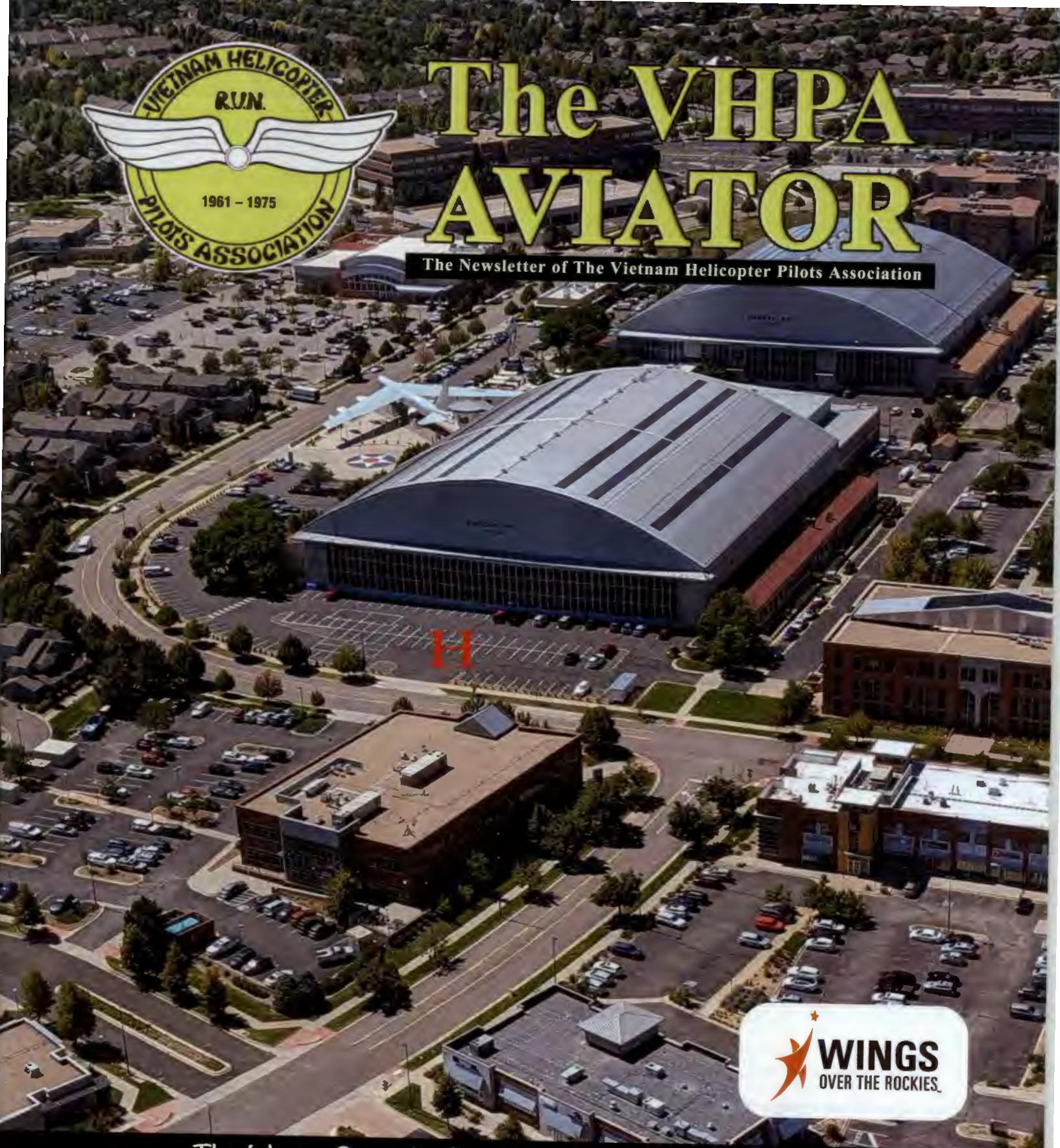




The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



The Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum
at Lowry in Denver with the LZ marked with an "H".

See page 38 for more details...

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From the Managing Editor...

Some of our members may have noticed a change on page two of the Aviator. The Membership Directory and Historical committee categories have been removed. Going forward, these activities will be combined with Records/Database function.

Aviator Privacy Statement: The VHPA considers member information proprietary and confidential. Use of any information in this publication for any type of solicitation is prohibited. Member information contained in this publication shall not be distributed to non-VHPA members without the express consent of the member.

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

THE VHPA AVIATOR, THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION (ISSN 1930-5737) (USPS 001-497) is published four times yearly ~ March, June, September and December. The VHPA is organized as a 501 (c) (19) fraternal military organization and one copy of each newsletter is included in each of our Member's Dues, yearly subscriptions to the Aviator are available to non-members for \$36.00. Published by Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA), headquartered at 1601 E Lamar Blvd, Suite 117, Arlington, TX 76011. Periodicals Publications postage paid at Round Rock, Texas and additional mailing points.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to 1601 E Lamar Blvd, Suite 117, Arlington, TX 76011

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

My message for this quarter takes the form of two notices. One for the proposed VHPA monument at Fort Novosel, the second a memorial piece for a distinguished woman, Dotty Kesten. Dotty working with her husband Art dedicated many years to the formation and growth of the AAAA.

~ Frosty Price

Did you miss the 2018 Arlington dedication? HERE'S YOUR SECOND CHANCE!

In 2025, the VHPA will be dedicating a similar monument in the Memorial Park just outside the Army Aviation Museum at "our" old Fort Rucker (Novosel).

It will mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, and you and your fellow aviators will not want to miss this important and auspicious occasion.

The date has not yet been set, as we are working with a local company to produce the monument, and we are coordinating with the Commanding General's office at Fort Novosel. We want to ensure that this historic day is planned and executed in a manner in keeping with the unique contribution Vietnam helicopter crews made in serving our country in combat and in shaping the future doctrine of Army Aviation.



HELP MAKE THIS HISTORIC DAY HAPPEN

We are asking you, your family, your friends, and all patriots to make a donation to help offset the costs to not just purchase the monument, but the work that will go into all the planning and logistics by volunteers. Chapter Presidents and members, please consider a donation from the Chapter Treasury. We answered the call and selflessly served our country in Vietnam. Please do so again to honor our comrades and their sacrifice.

The EC is hoping to be able to receive donations from the VHPA Members to fund this estimated \$25,000 project. Your EC, Secretary/Treasurer and Legacy Chairman have donated \$200 each to get us started. Write on your check "For the General Fund". This donation is not



tax deductible. Send your check to VHPA HQ, or call and make your donation via Credit Card. All moneys collected above the actual expenses will be given to the Scholarship Program.

Dotty Kesten, cofounder of AAAA with husband, Art, passed away on Sunday, 8 September 2024, in Connecticut. She was 101.

She and Art, teamed up to publish, manage and nurture a fledgling newsletter for Army Aviators back in the late '40s, into a significant monthly publication that was re-named "ARMY AVIATION Magazine" in 1953; and ultimately guided and managed the creation, in 1955, of our Army Aviation Association of America which today has grown to over 21,700 Active Duty, National Guard, U. S. Army Reserve, industry, and retired members.

And Dotty and Art's efforts didn't stop there... in 1963, their desire to continue to give back gave rise to a new charity, the AAAA Scholarship Foundation Inc., that now awards over \$630,000 every year to Soldiers and their families for college education. Dotty and Art were inducted together into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame In 1975.

Fast forward to 1999, it was their successful Scholarship Foundation that provided the umbrella that the VHPA needed to start our Scholarship program. The VHPA avoided a significant amount of start-up and CPA expenses; adopted the proper management framework from AAAA; and the AAAA provided a \$25,000 match to our \$25,000 to get our program up and running. In 2000 we awarded our first VHPA scholarship for \$1,000. The rest is a wonderful part of our history that we are all very proud of. We are grateful to Dotty and Art for their vision, success and support.

Arrangements have not yet been announced; however, Dotty will be interred with Art in the Columbarium at Arlington National Cemetery at a future date.



FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF REMAILING ITEMS! If you move, PLEASE call HQ with an update to your address!

This is important if you head south for the winter and back north for the summer. You must call HQ to change your mailing address each time to ensure you do not miss an issue of your newsletter.

Mark your calendars now for R2025 in St. Louis, MO – Aug 20 – Aug 23, 2025!

We have included a preliminary schedule of in house reunion events in this issue. We hope to have more details & tour info included in the Jan/Feb/Mar issue.

Reminders:

- The on line directory is free at:
<https://directory.vhpa.org>

As of the deadline for this issue, you can not make updates to your information via the on line directory. You can log in and search for members. Please call HQ with any changes to your contact info. We apologize for the inconvenience but things are taking longer than expected.

- Minutes to all EC meetings are posted in the VHPA website each month along with minutes to the Annual Business Meeting, VHPA Financial Reports and VHPA Policies. To view these documents please go to <https://directory.vhpa.org/>, click on member log in, sign in using your member number & setting up a password, under the “Other Documents” tab on the left – click “VHPA Administration Documents”.

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 and attend reunions!

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 Business Manager*

From the Managing Editor

In the recent few years, there have been many first-person books released on helicopter action in the Vietnam war. A significant number are authored by our members. Phil Marshall, an author as well, has been providing reviews when requested. Because the pricing for an ad is low cost and targets a specific audience who read the Aviator, several of the newer releases have taken advantage of this option. We coordinate the ad placement with the appearance of the book review to maximize exposure. There is, however, no requirement to place an ad to take advantage of a review by Phil Marshall.

Please contact me at aviator@vhpa.org to discuss pricing (as well as text/graphic assistance in preparing

an ad, if necessary).

Roger Lockshier, one of our advertisers, asked me an interesting question earlier this year. He wanted to know if he could use the ad from the Aviator in another publication. Yes he could, regardless of whether we modified any of the graphics (typically applying borders) or provided any “cover type” notes. That is covered in the price of an ad.

One of our recent articles ran without an author’s byline. The piece, Don’t Drown Yourself Just Before You DEROs was written by Dale De Roia, Darkhorse 46. My apology to Dale for the oversight.

~Tom Kirk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

To all that responded, either directly or indirectly, to my earlier request for information IRT the incident on 14 January 1967 that claimed the life of my high school classmate WO1 Robert Clark Ferris (and 173rd Robin Hood). That and the mystery associated with where his remains were ultimately interred. I extend my most sincere & grateful thanks for not only successfully providing the information I was looking for, and then some, but also for the professional & caring manner via which it was conveyed. As one respondent noted so well, none of these heroes names should be lost to history.

Very respectfully,

CUCM (SCW) Bob Williams,
USN SEABEES (Ret)

Brunswick, Maine
Deployed I Corps AOR 1968-1969

.....

Dear Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association and Army Aviation Association of America's Scholarship Foundation:

I write to you to extend my sincerest thanks to the VHPA and AAAA for their support to my post-secondary education by awarding me the Joseph P. Cribbins Memorial Perpetual Scholarship in 2020. This scholarship has been instrumental in funding my college education, and as a result has afforded me the privilege to explore academia at Trinity College in Hartford, CT.

During my time in college, I had the chance to explore various disciplines, gaining invaluable experiences and earning accolades in several of them. Some of these include

conducting undergraduate research for three years, volunteering and working with the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement, being a Presidential Scholar as well as the Presidential Fellow of Environmental Science, earning the Rosemary and Stan Marcuss '63 Fellowship for Research in Urban Studies, completed two honors theses, and receiving the Kelter Urban Studies Thesis Award. Through these experiences, I have learned the value and importance of loyalty, service, and love.

However, these are characteristics that I gained through life experience in college are not new to me, as they are modeled everyday by one of my greatest role models, my Papa, Gary Vollendorff. My Papa served as a Chinook pilot in Vietnam, as well as Warrant Officer and pilot in both the Army and the Washington National Guard, proving his service, loyalty, and love to his country and his profession. His service, loyalty, and love extend far beyond the military, into his family life, social life, and everything else he does. He inspires me to work hard and embrace these qualities. I was very honored that my Papa traveled from his home in Olympia, Washington to see me graduate this May in Hartford. Attached is a picture of us being proud of each other.

I am beyond grateful and appreciative for VHPA and AAAA's support in my education, and I greatly admire the VHPA and AAAA Scholarship Foundation's commitment to furthering the education of future students.



Most Sincerely,
Aurora Trani
Granddaughter of Vollendorff

.....

Shark's Teeth

I was born in 1941 and began talking at an early age. My dad was surprised at some of the quite unusual things coming out of my preschool mouth. One example was "Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek". Where did that come from? My dad was exempt from the war for football injuries from high school, but became a welder building Liberty Ships in Portland, Oregon. He and his friends did talk about the war but must not have been aware of young ears listening.

Later as a young teen, who sometimes liked to build model airplanes, the movie "The Flying Tigers" with John Wayne came out. The Curtis P-40 Warhawk, with the iconic Sharks Teeth, was so impressive. I did not know the whole amazing story until later years when Colonel Robert Lee Scott Jr., a famous Flying Tiger pilot, wrote his book "God Is My Copilot". That too was made into a movie. If you are not familiar with Colonel Claire Chennault and the American Volunteer Group (AVG) of China, you will find their stories absolutely incredible. For example, during the first six months of 1942 they destroyed 299 Japanese aircraft, losing only 12 of their Shark toothed P-40's. Many pilots became double aces.

As the years went by I moved on to other exciting things that I could participate in instead of reading about. In 1966 I left college after completing my ROTC aviation training and went to Infantry training, flight school, then straight to Vietnam. As luck would have it I was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division and given a choice to go to their Aviation Battalion or their Air Cavalry Troop the "Centaurs" of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment. I chose the Cav. I was a Second Lieutenant in a unit crammed full of Captains and Majors. Talk about low man on the totem pole.

During the first half of 1967 I had flown scouts (OH-23G), Maintenance/Medevac missions (Stable Boy UH-1D Maintenance Recovery aircraft),

Slicks with the Aero Rifle Platoon (UH-1D), but mostly Gunships (UH-1B and C models).

Being an extremely avid, excited and aggressive Gun Pilot, I just about lost it when I first saw the AH-1G Cobra Prototype. It was on display at Cu Chi. It had the original hydraulic TAT 102 hydraulic mini-gun on the nose. The landing skids were retractable (which turned out to be an aerodynamic mistake). I think the pilots name was WO Davis (who later became one of my instructor pilots during the NETT (New Equipment Training Team) transition course in Ben Hoa). A few days after seeing this incredible aircraft I got to see two Cobras from the Playboys, the 334th Armed Helicopter Company, who replaced us on a fire mission. The Playboys got the first Cobras In country. I got to see them in action for a few minutes that day. Very impressive.

Soon my tour with D Troop, 3/4 Cav was halfway up but I was ready to do anything to get my hands on that beautiful machine, the Cobra. Where do I sign, what do I have to do? Remembrances of my favorite book as a kid, "God Is My Copilot", and the fabulous history of Claire Chennault and his Flying Tigers hung heavy on my mind. Was it my turn to have the fantastic adventure of a lifetime? To be the one to develop new tactics to fit the new aircraft like he did? The excitement and the exhilaration keep a spring in my step to this day.

Why in the world did they call it a Cobra? It's a Shark not a Snake! Never understood that. Even the Flying Tigers of WWII with their P-40 "Warhawk" aircraft called their icon design "Shark's Teeth". From that point on it was hard for me to think about any other subject. The teeth on Chennault's P-40's were painted on the walls of my mind. On my six-month extension papers, I requested immediate transition into the Cobra and to be transferred to the 334th or any unit, anywhere in combat, that had Cobras or were

getting them. I know that my parents were not very happy but they always supported me no matter how wild the venture.

It turned out that the 25th Division was going to get some new AH-1Gs, but not until into the next year. But I could, and did, get signed up for the in-country transition right away. As the months went by I drew many drafts of the Sharks Teeth that were destined to be on my Cobra. At the transition course in Ben Hoa I was able to use the actual aircraft to finish my draft sketches. Back at Cu Chi, a template was made from light cardboard. The Squadron S-4 (3/4 Cav) scrounged some red, white and black gloss paint for me, in preparation for the arrival of our Cobras, and kept it quiet. Jim Filiatreault, a fellow pilot and artist gave me a hand.

In early 1968 I got word that the new model Cobras were coming into Vung Tau and I could hitch a ride up there and pick up the first one to be sent to the 25th Infantry Division. It was the newest upgraded model of the Cobra with the XM-28 nose guns (electric mini gun and 40 mm). They could not release it to me that day because none of their test pilots were available. No problem I said "I am totally rated in this aircraft and we need it today!!" The NCO gave me "the look" that gun pilots sometimes get from their ground counterparts (crazy SOB) and handed me the test pilot requirements for this aircraft. No one there would go up with me so we had to strap some sand bags in the front seat to meet the weight and balance requirements. It was a memorable flight that makes the hair stand up on the back of my neck when I think of it. I never realized that real test pilots were properly trained to do some hairy test maneuvers. I read the manual and nearly crashed into the South China Sea learning to do the "Topping Test", but we, aircraft 540 and myself, survived. That is when I began to think of 540 like a cowboy thinks of his horse. I just broke him and we are now an inseparable team.

I wasn't sure if our new Troop Commander would authorize me to paint the teeth, so I bypassed that, parked the aircraft in the last revetment and just hoped he had his hands full enough

that he might not notice for a while; or maybe he would think they just came that way. The other Cobras began to arrive. Tom Meeks got the second one. We were supposed to get twelve, but it was decided to give us only six and send the other six to the 25th Division Aviation Battalion "Diamond Heads".

To the best of my knowledge 540 was the first Cobra in the Division, I was the first active Cobra pilot, and SP5 Warren Waite was the first Cobra Crew Chief. We painted the teeth. It was so exciting! My nickname, which is another story, was painted below the backseat cockpit (Crazy Bruce) by Jim Filiatreault, we had that sucker ready for a combat mission in a couple days. I liked SP5 Waite and decided to enlist him as copilot in my devious plan to terrorize the 25th Division area. Turns out he was just as gung-ho as I was.

Here was the plan: Each day, for as long as we could get away with it, we would log out for maintenance and armament test flights. Flying at about 9000 feet we monitored the Tropic 66 frequency (I think that was the name. Anyway, the FM frequency that ground troops used to call for gun support). Our intent was to intercept a call for help and be on station in seconds with our full hog armament (76 seventeen-pound rockets plus mini gun and 40 mm grenades). Then when the scrambled gun team (either Centaurs or Diamond Heads) arrived we would already have coordinated with the ground guys, marked the target, beat Charlie up and showed him our TEETH.

It was the second or third beautiful day. We were cruising above the spotty clouds, enjoying this spectacular view. A ground unit in the Hobo Woods called in for support. They were pinned down and had pulled back Southwest of a creek line. I had been scouting and shooting in the Hobo for over a year. I knew exactly where they were. I don't remember the unit call sign ..."This is Moon Doggie 6 gunship on station for support" (that was my bogus call sign until I got nailed later for unauthorized missions). I got the sit-rep (wind direction, friendly position, etc.), lined up enfilade to the creek, began to zero out my airspeed, and called for identifying smoke. I told the guy on the ground I

would fire white phosphorous (Willy Pete) to mark the target and I needed an immediate correction based on his position. My high-altitude attack began at zero airspeed to give me maximum time on target. I rolled in ..."Willy Pete's off." Call from ground came back "On target!!" Nineteen pairs of rockets obliterated that side of the creek. We pulled out of the dive well above VNE (Velocity to Not Exceed) and about 5 pounds over red line torque. (Just consider this the first real test of how far we can push 540 and survive). "How's that?" I said. The ground commander says "On target! and what the F... are you flying?" "This is the new Cobra Gunship."..."Sure carries a lot of ordinance!"... "That was only half my load, where do you want the rest?" ..."S**t fire!" he says, bring it on. He gave us some corrections and we shot the place up good. I told Warren we were going to go down to 50 feet, 50 knots and show our teeth. He was free to empty the 40mm as we did that. He did so with great vigor. The VC were trained to always lead the aircraft by three lengths based on UH-1C speeds. So, they were either shooting way behind me or well out in front. That low, slow pass, became my modus operandi for quite a while until sometime later when Charlie finally figured out how to start hitting me.

I don't remember when the Centaur gun team (UH-1C's) arrived on station that day or whether they saw us clip a few tree tops pulling out of our last high speed rocket run. Maybe Pat Eastes will remember because it was he and Jeff "Doc" Halliday flying. One of them said something like "How are you likin it?" and my response was "You can't even imagine how great this is."

There are many more stories about my aircraft 540, like the one that caused us to expedite the painting of the same teeth on all the Cobras. The maintenance NCO that helped Tom Meeks and I get the mini-guns wired to where I could fire them from the back seat simultaneously with the rockets. My night fire mission with my Army nurse friend in the front gunner's seat.

After I had my second extension turned down,

I had to leave my trusty 540. I spent my last 2 weeks in country on 24-hour standby with a fully loaded hog, 540, with sandbags in the front seat. I was back up to any gun team that needed some more firepower, anywhere, anytime. I had to get my last licks in. I tried hard to stay in country but apparently the Army decided they needed combat experienced Cobra Pilots as instructors at the Cobra Hall training facility in Savannah, GA. My job was to train already Cobra qualified Pilots to be Instructor Pilots. Later my famous roommate Jerry Daly talked me into forgetting about the Cobra for a minute and take Command of the support unit at Cobra Hall. It was my first.

I finally got back to Vietnam in 1972, and got assigned to a unit that was just transitioning to new Cobras from their old UH-1C model Gunships. The 129th Assault Helicopter Company "Bulldogs & Cobras". It was a tough transition for the unit since the Crew Chiefs and Door Gunners no longer flew. Low morale for some, but exciting for our new pilots. Because I was now a senior Captain I could be the Gun Platoon leader and not lose my job to every new Captain that arrived. Of course, I immediately had my Sharks teeth painted on all the Cobras. We had top notch pilots that made a lasting impression on the Koreans that we supported with our flashy red and white sharks' teeth when we bailed them out of the Battle of An Khe Pass 1972.

I moved on and went into Aviation Research and Development for some rewarding assignments to finish out my 20 years. And now, at an age I could never have expected to achieve, my sharks' teeth are still the clearest, brightest, most exciting memories of my life.

By Bruce Powell

VETERAN'S QUILT PRESENTATION AND QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

Yesterday our August 2025 St. Louis reunion seemed so far away, but today, it appears to be just around the corner. Again, we will be presenting quilts to several of our veterans at the Veterans' Presentation and Quilters' Show and Tell; we encourage everyone to attend our presentation.

To all of my quilters, I am still accepting blocks and quilts (lap size); all blocks received will be incorporated into quilts for the 2026 Reunion. If anyone desires to donate a quilt for our upcoming reunion, I will need prior notification so an appropriate presentation label can be prepared.

Quilt block requirements continue to be:

- ~Fabric is to be prewashed to prevent bleeding colors

(Retayne sets the colors in the fabric)

~Colors requested. Red, White/Cream and blue.

- ~Blocks measurement is to be:
12 1/2 inches unfinished.

Use a quarter inch seam allowance.



If anyone has a quilt to present to that "special someone", please contact me so your presentation can be arranged.

Direct questions to me at:

Kathleen Sherfey

Quilt Coordinator

913-631-6811

klskms@aol.com

(Subject line: VHPA Quilter)

Upcoming Reunions

D Troop 1/1 Cav

When: March 25-27, 2025

Where: Hilton Garden Inn Reagan National
Airport

Information/contact:

gsmith1158@yahoo.com,
or by phone at 419-706-1277.

Interested in Advertising in The VHPA Aviator?

*The Official Newsletter
of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association*

Prices range from \$135.00 for a quarter-page to \$475.00 for a full-page, color advertisement.

*Our staff Graphic Designer will help
design your Aviator ad at no cost,
other price discounts are available.*

**Full Details
available at:**

Aviator@VHPA.org

Marriott St. Louis Grand

800 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63101

\$132 + tax over the dates of 20 August, 2025 – 23 August, 2025 **BASED ON AVAILABILITY**
(VHPA room rate availability limited pre & post reunion dates)

Cutoff date for VHPA hotel rate is Sunday, 27 July, 2025

Hotel Reservation information will be provided with Reunion Registration confirmation email

PLEASE consult www.vhpa.org for the most current Reunion information and details.

VHPA 2025 PRELIMINARY REUNION SCHEDULE

Wednesday 20 Aug	Thursday 21 Aug	Friday 22 Aug	Saturday 23 Aug
Mini Reunions Vendor Room	Golf Vendor Room St. Louis History Tour Welcome Reception	Gold Star Breakfast Quilters Show & Tell Vendor Room Skyline Dinner Cruise	Memorial Service Business Meeting Spouse Event Closing Banquet



Skyline Dinner Cruise

Set sail along the Mississippi River in a 19th century paddle boat. One of the highlights of this dinner cruise will, undoubtedly, be the sight of the Gateway

Arch shimmering against the landscape. Enjoy a relaxing evening with dinner, drinks and the views of the city skyline. This will be one unforgettable adventure for VHPA guests.

Soldiers Memorial Military Museum

Journey to the heart of military history at *Soldiers Memorial* Military Museum in downtown St. Louis. *Soldiers Memorial* Military Museum is a state-of-the-art museum facility that honors military service, veterans and their families. *Soldiers Memorial* shares American military history through the lens of St. Louis and a definite must see.



Anheuser-Busch Brewery Tour

The hub for innovation brewing of over 30 brands, like favorites Budweiser and Michelob ULTRA. Guests can explore the Anheuser-Busch brewery and learn why the beer is second to none. Packed with history and stunning views of the property, you'll learn all about the life of an Anheuser-Busch beer from seed to sip and to its crisp taste as the finished product!

St. Louis City Tour

This tour will give VHPA Guests all the secrets and sights that St. Louis has to offer from the beginning to present day. Packed with sights like Gateway Arch, amazing mosaics of the Cathedral Basilica, Soulard Market, Lafayette Square, Fox Theatre and much more. Guests will learn all the secret spots for local breweries and bites to eat as well.



VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

"WE FLEW ABOVE THE FINEST"

Marriott St. Louis Grand

AUGUST 20 - 23, 2025



GENERAL REUNION INFORMATION

Last updated 30 Oct 2024

DUE TO THE CUT-OFF DATE FOR ITEMS TO BE PLACED IN THE REUNION FLYER, THE INFORMATION BELOW IS PRELIMINARY INFORMATION THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

**FINAL REUNION DETAILS WILL BE LISTED AT VHPA.ORG AT A LATER DATE.
PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK THE VHPA WEBSITE FOR THE MOST CURRENT DETAILS.**

VHPA REUNION & HOTEL REGISTRATION IS ANTICIPATED TO OPEN IN MAY 2025

Reunion Hotel Info: Marriott St. Louis Grand, 800 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63101

The VHPA Group Rate is **\$132 plus tax per night** over the dates of **20 AUGUST 2025 thru 23 AUGUST 2025 (based on hotel availability)**. The VHPA room rate has limited availability pre & post reunion dates.

The cutoff date for the hotel rate is 27 JULY 2025.

Information for booking hotel rooms will be emailed to you with your reunion registration receipt & itinerary.

Transportation from/to the Airport: Several options for transportation from/to the St. Louis airport are: Uber, Lyft, taxi and the St. Louis MetroLink Light Rail.

To use the Light Rail, follow the MetroLink signs throughout the Airport to the Light Rail platform. VHPA members will be using the RED LINE from/to the airport/hotel. Tickets can be purchased at the boarding platform via ticket vending machines. Exit the Light Rail at the Convention Center Station for the Marriott St. Louis Grand, the hotel is about a block away. The estimated Light Rail time from/to the Airport/Hotel is 30 minutes.

For more information visit: <https://www.metrostlouis.org/metrolink/>

Parking: VHPA has negotiated a 40% discount off the 2025 hotel self parking rates.

Internet Access: Wireless internet is complimentary throughout the hotel.

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

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

Wheelchair/Scooter Rentals – Wheelchair and scooter rentals can be booked with Mobility City St. Louis. They will deliver and pickup to the hotel for a fee. Reservations need to be made 6-8 weeks in advance.

For more information: Visit <https://stlouismo.mobilitycity.com> or call 636-434-2860.

Vendor Area: If you are interested or know of anyone interested in becoming a Vendor for R2025 please go to www.vhpa.org and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver, and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules & Regulations. Complete the forms and mail or email to VHPA HQ. If you know of anyone that you think would be an asset to the Reunion Vendor Area be sure to let them know or contact VHPA HQ to give us the info and we will be happy to give them a call. Be sure to send your form in early.

Oral History Interviews: Mike Law will be available to record and collect Oral Histories. As we have done in past years, we will be signing attendees up for slots in advance. Please contact Mike Law via email at mikelaw1943@gmail.com or visit www.vhpa.org for details about how to sign up prior to arriving in St. Louis so you can fit this history preserving event into your Reunion schedule.

Volunteers: The South Missouri Chapter is the Host Chapter this year and as such, will organize the volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are organized around stations and then shifts with the number of volunteers needed for that shift. Sounds like a Duty Roster! We've found that 3-hour shifts will not take up much of your time or make you too tired. Additionally, we can guarantee everyone is trained on their duties. Needless to say, WE GREATLY APPRECIATE having volunteers! Not only do we avoid the cost of hiring local convention bureau temps, but we get a chance to interact with each other while performing the tasks EXACTLY as a VHPA'er would have it done. As is our tradition, the Host Chapter, The South Missouri Chapter, gets "first shot" at the Duty Roster. If you are interested in volunteering, contact HQ at sherry@vhpa.org or 800-505-8472. BTW, husband and wife teams are welcome to volunteer.

Reunion T-Shirts – The T-shirts for this year will come in small thru 3XL. The shirt design & color is still in the works. You are welcome to order as many as you wish with your Reunion Registration by July 25 or until sold out.

Please know it is possible to order Reunion T-shirts even if you do not plan to attend the Reunion. Simply contact VHPA HQ and tell them you only want a "Reunion T-shirt order only". The shirts will be mailed to you after the Reunion.

Attendee (Member/Subscriber or Guest) Registration - The early registration fee is **\$40** through 19 August and **\$50** beginning 20 August.

Please remember that each person, regardless of age, who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.

17 & under Guest Registration - The registration fee for someone 17 & under is **\$20**.

Please remember that each person, regardless of age, who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.

Canceling a Reunion Registration – The VHPA Member or Subscriber who made the Reunion Registration is known as the Primary Registrant (PR). A PR may cancel all or portions of his/her registration **by notifying HQ by close of business (3:00pm Central Time) Friday, 25 July 2025**. Please contact HQ by email at HQ@vhpa.org or phone at 800-505-8472. **It is important to note that reunion registration cancellations and hotel reservation cancellations are completely separate business processes. The PR is responsible for both processes. PRs cannot assume that when they cancel their hotel reservation that the hotel will notify HQ to cancel the reunion registration or vice versa.**

Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) Program - It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are non-refundable even with purchase of GRI: the GRI itself, reunion registration fees, dues payments, or voluntary contributions, cancellation fees, plus any event tickets designated as non-refundable. A PR may only cancel all or portions of his/her registration with GRI **by notifying HQ by close of business (3:00pm Central time) Friday, 08 August 2025**. Please contact HQ by email at HQ@vhpa.org or phone at 800-505-8472. The GRI program covers only specific VHPA events and fees, and does not cover cancellation costs that might be associated with hotel rooms, airfares, rental cars, and other non-VHPA generated expenses.

Reunion Refunds - The Executive Council establishes the official cancellation date (OCD) for each reunion. **The OCD for this year's reunion is Friday, 25 July 2025 without GRI and Friday, 08 August 2025 with GRI.** Only cancellations received by HQ by close of business (3:00pm Central Time) on the OCD are considered for refunds. **It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are non-refundable even with purchase of GRI: the GRI itself, reunion registration fees, dues payments, donations or voluntary contributions, cancellation fees, plus any event tickets designated as non-refundable.** As a general rule, HQ starts processing refunds about two weeks after the reunion ends. No refunds are processed until after the reunion is over. For PRs receiving a refund, there is a two-step process. First, the PR receives a letter and/or a statement from HQ outlining the details of the refund including the amount. Normally this correspondence is sent from HQ by US mail but it can be via email. Second, the PR receives a check via US mail from the VHPA's bank (Chase Bank). No refunds are issued back to credit cards. The goal is to complete the entire refund process no later than one calendar month after the reunion ends. Any clerical errors in the details of the refund should be brought to the attention of HQ.

Mini-Reunions: 21 August through 23 August - Keeping in mind that one of the primary reasons for our Reunion is to reconnect with past compatriots from your RVN unit and flight school. The best way to meet up with unit members is to schedule your own Mini-Reunion. If your unit does not have a Mini-Reunion, why not take the initiative to start one up, or you could combine with other sister units you are familiar with if you wish. In addition to specific units and flight classes, we've had Mini-Reunions for such subjects as tandem rotor, Dust-off, Operation Lam Son 719, anyone who was stationed at Soc Trang, VHPA chapters, anyone interested in radio controlled aircraft models. Mini-Reunions are typically scheduled in 4-hour blocks and are available for booking on most days during the Reunion. You can also request a second four-hour block. However, this second block will be granted on a space available basis with priority for the particular space given to units requesting only one block. Due to decreased usage and increased expenses, the Reunion no longer provides AV equipment for Mini-Reunions. Once your Mini-Reunion is scheduled the details will appear on the webpage. You still should make an effort to get the word out to your buds. Use your directory to contact members (encourage them to re-up with the VHPA if they are not dues current), write a short article for the VHPA Aviator, and schedule early so we can list your unit in articles such as this.

NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS ARE ALLOWED IN THESE ROOMS!

It is easy to schedule a Mini-Reunion. Complete the Mini-Reunion Request form available at VHPA.ORG and return by email to Sherry Rodgers at sherry@vhpao.org or mail the completed form to HQ at the address listed on the form.

KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Sponsorship - \$30 - Use this item to support costs of events for Gold Star Families to attend events. Thank you for your generosity.

PLEASE NOTE: This item does not provide you with a ticket to the Gold Star Breakfast, it helps to provide events for Gold Star Family Members.

O'Club: 20 August - 4:00pm-9:00pm / 21 August-22 August - 11:00am-9:00pm / 23 August - 12:30pm-9:00pm

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

INVITATION TO JOIN VHPA EC

BE AN ACTIVE VOICE IN THE VISION FOR VHPA ~Serve Our Membership On The Executive Council~

As is VHPA policy, on Saturday morning, 23 August, 2025, the attending membership will select two members to fill the positions of Vice President and Junior Member At Large by majority vote, following this year's Annual Business Meeting (ABM) in St. Louis.

Executive Council participation provides opportunity to serve our membership in ways that are interesting and rewarding. Basic duties include monthly attendance at a teleconference/ZOOM meeting, and an in person meeting during the reunion, as well as intervening duties and discussions to address issues associated with our ongoing service to the organization and its membership.

Simply declare your intention to run and a short bio (not to exceed 500 words) to Pat Leone, Junior Member At Large (Elections Committee Chair) thirty days in advance of

the ABM. Individuals seeking to run for Vice President must have served on the Executive Council in the past. First time applicants must be dues current and a member for at least one year to be eligible. Each candidate will have the opportunity to campaign beforehand, and will have the opportunity to address the attending membership at the ABM for three minutes before the vote is taken.

Entire requirements and processes are shown in the elections policy document located on the association web site.

Contact Pat Leone at:
apacheo46@aol.com,
or **512 966-7498**
for additional information.

R2025 PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

All events & times are subject to change

Updated 10.30.24

Time	Event
WEDNESDAY, AUG 20	
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Pre-Registered Packet and Tshirt Pickup
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Welcome Desk
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
4:00 pm - 9:00 pm	O' Club Open
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Oral History Interviews
THURSDAY, AUG 21	
7:30 am - 3:30 pm	Golf
7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast
8:00 am - 7:00 pm	Pre-Registered Packet and Tshirt Pickup
8:00 am - 7:00 pm	Welcome Desk
8:30 am - 11:30 am	HQ Registration Desk
9:00 am - 10:00 am	Oral History Interviews
9:00 am - 6:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
11:00 am - 9:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:30 pm - 7:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating - questions or changes
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Welcome Reception
FRIDAY, AUG 22	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Pre-Registered Packet and Tshirt Pickup
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk
8:30 am - 11:30 am	HQ Registration Desk
9:00 am - 10:00 am	Oral History Interviews
9:00 am - 6:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
11:00 am - 9:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:30 pm - 6:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Veterans Quilt Presentation and Quilters Show & Tell
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating-questions or changes
TBD	Dinner Cruise
SATURDAY, AUG 23	
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Pre-Memorial Breakfast
8:45 am - 9:30 am	Memorial Service
8:30 am - 11:30 am	HQ Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Spouse/Guest Event
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting
12:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
12:30 pm - 9:00 pm	O' Club Open
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Mini-Reunions / TOCs
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Banquet Seating-questions or changes
5:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Closing Banquet w/Entertainment



Book Reviews by Phil Marshall

Phil Marshall, is a Life Member and was President of the VHPA in 1994. He flew Dustoff in 1969 in Northern I Corps and he is also a Life Member of American Huey 369. He has authored over 25 books to include 19 books documenting the rescues missions that we all flew in Vietnam. **You can contact Phil at dmz.dustoff@yahoo.com**



"Tales From the Cockpit" by Chuck Howard

Not many Vietnam Helicopter books are written by Test Pilots...this one is, giving one more perspective of flying in Vietnam. However, this well-written book goes even further. Author Chuck Howard also gives a

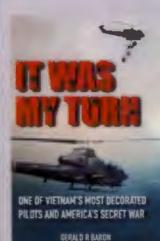
bird's eye view of his many adventures after Vietnam. At least half the book is dedicated to his later career and is very entertaining. Quite the career, Sir!

Logging his flight time as "TP" for Test Pilot in VN, Chuck does an exceptional job describing his numerous "Excellent Adventures" (my words) growing up, flying helicopters in combat and post-Vietnam flying for the Port Authority in New York and New Jersey. Talk about a career! The book consists of 49 Chapters with very few Chapters more than several pages and many only a couple of pages. Quick, concise writing using easy to read plain English. Kinda like Readers Digest; some short, quick "snippets" that allow the reader to read a couple of chapters and come back later at the reader's convenience without having to remember the previous chapters.

Here are some things to look for in "Tales From the Cockpit": Playing "Chicken" with a helicopter and a Deuce-and-a-Half. An interesting R&R to Japan. A "Gotcha" experience with a Korean passenger. The World Record Exhibitionist. And a VERY prophetic comment from the Mastermind of the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993. Most of these got a verbal reaction from me.

However, to me, the most interesting post-Vietnam Chapter was his documenting the loss of TWA Flight 800 over the Atlantic. I'm thinking "What the heck did he have to do with that?" You will have to find out for yourself, but here's a hint: Pilot Howard is the first helicopter on the scene; his eye-witness accounting of that tragedy and his analysis of the final accident report were quite interesting to me. Things that make you go "Hmmm?" Overall, his post-VN "Excellent Adventures" were just as good as his combat time!

Books like Howard's are the things that make me glad I volunteered to review books for the VHPA Aviator. Otherwise, I would have missed many of the Excellent stories contained in all of them.



"It Was My Turn"

A biography of CW2 Terry Crump
By Gerald R. Baron

"One of Vietnam's Most Decorated Pilots and America's Secret War", reads the subtitle, this very well researched and compiled book documenting the tour of

Cobra pilot Terry Crump will keep you reading every page, not wanting to miss any of the included missions.

Written by Gerald R. Baron, who got a very good look at the tour of a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, has done an excellent job of detailing Terry Crump's tour in Vietnam. Baron now probably knows more about "the way it really was" in Vietnam as any civilian who wasn't there. Interestingly, Baron uses a ploy that ends many Chapters with teasers and spoiler alerts for the next Chapter to keep the reader interested. A nice touch, Sir!

Terry Crump flew with the 361st AWC Pink Panthers,

supporting SOG missions out of II Corps...and other places. Many of his flights are recounted by the Author in great detail. Of course, Crumps early life before Vietnam and life after Vietnam are included as well, but it's the details in between that will capture your attention. Of particular interest to me is the narrative of "Operation Tailwind". If you are not familiar with that bit of history, reading about the Operation alone is worth the price of the book. At least, that was my "take" on it. Baron did his research and conducted many detailed interviews to capture a very in-depth accounting. Attending the 2024 SOG Reunion, I'm sure, was a gold mine of war. By Gerald R. Baron is a regular Daisy Chain of missions and information. In my not so humble opinion, it is well researched, well documented, well written and, well...done really well!

And, yes, Crump really was awarded 7 Distinguished Flying Crosses during his 365 day tour. And, no, he was not the Awards and Decoration Officer.

JERSEY BOY TAKES FLIGHT

One Man's Story of Life, Loss, and Love During the Vietnam Era

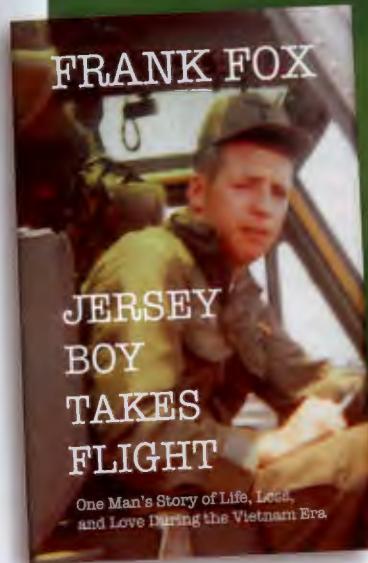
“ Peaceful as it looks from above,

a war was raging on the mountaintops,
in the jungle, and in the rice paddies
and villages below...

No boundaries, no warnings, no D-Days...
...but always lurking close by, and

fate was the hunter! ”

- Frank Fox



"Jersey Boy Takes Flight", by Frank Fox, is available through local bookstores, AMAZON, or other book suppliers in hard / soft cover, e-book, and audio-book (author read).

Vietnam Heli Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

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**TAKE YOUR GROUP
& PICK YOUR
OWN DATES**

A Visit to Texas Tech

I had the occasion to visit Texas Tech in Lubbock Texas for an award ceremony. I had heard there was a depository of Vietnam information there and since I was interviewed by Mike Law after the San Antonio VHPA reunion, I decided to make a stop at The Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive. I was provided a personal guided tour of the facility. This is a two-story fully climate-controlled building. They have all Vietnam information from the libraries of every president from President Eisenhower to President Ford. A whole section contains over 10,000 published books concerning Vietnam. I was extremely impressed at the dedication and thoroughness of preserving our story in history. What better place for our story to be preserved than in a research facility on the grounds of a university.

Staff members painstakingly examine all the donated material and thoroughly preserve it from deterioration. Then the papers are catalogued and placed in special folders that prevent further deterioration, assuring the information is available for future reference. They have high tech equipment for keeping old film from sticking together thus allowing it to be digitized by the facility. Likewise, they accept original photographs and slides. They do not accept digitized photos because of the possibly of the photo being photoshopped; photoshopping; is the altering of a digital image with Photoshop software or other image-editing software in a way that distorts the original photo deliberately (as for deliberate deceptive purposes). Sound recordings from various sources are also preserved. I thought it was interesting that bound books are kept behind blackout curtains to prevent light from causing the book covers and titles to fade.

Then there is a large section of donated items ranging from Montagnard cross bows, steel pots, uniforms, and medals etc. (Montagnard is an umbrella term for the various indigenous peoples of the Central Highlands of Vietnam) Row upon row of movable library shelves hold all the reference material. This is truly a first-class research facility preserving our stories for future generations

to research and learn from. You are not allowed to go into the storage area normally, but I was given a tour since I had contributed an oral history interview. You can access information via the internet or visit and check out items for use in the reading room. The curator indicated they are experiencing over 200,000 inquiries a year. So, if you would like to tell your Vietnam story, you can be interviewed. Mike Law with the VHPA conducts interviews and the archives staff can arrange for your interview as well. If you would like to get further information on contributing your history, visit:

<https://vva.vietnam.ttu.edu>

By JB West

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

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Fair Prices Paid. Not for profit.
References available.



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Spearheading the 1972 Easter Counter-Offensive

By Phillip K. Manuel

I didn't sleep much the night of July 10th, 1972. Earlier that evening, we received a briefing that the next morning we would spearhead the counter offensive in Military Region I to drive the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) back across the demilitarized zone. Our mission was to insert a battalion of the Army of South Vietnam (ARVN) Soldiers behind NVA lines. The Pickup Zone (PZ) would be a large field north of HUE, but south of the My Chanh River. The plan was for us to cross the Forward Edge of the Battlefield (FEBA) formed by the My Chanh River at an altitude of fifty feet in echelon right formation. We could expect light resistance enroute to the landing zone (LZ), but to anticipate the NVA attempting to shoot us down on the way out after inserting the ARVNs thus trapping them behind enemy lines without any means of support. After departing the LZ, we would fly south to the PZ in loose formation as low and as fast as possible with each crew picking their own most advantageous route to avoid NVA antiaircraft and small arms fire. After the briefing we performed a preflight on our assigned aircraft so that if we found any issues with the aircraft, maintenance personnel would correct the discrepancy before morning.

I don't know what the other pilots did after the briefing and preflight, but I went back to my hooch to get some sleep. Wakeup call was planned for around 0400 hours. I didn't sleep much. I was concerned about the danger involved in the next morning's mission. It seemed like every time I dozed off, I would be awakened by the rumble from B52 strikes hitting NVA positions over 165 kms away. The B52 strikes would make my bed shake like a small earthquake.

My concern about the mission was fueled by knowing that our company commander, Major Dan Kingman, and his crew were blown out of the air by a heat seeking missile on 24 May in the same general area we would be entering the next morning. His copilot was a good friend of mine, First Lieutenant Bruce Kline. Bruce and I attended the

Transportation Officer's Basic Course, Flight School, and the Aircraft Maintenance Officer's Course together. I was also thinking about another Flight School classmate, First Lieutenant John Call, US Air Force, killed near Quang Tri during a search and rescue mission on 6 April when his CH-53 was shot down by a ZSU-23 anti-aircraft system. We knew that we would be flying against some very deadly enemy anti-aircraft weapons.

On 11 July the mess hall opened around 0500 hours. The mess hall was crowded for that time of the morning. As I ate breakfast with the other aircrews, I couldn't help but wonder if this was going to be my last meal. I never thought my last meal might be bacon, eggs, and pancakes. After breakfast, we headed to the company area to draw our weapons and look over the aircraft one more time even though we completed our aircraft preflight the night before. Sometime around 0700 hours the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) departed Marble Mountain Army Airfield and flew north past Da Nang, over the Hai Van Pass enroute to the PZ north of Hue.

My aircraft commander (AC) that day was CW2 Bumpus. I had flown with him on other missions and knew he was a good pilot and AC. As we cleared the Hai Van, we could see flashes from naval gun fire and B52 strikes pounding the NVA positions many kilometers to the north. The weather was good that morning and it took us a little over an hour to fly to our PZ. The PZ turned out to be a large, open field with groups of ARVN Soldiers formed up and ready to get on the helicopters.

We landed in the PZ and shut down. A short time later we were joined by UH-1s and Cobras from F/4th, F/8th, and F/9th Cavalry. We also had our own Cobras from the 48th Gun Platoon, the Jokers. Our flight was going to consist of 50 UH-1's and 16 Cobras. The 48th Company Command, Captain (CPT) Harvey L. Wilson, was the flight leader. CW2 Bumpus and I were chalk 2 in the flight. Not long after we arrived at the PZ a flight of four or five Marine CH-46s joined us. They were

not part of our assault and had their own LZ to deal with.

We were not on the ground long before the ARVN's started moving toward our aircraft. I don't know what one of the ARVN Soldiers did, but he ticked off his sergeant. I watched the Soldier low crawl about 30 yards to the helicopter with his sergeant walking beside him and yelling at him and every time he tried to get up his sergeant hit him in the head with his steel pot. The beating continued until the Soldier reached the helicopter.

We started our aircraft once the ARVN's were on board. The ground literally shook when all the helicopters were at full throttle. Feeling the ground shake and the sound of all those helicopters caused the adrenalin to start flowing. Seeing the 50 UH-1s and 16 Cobras lined up for the assault was an unbelievable sight and exciting to be a part of. The Marine CH-46s departed just before we lifted off and headed for their LZ. I never saw the CH-46s after that. VNAF helicopter units were supposed to be part of the mission as a follow-on assault to our insertion. I never saw them before we took off. They must have landed in the PZ right after we departed.

We lifted off as a flight of 50 UH-1s in echelon right formation sometime around mid-morning. Cobras guarded our left and right flanks. We stayed below 50 feet in hopes of avoiding antiaircraft fire and the heat seeking missiles. We could see the naval gun fire still pounding the NVA positions ahead of us. Some of the B52 strikes had dropped white phosphorus (Willy Pete) or napalm bombs despite CPT Wilson's request during mission planning that they not use those type of bombs near our LZ. Fires ignited by the B52 strikes generated a lot of smoke and dust which reduced our visibility. As we flew toward the LZ, we could see the smoke and dust clouds ahead of us and the farther north we went the worse the visibility became.

We were flying just to the west of Highway 1, and as we reached the My Chanh River, I saw that the bridge was still laying in the river. The bridge had been destroyed by the South Vietnamese Marines on 17 May as the Marines withdrew to the south. There was no way for wheeled or tracked vehicles to cross the river after the bridge was demolished. The My Chanh River was the FEBA with everything north of the river belonging to the NVA and we

were crossing the FEBA. I had flown missions after 17 May in support of the ARVN's and during those missions saw hundreds of military vehicles, motorcycles, and Lambrettas scattered all over the highway north of the bridge. Some of the vehicles appeared to still have bodies in them. As we crossed the river on 11 July, the vehicles were still on the road, but it appeared the bodies had been recovered.

After crossing the river, we flew over NVA armor and wheeled vehicles, most of which had been destroyed by the B52 strikes and naval gun fire. A couple of the vehicles that survived the B52s and naval gun fire made the mistake of moving and were quickly destroyed by the Cobras. The farther north we flew, the thicker the smoke and dust became. The visibility was terrible. CPT Wilson came on the radio and told the flight that we were going to make a slow, 180 degrees turn to the left to get out of the smoke and dust. Doing a 180 degree turn with a flight of 50 UH-1s and 16 Cobras in poor visibility was not easy. It was a perfect situation for a midair. Somehow, we maintained limited visibility with the ground and other aircraft throughout the maneuver and completed the turn without incident. We flew south for a couple of minutes and then turned east for a minute or two. We then turned north toward our LZ. Approaching the LZ from the southeast provided us better visibility and we were able to see the LZ.

As we approached the LZ, things started getting exciting. I could hear some small arms fire. Mortar and artillery rounds were exploding under us as we approached the LZ. The thing I remember most as we landed was all the explosions going off around us. Fountains of dirt and mud were blowing up everywhere. I don't know how much of it was suppressive fire from the Cobras or how much of it was NVA incoming rounds. It reminded me of scenes from WWII movies. We barely touched down before the ARVN's exited the aircraft and started clearing the LZ. We quickly departed as a flight of 50 with some of the Cobras escorting us and some staying on station to support the ARVN's at the LZ.

The formation back to PZ was still echelon right but much looser than the formation to the LZ. We still expected the NVA to try to shoot us down on our way back south. I was in the right seat and on the controls flying nap of the earth at about 120

knots when I hopped over a small tree line. A duck flew up from a pond directly in front of us and hit my chin bubble. The chin bubble disintegrated on duck impact. We had just experienced a Be One Are Dee (B1RD) strike! Fortunately, my helmet visor was down, and I didn't get any plexiglass in my eyes. My helmet immediately started floating around my head, held in place by my chinstrap. The wind velocity coming through the open chin bubble was terrible. I looked down at my feet and the duck was crumpled up between the peddles. We radioed our B1RD strike to the flight lead.

We flew back to the PZ to pick up another sortie of ARVNs. While loading the second sortie I took the opportunity to get out of the helicopter and removed the dead duck. The duck felt like mush. I don't think there was a bone in its body that had not been broken. The only pieces of chin bubble remaining were small pieces with screws holding them in place.

The second insertion was uneventful until we again entered the cloud of smoke and dust. As we entered the cloud, we saw the VNAF helicopters coming at us. They were not in formation and totally unorganized. They landed in the LZ several minutes after our initial assault, dropped off their soldiers, and were heading home. Somehow, we avoided midair collisions with the VNAF and proceeded to the LZ. We never saw the VNAF helicopters after that, they did not make a second assault. Landing in the LZ the second time was uncontested and much less exciting. After the second insertion we flew back to Marble Mountain. The flight back was very uncomfortable with no chin bubble to block the wind. My helmet seemed to float around my head from all the air being forced under it. I couldn't help but think how amazing the mission was and that we sustained no casualties (other than the dead duck). I understand some intelligence officers were monitoring our frequencies during our assault and heard us report the B1RD strike. They had no idea what a B1RD strike was and wanted information about the B1RD missile. I wish I could have shown them the duck!

Years later I learned that the assault was supposed to be a South Vietnamese operation. According to the Paris Peace Talks all U.S. combat forces were out of Viet Nam by 1 June. The 48th

AHC was supposed to stand down prior to 1 June but was extended in country to support the counter offensive. It was the only AHC left in Viet Nam. As far as the Paris Peace Talk negotiators and politicians were concerned, we were no longer in Viet Nam. The military planners knew that the South Vietnamese could not mount a successful counter offense without us, so we were ordered to lead the way even though we were officially no longer in Viet Nam. Historical documents record Air Force and Marine Corps support for the counter offensive on 11 July, but no mention is documented of brave, courageous 48th AHC support. None of the Army crewmembers that participated in the assault were awarded commendations or awards. There is no record of the 48th AHC spearheading the counter offensive in Military Region 1 that day.

The UH-1 and Cobra aircrews displayed unwavering bravery and amazing flying skills during the execution of the mission on July 11th while dealing with the limited visibility and size of the aircraft formation. The unit leadership was exemplary. The motto of the 48th AHC was Skill Not Luck. We demonstrated a lot of skill that day, but I believe we also were blessed with a lot of luck.

The 48th AHC flew missions supporting the South Vietnamese for a short time after 11 July, but soon focused on standing down the unit and transferring the guidon to Germany by the end of August. Unit personnel who had nine or more months in Viet Nam got to go home. Those of us who had less than nine months in the country, I had eight, were transferred to other units. Most of us went to either F/4th CAV or Headquarters 11th Aviation Group. I went to the 11th Aviation Group and became the Head and Headquarters Company Executive Officer. I served in that capacity until I left Viet Nam on a C5A to Dover, Delaware on 19 December.

Side note from Reviewer Dennis Faucher:

After June 1, 1972 the 48th AHC was not the only AHC remaining in RVN. The 129th AHC didn't leave until April of 1973 and the 61st was still at Lane. At least two were still in Pleiku.

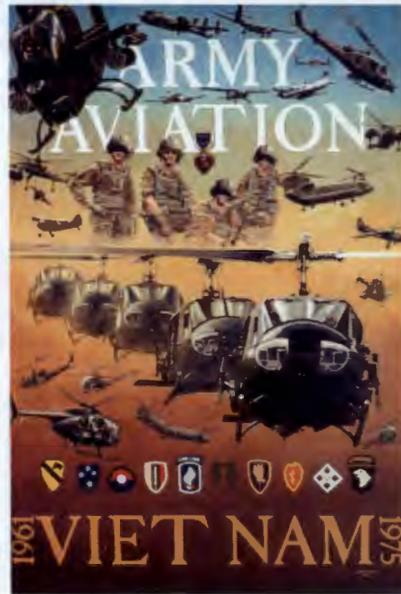
Colonel Matt Jackson has catalogued the process of reporting to the Induction Center to earning his Army Aviator wings in a way which reveals the long road (in effort – not time) many will find both entertaining and informative. For those unaware of the journey from young man to combat seasoned veteran it is a fascinating tale.

For those who have made the journey it is a poignant reprise of a time long ago and a proud achievement.



His brothers in arms will find it accurate and well... nostalgic.

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*Have photos for future calendars?
Contact VHPA HQ and ask for Mike Law.



The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assoc. and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new *VHPA 2025 Calendar*, now available for immediate delivery. This is the 32nd annual calendar produced by the VHPA.

Each month presents scenes of the men and machines that flew over Southeast Asia, plus detailed captions about what is pictured.*

The annual *VHPA Calendar* also commemorates the 2,167 helicopter pilots who died or whose bodies were not returned (BNR) from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-75).

Printed in full-color, this 16x11-inch (BIG) wall calendar is the perfect gift for all VHPA members and their families. **Only \$16.95!** (plus shipping & Missouri state taxes if applicable.)

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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.

V H P A Chapters

ALAMO CHAPTER

Things are picking up and more things happened in South Central Texas these past several weeks. Although the weather has been very hot and humid, August was a real burner, the Alamo Chapter group started moving about. Several couples enjoyed cruises on European rivers and cruising the med and other points. Others headed for the Pacific region. Several of us got together for some day trips enjoying a variety of cuisines and enjoying each other's company.



Our monthly luncheons/dinners continue. In August the group met for a great brunch at the Hatch Café & Bistro in Bulverde, TX. The Hatch is a wonderful and quaint café located in a small village serving excellent food. You need to stop by if you're in town. On September 11, President Tim Worley convened a business meeting and hosted a dinner with the purpose of holding elections for the 2025 officers. Elected were: Mike Law, President; Dave Sherrard, Vice President; Mike Clark continues as Secretary; Chic Carter continues as treasurer; Jim Boykin, Senior Member at Large;



Author Jim Weatherill discussing his book.



Dinner Presenters Jim & Anne Weatherill.



Fellowship 2.



Mike & Diane Law and Jan Clark.



Fellowship 1.



Membership Business Meeting & Dinner 2.

VHPA Chapter Activities

Mid-Term Member at Large remains open as of this writing but we have a possible in mind; and to round out the officers, Dale Stout as the Junior Member at Large.

Earlier this month, President Worley hosted an Executive Council meeting discussing not only next year but determining how best to invest the money we have on-hand. The Council presented their recommendations to the general membership. The members approved to continue to support the Huey 369 Project and the Vietnam Archive Center and Museum at Texas Tech University.

The chapter is also planning for our annual Christmas Party/Dinner, which is scheduled on 7 December at the Army Residence Community. This is always a great time. The chapter is alive, well, and active. President Tim Worley occupies the left seat and continues to lead the chapter to a successful year although he is preparing to relinquish that seat to Mike Law.

Visit us at our web site: <http://vhpa-alamo.com/> for more information about the Alamo Chapter.

Until next time, stay happy and healthy.

Mike Clark
Chapter Secretary



President Tim Worley addressing the group.



President Tim Worley greeting new member Rick Throchmorton and his wife, Phyllis.

Alaska Chapter News!

 We decided this year to have our annual picnic as a memorial for the 16-chapter members we have lost over the past few years. We also had the honor to dedicate the park for David Buirge.

The Members of American Legion Post #15 and our chapter recognized all the work David has done over the past 10 years to upgrade and make the park a great place for picnics. He also organized and coordinated the picnics over the years, and we were asked to name the park after David.

So, on a very nice partly cloudy day, we gathered to celebrate our friends who now have a heavenly home, enjoy good food and comradery, and dedicate the park. Small but wonderful turnout, and it was honorable and very nice.



VHPA Chapter Activities

We are preparing for winter, and our fall dinner this November will honor another member who has passed, Tom Blake. This year instead of a potluck we are having it catered with a slide show of our events and members for the past ten years. We will also be debating whether to keep our web-site or not as most members do not seem to use it. All this should be a Hoot!

Still Have Wreaths Across America



in December then It gets quiet and many of our members disappear until spring! But, we stay in touch the best we can and look forward to our next event.

***There is Pride in Knowing
WE FLEW.***

Lynn Kile

www.VHPA-Alaska.org

Georgia Chapter



UH-1H "Hollywood" Inauguration.

Well, Our Chapter's progress toward refurbishing the trailer belonging to the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation is well documented in The Aviator. With a push, our partner, Andrew Thomas' All Peachtree Towing, refurbished lights, brakes, hubs, tires, goose-neck hitch and blade rest!



This trailer pulls like a Great Dane! This trailer was constructed by the USMC probably 50 years ago and will still be rolling 50 years from now. And with the additional help from our AAHF friends, the congregants at World Harvest Church really enjoyed their "Celebrate America" participation this June 29th weekend. We were asked to exhibit AAHF's UH-1 "Hollywood", and with great Chapter participation, we did!

Travis Lee Memorial – 20 SEP 2024

In support of our local Veteran Brothers, The Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Assn (AVVBA), Our Chapter was asked to attend and support the dedication of a memorial in the honor of Lieutenant Travis Lee, a KIA in a battle in Dinh Tuong Province in the Mekong Delta on 17 APR 1969.



Although stationed in Country as a Combat Engineer, then Lt. Travis Lee found himself assigned as an Infantry Platoon Leader due to shortages. On the night of 17 APR, his platoon came under heavy attack which he and his men repelled. Subsequent attacks



Bob Maynard and Chuck Bayless with Roswell FD



Founder Mirek Hufton, 2 from left, and staff.



Jim Crawford and friends



The Church Toddlers

VHPA Chapter Activities

found Lt. Lee moving among his men, directing them and defending their perimeter. He fell mortally wounded. Due to his valor, he was awarded the Silver Star and Bronze Star.

Prior to entering Service, Lt. Lee was an accomplished baseball player for Sprayberry High-school and coached baseball in his neighborhood park system close to Marietta. His family had long wanted to dedicate Lee's name to one of these local parks where he had played and coached. Sewell Park was the sight of this memorial dedication and it was well supported by GA-VHPA, AVVBA, the American Legion, and other Veteran's Organizations. Welcome Home Lt. Lee.

Vietnam War Memorial – 5 OCT

On 5 October, hundreds of Veterans, both US and South Vietnamese, gathered at Brook Run Park in Dunwoody, GA for the dedication of it's Vietnam War Memorial. The Georgia Chapter was again asked to attend in support of the primary partner in this endeavor, The Atlanta Vietnam Veteran Business Association (AVVBA).

This quote from Juhn Butler, AVVBA's Chairman Emeritus summarizes the impact of this memorial:

"This memorial is the result of a collaborative partnership between the Vietnamese American Community of Georgia and the U.S. Vietnam Veterans of the AVVBA, with the support of hundreds of volunteers and donors who are making this \$1 Million project possible. This project is rare because it honors both Vietnamese and U.S. soldiers who died fighting for freedom from Communism during the Vietnam War. It is unique because it was developed as an equal partnership between Vietnam Refugees and U.S. Vietnam Veterans."

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for full scope and impact!



Bronze Statue of US and ARVN Infantrymen



Maj Gen Flora,
Keynote Speaker

TraMy NguYen, War Memorial Director



John Butler, War Memorial Project Mgr.



VHPA Chapter Activities



Michigan Chapter

The Michigan Chapter continues event participations and holding gatherings to keep the chapter going.

On June 28th our booth was well manned at the 2024 edition of Open Ramp at USCG Air Station Traverse City. Over 8000 people attended this year's event with many stopping by to ask questions or just talk. One fellow walked up and discussed his dad, a recently deceased Vietnam Helicopter Pilot, and exchanged stories and memories of his father. Clay Maxwell gave him a Huey sticker and then we presented him with a Michigan Chapter VHPA lapel pin. All the Blue Angel jets were on display along with various other air show participants.

July 10th Yet another successful Brunch at Willies Rear in Traverse City. Discussion centered on the recently completed Open Ramp at the Coast Guard Air Station, VA response and benefits, Cobra tactics employing "Little Birds", Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition upcoming events. All agreed that the chapter logo looks great permanently mounted on the wall. Future Traverse City meetings will be at 1030 on the second Wednesday of each month.

The August 14th regular monthly brunch gathering in Traverse City, local representatives of the Quilts of Valor Foundation presented a Quilt to longtime VHPA member Ed Canright. Ed served with the 61st AHC from September 1969 to September 1970 at LZ English, flying gunships, as well as Lane Airfield during that period. His unit operated in support of the 173rd and the 101st. Missing in the August 14th Traverse City photo is the host, Mark Benjamin.

Many in attendance served in the Guard after Vietnam. Discussion during this meeting centered on our various experiences not only in Michigan but also in Vermont and Ohio. OH-23B models (flat windshield) OH-23D's, UH-1s, OH-6, CH-34, H-19s. Wonderful memories!!!

Jean Perkins, the NW MI Quilts of Valor representative presented, along with Joe Meredith, the well deserved Quilt to our own Ed Canright. Ed recently relocated from Traverse City to Florida. We hated to see him go.

While our Michigan Chapter did not have a display at the Mason Aviation Day on August 17th, Ken Hand



L-R Peter & Miriam Fabian, Paul Fitzsimons, Linda & Clay Maxwell, Mark Benjamin

June 28th Open Ramp Participants.

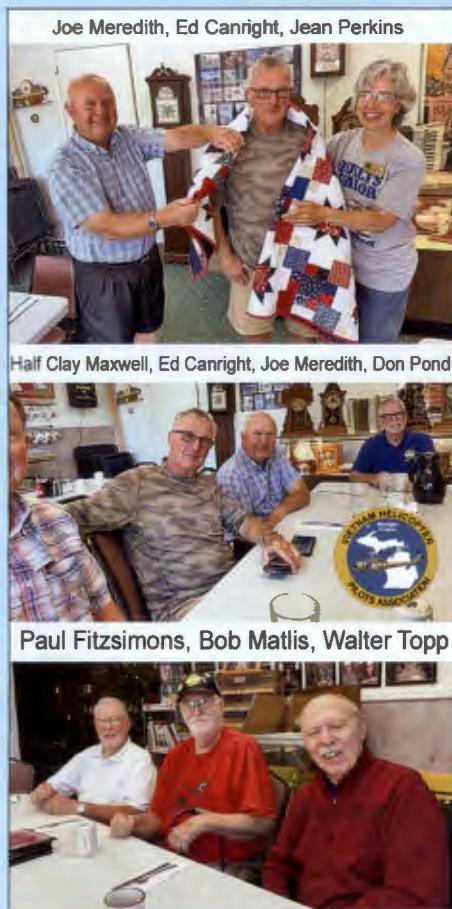


June 28th Open Ramp photos.

and his wife, Beth, did a recon and gave this AAR and photos. "It was a really exciting time at the Mason airport, Beth and I did attend driving our 1974 Beetle. It never did rain in the morning, but the clouds were pretty threatening, maybe around noon there might have been a shower but it was not an all day rain." Forecast was for rain most of the day but Ken & Beth went anyway. The Mason Aviation Day has been an interesting event each year that we've had a presence there. We're looking forward to trying again next year.

A very special event occurred during the September

VHPA Chapter Activities



August 14th Traverse City.

final during August 1962 on the USS Croatan, a WW2 Jeep Carrier, with about 10 33rd pilots on board. The main body of the 33rd and 573 Trans. Det. (CHFM), field maintenance group left on 11 September 1962. The 33rd spent a couple of weeks in Tan Son Nhut and went to Bien Hoa as its permanent location. Miriam and the wives of other pilots had babies about the same time so that we had a 60 Day Delay and didn't leave Travis AFB until 11 November 1962 so that our Liz was 2 months and 1 week old. Major Joe Henderson, our CO, was a very good man.

"The 57th Transportation Company (Lt Hel) from Fort Lewis, Washington and the 8th Transportation Company (Lt Hel) from Fort Bragg, North Carolina were the first two Army helicopter units sent and arrived in December 1961. The 57th went to Tan Son Nhut and the 81st to Qui Nhon. The 93rd Transportation Company (Lt. Hel.) from Fort Devens, Massachusetts was the second Army helicopter unit sent and arrived in January 1962. It went to Da Nang but in September 1962 went to Soc Trang in the delta,

11th gathering in Traverse City. This event centered on Peter Fabien, his family, and a Quilt of Valor. Peter's wife Miriam and his then-infant daughter Liz saw him off for his tour in Vietnam. He wrote about it after the gathering. "My unit, the 33rd Transportation Company (Lt Hel) from Fort Ord California, was the 4th Army helicopter unit sent to VN. The helicopters left from the Oakland Army Terminal during August 1962 on the USS Croatan, a WW2 Jeep Carrier, with about 10 33rd pilots on board. The main body of the 33rd and 573 Trans. Det. (CHFM), field maintenance group left on 11 September 1962. The 33rd spent a couple of weeks in Tan Son Nhut and went to Bien Hoa as its permanent location. Miriam and the wives of other pilots had babies about the same time so that we had a 60 Day Delay and didn't leave Travis AFB until 11 November 1962 so that our Liz was 2 months and 1 week old. Major Joe Henderson, our CO, was a very good man.

switching places with the Marine helicopter squadron HMM-163 that had arrived in April 1962."

Tom Payne, VHPA Chapter Liaison, who saw the initial report of this gathering had a personal connection with Peter. He echoed Peter's story and added "Peter was sent to my old unit which was stationed at Bien Hoa for 10 years. He was in the 33rd Transportation Company, one of the very first helicopter units to go to Vietnam. There were 4 of these units sent in 1962. Two of them arrived in Vietnam in about Feb or Mar of 1962 and two of them arrived in Sept 1962. Each of them flew the CH-21 called the "Flying Banana". The 33rd Trans received UH-1B's about a year later in 1963/1964 and the unit was renamed the 118th Aviation Company(light) and subsequently renamed the 118th Assault Helicopter Company in about 65. I served in the 118th at Bien Hoa



August 17th Mason Aviation Day.



September 11th Quilt of Valor Presentation.

VHPA Chapter Activities

from Aug 66-Aug 67 flying UH1Ds and UH-1Cs. The unit remained in Bien Hoa until about March of 72."

The Quilt of Valor was presented to Peter which was an emotional moment for all!! The Quilt was presented by Jean Perkins, NW MI Rep for Quilts of Valor Foundation with wife Miriam and daughter Liz in attendance.

At the October 9th brunch in Traverse City the conversation centered around veterans pheasant hunts at Marian and Mason Michigan, Harry Kerlin's aviation career path to a career in law enforcement, and Ron Reinhold being an author of two books. One on creative thinking and the other is called "Predicting the Bite. Yup: about fishing. Mason Grahl briefed us in general terms about becoming a teacher, coach, athletic director and high school principal. Sandy McLeod reminded everyone one of the congressionally mandated welcome home Vietnam vets program. Ron Reinhold was the only one without a pin, so Sandy presented one to him.

In the October 9th Traverse City photo from bottom and going clockwise: Carol Luck, Harry Kerlin (Army aircrew in Vietnam then helicopter pilot for the Flint Police Department), Terry White (friend of Harry), Barry Witt, Ron Reinhold, Don Pond, Walter Topp, Mark Benjamin, Sandy McLeod, Bob Matlis, Joe Meredith, Mason Grahl, Lee captain lucky Luck.

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

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

Submitted by Rich Deer, President



October 9th Traverse City.

A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



"...for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight."

DFCSociety.org/membership

VHPA Chapter Activities



Activity Report of the North Alabama, VHPA

October 31, 2024

This fall promises many “opportunities to excel” for the North Alabama VHPA.

On September 28th the chapter supported exhibiting BUC-3, our UH-1C/M gunship in the Cullman, Alabama Homecoming Parade. We didn’t realize it before, but the parade is a 50+ year tradition in that city. Buc-3 was one of the highlights of an old-fashioned local parade; complete with horses, many parade floats by organizations like the Future Farmers of America (FFA); and for this year’s parade only, Beetlejuice himself! (Or so, he claimed.) The crowds were enthusiastic and seemed to appreciate our participation. Before the parade started, Col (ret) Ken Brown picked up Chapter Secretary Sam Maki and President Marshall Eubanks for a 30-minute Facebook Live event called Cullman Veterans Show.

Diane Carlson Evans, RN, Army Nurse Corps, 1966-1972 (VN 68-69, 71st & 36th Evac Hospitals), had a dream. That dream was to “establish a memorial in Washington, D.C. to honor the 265,000 military and civilian women who served around the world during the Vietnam War.”

NAVHPA’s adopted donut dolly, Connie Popel (Sep 1969 - Nov 1970 at Cam Rahn Bay, Da Nang, and Bien Hoa) attended this year’s commemoration in September. The speaker was Diane Evans, Founder and President Emeritus of the Vietnam

Women’s Memorial Foundation. Connie found the commemoration a “very moving ceremony.”



NAVHPA members in Cullman prior to the parade in September. (L-R Ed Marzola, Ernie Megli, Ralph Weber, Les Haas, Sam Maki, Marshall Eubanks, Rich Hudgens).



Waiting for the Cullman Homecoming parade to start.

Prior to this Memorial, not much was known to the public about the accomplishments and heroism of American women in the War. Of the 265,000 women who served during Vietnam, 10,000 served in Vietnam. Ninety percent were nurses and medical personnel. Others served in administration, air traffic control, military intelligence and other positions. Women served in non-service positions as news correspondents, Red Cross workers, Donut Dollies, the USO, Special Services, humanitarian and other positions.

Connie continues to attend Commemorations of this memorial, the Military Women’s Memorial (located at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery) as well as American Red Cross Overseas Association (ARCOA) reunions.

Phil Marshall did a book review in the April/May/June 2024 *Aviator* of Diane’s book, “*Healing Wounds*.” In his words, “you need to read this book.”

On 2 October NAVHPA members Sam Maki, Sandy Weand and Marshall Eubanks attended the North Alabama Veterans & Fraternal Organizations Coalition (NAVFOC) Founders Day luncheon. NAVFOC membership consists of 60 local organizations – NAVHPA being one. Their mission is to “serve as a communication conduit for member organizations, provide information sharing venue, a common voice for the member organizations on matters of interest to all, and help coordinate activities for charitable and educational purposes.” The luncheon speaker was LTG (R)



Cullman High School FFA members in Buc-3

VHPA Chapter Activities

L. Neil Thurgood. He attended flight school in the mid 1980's and served with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. He entered the Army as an enlisted soldier and his talk about soldiers was 'spot on.'

Local veterans of the Vietnam War received the 50th commemorative lapel pin from US Representative Dale Strong during a pinning ceremony in October at the Auburn University Research and Innovations Campus in Huntsville AL.

Strong, of Alabama's 5th congressional district, attached the pin to each vet's shirt collar. He added this remark, "You returned home to a divided country and never received the recognition you deserved".

About 150 people attended, and 75 were pinned at the event.

After the official ceremony, Rep Strong marveled at the patriotic corvette owned by NAVHPA member Bill & Rene Binkley. Strong was somewhat overwhelmed by the unique collection of graphics that honor all vets and family members independent of the war/conflict in which they participated. Bill and Rene are loyal patriots displaying their vette at numerous events in the hope of educating and reminding, 'Freedom is not Free'.

We are looking forward to the November and December events. We will exhibit Buc-3 at the Cullman Veterans Day Celebrations on the 9th and tow her in the Huntsville Veterans Parade on the 11th. In December the chapter will host it's annual Christmas party which last years boasted attendance from



Enthusiastic crowds at the Cullman Parade.



NAVHPA Secretary Sam Maki and Treasurer Sandy Weand flank LTG (ret) Thurgood.



The Military Women's Memorial, near the Wall, in Washington, DC.



L-R Bill Binkley, George Wandler, Rep Dale Strong, Les Haas,



Bill Binkley's Corvette honoring fallen heroes.



more than 30 members and guests. More about that in a future report.

The NAVHPA meets every month at the Huntsville Country Club for a social hour, business meeting and buffet dinner. We have 40-50 attendees every month, depending on the members' travel, family, and medical concerns. After the social hour, a business meeting takes place using a format that allows us to complete the meeting in 45 minutes or less, followed by a buffet dinner. If you or someone you know is visiting or moving to the North Alabama or Middle Tennessee area, please let them know we are here and eager to find new folks to talk with. We are on Facebook as 'North Alabama VHPA'.

Ralph Weber

VHPA Chapter Activities

North Carolina VHPA

At the time of writing this first draft of the NC VHPA news in early October, it has been one week since Hurricane Helene ravaged North Carolina creating what has been described in news reports as "destruction in biblical proportions". Within hours of the hurricane winds lessening, scores of helicopters, mostly privately-owned, were in the air leading what was to become a massive search and rescue, medical evacuation, and disaster recovery effort conducted by both civilian and military helicopter teams. And this effort was not secluded to North Carolina - helicopter response missions in other states affected by Helene were also extensive.

On 9 and 10 October, Florida is dealt a second blow by another hurricane in twelve days as Milton storms across that state and, again, helicopter crews, military and civilian, are quick to respond to relief efforts. Of note during both of these horrific situations was the support provided by two vintage Hueys and their crews from the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation while flying missions in North Carolina after Helene, and then re-grouping to lend assistance, as needed, in Florida following Milton. Kudos to the AAHF and to all the other helicopter crews who performed selflessly and professionally during those difficult days. You added another glowing chapter to helicopter history, and you have added luster to your rotary wing aviator badges.

NC VHPA continued its Summer display season with presence at three patriotic and cultural events: the Southport Fourth of July Festival, the Flags For Heroes commemoration in Angier, and New Bern's annual Mum Fest. Our invitation to participate in the Burlington Balloon Fest in early September was cancelled due to funding issues for that event, though from reports the fest was successful for the balloonists.

Established in 1972 as North Carolina's Fourth of July Festival, Southport celebrated its 229th year of America's Independence over eight days with a variety of patriotic events, displays and



NC VHPA OH-58 on display at Southport, NC Waterfront Park.



NC VHPA helicopters staging for the Southport NC Waterfront Park.



Author Tom Ross, Bain Black and Jeff Murray lecturing at the ASOM. New 281st AHC display in the ASOM.

fireworks during which 40,000 to 50,000 people congregated in this seaside town. Festival Liberty Sponsor, Rick and Joy Mitchell coordinated for two days of NC VHPA display and parade with an OH-6, an OH-58, and a Mike-model Huey gunship 'piloted' by Jerry Seago, Brock Nicholson, Ed Hughes and Jerry Phelps.

The Rotary Club of Angier, NC hosted its fifth annual Flags for Heroes tribute on Saturday, October 5th. The event included keynote speaker Ben Gay, NC VHPA President, the honoree roll call, music and pictures. Accompanying Ben were Brock Nicholson and Pat Ewing (from Texas) and the UH-1H in 48th AHC livery.

VHPA Chapter Activities



Ladies of the Angier Rotary Club sitting in NC VHPA Huey helicopter.



Pat Ewing, Brock Nicholson and Ben Gay holding the flag in honor of NC VHPA.



Visitors to NC VHPA display at New Bern Mum fest.

The NC VHPA was again invited to New Bern, NC to display at the annual 3-day Mum Fest held October 11, 12 and 13. The first big happening of the weekend was the traditional Friday night dinner hosted by Ed and Claudia Hughes at their home across the Neuse River. This year we were treated to fried chicken with all the appropriate sides and desserts.



NC VHPA helicopters on display at the New Bern Mum Fest.

On Saturday and Sunday, we had the three helicopters (an OH-6, an OH-58 and one UH-1H) sited next to the river and the cooling breeze was welcome during an absolutely beautiful weekend. Over the two days we had 5232 visitors to the three aircraft. Considering some visited two or all three aircraft, this figure could reasonably be expanded to 10,000 or 15,000 (by Ed Hughes' reckoning).

In late October, our Operations Officer, Jerry Seago, received an anticipated invitation to again join with Old Armor Beer Company's celebration of Veterans Day in Kannapolis, North Carolina. Shortly after that invitation, Jerry received a request to have a helicopter at Old Armor Beer for filming of the opening and closing scenes of an ESPN Sports Center Veterans Day television special. So, on 28 October, Jerry and Brock Nicholson had the UH-1H on site in Kannapolis as background to the crowd of veterans participating in the filming.



NC VHPA members at the New Bern Mum Fest.



NC VHPA Huey at Old Armor Beer Company.



Veteran participants in ESPN Sports Center filming at Old Armor Beer Company.

VHPA Chapter Activities

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

August and September were busy months for the Chapter and the Helicopter War Museum. Aside from our Chapter Meetings, we attended the Collector Car Council of Colorado Car Show and an event with the Wings Over the Rockies Museum here in Denver.

First, we added three new displays to the Museum. A replica M16A1 donated by Bill Bates and an AK47 replica donated by Dale House. Using his wood-working skills, Bill built two wooden shadow boxes to display our new additions. Don Kent donated three Vietnam era Smoke Grenades. One is displayed alongside the M16.

At the Collector Car Show, we started early at 0630 at the Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport with the arrival of the Museum brought in by driver Doug Perea of Wiers Fleet Partners who provides transportation of our Museum for all of our events. As soon as we positioned the Museum, I called up member Rich Norloff to fly his Bell 47 (OH-13) to the display area. After he shut down, we pushed it into position with the help of his Son Jonathan, who spent the day with us. While we were pushing the helicopter over, Doug Neil was busy inside the Museum setting up our displays. Bill and Rick tended to the generator and swamp cooler.

We had a steady crowd all day. Docents Doug Neil, Rich Norloff, Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Ben Prieb, Chris Towne, and I were kept very busy. Several visitors asked if they could sit in the helicopter. Rich assisted and explained the controls to them. I attached a picture of Aimi and Kelly enjoying one such adventure. Kelly kept putting her hands up to cover her face from the sun so I didn't get a clear picture of her. She was concerned she couldn't see me. Very cute.

One 'customer' as he called himself, spent a great deal of time looking at our exhibits and I noticed he was having quite a time with his emotions. He introduced himself as Joe (not his real name). He



Rick Norloff with his Bell 47 (OH-13) at Centennial Airport.



Display at Rocky Mountain Airport.



Ami and Kelly in the Bell 47.

VHPA Chapter Activities



M16A1.



AK47.



The Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum at Lowry in Denver with the LZ marked with an "H".

said he was an 11B10 with the 52nd Infantry, 1st Cavalry. We had a long chat. This had been his third trip to our Museum at the Airport in the past three years. He had spoken to several other members on previous visits. He referred to us as his emotional support group. Good going guys! This is one of the reasons we are out there, to support other members of our unique club of Vietnam Veterans.

The event In September with the Wings Over the Rockies Museum was to Honor the Vietnam Air War Veterans and the 50-year anniversary of the End of the Vietnam War. It was held over a four-day weekend culminating in a Banquet held at the Centennial Airport at the Exploration of Flight Museum. The banquet was hosted by USAF Major General John L. Barry, CEO and President of the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, and guest speaker USAF General Ronald R. Fogelman, former Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force.

We had a good Docent turn out over the four days with Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Carl and Barbara Cavaluzzi, Wick Clark, Dale House, Phil Lanphier, Cliff



Museum Display at the Wings Over the Rockies with Gary Worthy's LOCH.

Lawson, Greg Mann, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Bill Robie, Robert Simms, and Chris Town. A special Thank You to Member Gary Worthy for providing his OH-6 for our chapter display, and Pilot LTC Roddy Dill (Ret) for providing pilot services to move the LOCH around. He let me fly it into the Wings Over the Rockies Museum parking lot in Lowry. Very exciting indeed. Gary flew LOCH's in Vietnam with Air Cavalry Troop, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, under the call sign

VHPA Chapter Activities

“Black Horse”. He was wounded by enemy fire during a recon of a suspected enemy encampment. The AK47 round hit his chicken plate and ricocheted into his skull. He still carries the AK47 round lodged in his skull. He found the OH-6 at a Museum in Houston, TX. He maintains it in flyable condition.

We get visitors from around the world. To name a few: Canada, England, Germany, Malaysia, Maldives, Vietnam, Ukraine and Russia (I wonder what the discussion might have been had they arrived at the same time). One of our guests was an American School Teacher who spent 20 years in Vietnam teaching Vietnamese school children of all ages. She said, “After the Vietnam War ended it was very evident how the communist government took control over every aspect of life for its citizens”. She said of orphans, “They are not recognized by the government, so they cannot participate in any programs. They are considered non-citizens.” The orphanages survive primarily on donations.



Bill Bates speaking with Guest outside the Museum.

The weekend went by fast. Even though we were all exhausted by the end of the fourth day, fun was had by all. The visitors that come to us are very inquisitive, appreciative, and generous patrons of all veterans.

We normally hold meetings once a month, on the third Wednesday, at 10:00 hours at the American Legion Post #1, I-25 and Yale Avenue. Visit our Web site at 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

**Dale House
President**

A photograph of six people standing in front of a white bus. The bus has "MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS" and five stars on its side. The people are dressed in casual attire, some wearing caps and jackets. To the right of the bus is a list of tour packages with dates.

Read MHT Blog @ miltours.com

Info: e-mail notify@miltours.com

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

If available, more obituary information for the individuals in TAPS can be found at VHPA.org at the Died After Tour Name List.

***Arbogast, Clinton D. USA; Flight Class: 69-47; RVN: 64-65 461 TRANS CO, 69-70 101 ABN, 70-72 C/3/17 CAV; PH; Callsigns: BLACK HAWK 19/STOGIE 19.**

It is with great sadness that the family of Clinton David Arbogast announce his passing on July 22, 2024. He is loved and missed by his wife of 49 years, Janet Arbogast.

Clint served 23 years in the Army, including 3.5 years in Vietnam as a test pilot and he wrote many helicopter safety manuals that are still in use today.

He was the recipient of many awards including Purple Hearts and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. After retirement, he worked as a contractor at NASA doing safety and quality assurance on the shuttles, Hubble Telescope and space station and then he worked at NSA. After retiring from civilian life, he loved to do projects and renovations around the house and spend time with his family.

***Ashman, Raymond C. USA; Flight Class: 69-1; RVN: 69-70 B/158 AVN 101 ABN; DFC, BS; Callsign: LANCER.**

Raymond C. Ashman passed away on March 7, 2024, in Nong Bua Lamphu, Thailand. No other information provided.

***Barnes, Roger A. USA CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 66-7; RVN: 66-67 281 AHC, 69-70 178 ASHC, 70-71 242 ASHC; Callsigns: WOLF-PACK/BOXCAR/MULESKIN-NER.**

Roger Allen Barnes, passed away on May 10, 2024, in Bentonville, AR, lovingly surrounded by his family. He was born on October 11, 1939, in Sioux Falls, SD. At the age of 17 he joined the

US Air Force, then the US Army.

After his Vietnam service, he continued his dedication to aviation, instruction, and mechanics until his retirement as a Chief Warrant Officer 4.

Beyond his military career he took immense pride in his work and unwavering ethics. Previously as a pilot for Petroleum Helicopters Inc. in Louisiana, pilot/base manager for Air Evac Lifeteam in Springdale, and alongside his wife, Owner and Administrator of Career Academy of Hair Design, then finally the Academy of Professional Cosmetology. While in the Cosmetology Education industry he served as a NACCAS Accreditation Evaluator and Region VI member, to ensure educational standards and integrity of the industry. Together Roger and Sin built a thriving business and legacy which touched the lives of many in their community. He is survived by his loving wife, Sin Hui Barnes.

***Bigelow, Robert W.USA; CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 56-1; RVN: 66-67 D/3/4 CAV 25 INF; Callsigns: STABLEBOY/ CENTAUR.**

Robert W. Bigelow, 93, of Fremont, went to be with his Lord and Savior on Wednesday afternoon on August 16, 2023. He was born on February 20, 1930 in Howell, MI. He enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 17 and served for 20 years. He was an Army aviator for most of that time. His Army career was marked by commendations and decorations, none of which he displayed or offered to talk about.

When he retired from the Army in 1967, he and his wife Helen, began a successful farming career in Smyrna, Mich. that lasted for a few years until

they heeded God's call into the gospel ministry. It was during the farm years that they began welcoming foster children into the family. They continued providing a home to foster children for many years, more than 80 children over 25 years.

Robert studied for the pastoral ministry at Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music while also teaching in the school's Missionary Aviation program. The pastoral ministry took the Bigelows to thirteen churches altogether, including Aetna Calvary Church and Country Bible Church in Newaygo County and Gowen Bible Church in Montcalm County. Late in his more than 40 years of ministry, Pastor Bigelow served various churches as interim pastor. He also served as the chaplain of a large Christian RV park in Texas. Helen Bigelow once estimated that, during their decades of military and ministry service, she and her husband moved nearly 50 times. Nobody knows an exact number.

Black, John D. USA LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-3; RVN: 67 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 70 IFFV, 70-71 B/7/17 CAV; DFC (2OLC), BS (OLC), PH (OLC) MSM; Callsigns: WHITE 12/SCALPHUNTER LEAD.

John D Black passed away on October 5 at home after a long illness from COPD. He was a longtime resident of McMinnville, TN. John was born January 26, 1947 in Largo, FL. As a Military Brat he moved with his Air Force father around the US; graduated from Largo, FL High School; then joined the Army. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Park College, Parkville, MO..



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John's Army career of 25 years included specialties in Aviation, Armor, Research and Development and Safety. He further applied his aviation knowledge and skills by becoming a test pilot for the US Army Aviation Development Test Activity as a Research and Development specialist. Assignments with the Test Activity were based out of both Ft Rucker and Ft Eustice with a lot of TDY blade time with new, experimental and enhanced equipment at locations across the United States.

After retiring from the Army in 1992 John's passion for aviation continued; he served as a helicopter pilot for the Warren County Police Department and as a fixed wing pilot for Apex Construction. He specialized in search and rescue and drug interdiction operations for the police department. He also became the JROTC instructor for Warren County High School, Warren, TN. John wanted Honorable Mention to go to his many "rotor-head" brothers from Vietnam and Ft Rucker. He is survived by his wife of 19 years, Barbara.

***Cereno, Michael A.**
USMC; Flight Class: 4-7; RVN: 73 HMM-164, 73-74 HMH-462, 74 HMM-165.



Aldo Cereno, of Saint Charles, MO, passed away Thursday, September 12, 2024, at the age of 77.

Mike was a dedicated serviceman with a lifelong passion for flying. He proudly served his country for six years in the Marine Corps, after initially starting in the Navy, where he transitioned to the Marines to train as a pilot. Flying quickly became his true calling, and during his service, he flew CH-46 helicopters.

After his time in the military, Mike continued pursuing his passion for aviation by attending flight school in Pensacola, Florida. Following his Marine Corps discharge, he worked on tug-boats for a barge line while putting himself through aviation school, studying Marine Engineering at the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

After graduating, Mike embarked on a long career as a commercial pilot, flying for TWA and American Airlines. He later served as a captain for Jet Linx and Citation Air, flying private planes. Mike was also active in his community, volunteering with the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, the Spirit of Aviation, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sky Soldiers, and the USMMA Foundation.

Christian, Dudley F. USA CW5 Ret.; Flight Class: 71-17; RVN: 71-72 162 AHC; Callsign: VULTURE 11.

Dudley Christian passed away on October 24, 2024. He is survived by his wife, Faye. No other information provided.

***Close, Fred L. Jr. USA; MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 68-6; RVN: 68-69 92 AHC; BS, MSM (3OLC) Callsigns: BLACKSMITH BRAVO.**

Fred Leland Close, Jr., of Sierra Vista, Arizona, passed away on July 6, 2024. He was born on October 10, 1941 and adopted by Fred and Martha Close. From a young age, Fred's talent for music was evident when his mother discovered him creating melodies with water glasses. This led to piano lessons and a scholarship in music at Arlington State College. Although Fred eventually shifted his focus to Business Administration, graduating in 1966, his service to our country soon followed.

After Vietnam, Fred pursued a Master of Arts degree in Accounting from the University of Alabama and held various significant assignments, including service in South Korea, Maryland, and New Jersey. In 1986, Fred retired and moved to Sierra Vista, Arizona, where he became a financial consultant and later a teacher at Cochise College. His legacy of leadership and service continued in civilian life, touching the lives of many.



***Cooper, Douglas L. USA LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-9, 68-11; RVN: 68-69 C/101 AVN 101 ABN; Callsign: BLACK WIDOW 13.**



Doug Cooper passed away on October 7, 2023, after a lengthy illness. He was born in Washington Courthouse, OH on September 2, 1946. He attended The Ohio State University and graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – Summa Cum Laude. Doug joined the Army, became a helicopter pilot. Doug continued his military career as a research and development test pilot. After his military service, Doug began his engineering career serving as plant engineer for several large manufacturing companies in N.C.

He is survived by his wife, Sue McClellan Cooper.

***Dale, Ronald P. USA COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-25, 67-23; RVN: 68 C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; BS, PH (OLC); Callsign: DASHING CAV-ALIER 28.**



Ronald P. Dale, of North Kingstown, Rhode Island, age 77, passed away on Saturday, July 6, 2024. He was born in East Providence.

Ron served 30 years of active duty. He was battalion commander of the famed 101st airborne division. After he retired from the military with full honors - he became a high-level civilian contractor to Hughes aircraft and Goodrich missile guidance systems. In short - he was a consummate patriot who dedicated his entire working life to our country.

Davis, James W. USA; Flight Class: 70-26; RVN: 71 7/1 CAV; DFC, BS; Callsign: DUTCH-MASTER 28.



James William Davis of Folkston, GA passed away on Sunday, October 6, 2024. He was born in Corpus Christi, TX on March

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18, 1947. He received his B.S. from Rose Hulman Institute of Technology.

He was a member of Folkston Methodist Church for many years. During that time, he served as choir director, choir member, lay leader and member of the Methodist Men's class. He was active in the Boy Scouts with his son and grandsons. He is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Marsha Duvall Davis.

*** Dr. McLamb, Samuel D. Jr. USA; Flight Class: 67-20; RVN: 68-69 82 MED DET; DFC; Callsign: DUSTOFF 85.**

Dr. Samuel B. McLamb, Jr. (Dr. Sam) passed away at his home, Jan. 30, 2024 at the age of 80 after an eight-year battle with Parkinson Disease. He was born in Smithfield, NC and was a graduate of Smithfield HS. He attended Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, NC and participated in the ROTC program. Upon graduation from WFU in 1966, Sam was commissioned as 2nd LT in US Army. After an overseas posting, he returned to the states to attend flight school "knowing it was a direct ticket" to Vietnam.

Upon his discharge, he returned to North Carolina where he entered medical school at Wake Forest University. (formerly Bowman Gray School of Medicine). Sam's focus was Internal Medicine and for 32 years he devoted his life to residents of Goldsboro, NC and surrounding counties. He established Goldsboro Medical Specialists in 1979 and worked there until August 2011.

Sam never forgot his service as a Dust-Off Pilot and remained an active member of the NC Vietnam Helicopter Pilots until his health preventing him from participating in events. He is survived by his wife, Yvonne Corbet McLamb.

Eden, Thomas G. USA; Flight Class: 69-11; RVN: 69-71 AHC; Callsign: RATTLER 17.

Thomas Gene Eden passed away on August 8, 2024, at Essentia Hospital in Duluth, MN, following a courageous four-year battle with cancer. Tom was born on July 16, 1945, in Bryan, TX. Tom graduated from Stephen Austin High School in Bryan in 1963. As Tom phrased it, after flunking out at Texas A&M, he "won an all-expenses-paid trip to Vietnam." He joined the Army, completed flight school, and shipped off to Vietnam.

After his military service, Tom settled in Lafayette, LA, where he worked for 38 years at Petroleum Helicopters Inc., flying offshore oil platform support in the Gulf of Mexico. His last assignment was as Lead Pilot at the heliport in Grand Isle, LA. Tom also continued his education, proudly completing his degree in Industrial Studies at what was University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette. He is survived by his loving wife, Pam.

***Ellis, Thomas C. USA; Flight Classes: 66-23, 66-21; RVN: 67 C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 69-70 A/228 ASHB 1 CAV; DFC (OLC), BS (OLC), PH (OLC); Callsigns: BRAVE FIGHTER 26/WILDCATS.**

Thomas "TC" Ellis passed away on June 30, 2024, after a short illness. Born in Buckhorn, KY on May 24, 1940, he grew up in Johnson City, TN before enlisting in the military in 1958. He served as an enlisted man until 1966 and went to Warrant Helicopter Flight School. In 1967 while in the RVN, he was shot down and lost two members of his crew.

After his military service, he flew for United Coal Company in Bristol, VA. In 1990, he went to work for the US Postal Service and retired for good. He is survived by best friend and loving wife of 52 years, Bobbie.



***Fecher, Conrad C. USA; Flight Classes: 68-514, 68-24; RVN: 68-69 192 AHC; BS; ACM (V); Callsign: POLECAT 16.**

Conrad Christopher Fecher, 77, passed away at Mountain View Hospital, Las Vegas, NV on April 26, 2024. He was born on July 9, 1946, in New York City (Manhattan), NY. Chris graduated from Brooklyn Tech. After high school, he worked at AT&T to help his mother.

When the Vietnam War occurred, he was drafted and chose the United States Army. He went through OCS and eventually became a Captain. Chris's career led Chris and Billie to establish homes all over the country, from PA, NY, NJ, Washington, D.C., TX and CA. In 1971, Chris went to work for Ross Perot at Electronic Data Systems (EDS). At night he attended and graduated from Elizabethtown College. In 1985, Chris became Vice-President of Ducommen. He had an illustrious career working in the computer industry with Integrated Information Systems, Perot Systems Corporation, Integrated Healthcare Delivery Services, AT&T Company Solutions and Chief Information Officer Global. In 2001, Chris and Billie retired to Las Vegas, NV.

Chris is survived by his wife of 51 years, Billie Ruth Tate Fecher.

Fuller, Gregory D. USA; Flight Classes: 68-507, 68-7; RVN: 69-70 B/7/17 CAV; DFC, BS; Callsign: SCALPHUNTER.

Gregory Fuller of Farwell MI, died on July 15, 2024. He was born on February 19, 1946. No other information provided.



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**Hartley, Thomas M.
USA; Flight Class: 65-
18; RVN: 66-67 A/1/9
CAV 1 CAV; Callsign:
APACHE 29.**

Thomas "Tom" Maxwell Hartley, 81, of Granbury passed away on Tuesday, July 9, 2024. Tom was born on August 2, 1942, in Peoria, IL. He earned his degree from Texas A&M in 1964 and was a Certified Public Accountant for the Internal Revenue Service. He was proud of his career with the IRS.

Tom owned a 1969 Cessna 150J airplane that he loved to fly and maintain. He took his grandchildren on many trips to visit the family farm in Illinois. The 60-acre family farm has been in the family for generations and was valued by Tom.

Tom took great pride and love in the organization and charting his ancestry through genealogy. This was one of his favorite hobbies which he shared with his late wife, Micki.

***Johnson, Thomas A.
Jr. USA; Flight Class:
67-5; RVN: 67-68
A/229 AVN 1 CAV; SS,
DFC; Callsign: BAN-
DIT 88.**

Thomas "Tom" Aubrey Johnson, Jr., 78, passed away Tuesday, March 19, 2024. He was born February 14, 1946, in Carrollton, GA. At the young age of 14, Tom started flying planes, and grew up proudly serving his country with the United States Army. He was a commander for the VFW Post 7404, an active member of the Amvets Post 99 and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Tom was very successful in his life and was the founder of Vietnam Veterans of West Georgia and East Alabama, he was also the president of the Southeastern Chapter EASA. Tom was the author of "To the Limit" an autobiography of him when he was in Vietnam. He was also the inventor of equipment; that was key to the electric motor industry.

Tom leaves behind his wife of 61 years, Patricia "Pat" Johnson.



***Karriker, Jerry R.
USA LTC Ret.; Flight
Class: 56-11; RVN: 63-
64 117 AVN, 71
HHC/165 CAG; Call-
sign: FLIGHTWATCH-
ER.**

Jerry Ray Karriker, born on September 10, 1934, in Mexia, TX gracefully passed from this life on September 21, 2024.; he was also a beloved educator at Temple High School, where he inspired countless students throughout his teaching career. Jerry was a proud graduate of Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, where he laid the foundation for a life dedicated to learning and leadership. In 1961, he took his commitment to faith a step further, becoming ordained as a Baptist deacon. For over six decades, he served the Lord faithfully, embodying the very essence of compassion and grace until he was called home.

Throughout his life, Jerry's proudest accomplishments included the establishment of Baptist churches around the world. He founded several noteworthy congregations, including Wincrest in San Antonio, TX; Trinity Baptist in Baumholder, Germany; Calvary International Baptist in Bangkok, Thailand; and Grace Baptist in Temple, TX. Each church stands as a testament to his unwavering commitment to fellowship and ministry, leaving an enduring legacy that will touch lives for generations to come.

He is survived by his loving wife, Lolita Buchanan Karriker.



children and grandchildren and he cherished family above all. He was charismatic, selfless, patient, kind, loving, understanding, and non-judgmental. Though I am sure that there was a celebration like no other when he rejoined those who passed before him, he will be sorely missed by those he left behind. Until we see you again, we will do our best to continue your legacy of love and acceptance and try really hard not to get the water wet. The world is a better place because you were in it.

**Loughman, Gary F.
USA LTC Ret.; Flight
Class: 65-5; RVN: 62-
63 232 SIG CO, 67-68
B/227 AHB 1 CAV;
DFC. BS; Callsigns:
C O P P E R R H E A D
26/COPPERHEAD 3/POTATO
MASHER 3.**



Gary F. Loughman passed away on October 24, 2022, while in hospice care at home in Houston, TX. Gary was born in Windsor, MO in 1940. He graduated from Raytown High School and later from the University of Nebraska with a bachelor's degree.

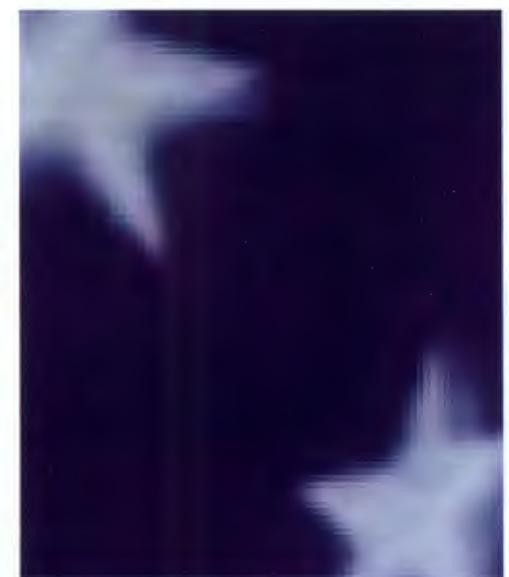
He retired from the Army in 1981 after 21 years of service. Afterwards, he flew helicopters for PHI in Louisiana and Texas, for Aramco in Saudi Arabia, and in Egypt. He is sadly missed by his wife of 54 years, Margaret, and his two sons.



***Lavallee, Paul L. Jr.
USA; Flight Class: 67-
22; RVN: 68 336
AHC; Callsign: T-
BIRD.**

Paul Leo Lavallee Jr., a long-time resident of Gray, passed away on Sept. 19, 2024, surrounded by his children after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Paul was born in Brunswick on April 21, 1943. He attended Brunswick High School, then the University of Maine in Orono before entering the Army.

Paul's greatest joys in life were his



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Marcy, John USA; COL Ret.; RVN: 67 A/3/17 CAV, 68 190 AHC, 71 1 TC BN; DSSM; BS (OLC), PH, MSM, ACM; Callsigns: SILVER SPUR/GLADIATOR 3.

John Marcy, Col USA (Ret) born Feb 11, 1942 in Lackawanna, NY passed away on April 30, 2024 at the age of 82. He is survived by his wife, Paula (Linton). John attended Queen of All Saints Elementary School, Canisius High School, and graduated from John Carroll University. He entered the Army in 1964 serving in a multitude of Infantry, Aviation and Procurement Assignments. His military career spanned a variety of command assignments, included two combat tours in Vietnam and was highlighted by a five-year assignment as the Assistant Program Manager (Log) during the development of the US Army's Apache Helicopter Program.

Upon retirement from the Army, Colonel Marcy and his wife remained in Hudson, OH where he pursued a 2nd career in Aquatics Management. He retired once again from the Hudson School System where he directed the Aquatic Programs for the Elementary School as well as the Hudson Recreation Department.

During retirement he continued a close association with aquatics by consulting for developers, volunteering for the Red Cross, and managing several swimming pools throughout the Hudson area.

In 2020, John and Paula relocated to South Pasadena, FL. He continued to serve the community as a Director on the Board of Directors at Baywatch of Harbourside.



Meadows, Charles S. Jr. USA; Flight Classes: 66-15, 66-13; RVN: 67-68 48 AHC, 69 3 BDE 4 INF; Callsigns: JOKER 26/ALOHA 13.

Charles Samuel Meadows Jr., known affectionately to friends and family as Chuck, passed away from a brief illness on June 24, 2024, at the age of 80 in Corpus Christi, TX. Born on August 13, 1943, in Memphis, TN, Chuck lived a life marked by intelligence, courage, and a faith that guided him through every season of his journey.

He was a 1961 graduate of Treadwell High School. He played the clarinet in the band, was an officer in the Army ROTC and also performed with the drill team. He attended the University of Memphis (formerly Memphis State University) where he performed with the Airforce ROTC drill team. He enjoyed studying Math and Psychology. While he attended MSU, he worked as an inhalation therapist at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital.

After leaving the Army, he and his family moved from Memphis to Beaumont, TX. It was there that he began a career in the construction and commissioning of chemical plants, settling in Corpus Christi, TX. After retiring in Corpus Christi, Chuck worked in Houston, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Nigeria. Retiring again and finally, he and Donna took vacations closer to home, seeing the US.

In his leisure time, Chuck found happiness in simple pleasures, whether he was sharing a meal with his family or recounting tales of days gone by. He and his wife, Donna, enjoyed spending time with their great-grandchildren. His presence was a gift that enriched the lives of all who were fortunate enough to share in these moments. He is survived by his wife of fifty-eight years, Donna Clark Meadows.



Merritt, Donald E. Sr.; USA; LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 61-6, 64-6QC; RVN: 66-67 1 AVN 1 INF, 69-70 608 TC CO, 69 14 TC BN; Callsigns: LONGHORN VET/WRENCH BENDER 6/RELIABLE 3.

Donald Edward Stewart Merritt, Sr., of Owensville, passed away Mon., Aug. 5, 2024 at his residence in Owensville. Donald was born July 2, 1936, in Little Rock, Ark. Donald was blessed with two fathers. His biological father, Cecil Cruz, and the father who raised him, Edgar Harold Merritt.

Donald was a member of the American Legion of Rosebud, VFW Post 6133 in Owensville, and a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Southern Missouri Chapter. He was a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rosebud. He is survived by his wife, Karen Banks Merritt of the home.

***Perrin, William S. USA LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 56-13; RVN: 66-67 11 GS 1 CAV; LM, BS, MSM, ACM; Callsign: ANGRY HORNET 6.**



This is to regretfully inform the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's Association of the final flight west of my Father, William S. Perrin (92 years old). William S. Perrin was born on September 24, 1931, at Clarkston, GA. He attended Clarkston Elementary and graduated from Clarkston High School in 1948. He graduated from North Georgia College on June 1, 1952, and was commissioned through the ROTC program as a 2nd LT Infantry branch in the Regular Army.

After two OS tours he was assigned as the Army Aviation Project Officer, U. S. Naval Training Devices Center, Port Washington, N.Y., in July 1965. He was responsible for fielding the OV-1 Mohawk Ejection Seat Trainer, all Systems Trainers for the OV-1 and the Mohawk Instrument Flight Simulator.

Following yet another OS tour he attended the Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth,



Taps

Kansas, from June 1967 to June 1968. His next tour of duty was as the Deputy Director, Dept. of Tactics, at the Aviation School, Ft. Stewart, Georgia, in July 1968. There, he trained Vietnamese Pilots in advanced training in the UH-1 helicopter and U. S. Pilots in the Cobra helicopter gunship transition at Hunter AAF, Savannah, Georgia.

He was a long-time member of the Clarkston Baptist Church where he served as a Sunday School Teacher and Deacon, and when that church was reorganized and re-named the Clarkston International Bible Church, he was elected to serve as the first Chairman of Elders and he also continued as co-teacher of the men's class in the Senior Adult Department.

***Rhoades, Kenneth D.**
USA COL Ret.; Flight Class: 66-15; RVN: 66-67 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF, 70 B/25 AVN 25 INF; LM (OLC), DFC.



Kenneth (Ken) was born, September 18, 1942, in San Mateo, CA. He died on August 4, 2022 under the care of Cornerstone Home Hospice at the Villages from Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS). He was 79 years old. After moving from CA at age 4, Ken grew up in Holdrege, NE and Pocatello, ID; Moving from NE to ID at age 14. He joined the U.S. Army as a Private (E1) in 1965 and retired as a Colonel (O6) in 1995.

He received a Bachelor degree from Boise State University and Master's degree from Pennsylvania State University. He completed a US Army senior service school, the Resident US Army War College at Carlisle Pennsylvania. During his military service Ken completed many additional schools and training programs. He was a fixed and rotary wing aviator who flew over 4,000 flight hours during his years of service.

Upon retiring from the army at age 53, he worked national defense and other federal contracts in the Washington DC area for 5 years before fully retiring in southern Florida (FL).

He was close with family and friends and an active member of The United

Church of Christ at The Villages (UCC). He sang in the UCC choir and sometimes played the piano during services. Ken was interested and cared about the welfare of all individual people.

Ken is survived by his wife, JoAnn.

***Rucki, Kenneth H. USA; Flight Classes: 69-19, 69-15; RVN: 69-70 D/3/4 CAV; Callsign: CENTAUR 27.**

Kenneth H. Rucki, 76, passed away October 12, 2024, at Hospice of Jefferson County at the Ellis Farm. Ken was born July 23, 1948, in Brooklyn, NY. He graduated from North Babylon High School in 1966 and attended William Jewell College with a Tennis Scholarship until he enlisted in to the United States Army in 1968. He served until his honorable discharge in 1988, spending his career as a helicopter pilot.

After Ken retiring from the Army, he owned and operated North Country Helicopter, serving the community in various capacities. The business was sold in the early 1990's. For twenty-nine years he was a financial advisor for Legend Equities, retiring in 2023. He is survived by his wife, Kathy.

Rushatz, Alfred S. USA COL Ret.; Flight Class: 64; RVN: 65-66 145 CAB, 71-72 F/8 CAV; Callsign: BLUE GHOST 6.

Alfred Stephen Rushatz, 84, beloved father, grandfather and friend, passed away peacefully on May 10, 2024. He leaves behind a legacy of kindness, dedication, service and unwavering commitment to those around him. He was born on April 23, 1940 in Egypt PA. Alfred grew up in Allentown, PA,

Following graduation from Allen High School in 1958, Alfred attended the United States Military Academy at West Point and was a proud member of the "Can Do" class of 1962. He earned a Masters as well as a Doctoral degree in Physical Education from Penn State. He concluded his military career with his appointment as the Deputy Director of Physical education at West Point.

Upon retirement, he and his wife, Lynda relocated to North Carolina where he enjoyed a thriving career in real estate. His expertise and wisdom were sought after by colleagues, family and friends alike, earning him admiration and respect throughout his career.

In his free time, Alfred enjoyed membership in various philanthropic organizations to include being a life-time Rotarian and former president. He is survived by his wife, Karen.

***Sanders, Bobby L. USA COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 58-5, 59-1; RVN: 63 ARPA & 57 TC CO, 67-68 189 AHC, 68 HHC 17 CAG; LM, BS (OLC), DFC; Callsign: GHOST RIDER 6.**



Bobby Lee Sanders passed away on July 27, 2024. He was born on February 18, 1931. Bob grew up in the Whittier, CA, area and left home at age eighteen, trying his hand at several jobs before working as a draftsman in York, PA. His most significant project was designing the steel work for the original National Bohemian Beer brewery building that still stands today as a landmark in Baltimore, MD.

When Bob received his draft notice, he chose to join the U.S. Army and during bootcamp was selected for Officer Candidate School (OCS). He graduated as a second lieutenant from Corps of Engineers OCS in 1953.

While in the U.S. Army, Bob completed a bachelor's degree from Campbell College (now University). He attended The Command General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He finished his career as Director of the Directorate of Disposal Operations in Battle Creek, MI.

Following his retirement from the Army, Bob had a very successful second career working alongside his former comrade and best friend, Bud Pohlman, at Component Machinery and Engineering in St. Louis, Missouri. Bob is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Norma.

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***Sauer, Robert F. USA; Flight Class: 69-7 RVN: 69-70 C/158 AVN 101 ABN; BS; Callsign: PHOENIX 57.**

Robert Sauer passed away on June 16, 2024.



Following Vietnam service, he joined the Army Reserve at ASF 26, at NAS Glenview, where he was an excellent pilot and fine example to those who followed. Upon leaving the military, Bob had a long and successful career in the insurance field. He was a man of great faith and an inspiration to all who knew him.

He will be truly missed by Beth, his adoring wife of 56 years.

***Siegel, Michael D. USA; Flight Class: 67-7; RVN: 67-68 D/3/4 CAV 25 INF; DFC (2 OLC), BS; Callsign: CENTAUR 36.**

Michael D. Siegel (born May 17, 1944) died peacefully at his home in Bluffton, South Carolina on, September 14, 2024. In 1966, Mike enlisted in the US Army, trained as a helicopter pilot, and served his country with valor in Vietnam.

Following Vietnam, Mike returned to Wausau and began his career in real estate, first as a salesman, and then as a broker/owner. He would serve his community until his early 60s, and, ultimately, became a director of his local, state, and national Associations of Realtors.

In 2007, Mike retired to South Carolina with his wife Pati Burgess and was able to pursue his passion for golf while escaping the cold that Wausau winters can bring. Mike is survived by his wife, Pati.



***Simpers, John L. USA; Flight Classes: 66-11, 66-9; RVN: 67 9 AVN 9 INF & 196 LIB, 70 361 AVN; Callsigns: JAYHAWK/CHARGER/PANTHER 35.**



John Lowell Simpers, age 80, of Omaha, AK, went home to his Lord and Savior on July 31, 2024. He entered this life on July 7, 1944, in Columbus, GA.

John was signed by the Pittsburgh

Pirates but found out he would be drafted, so he enlisted into the Army flight school. He worked many security jobs throughout his life, including for the Joint Chief of Staff. However, his passion was working in emergency services as a fireman for forty years and as Fire Chief for ten years. John enjoyed drawing and working on comics that were published in local newspapers.

John was a generous and helping person who would give you the shirt of his back. He was funny with his stories and jokes he would tell often. John's strong quality was his faith in God. He was part of the Prayer Mountain of the Ozarks since its opening and did whatever he could to help out there. John will be forever loved and greatly missed. He is survived by his wife of three years, Sheryl Simpers.

Soltero, John M. USA; Flight Classes: 67-503, 67-23; RVN: 68 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; BS, PH.

John "The Boy" Medina Soltero. Age 75. Our dear father and grandfather passed away at Tucson Medical Center's Peppi's House, surrounded by his loving family on April 7th, 2024. He was born on April 16, 1948, in Tucson, AZ. He was raised in Barrio Anita, Tucson, AZ; Dyess Airforce Base, TX; Zaragoza, Spain; and Kincheloe Airforce Base, MI.

Upon returning home to Tucson, he enrolled at the University of Arizona for three years until moving into management with the U.S. Postal Service for thirty years. He served in important roles such as Union Supervisor. John leaves behind his wife of 18 years, Maria Susana Moon.

***Stamschrer, Ronald J. USA CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-515, 68-27; RVN: 68-69 B/123 AVN 23 INF, 71-72 175 AHC, 72 18.CAC; BS, PH, MSM, AM, ACM; Callsigns: WARLORD/BUSHWACKER/GREEN DELTA.**

Ronald Stamschrer passed away at home with family present on March 20,

2023 after a short battle with Glioblastoma Multiforme Grade IV Brain Cancer. He was born in Wabasha, MN on February 25, 1949 and graduated from St. Felix High School in 1967. He later obtained a B.S. in Airport Management from Troy State University.

After military retirement, he and his wife purchased a cattle/crop farm in MN, farming part-time while flying helicopters and fixed wing aircraft for Dairyland Electric Cooperative, retiring from there after fifteen years. In 2011 he retired from farming. Post retirements, Ron was actively involved in his family, golf, hunting, farm and fraternal activities. He was a two-term Commander of both the Wabasha American Legion Post #50, Burkhardt-Roemer VFW Post #4086. In addition, he served on the local township board as a Township Supervisor for six years. Beginning 2019, he served on the board of the Coffee Mill Golf Course in Wabasha as Vice-President and President resigning as President in February 2023 due to his brain cancer. Ron is survived by the love of his life, wife of 52 years and best friend, Linda.

***Stenehjem, George N. USA COL Ret.; Flight Class: 58; RVN: 66-67 D/3/4 CAV, 69-70 HHC/158 AVN 101 ABN; Callsign: LIGHTNING 6.**

George N. Stenehjem of Edina, MN passed away September 24, 2024, in Bloomington, MN at the age of 94. He is survived by his wife Jean.

George was a 1954 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and earned a Master's Degree in Business from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in 1966. He served at Ft. Benning, GA. Germany, TN, TX, Ft. Rucker, AL, Korea, Vietnam in 1967 and 1970, the Pentagon and was Commander of ROTC at the University of MN. George was recognized with many service awards.



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Swanz, Peter V. III
USA; Flight Class: 67-17; RVN: 68 361 AVN, 68-70 61 AHC; Callsign: STAR BLAZER 25.



Peter Vincent Swanz III, 74, died, October 4, 2017, at Florida Hospital East in Orlando, FL. He was born in 1943 and raised in Buffalo, NY. Peter enrolled in the Army after high school and became a helicopter pilot.

After leaving the Army he spent several years as a salesman. He reenlisted in the Army during Desert Storm. Peter lived in many different places, including AZ, CA, GA, and Panama. He moved to Orlando in 2006 to enjoy the sunshine and theme parks.

Peter was a generous, thoughtful person who was always looking for a way to help those around him. He had a great sense of humor and never met a stranger. His greatest joy in life was spending time with his family.

***Teasley, Robert N.**
USA; Flight Class: 67-17; RVN: 67-68 3 BDE 4 INF, 68 D/1/10 CAV 4 INF; Callsigns: ALOHA 2/SHAM-ROCK 46.



Robert N. "Bob" Teasley was born on July 17, 1946 and died on June 4, 2024. Bob was born in Lexington, KY. He graduated from St. Petersburg High School in 1964. Bob worked at Publix as a stockboy/bagboy and St. Pete/Clearwater Airport as a lineman. These jobs helped to fund his flying lessons to obtain his private pilot's license. He was enrolled at St. Petersburg Junior College until he received his "Greetings" letter from Uncle Sam. He enlisted in the US Army.

Following his service, he returned to St. Petersburg Junior College. Once again his education was interrupted by a job offer from Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO). He was hired by the Sheriff's Office as their first full time helicopter pilot, flying nights 8pm-4 am. While working for PCSO

he also transitioned to more fixed wing flying in order to transport prisoners. Bob worked for the Sheriff's Office for 12 years. He left PCSO to fly night freight in larger aircraft out of Minneapolis, MN, then eventually he flew for a commuter airline out of Stevens Point, WI. In 1986 Bob reached his goal of becoming an American Airlines Pilot. He retired 20 years later as a Captain on the Boeing 757 and 767.

Bob died peacefully at Suncoast Hospice in Pinellas Park after an extended illness complicated by agent orange exposure in Vietnam. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Joy.

Wynne, Frank N.
USA; Flight Class: 67-5; RVN: 67-68 A/101 AVN 101 ABN, 70-71 C/4/77 ARA 101 ABN; Callsigns: EAGLE 22/GRIFFIN 22.



Frank Wynne was born on January 31, 1947; he died on July 30, 2024. No other information provided.

Obituary Submissions

Individuals wishing to supply a notice of death and/or information such as online link(s) may do so by email to aviator@vhpa.org. Those wishing to write their own obituaries may submit same to that email address as well. Space constraints may limit the amount of text allowed. For self-produced versions, any edited narrative will be provided to its author for review as soon as feasible. Pilots meeting VHPA membership criteria, but have never been a member, will have a one line entry. Regardless of whether or not an obituary is abridged, an unedited version (full text) of all submitted obituaries will be posted on our web site at <https://www.vhpa.org>.

Records of the recent deaths of the following potential members of the VHPA were gleaned from internet searches within the last two months. All the information VHPA has for these pilots may be found at VHPA.org or by calling 1-800-505-VHPA. If you knew any of the pilots listed, please help VHPA by sending any information you know about the person to HQ@VHPA.org or call 1-800-505-VHPA (8472) so it can be added to our database.

Bomberger, Bruce E. USA; Flight Class: 70-I; died on October 7, 2024.

Brotnov, Harmon M. USAF COL Ret.; RVN: 70-71; Callsign: Green Hornet, died on August 5, 2024.

Dammerow, Charles D. USA; Flight Classes: 69-41, 69-39; RVN: 69-70 187 AHC, died on January 7, 2024.

Denison, Alan J. USA; Flight Classes: 70-19, 70-13; died on October 13, 2024.

Ess, Terry H. USA; Flight Class: 71-22; RVN: 71-72 187 AHC; BS; died on October 22, 2024.

Ferrara, Seth J. IV; USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-18 RVN: 67-68 334 AHC; died on October 23, 2024.

Frazier, Errol R.; LM, DFC, BS (2OLC); died on August 2, 2024.

Hoffman, Howard J. USA COL Ret.; RVN: 67 179 ASHC; died on July 25, 2024.

Kent, Ronald A. USA; Flight Classes: 70-5, 70-3; RVN: 70-71 HHC 21 SIG GRP; died on April 24, 2023.

Lopresti, Joseph USN CMD Ret.; RVN: 72-75 HC-4; Callsign: SEADEVIL; died on March 27, 2024.

Matusiewicz, Daniel A. USA; Flight Class: 71-2; died on July 16, 2023.

Meeks, Walter L. Sr. USA CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 71-1; RVN: 101 ABN; died on July 31, 2020.

Norman, Norman D. Jr. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 75 40 ARRS; died on July 9, 2024.

Painter, Stephen C. USA; Flight Class: 71-4; deceased with no date supplied.

Vonwatzdorf, Rudolph A. USA; Flight Class: 67-10; DFC, BS, PH; died on September 20, 2020.

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