC in 67; 271  
ASHC in 68; 132 ASHC in  
70-71

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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**AUTHOR: AL BILLINGS**

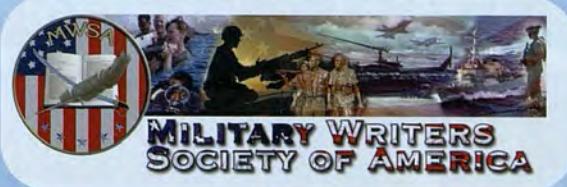
**PUBLISHER: BOOKSURGE**

**REVIEWER: BILL MCDONALD  
(PRESIDENT OF THE MWSA)**

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## A Navy Maverick with True Grit

Seldom do I ever read a military aviation book where I come away thinking that I would have really loved to have flown with the author of that memoir. Author Al Billings is a veteran's veteran! He is a man among men. It was men like Al that made flying in Hueys the heroic aviation adventure it was. His book "Seawolf 28" explodes with energy and action and much more. His personality certainly comes shining through and shows him for whom he was.

Billings was awarded over 40 medals and citations including the Silver Star and The Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of the Navy's most decorated helicopter attack squadron in the Vietnam War. I have met several members of the Seawolves when filming the documentary film "In the Shadow of the Blade." You could not find any better group of honorable men for sure. It is not surprising to read how well they did in combat. This book not only honors the role of the author but also adds to the almost myth like tales of those fine young men.

The book is well written and is a great read. I admit that the last chapters in the book were not the way I would have liked to see it end for the author, but Billings is true to himself all the way to the end and shows a lot of class. When you finish reading his book you will be left with many emotions about the war, the men, leadership in the military and what it means to stand up and be counted when someone has to be accountable and honest. Al Billings is a true leader in the real sense. I think most veterans will agree that he would be the guy that you would like to have had in the pilot's seat on your flight!

***This is a must read book and receives the MWSA's HIGHEST RATING – FIVE STARS!***

## INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN THE VHPA AVIATOR?

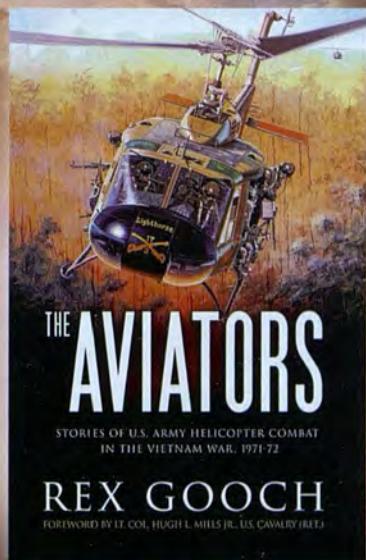
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# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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## Notice to all Members of the VHPA

The liaison between the national HQ of the VHPA and the independent Chapters has reverted to Tom Payne of the Chapter Liaison National Committee. Tom can be reached at 918-813-5132 (cell) or 918-298-5132 (home) or via E-mail at ka5hzd@att.net. Feel free to contact Tom concerning any details on opening your own local Chapter of the VHPA and/or for seeing what assistance is available from HQ to support your efforts.

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

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## ALAMO CHAPTER

Although still in the "red zone" category for COVID, on 19 Nov, twenty-eight-chapter members, their spouses, guests, and partners gathered at Gennaro's La Cucina Italiana Restaurant in New Braunfels, TX. A number of items were discussed including congratulating Preslie and his wife on reaching their 90th Birthdays. Ray Vaske talked about the Chapter donation of pallets of water to help victims and workers during the recent hurricane in Florida. Maverick talked about the USS Lexington that also needs help and The Wreaths across America program that needs donations and that if you wanted to donate for a particular person at Fort Sam you need to get your donation (\$15.00 per wreath) by the end of this month and the wreath will be laid on Dec 19th. You can go to the web site for Wreath across America.

Mike Law discussed The American Huey 369 project and the National Archives. A \$1,000 check will be sent to "American Huey Chapter of the VHPA" to support that effort.

On 4 Dec. twenty-plus chapter members, their spouses, guests, and partners enjoyed a combined Christmas Dinner and annual business meeting at the Barn Door Restaurant in San Antonio (see photos). We had a fantastic time culminating with the business meeting, in which the officers and directors for 2021 were elected. They are: President, Ray Vaske; Vice President, Dale Stout; Treasurer, Chic Carter; Secretary, Michael Clark; Senior Member-at-Large, Jim



Boykin; Member-at-Large, Tim Worley; Junior Member-at-Large, Chip Brown; and Immediate Past President: Mike Law.

The chapter is looking forward to 2021 and a great year with President Ray Vaske moving the chapter forward. Visit us at our web site: <http://vhpa-alamo.com/> for more information about the Alamo Chapter.

*Until next time, stay happy and healthy.*

By Michael Clark, Past President



## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

December 2020 - January 2021

We have a new year ahead and I'm sure we all hope it'll be better than 2020, but looking back, I came across a photo I took the year before. I call it Two Choppers.

We all miss our Huey, but in retrospect I still think we did the right thing. 563 was out in the weather where it was difficult to protect it from further deterioration. The 2020 COVID isolation would have kept us from gathering to work on it. The cost of indoor storage was prohibitive. The people who have 563 now are taking good care of it, and they are sharing it and our history. That's all good.

More good: Our treasury is healthy, we have the MOC



Two Choppers at LZ Fritz in June 2018.

stored for no charge, and we have a good database of membership so we can all stay in touch. Dave Anderson has that and is keeping us all informed. Al Doucette is minding our money.

What we don't have are any meetings or gatherings of any kind because of the COVID "social distancing"

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

requirements. This bothers me and I know it bothers many of you, too. I like to call it physical distancing not social distancing. My solution is that we stay in social contact by phone call, text, and email until we can have the next event. Let's all stay in contact and as soon as we have some decent chance of not infecting each other, we'll have a BBQ or something. Call at least one of your CCN friends soon.



## GEORGIA CHAPTER

On January 16, 2021, eighteen intrepid former Vietnam helicopter pilots met for breakfast, comradeship, and an excellent

presentation by Army Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired) Lee Stuart. LTC(R) Stuart's life reads like an adventure novel. He began his military career as an enlisted paratrooper, serving first with an ARVN Ranger Battalion and later with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. After Vietnam, he went to college, got a commission, and came back into the Army. In addition to being a Special Operations Army Aviator, his qualifications include Master Parachutist, Ranger, Pathfinder, Air Assault, and Scuba. He served with the 1-75th Rangers, with the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment Delta as their Senior Special Operations Aviation Officer, and with the 82nd Airborne Division (1-82 Attack (Apache) Battalion) in operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

After retiring from the Army in 2002, LTC Stuart served as a contractor working for the U. S. State Department in Iraq, where he served as the Senior Operations Officer for the five northern provinces (Kurdistan) in northern Iraq.

His presentation to the Georgia Chapter was mainly about his time in Iraq and his dealings with the Kurds,

Hopefully, there will be a safe VHPA reunion in 2021.

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

*Apolitically yours,*

Ken Fritz  
President, VHPA-CCN

Turks, and Iraqis. While on that assignment, he survived the largest suicide bombing when on February 1, 2004, 112 people were killed and 454 were wounded in Erbil, Iraq. He was in Iraq from 2003 to 2008.

He also talked a little about what he did after returning from Iraq, including the story of his dog, Boomer, and how Boomer saved his life when he was attacked by a couple of people trying to steal his neighbor's truck. He loved Boomer so much he wrote a book about him (called Boomer - One of the Unwanted).

LTC(R) Stuart's presentation was well-received and we appreciate his visit to the Georgia Chapter.

In other news, the Georgia Chapter President, Chuck Stoudt, continues his battle with pancreatic cancer - prayers for Chuck and his family are appreciated.

The Georgia Chapter has a breakfast meeting every other month on the third Saturday of the month (the next meeting will be March 20). We meet at 0900 at the Come-N-Get It Restaurant, 1409 Church Street Extension, Marietta, GA 30060. The meeting schedule for the upcoming year is on our web site ([GA-VHPA.org](http://GA-VHPA.org)). Former Vietnam helicopter pilots are welcome to join us at these meetings - the food and fellowship are excellent. Interested persons should contact Skip Bell, [gavhpap@gmail.com](mailto:gavhpap@gmail.com) or 770-548-7991.

Carl Bell



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter's activity during the winter months is typically subdued but the pandemic continues to reduce almost all options. By spring, we certainly hope that some events will be resumed.

One project that is ongoing is the restoration of the grounds around the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Traverse City. Member At Large Mark Benjamin has headed up the effort to restore the Memorial and the grounds, assisted by several chapter members, other veterans' groups, and members of the local Coast Guard.

The Traverse City Parks Department has been instrumental in helping with the logistics involved and has worked on surround park land as well for an impressive renovation of the whole area. The photos provided give just a sampling of the work involved and the outstanding results. It continues to be an



Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans 1988.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



**Before**

"Before" Conditions around the memorial.

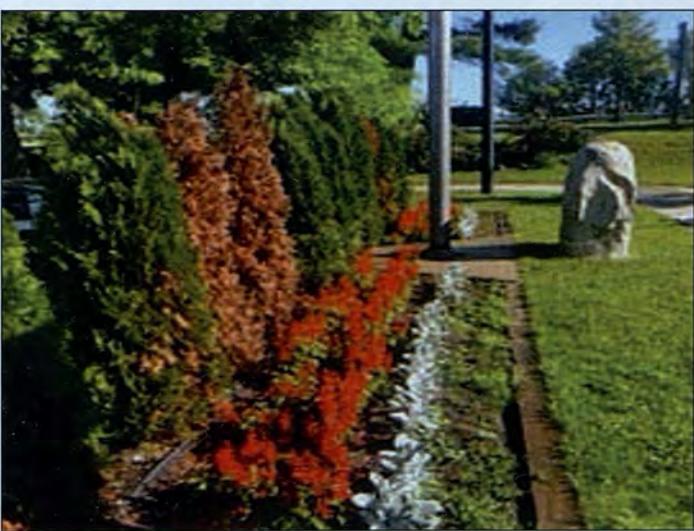


**After** Memorial grounds.



**During**

"During" Restoration.



**After** Flower beds.



**After** Flower beds blooming.

ongoing project to protect the gardens, replace trees, and even monitor snow plowing nearby.

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](mailto:richdeer@att.net). We have

several non-Michigan residents on our roster so don't let that stop you from joining us. More information on our chapter can be found online at [vhpami.wordpress.com](http://vhpami.wordpress.com) and on Facebook at Michigan Chapter of the VHPA.

Submitted by Rich Deer, President

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The COVID thing, that you've all surely heard about, has restricted many of our regular activities. We haven't been able to meet since March 2020. So, this article is a retrospective of 2020.

We started off strong. January 7, 2020 found 10 members and spouses supporting the picking up and boxing nearly 1000 wreaths from Veterans graves in Huntsville's Valhalla Cemetery. The next day, January 8th, about 12 members and spouses supported the retrieval and packing about 2700 wreaths from Huntsville's Maple Hill Cemetery. This culminates our support to Wreaths for Veterans until October 2020, when the un-packing, cleaning, fluffing and re-packing of all wreaths in preparation for the 2020 Christmas season will take place. Author's note: The Wreaths for Veterans program was cancelled for 2020 due to COVID. We were all disappointed.

At our January 2020 meeting, we had a special guest. USAF LTC (Ret.) Charlie Summers flew F-100D fighters in Vietnam. On November 13, 1965, during a mission with a flight of three F100s, Charlie got shot down and had to parachute. That's where his story begins. He was eventually picked up by a Huey and taken to a hospital. Charlie had the greatest sense of humor telling this story of how he crawled to the Huey, but his parachute blew up into the first Huey's rotor, they all left that one for a second one, going between trees on takeoff. Just a great story teller, and a heck of a story. Charlie's remarks again brought home that we cannot know the impact of what, at the time, seemed a routine mission.

After the first lockdowns were over, a few members of NAVHPA got together and completed much needed work on our hangar facility for BUC-3, our UH-1C/M gunship. We met in June to complete our first task, which was to install a dozen wind anchors to tie the hangar securely to the ground in the event of high winds. After several hot hours, we were sure that BUC-3's hangar was firmly secured to the ground. We also attached a plaque to both sides of BUC-3 that was provided by the 170th AHC Association.

On Monday, 6 July, four NAVHPA members (Don Bisson, Bob Monette, Sam Maki, Marshall Eubanks) took a trip to the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) located at the Atlanta Motor Speedway, Hampton, GA. The purpose of the trip was to return some loaned Charlie Model Huey Gunship armament system items and to loan the AAHF the Mini Guns and 7-Shot Rocket Pods from our M-21 Gun System.

In addition to the several flyable Hueys and Cobras, the



After his war story at the January meeting, USAF LTC (Ret.) Charlie Summers and spouse pose with members Bob Stewart, Marshall Eubanks and Les Haas.



L-R: Bob Monette, Rick Davis, Les Haas, Gil Fluhr and Marshall Eubanks installing tiedowns for the Buc-3 hangar.



Hot enough for you? NAVHPA members take a break from removing parts in the Georgia sun.  
L-R: Sam Maki, Marshall Eubanks, Don Bisson, and Bob Monette.



Front of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument dedicated November 17, 2020.

AAHF has nearly a dozen parted out Hueys. The AAHF Director of Operations, Ron Disney, was more than gracious and allowed us to obtain some needed parts for Buc-3. These included doors, marker lights, a green house and

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Charlie Hearn, 170th AHC 1968-1969, with BUC-3 at the Cullman Veterans Celebration.

door glass. Of course, we had to remove all parts in the oppressive Georgia heat and humidity.

Our UH-1C/M Gunship, BUC-3, sat for many months in her hangar waiting for an event for her to be displayed. With COVID safe practices, we determined we could participate in the Cullman, AL Veteran's Day celebrations. For her to look her best, we scheduled a wash and cleanup day on Nov 4th. We had 13 members show up – the first time a group of NAVHPA members had gathered since March. In addition to clean-up chores, lots of catching up and storytelling took place.

On Nov 6, BUC-3 was towed to Cullman, AL and set up for their annual Veterans Celebration on Nov 7th this year at the Cullman Airport. Visitors enjoyed the many vintage military aircraft, vehicles and displays. NAVHPA members stayed safe by not allowing visitors inside BUC-3 (first time this has happened in more than seven years). This did not dampen the enthusiasm as many visitors asked questions and veterans recalled and related their experiences in Vietnam with Army aviation. One particular visitor, Charlie Heard, was a crew chief with the BUC-3's unit the 170th AHC from 1968-1969. Charlie flew in both BUC-3 and BUC-4 while in the company. We enjoyed listening to his stories and learning more about BUC-3.

Due to COVID concerns, the Huntsville annual Veterans Day Parade was cancelled, and a virtual program was shown on local television. This gave us an opportunity to support another community with their Veterans Day activities on Nov 11. BUC-3 was scheduled to participate in the Priceville, AL Veterans Day event. However, weather caused this event to be cancelled and BUC-3 was tucked back into her hangar.

Two NAVHPA members, Marshall Eubanks and honorary member Julie Kink, along with Julie's husband, Medal of Honor recipient LTC(R) Mike Sprayberry, are on the



NAVHPA members John McDaniel and Sam Maki talking about Buc-3 at Cullman.

Alabama Gold Star Families Memorial Monument (GSFMM) Committee. Marshall was the chair; Julie was the co-chair and Mike was an advisor.

Fifteen members and spouses supported the dedication ceremony of the Alabama Gold Star Families Memorial Monument (GSFMM) on Nov 17. Members manned the four Gold Star Families registration tables, handed out red carnations and memento bags to Gold Star Families, served as escorts and ushers for Gold Star Families. Nearly 600 people, including 200 Gold Star Family members, attended this dedication of Alabama's first GSFMM. NAVHPA members contributed to the great success of this event.

NAVHPA also made a monetary contribution to Stand Down Huntsville, a local charity helping homeless and less fortunate veterans in north Alabama area. We normally have been having winter coat drives every year for the charity. Stand Down Huntsville was in need of items to support local homeless veterans and NAVHPA decided to donate cash so they could purchase needed items.

The North Alabama Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the second Tuesday of most months at 6:00 PM (1800). We intend to meet again in person as soon as we are permitted to do so. Stop in when you get a chance. If you live in the North Alabama and Middle Tennessee area, we want you to join our chapter.

You can contact us at [navhpa@gmail.com](mailto:navhpa@gmail.com). Our web site is <http://www.na-vhpa.org>. Come on out!! We know you have tons of war stories you need to get out of your system. We need to hear them.

Ralph Weber

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

The Old Dominion Chapter was busy this December 19th, placing wreaths upon grave sites at the Amelia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia, VA. We had an excellent turn-out of 16-plus participants at the ceremony sponsored by Wreaths Across America. Our Chapter also donated \$300.00 to Wreaths Across America for purchasing wreaths for this cemetery.

After laying wreaths, we met at the Mission BBQ Restaurant on Hull Street Road in Midlothian, VA for lunch and camaraderie.

Planning is in progress for a meeting in the Fredericksburg area for January/February time frame and we are scheduled for a tour of the US Army Museum in March conducted by our member, Docent Ron Markiewicz.

A Big "Thank You" to Rick Dodson for all the great photography.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Don Agren, President



L to R Rick Dodson, Don Agren, Richard Newell.



L to R Frosty Price, Don Agren, Kirby Walls, Hugh Adams, Jim Squyres.



After wreath laying.



Rolling Thunder entering the Cemetery.



Most of our Chapter Members gathering at the beginning.



Local Cub Scout Chapter giving out small bottles of hand sanitizer.



Wreaths Across America Presentation.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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

We are still "Zooming". We had a great meeting in January with 20 participants. We have gained two new members since our last writing; Larry Weaver Class 67-22, 119th AHC, Alligator 265; and Chris Towne Class 70-36B1, 3rd Avn 52nd CAB, Chick-enman 11. Welcome to RMC! Some members have reported virus infections, but all are recovered and healthy at this writing. As we had hoped, the vaccine has finally reached us old timers through our health care facilities and through the VA. By the time this edition comes out, we will have had our second shot. That is Fantastic! At this writing, we are all safe and still practicing physical distancing.

I've noticed that many chapters continue to conduct activities with not so social distancing, just an observation from the many photos I've seen published throughout 2020. I may be wrong, but I've decided to submit some photos of some of our past



Veterans Day at Sky Vista.



Group Photo at the WOR.



Rick Overstake at CSP.



Honor Flight 2019.



January 2021 Zoom Meeting.



Crusaders at Freedom Memorial.



Mar 2019 Chapter Meeting with Krista Mortensen.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

activities so as not to be left out. It seems right since we have had to cancel all of our activities for 2020 and what looks like most of 2021 as well.

So, a nostalgic look back of 2019: What our Chapter meetings used to look like; Dedication of Sweet Sioux at the Wings over the Rockies; Memorial Day at the Colorado Freedom Memorial; HWM at a Car show; HWM at the Space Port Colorado; Welcome Home Honor Flight at DEN; and Veterans Day at Sky Vista Middle School. Just a few of our favorite events.

Meeting Schedule and other Information:

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The chapter has been dealing with the Corona Virus as all the other chapters have. Given the age of our members, we have been meeting outside in park pavilions and practicing social distancing as best we can. But...this is Minnesota in November and mother nature has driven us indoors. For our November meeting we did a zoom call which for some of us was our first experience. The meeting went quite well even though we had a small turnout. The biggest advantage was that our snowbird members were able to join us from Florida and Arizona and another member who lives 125 miles away didn't have to make the drive. We will most likely have another zoom meeting for our January meeting.

The chapter is doing well, and we did have some members participate in a couple of veterans' events earlier in the fall. Both the display Huey and the flyable Huey made an appearance at the High Ground event in Neilsville, WI. The flyable Huey participated in a flyover for 9/11, and also a flyover at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery for Veterans Day. Unfortunately, most of the Veterans Day events were cancelled this year including the New Richmond Wisconsin Middle school event, which has become a favorite of the Chapter. There is a veterans' event in the planning stages for Memorial Day in Waukesha, WI. They have asked the Chapter to participate in some way. They will have the moving wall and various other attractions including a marathon (not me) and a beer garden (yes, please). We will have to wait and see what the new year brings, but we are all hoping to get to see each other very soon. We all have our fingers crossed for the Reunion in Charlotte. Stay safe. It looks like there may be some light at the end of the tunnel.

## December/January

The January Chapter meeting was a Zoom meeting again. This time we had a bigger turn-out thanks in part to our telephone tree reminder calls before the meeting. The past two

We have suspended all meeting and activities except for video and telephone conferencing. Visit our Web site at [www.RMCVHPA.com](http://www.RMCVHPA.com) for any updates. We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: [RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com](mailto:RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com)

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

**Dale House**  
**President**

months have been pretty quiet as most of us are staying close to home waiting for an appointment to get vaccinated.

We discussed the past events of the fall and looked forward to the events scheduled for the spring and summer. May 22nd will be the "High Ground" event at the Neilsville, Wisconsin Veterans memorial. It will be a fly-in event for the flyable Huey owned by Chapter member Dave Schmitz and his co-owner Barry Hammerback. Memorial Day weekend there will be an event in Waukesha, WI featuring the moving wall. If you would like further information on the events planned for that weekend, contact one of the Chapter officers. Contact information is available on the VHPA website. In August (exact date to be determined) the local chapter of Viet Nam Veterans of America will host its annual China Beach picnic in Trimble, WI. Stay tuned for further details.

At this point we are planning to have another Zoom meeting for our March meeting. We are hopeful that our May meeting can at least be an outdoor event if not an indoor lunch with an appropriate beverage.

**By Don Abrams**

**Want to start  
a Chapter of the VHPA  
in your area?**

*Contact Tom Payne  
for full details  
and lots of help!*

**(918) 813-5132**  
**(or) [ka5hzd@att.net](mailto:ka5hzd@att.net)**

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Southern California Chapter members are still holding tight in our homes (bunkers) watching the increases in COVID pandemic spreading thru our neighborhood, cities, and counties.

Requirements are changing almost daily from Sacramento and local county seats as to what we can or not do. Open / Closed - stay at home orders, etc. orders are daily headlines.

Who can get a vaccine and where - that's if the websites

haven't crashed - allowing you to make appointments.

We are still looking at means to get our members together - Zoom - FaceTime, etc.

Stay safe and keep your situational awareness on full alert when venturing out for your daily groceries and other needs - delivery services are the new norm...

**Jim Davidson,  
SoCal VHPA, President**



## SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The first quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA will be held in the Silver Dollar City Parlor, in The Keeter Center, on the campus of The College of the Ozarks on Saturday, March 27, 2021, and will begin at 11:00 AM. Thanh Boyer, who was scheduled to speak at the VHPA Annual Reunion in Denver, will be our guest speaker.

Thanh Boyer was born in Vietnam before the communist takeover. Then her life, and that of her family, would forever change. Her life story is one of courage, perseverance, strength, and love. You will want to be there to hear her, as she recounts being put on a boat, in the middle of the night, at age

12, to escape Vietnam and the communist regime. She and her husband, John, have two grown children and make their home in Alabama.

The chapter will again be selling raffle tickets for a quilt which will be given away during our November meeting. Proceeds will again go to the scholarship, endowed by the chapter, at The College of the Ozarks, and our goal is to exceed the \$1,400 raised last year. Mark the meeting on your calendar, come prepared to hear the story of an amazing life, and bring your checkbook to help our scholarship effort!

RSVP to John Sorensen at [jsore65648@gmail.com](mailto:jsore65648@gmail.com) or (417) 872-7891.  
John Sorensen, President

## Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

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



Website: [www.chpa-us.org](http://www.chpa-us.org)  
Email: [hq@chpa-us.org](mailto:hq@chpa-us.org)  
Phone: 800-832-5144 messages  
Membership assistance:  
Loren McAnally (205) 529-4684 cell  
(life member VHPA & CHPA)



# 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.*

\*Beaumont, Marion E. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 63-4, 66-2QC; RVN: 66-67 D/229 AHB 1 CAV; LM, MSM; Callsigns: Tomcat 56/Smiling Tiger 56.



Marion Earl Beaumont gave up his place on this earth on November 18, 2020 and moved to his new address in Heaven. He was born in Petal, MS on June 24, 1936.

He graduated from Petal High School in May 1954 and from Mississippi Southern College in May 1958 with degrees in Mathematics and Physics. After college graduation, he entered active duty with the U.S. Army as a 2nd Lieutenant and served proudly for the next 22 years.

Following his retirement from active military service, he was awarded the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service while employed at Fort Lee, VA.

He is survived by his loving wife, Mary.

\*Botnen, Robert H. USA; Flight Classes: 68-14, 68-22; RVN: 68-69 A/7/17 CAV, 72 C/7/17 CAV, 72-73 201 AVN; DFC, BS; Callsign: Blue 30.



Robert Henry Botnen died peacefully in a hospice in Tacoma after complications from a heart valve insertion procedure. He was born in Tacoma during WWII.

Bob grew up on Fox Island, graduated from Peninsula High School in 1962, attended WSU, and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army after graduating from Armor Officer Candidate School in March 1967.

After leaving the military, Bob became a pharmaceutical salesman for dermatological products with Westwood Pharmaceuticals. He was regularly one of the top salespersons.

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

Carr, Robert A. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 55-O; RVN: 57 MED; Callsign: Dustoff.

Robert Adam "Bob" Carr of Waynesboro, formerly of Maryland, passed away peacefully at his home December 22, 2015. He was born in Encinal, TX on February 27, 1933.

Bob proudly served his beloved country during the Vietnam and Korean Wars as a helicopter pilot in the United States Army. He received his masters from St. Edwards University in Austin, TX. Bob was a member of the VFW.

He is survived by his wife, Avis.

\*Christensen, Neal R. USA, BG Ret.; Flight Class: 60-7FW; RVN: 65-66 3 BDE 25 INF, 72-73 MACV; Callsign: Aloha 6.



Neal Christensen passed into God's love January 10, 2021, in Daphne, AL. He was born on February 18, 1935 in Humboldt, IA.

He leaves behind the legacy of a U.S. Army career spanning two tours in combat, service with the National Military Command Center, the U.S. Army War College, and as the Deputy Adjutant General of the Iowa National Guard.

Following his retirement, Neal served both God and community by his leadership in the Sun City Presbyterian Church and the Okoboji, IA City Council.

He is survived by his wife, Sara.

\*Coleman, Lynn F. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 60-2, 66-2QC; RVN: 66-67 281 AHC, 69-70 HHB/4/77, ARA 101 ABN, 70 A/4/77 ARA 101 ABN; Callsigns: Wolfpack 36/Dragon 46.

Lynn Coleman, 84, was born in Albany, CA. He passed away peacefully on December 8, 2020 in The Villages, FL. He graduated from Admiral Farragut High School and earned his BS from Hofstra College and MS from Troy State University. He was commissioned in the US Army in 1958 and served over 26 years.

In 1980, he became a Mason while serving in Japan and held leadership positions in several bodies in Oregon and Florida at both the local and state levels.

He is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Diane.

Davis, Patrick F. USA; Flight Class 71-22; RVN: 71 187 AHC.



Patrick "Pat" Davis of Piedmont, formerly a longtime resident of Marlow and Duncan, passed away December 20, 2020 at Integris Hospice House in Oklahoma City. Pat was born February 21, 1948 in Marlow and graduated from Marlow High School with the class of 1966. He attended and graduated from Cameron University in 1970. Pat was president of the first graduating class of Cameron University.

Upon graduation from Cameron University, he was commissioned into the United States Army.

After his service, he was employed with Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance Company in Mangum. He then worked as a real estate appraiser with Duncan Savings and Loan, and when the Lawton Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company opened in 1978, Pat was in the group of early employees. He worked in many areas starting as a manager of the control room, quality control, accounting and retiring as a senior buyer in purchasing in 2010.

He is survived by his wife, Brenda.

\*Dubs, Roger D. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-23, 67-503; RVN: 68-69 173 AHC, 69-70 18 ENG BDE.

Roger D. Dubs died on June 17, 2019. He was born on December 23, 1944 in Freeman, SD. He graduated from Menno High School in 1962.

Following his Vietnam service, Roger joined the South Dakota National Guard in 1971. He spent 33 years in the Guard before retiring in 2004. After retiring, he continued

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to fly in various tourism and private positions, logging over 14,000 hours of flight time.

He is survived by his wife, Kathy.

**Gerretson, James L. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class 56-10; RVN: 66-67 D/15 TC 1 CAV, 68-69 54 TC; BS, ACM; Callsign: Big Daddy.**



James L. Gerretson of West Lafayette passed away December 17, 2017 at the Indiana Veterans Home, West Lafayette. He was born February 18, 1932 in Green Bay, WI. He graduated from high school in Deland, FL and continued his education in Deland at Stetson University where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

**Gleason, Neal E. USA/USN, LCDR Ret.; Flight Class: 69-47; RVN: 70 336 AHC, 71 235 AWC; DFC; Callsign: Dealer 20.**



Neal Eugene Gleason died on January 26, 2021 at his home in Beeville, TX. Neal was born on December 7, 1950 in Albuquerque, NM. When he turned 18, he joined the Army, becoming the first of all eight of the Gleason children to serve their country in the United States Army.

Neal was a decorated combat veteran who served in Vietnam and spent seven years in the U.S. Army flying helicopters, 18 years in the U.S. Navy as a fighter pilot and flight instructor, and another 14 years as a contract flight simulator instructor.

He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Roxanne.

**Glover, Samuel E. USN, CDR Ret.; RVN: 71-72 VAQ 130; Callsign: Zapper.**



Samuel Ennis Glover, 78, passed away on December 31, 2020. He was born and raised in Baltimore, MD.

Sam proudly served his country as an aviator in the U.S. Navy. He started his Navy career flying helicopters, then transitioned to jets.

In the mid-1970s Sam and his family returned to Baltimore. He worked with his father to help operate and eventually own Chieftain Pontiac GMC in Lutherville, MD.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Lynne.

**Goodowens, Fowler L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-10; RVN: 68 C/7/1 CAV; SS, DFC, BS (3), PH (6), ACM.**



Fowler Goodowens of Adams, TN, passed away December 25, 2019, at AHC of Clarksville. Fowler was born November 27, 1938, in Ft. Benning, GA.

He is survived by his wife, Betty.

**\*Griffin, Jeffery T. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-3, 68-503; RVN: 68 ACT/11 ACR, 71-72 F/4 CAV; Callsigns: Thunder Horse/Centaur 50.**



Jeffery Thomas Griffin passed away on January 13, 2021 in Houston, TX. Jeff was born in Three Rivers, MI on May 12, 1943.

When Jeff retired into civilian life, he worked for PHI, flying in the oil industry. He logged over 16,000 flight hours with PHI out of Galveston, New Orleans, Columbus, OH (SkyMed) and at Hainan Island, China mostly operating the S-76, a mid-sized helicopter. He was a life member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He is survived by his wife, Karin.

**Guthery, Alvin R. USA; Flight Class: 63-3W; RVN: 64-65 197 AHC; Callsign: Raider 27.**

Alvin Guthery died on September 4, 2020. No obituary was available.

**Hamman, Kenneth A. USN; Flight Class: 55-LFW; RVN: 65-67 USS IWO JIMA, 69-70 HA(L)-3.**

We are sad to announce that on December 26, 2020, at the age of 88, Kenneth Hamman of Chubbuck, ID, born in Chicago, IL in 1932, passed away.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret.

**Harris, Edwin H. USA; RVN: 65-66 68 AVN, 66 120 AHC, 68-69 A/123 AVN 23 INF; BS, PH.**



Edwin "Ed" Hawkins Harris Jr. passed away on December 21, 2020 at Piedmont Medical Center in Rock Hill, SC. Ed was born September 6, 1937, in Kittrell, NC. He graduated from Zeb Vance High School in 1957 and entered NC State University. He enlisted in the Army in 1958, attended Officer

Candidate School, and was commissioned as an Infantry Officer.

Ed graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and served the remainder of his career as a Military Intelligence Officer. He retired from the U.S. Army after 20 years of service. In addition to his many military schools, Ed received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hampton Institute, and a Master of Arts Degree from Temple University. After his military career, Ed continued to serve. He worked in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety in Emergency Management and then became the Chief of the Mobile Emergency Response Support team in FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency, South West Region. He retired from public service in 2004.

He is survived by his wife, Arline.

**\*High, Charles M. USA, CPT Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-8, 68-10; RVN: 68-69 A/101 AVN 101 ABN, 69 B/5 TC BN 101 ABN; Callsign: Comanchero.**



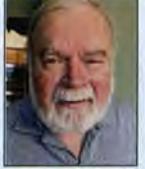
Charles Manselle High passed away on November 29, 2020, at Lenoir UNC Hospital. He was born August 14, 1939. His father's career with the railroad took him from Arkansas to California in his early life.

Charlie, as he was known, earned his BS degree from St. Leo College.

After the military, he began working for Smithfield Foods at their meatpacking plant in Kinston where he was a supervisor for many years. Charlie was an active member of Faith Fellowship Church in Kinston.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen.

**Humphreys, Michael A. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 68-25; RVN: 68-69 E/82 ARTY 1 CAV; BS; Callsign: Wood-pecker 27.**



Michael A. "Tony" Humphreys peacefully piloted his final flight into the heavenly skies at home on November 24, 2020 surrounded by loving family members. He was born in Huntington, WV on September 22, 1947. He graduated in 1965 from Huntington High School. He was a lifetime member of VFW Post 1064, the American Legion Post 16, as well as a longtime member of the Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society. Additionally, Tony thoroughly enjoyed his

# TAPS

role as a narrator for the Amtrak Cardinal from Huntington to Clifton Forge for several years.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Jacqueline.

**\*Inlow, Michael D. USA; Flight Class: 69-8; RVN: 70-71 A/2/17 CAV 101 ABN; Callsign: Assault 46.**



Michael Inlow of Windmwere, FL died on December 31, 2020. No obituary was available.

**\*Jourdan, Phillip C. USA; Flight Class 69-45; RVN: 70 3 BDE 101 ABN, 70 158 AVN 101 ABN; PH; Callsigns: Thunder 47/Lancer 47.**



We celebrate the life of Phillip C. Jourdan, who passed away on December 31, 2020 at the age of 71. Phillip resided in Georgia, and in his youth, he lived in Cheboygan, MI and attended High School there.

Phil joined the army at the age of 19. After a critical injury during combat, he finished his military career of six years stationed in the United States.

Phil enjoyed a 33-year long career at Proctor & Gamble after his military service. Earning recognition as a successful startup manager, he worked extensively in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, which suited his love of history and travel.

**Kash, Steven N. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 56, 62; RVN: 65-66 498 MED CO; Callsign: Dustoff 26.**

Steven Neil Kash died April 24, 2014 at his home. Steven was born on December 21, 1930. He was a life member of the University of Michigan Alumni and Cheerleaders Association, the American Legion Post 8, the Bluegrass Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, Bluegrass Military Affairs Coalition and the Marine Corps League.

He is survived by his wife, Rosalinda.

**\*Kester, William R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 58-6; RVN: 67 611 TC CO, 67-68 398 TC 11 ACR, 68 187 AHC, 68 602 TC, 72 71 TC BN, 72 MACV; LM, BS.**



William "Bill" Robert Kester, 87, of Glen Allen, passed away on December 9, 2020. He was born in Kansas City, MO. He graduated from Pontiac High School, Pontiac, MI. in 1952. He earned a B.S. from Michigan State in 1956. After completing college and ROTC program, he was commissioned.

He earned a M.S. from the University of Tennessee. He retired after 22 years of service.

After retiring in 1979, he worked in social services and DIT in the City of Richmond, retiring in June 1997. He was a member of MOAA, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Lifetime Mason Pontiac Lodge No. 22 and American Legion.

He is survived by his wife of 53 1/2 years, Diane.

**\*Kirkley, Jimmie J. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class 57-5; RVN: 64 62 AVN, 64-65 150 TC DET, 64-65 A/502 AVN; Callsigns: Roadrunner/Boeing Rep.**



Jimmie 'Big Jim' Joe Kirkley passed away on April 28, 2020 at his home in Palm Bay, FL. Jim was born on February 10, 1930 in Howe, OK. He left high school after two years to enlist in the Army at age 16. When asked how he managed to avoid detection of his age, he said in 1946 no one seemed to pay much attention to such details. Plus, he was big, and looked older than he was. After his first enlistment he left the Army but, then 'got hungry,' so he reenlisted. He attended jump school at Fort Benning, spent several years with the 82nd Airborne Division, and earned his high school equivalency GED in 1952.

Jim applied for Army Aviation flight training. His first aviation assignment was to Europe where he flew CH-34 helicopters. In September 1964, Jim was with the 11th Air Assault Division in Fort Benning when he was selected to be the maintenance warrant officer for the 150th Transportation Corps Detachment of the 62nd Aviation Company; a newly formed helicopter company to be deployed to Vietnam in 34 days. He was in the Advanced Party that went to Vinh Long in September 1964 and thus became an 'Original Outlaw.'

**\*Lorence, Carl E. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 56-10; RVN: 61 AIR A M E R I C A LAOS, 62-63 93 TC CO, 67-68 205 ASHC.**



**\*Koslowski, Edward A. Jr. USA/USAF, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-503/67-25; RVN: 68-69 129 AHC, 69-721/17CAV.**



Edward A. Koslowski, Jr. was born on June 16, 1946. He died on August 26, 2020 of natural causes.

Edward transferred out of the Army and into the Air Force after the war. He started out Flying C-130 tankers. Edward was eventually promoted to Major and given the coveted position of Aircraft commander of an AWACS Reconnaissance plane.

Edward retired from the military after 20 years of decorated service to the United States of America. His military background remained the core of his identity thereafter and he maintained strong ties with other retired military pilots.

Edward became a commercial airline pilot after his military retirement. He started out flying small private jets for a company called Schrivner. He was eventually hired by American Trans Air (ATA), a private charter company. There he flew the Largest passenger plane in the world at the time, the huge 3 story L-1011.

He was very active in his community, enjoying outings and events with his friends at the Sandra Lane adult community. He attended the Vietnam helicopter reunion every year, sporting one of the most obnoxious mustaches imaginable. He was a member of the See Bees. He was also a much beloved member of the Quiet Birdmen (QB's).

**Leopold, Robert C. USA; Flight Classes: 66-17, 66-19; RVN: 67-68 170 AHC; Callsign: Bikini 29.**

Robert Leopold was born on October 16, 1946 and died on June 17, 2017. No obituary was available.

**\*Lorence, Carl E. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 56-10; RVN: 61 AIR A M E R I C A LAOS, 62-63 93 TC CO, 67-68 205 ASHC.**



Carl E. Lorence of Harrisburg passed away on December 18, 2020. He was born in Ford

# TAPS

After his military career, he retired from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania working as a Supervisor for the Bureau of Financial Management, CDIC.

Carl was a member of St. Margaret Mary Roman Catholic Church as well as Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, Steelton, the American Legion Post 272, the Vietnam Veterans Helicopter Association, the Polish National Falcons, Ford City, the Capital Area Greenbelt Association where he was former President and member, the Appalachian Trail Association (ATA), the Keystone Trail Association (KTA), and helped to create and build the PA Standing Stone Trail.

**McCreery, Robert L. USA; Flight Class: 69-19; RVN: 69-70 121 AHC; Callsign: Tiger 14.**

Robert McCreery died on January 22, 2020. No obituary was available.

**Miller, James E. USAF; Flight Class: 67-G; RVN: 69 33 ARRS DET; DFC; Callsign: Pedro.**

James E Miller of Tampa, FL passed away peacefully from complications associated with dementia on December 25, 2020. He was born on December 23, 1943.

Jim grew up in Freeport, NY, attended Clarkson College in Potsdam, NY where he graduated in 1965 with a degree in Chemistry. After graduation, Jim joined the U.S. Air Force completing pilot training. He flew helicopter rescue missions in Vietnam. Jim went on to pilot the refueling aircraft, the KC 135. He really loved the excitement of flying and even considered becoming a commercial pilot.

Upon leaving the Air Force Jim settled in Tampa and attended USF, graduating in 1978 with an Accounting degree and was a member of the Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi.

He remained in the Tampa Bay area practicing as a CPA in both Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, eventually opening his own practice: James Miller, PA.

He is survived by his loving wife of 26 years, Judy.

**\*Mooney, Kenneth W. USA; Flight Class: 65-4W; RVN: 65-66 1/9 CAV; Callsign: Brave Apache.**

Kenneth Mooney was born



on May 6, 1941 and died on November 28, 2020. No obituary was available.

**Murray, Reginald A. USAF, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 58; RVN: 71-72 37 ARRS; Callsign: Jolly.**

Reginald Alton Murray passed away peacefully on November 17, 2019 in his home in Auburn, CA. He was born June 25, 1934 in Catawba County, NC. Reginald was a 1956 graduate of Duke University in Durham, NC with a BA in Business Administration.

Reginald held a Master's Degree in Safety from Central Missouri State University. Following retirement from the United States Air Force, he taught aeronautics and flight safety with Embry Riddle University. Reginald served for several years on the Airport Commission for the City of Auburn, including as Chair, and was President of the Vintage Oaks Home Owners Association.

**\*Paulson, Thomas R. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 63-1W; 65-66 48 AHC, 68-69 205 ASHC; DFC, BS; Callsigns: Blue Star/Geronimo.**

Thomas Robert Paulson departed for his heavenly home on December 29, 2020. Tom was born in Lookingglass, OR May 21, 1934.

After his military service, Tom was a corporate pilot flying Fixed and Rotary Wing aircraft in Alaska and later Oregon.

He was a member of the United Methodist Church, Veterans of Foreign War, American Legion, Douglas County Celtic Society, Scottish Knight Templar, Oregon Hunters, and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association. He regularly delivered food for the Winston/Dillard Food Pantry.

He is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Donna.



**\*Quigley, Claude V. USA; Flight Class: 67-12; RVN: 67-68 A/7/1 CAV, 68-69 B/7/17 CAV; DFC, ACM; Callsigns: Undertaker 6/Tycoon White.**

Claude Vaughn "Mike" Quigley was born June 4, 1944 at sea (The ship's crew nicknamed him "Mike" as his mother delivered aboard the USNHS St. Mihiel. As a military dependent, Mike was educated in England, Germany, and Spain, and was fluent in French.

In the middle of his Junior year at University of Maryland, Mike was inducted into the United States Army December 8, 1965, graduating OCS November 6, 1966, he earned a 2nd Lieutenant Armor (USAR) Commission.

Following his discharge from active duty, Mike briefly worked in animation in California for Taskforce before attending the University of Texas, El Paso, majoring in Business Administration. He formed Headquarters Aviation (1988-2006), an Aircraft Manufacturing and Private Aircraft Maintenance Company. From 2006 until he retired, Mike worked for Pension Planners of West Texas. Well known in the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) community, Mike was a past president of the 555 Experimental EAA Las Cruces Chapter and the El Paso Aviation Association. In 2016, he was inducted into the El Paso Aviation Hall of Fame. He was an active member at Mountain View Baptist Church for many years.

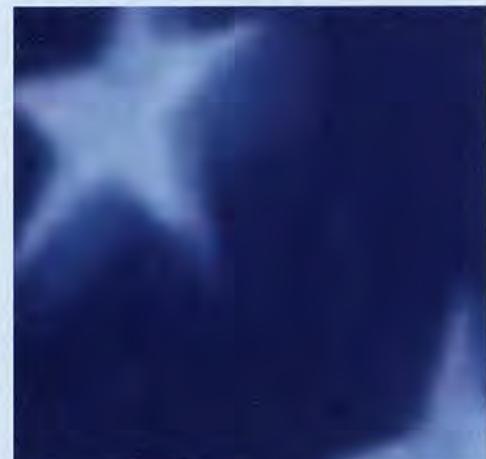
He is survived by his partner, Janice Huddleston.

**\*Ray, Marion N. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-14, 67-14; RVN: 67 170 AHC, 70-71 C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV; SS, DFC, BS; Callsign: Bikini Blue Leader.**



Marion Neal Ray died on December 11, 2020. He was born in North Little Rock, AR on December 2, 1938. Marion attended Spiro A. Jones High School, graduating from high school before the age of 16. He attended Tuskegee Institute and Northeastern University studying mechanical engineering. In 1961, he was drafted into the United States Army.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Helen.



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\*Ricks, Douglas F. USA; Flight Class: 67-14; RVN: 68-69 A/7/1 CAV, 70-71 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; Callsign: Apache 16/Saber 7A.

Douglas Ricks was born on March 10, 1942 and passed away on January 2, 2021. No obituary was available.

Ringgold, Donald J. USMC; Flight Class: 62-2; RVN: 65-66 HMM-361; Callsign: YN.

Donald Ringgold passed away on December 22, 2015. No obituary was available.

Rubery, Daniel J. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-8, 68-10; RVN: 69 228 ASHB 1 CAV.



Daniel J. Rubery of O'Fallon, MO, fortified with the Sacraments of the Holy Mother Church, died on August 21, 2013 at the age of 73.

He retired after 27 years of military service. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Dardenne Prairie where he was an active volunteer. He was also a member of the AAAA, American Legion, St. Vincent De Paul, Catholic Charities, and Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree.

\*Rush, Thomas W. USA, CW2 Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-43, 69-47; RVN: 71 335 TC CO, 71-72 361 AWC; SS, BS, (V/OLC); Callsign: Panther 55.



Thomas (Wayne) Rush of Orange Park, FL gained his wings on January 05, 2021. Born in Sycamore, GA February 24, 1937. He graduated from Sycamore High School in 1955, participating in many school activities.

After retirement, he pursued his passion. He was raised listening to and singing gospel music. The music he wrote and performed was influenced by those grass roots. He also enjoyed golfing, traveling, and jamming with his friends.

Shearer, Ian C. USA, MAJ Ret.; RVN: 65-66 221 AVN, 69-70 HHC/11 CAG; BS.



Ian Shearer of Gulfport went home to be with the Lord on January 11, 2021 at Memorial Hospital of Gulfport after a lengthy illness. Mr. Shearer was born on March 27, 1934 in Camden, NJ.

He attended the Gulf Coast Military Acad-

emy, Long Beach High School and Troy State University.

After retirement from the Army, Mr. Shearer worked at Mobile Medic Ambulance Company until he went to work for the State of Mississippi's Employment Department as a Veteran's Specialist until his retirement after 20 years.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Janice.

Sheehan, William H. III USA; Flight Classes: 66-17, 66-19; RVN: 67 188 AHC, 67-68 162 AHC, 70-71 ACT 11 ACR; Callsigns: Black Widow 46/Vulture 28.



William Henry Sheehan III, 75, passed peacefully in his home, January 17, 2020. Bill was a New Jersey native. Bill retired from Fort Monroe in 1985. He continued work in Defense Contracting as a Senior Military Analyst, serving two short tours in Iraq, before his final retirement in 2009. He remained a proud member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assoc. & MOAA.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Terry Ann.

Shoemaker, Mark E. USA; Flight Classes: 70-1, 70-3; RVN: 70-71 B/123 AVN 23 INF; Callsign: Warlord 11.

Mark Edward Shoemaker passed away unexpectedly on April 14, 2017. He was born on March 8, 1948 in Herkimer, NY. His family moved to Ft. Lauderdale, FL where he graduated from high school. Mark went on to college and graduated from Embry Riddle Aeronautics University and became a licensed helicopter and fixed wing pilot as well as a commercial pilot.

He entered the US Army on March 19, 1969. For many years Mark was N.Y.S. hunting and game guide. Prior to moving to Boonville several years ago, he was a resident of Otter Lake, NY. Mark was very active in the Harland J. Hennessey V.F.W., Boonville and held numerous positions. He served as commander, senior/junior vice commander and quarter master. He was a member of the Military Order of the Cooties of America. He served as grand commander of New York State Adirondack Council, New York State P.O.W./M.I.A. and was an instructor/coordinator for officer training school.

In District 4 of the V.F.W. he held positions

as commander, jr./sr. vice commander and quartet master. Mark also was a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association. He was very active in the Vietnam Get Together every year at the V.F.W. in Boonville and Mexico, NY.

Smith, Allan V. USA; Flight Class: 63-7WT; RVN: 66-67 D/15 TC 1 CAV, 69-70 242 ASHC; BS (OLC), PH; Callsign: Muleskinner.

Allen Smith passed away on February 8, 2013. No obituary was available.

Stormer, William H. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 71-11; RVN: 71-72 A/377 ARTY 101 ABN; BS, MSM; Callsign: Gunner 75.

William Henry "Pete" Stormer passed away on Friday, March 20, 2020. He entered into this life on August 29, 1951 in Baltimore, MD.

Due to his many qualifications and instructor courses, Pete served a number of years in his second career at Redstone Arsenal's Aviation Test Center. Pete was a member of First Baptist Church of Clarksville.

He is survived by his loving and supportive wife of 44 years, Jane.

\*Stoverink, Robert I. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 53-C; RVN: 66-67 114 AHC, 67 HHC/13 CAB; SS, DFC, LM; Callsign: Knight 6/Delta 3/Delta 5.



Robert Stoverink was baptized into the hope of Christ's resurrection December 3, 2020. Bob entered the US Army in 1948 and retired as a Colonel in 1978. He served in Germany, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Upon the death of his son by a drunken driver in 1978, Bob spent the next thirteen years as Director of Bureau Personnel and Training for the St. Louis County Police Department.

# TAPS

**VanPelt, Richard S. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-1, 68-3; RVN: 68-69 D/1/1 CAV AMERICAL, 69 2/17 CAV 101 ABN; ACM (V).**

Richard "Rick" S. Van Pelt of Missoula was born April 24, 1947 and died on March 23, 2019. Rick was born into an Air Force family and spent 20 years in the Army. It was in Vietnam he was exposed to Agent Orange which led to his early heart disease. Rick had a thirst for knowledge and after leaving the Army he became a school librarian. His goal was to pass on that thirst to children. Rick was passionate about leading small groups and serving his church.

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

**Villotti, James S. USAF; RVN: 67-68 20 SOS; died on April 20, 2019.**

No obituary was available.

**Vineyard, Lawrence A. USA; Flight Class: 64-4W; RVN: 64-65 119 AHC.**

Lawrence Vineyard passed away on February 22, 2019 in



Dayton, OH. He was born March 16, 1943, in Charleston, WV.

Following his Vietnam service, he was employed by Evergreen Helicopters. He later formed his own business, Timberline Helicopters.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou.

**\*Watt, Harvey W. USA; Flight Classes: 68-1, 68-3; RVN: 68-69 235 AWC; Callsign: Death Dealer 27.**

No obituary was available.

**Wiles, James T. USA; Flight Classes: 67-13, 67-17; RVN: 67-68 189 AHC, 71 335 TC CO; Callsigns: Ghost Rider 28/Jock Strap 15.**

No obituary was available.



**Wyatt, Wallace W. USA; Flight Class: 71-28; RVN: 72-73 C/7/17 CAV, 73 H/10 CAV; Callsign: White 4.**

Wallace Wyatt passed from this world to be with his Lord



Jesus Christ on May 24, 2014, in Pearland, TX. Wayne was born in Fort Smith, AR on June 17, 1947. He attended El Dorado High School graduating in 1965, continuing his education at Harding University, graduating with a Bachelors Degree in Accounting in 1969. He then chose to serve his country by enlisting in the Army. His full-time Army service was from 1969-1972. He continued his service in the Army National Guard and gained his Masters Degree from Louisiana Tech University in 1976.

Wayne returned to active duty for a period of time when he was accepted into Apache helicopter flight school in 1990. Wayne was able to achieve all of these accomplishments while making a career in the oil and gas industry.

He is survived by his loving constant companion and wife of 48 years, Judy.



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# TAPS

## OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

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

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

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](mailto:HQ@VHPA.org) or call 1-800-505-VHPA (8472) so it can be added to our database.

Adams, Frank R. USA; Flight Class: 67-6; DFC, PH; died on November 14, 2020.	Gordon, James B. USA; Flight Class: 61-8; died on November 24, 2020.	Percy, John E. USA; Flight Class: 69-35; BS; died on January 14, 2021.
Avant, Julius H. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class 70-14; died on December 22, 2020.	Hardee, Emmett R. USA; Flight Classes: 68-10, 68-14; died on January 18, 2021.	Peters, John, W. USA, LTC Ret.; DFC, BS (OLC); died on January 14, 2021.
Barry, John W. USA, MAJ Ret.; RVN: 66-67 162 AHC; DFC (OLC), BS (2); PH; died on January 9, 2021.	Huddleston, Larry B. USA; Flight Classes: 68-20, 68-512; BS; died on December 11, 2020.	Plumlee, Printer V. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class 67-13; BS, ACM; died on January 1, 2021.
Boge, Allen D. USA; RVN: 114 AVN; died on November 23, 2020.	Jennings, John E. USA, CPT Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-44, 68-524; RVN: 69-70 7/17 CAV; died on December 30, 2020.	Potter, William J. USA; Flight Classes: 68-16, 68-26; died on June 1, 2015.
Citrano, Michael J. Jr. USA; Flight Class: 65-2; died on January 4, 2021.	Jensen, Blaine P. USA, Ret.; died on November 26, 2020.	Rands, Carroll C. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67-68 20 SOS; DFC (3); Callsign: Green Hornet; died on January 1, 2021.
Cox, George W. Jr. USMC, MAJ Ret.; SS, DFC, BS; died on January 11, 2021.	Kendall, Mark C. USA, COL Ret.; DFC, PH; died on December 11, 2020.	Rosler, William E. USA; Flight Class: 69-3; died on November 15, 2020.
Crabtree, Hugh L. USAF, MAJ Ret.; died on January 10, 2021.	King, Larry D. USA, CPT Ret.; Flight Class: 67-23; SS, (OLC), DFC, BS (OLC), PH (2), ACM; died on January 7, 2018.	Ruble, Samuel R. Jr. USN; RVN: 67-68 HC-1; died on December 10, 2020.
Davis, James T. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 70-33/70-31; died on November 21, 2020.	Leister, Richard A. USA; Flight Classes: 68-9, 68-11; BS, PH; died on July 9, 2020.	Sanders, Vernon H. Jr. USA; Flight Classes: 70-19, 70-15; DFC, BS, ACM; died on October 9, 2020.
Davis, Lauren C. Jr. USAF, MAJ Ret.; died on January 12, 2021.	Michiels, Donald E. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 71-72 40 ARRS; died on September 18, 2020.	Smith, Jack W. USA; Flight Class: 69-34; died on January 15, 2021.
Delong, Marvin L. USAF, MAJ Ret.; died on December 9, 2020.	Mongeon, Darryle R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 69-28; died on January 3, 2021.	Stanley, Charles S. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-6; SS, DFC; died on December 20, 2020.
Fallon, Richard E. USAF, MAJ Ret.; RVN: 20 SOS; died on January 6, 2021.	Mumme, Fabian S. USA; Flight Class 71-8; RVN: 71-72 213 ASHC; died on December 12, 2020.	Ulosevich, Steven N. USAF; Flight Classes: 71-22AF, 71-22; RVN (Thailand): 75 Det. 5 40 ARRS; died on June 3, 2020.
Foss, Gerald P. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 72 38 ARRS; died on January 13, 2021.	Nall, Joseph M. USAF; died on December 3, 2020.	Urfer, Stephen R. USA; Flight Class: 69-23; died on September 25, 2020.
Franklin, William P. USN, CPT Ret.; died on December 18, 2020.	Oderman, Dale L. USAF, COL Ret.; RVN: 68 37 ARRS, 68 40 ARRS; SS; Callsign: Jolly Green; died on December 13, 2020.	
Gillette, William P. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 65-66 HHT/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 69 HHT/7/1 CAV; died on January 30, 2021.		

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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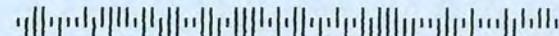
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