



The VHHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



MAY 14 - MAY 17 ~ 2024

*Hope to See
You There!*

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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.

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

THE VHPA AVIATOR, THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION (ISSN 1930-5737) (USPS 001-497) is published six times yearly ~ January, March, May, July, September & November. 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

By the time you read this our reunion will be right around the corner, and my last article as President. I urge you to register early as many events will fill. The weather should be good, but I advise you to bring some winter wear just in case. The biggest improvement this year is the ability to order food in the O'club as they are letting us use their sports bar. Another popular venue will be the Lake Tahoe cruise and dinner, so again register early. In this issue of the Aviator, you will find an article updating the VHPA Legacy that should answer



a great many questions. I have also included an article that talks about getting military records. Lately we have had quite a few requests from family members seeking information, so maybe the article will be helpful.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you for letting me be your president of this great organization. It's been a great ride, but it's time for me to pull pitch one last time.

Safe travels.

~ John P

Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage (FVSO) Kontum, Vietnam

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Patrick Leary
FVSO PRESIDENT AND LIFE MEMBER VHPA



THANK YOU FOR A SUCCESSFUL 2023
Donations to FVSO are gratefully accepted year-round

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Our Monthly Newsletters Available on the Web Site

Website

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Address

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Auburn, CA 95604-9322



For Your Information:

The minutes of each monthly meeting of the Executive Council are available on the VHPA website.

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.

Just a reminder - R2024 will be located in Reno, NV. The first official day of the reunion will be May 15, 2024 and the closing banquet on May 17, 2024.

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



'Preserving the Legacy', all combat helicopter aircrews, all eras of warfare!



If you were a US military pilot or crewmember in combat or in an imminent danger area, in any conflict,

you should be a member of the Combat Helicopter Pilots Association!

Be sure to order your new CHPA aircrew gear online at: <https://fanmadefits.com/chpa-aircrew-gear>

Join the 2023 CHPA Memorial Day 5K Challenge at:

<https://www.goneforarun.com/virtual-race-chap-memorial-day-5k-2023/chp-0001.html?cgid=gfar>

Website: www.chpa-us.org / Email: hq@chpa-us.org / Phone: 800-832-5144

VHPA Writers GROUP

I am looking forward to another “meeting of the minds” at this year’s reunion and VHPA Writers Sessions. Maybe even dinner if anyone is interested. I hope to see everyone from the previous year’s sessions return and some new faces as well. After all, who else is there to tell our story but us?

I have exchanged emails with VHPA member, author Gary Bridges and am excited to pass on word that he is making great headway on getting his screenplay *Cost of Valor* into a feature film. I surely do not want to break any news before he does, so look for a piece in the *Aviator* soon. I hope I got the story right!

I will tell you that he has a Go Fund Me page (<https://gofundme.com/f/cost-of-valor>) where we can put our money where our mouths are and help get this much needed story onto the big screen. Hopefully he will be at this year's reunion and at our



meeting and can discuss this project. I also hope we might have the opportunity for individual authors to present a short, 4-5 minute reading from their work at our meeting.

I have something to tell everyone about as well. The West Warwick Library in Rhode Island was awarded state arts funding to hold a Veterans Anthology Writing Project which included a several month-long series of writing modules and workshops with 10 Veterans. The award stated “...to assist in honing creative writing skills. Participants write and polish fiction or poetry, after which the staff at West Warwick Public Library Press will purchase and publish the collection.” I was happy to be included. Is your state doing the same or similar? Let us know.

Your homework, find out if there are similar opportunities in your area and let us all know. Maybe VHPA can get this sort of thing funded too. NEA, NEH? It’s about time the world gets to see the war through our eyes, as we saw it.

Contact me:

**PilotAuthor@gmail.com or
tomintxk@gmail.com**

Tom Morrissey

From the Managing Editor...

As of the first calendar quarter of this year, the Executive Council has opted to publish the *Aviator* four times annually. The costs of both printing and mailing the magazine have risen dramatically in recent years. The editors had decided raising advertising rates could help offset this situation, yet keeping it economical (for the near term), is beneficial to our small business owners, charitable organizations, and member authors. We have seen an increase in the latter which indicates the suitability of this opportunity to the mutual benefit of authors and potential customers.

For this first quarter, we are publishing both a

magazine and a reunion mailer. This due to the proximity of the reunion to the magazine’s target mailing date. As a result, our efforts will be prioritized on the mailer having the details for our reunion. Tom Hirschler and I will determine the submission cutoff dates for following quarters when we have a “normal” schedule.

Our layout/graphic artist, Kay Taylor, will concentrate on the mailer, then the *Aviator*.

Thanks for your understanding as we transition to a new time line.

~ Tom Kirk

Roaring Into the New Year! 2024!

The Annual Summit in Denver will be barely 90 days away by the time you read this. Incredible! We hope that everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's holiday; really looking forward to the year ahead and the great work that your Association will do in support of our Aviation family.

Bill Harris and I had the privilege of travelling to Lubbock, Texas after Thanksgiving to join the leadership of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Legacy Committee to see how our Association might best support them in the future, as it plans its inevitable 'sunset.' Art Jacobs and Don LeMaster are the leads for the VHPA; Bill and I were totally impressed with their vision for the future of VHPA. Importantly, they are completing their Strategic Plan that will inform the execution of the myriad tasks and actions that the transition will require, ranging from event planning to publication and membership servicing. Art and Don have also established a strong relationship/partnership with the Vietnam Center and Archive (VNCA), located on the Lubbock campus of Texas Tech University. We honestly had no idea how extensive the VNCA collection is and how deep the expertise is that resides there. The VHPA will be leaving all their records and documents to the VNCA and have already been coordinating with the VNCA for some years. Their decision to get into a relationship with VNCA to maintain their legacy records could not have been more well placed. Check out the VNCA website

at www.vietnamwarlegacy.ttu.edu for a quick overview of the breadth of their capabilities and plans for the future.

AAAA has also been a beneficiary of the VHPA's support and generosity. The VHPA was the very first "Heritage Matching Fund" scholarship established by the AAAA Scholarship Foundation Inc., in 2002 with a donation of \$10,000. Since that time, the VHPA has donated almost \$500,000, which this year supported 18 scholarship awards to deserving students in our merit-



Pictured (l to r), AMA National President MG (Ret.) Davis, Dr. Ron Milam, Executive Director, Texas Tech University College of Arts & Sciences Institute for Peace and Conflict; Dr. Steve Maxner, Director, The Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, TTU; and AMA Executive Director, Bill Harris.

based program. We at AAAA look forward to continuing to develop our relationship with the VHPA to best support them into the future ensuring that their story and legacy is never forgotten. I conveyed to them on behalf of our 19,600 members, that AAAA will do whatever it can to carry on the traditions, memory, and spirit that the first "Sky Soldiers" pioneered during their Vietnam War service. We owe them nothing less.

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**

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

E★L★E★C★T★I★O★N★S

Do you want to participate in leading the VHPA? Each year two positions on the Executive Council, Vice President and Junior Member-at-Large, are filled by a majority vote of those members present at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). The ABM is scheduled May 17th, the final day of the 2024 Reno Reunion.

Executive Council duties entail a monthly teleconference/ZOOM meeting, a meeting during the reunion, and the sharing of duties and discussion addressing current and evolving issues. It is worthwhile service most find both interesting and rewarding.

The election process is pretty simple. No peer

nominations are required to run for election, but you must notify Bob Hesselbein, Junior Member-at-Large, of your intentions thirty days in advance of the meeting. Please note individuals seeking to run for Vice President must have served on the Executive Council in the past. Each candidate may campaign beforehand, and will have the opportunity to address the attending membership at the ABM for three minutes before the vote is taken.

Please contact Bob Hesselbein
at beaner1138@aol.com or (608) 628-9024
for additional information.

Vietnam Helo Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

13—26 Apr &
3—16 Aug
2024

Tour Historian:
Bob Hesselbein,
C/16 Cav

Tour Leader: John
Powell, 1/9 Cav

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Looking For

Do any of you 1/9 CAV veterans know where Robert can purchase Headhunter 1/9 CAV decals?

If so, please reply to me and Cc Robert Swain
rjayswain@gmail.com

Jim Kurtz jkurtz@gmail.com

My father was Retired Major Alfred A. Sanders. He did two tours in Vietnam. The first time he flew the Bird Dog, second time he flew the Cobra for some payback. His words. Like a lot of Veterans, he never talked much about his time over there. Just a comment here or there with a quiet upward looking pause after.

I would like to know more about his time in 52nd CAB Flying Dragons from a fellow pilot or crewmember. I believe that tour was in 1972. Any assistance will be greatly appreciated and thanks in advance.

Regards,

Russell Sanders. airbear72@gmail.com

I have lost my flight class ring (devastated) and am looking for a contact to replace it. I actually have the receipt from Balfour but they say it has to be ordered from "US Army Aviation School". A fellow VHPA member has told me he replaced his by a contact at Ft Rucker.... but too many years ago to have any details.

I'm sending this to several of the council members in hopes that someone can put me in contact with someone. Please feel free to forward this to anyone you may feel can help.

CW2 Danny Cram, class 67-19

Dlcram@msn.com 303-588-8838

Hello,

My uncle, Francis Eugene Dalberg, served in the Army from 1966 to 1969, including as a helicopter mechanic and pilot in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969, when he crashed but thankfully survived. He received "The Air Medal" for flights between March 9 and March 17, 1968. Sadly, my uncle (whose nickname was "Budge") died in 1979 in a civilian helicopter accident while dusting crops in Arizona.

I am reaching out with a few questions:

I would be interested in learning more about his service. I am curious if anyone in your organization might be able to help with that. We have obtained some basic records from the Department of Defense. However, I lack the expertise to know exactly what the documents tell us.

Many thanks,

Doug Holt

Evanston IL

312.662.8315 (cell)

Hello,

I'm a Vietnam Vet, Life member VFW 8495, Fairport NY 14450. We have a Vietnam Era Helicopter on Static Display on our grounds. It is in need of a makeover and painting to military specs Would you have any info on getting it restored? I can be reached by phone 917-560-8319

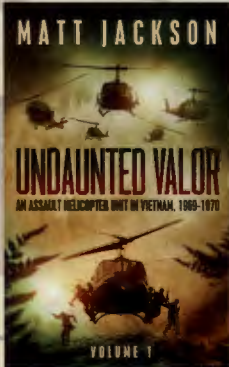
Best Jim.

af127@yahoo.com

ALL ABOUT JACKSON

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.



AVAILABLE ON: amazon.com
in paperback and kindle

WELCOME TO THE VHPA!

Look the list over and if you recognize anyone, give them a call, drop them a line or send them an e-mail welcoming them into our Association. Full contact information is available either on-line in the Member Services section of our website, or through our staff at HQ by calling 1-800-505-VHPA (8472).

AVIATOR REPORT completed for 8 New Members and covers the period 1.18.23 to 10.27.23

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

This roster is presented in alphabetical order by last name

Billmann Barry R. **
Turnersville New Jersey
Army
64-8
114 AHC in 65-66; A/101 AVN 101
ABN in 65-66

Carter James M. **
Port Richey Florida
Army
68-501 67-25
57 AHC in 68-69; 1 CAV DIV in 71-72

Gibbons Charles
Stevensville Montana
Army
75-51

Gluth Gary W. **
Union Kentucky
Army
70-770-5
C/4/77 ARA 101 ABN in 70-71

Hethcoat George L. **
Lansing Kansas
Army
70-50
A/7/17 CAV in 71-72

King Wesley J.
Pagosa Springs Colorado
Army
71-23
117 AHC in 71-72

Marshall Carl B. 'Jake' **
Saint Augustine Florida
Army
68-24 68-40
ATC/11 ACR in 69-70

Starling James B. **
Sunnyvale Texas
Army
71-6A/158 AHB 101 ABN in 71



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THE DAY THE MEDICS SHOT THE BAD GUYS

1 APRIL 1970 APRIL FOOLS DAY

By Phil Marshall

Somewhere north of QL9, the east-west road through Dong Ha to Laos. North of the artillery firebases such as Alpha 4 and Bravo 1, not that far from the DMZ, Demilitarized Zone, separating North and South Vietnam. Call sign "DMZ Dustoff 707" Aircraft Commander 1LT Gary L. Brink, Co-pilot Warrant Officer 1 Robin (Rob) Halvorson, Crew Chief Specialist 4 Tommy Johnson and Medic Specialist 5 Frank E. Crockett are on a

mission to evacuate wounded in UH-1H 67-17627, one of the original Huey helicopters that deployed overseas with the 237th Medical Detachment in November of 1968.

Brink remembers, "We had an early afternoon mission to pick up a wounded infantryman but we kept getting shot at; we tried a couple of times to get in, but there was just too much incoming." But, Halvorson thought he saw a way to get in on his (right) side of the aircraft, so he asked for the controls.

Approaching at treetop level and high speed, Rob had spotted a draw, or depression in the ground, that he thought he could use to their advantage. Settling into the low spot, Rob remembers, "We were sitting on the ground with the blades maybe only a foot off the ground at the tips, but it gave us the protection we needed and we got the wounded on board. After we lifted out and were pretty much at altitude, what appeared to be a rocket of some sort whizzed straight across

the nose of the aircraft, one side to the other. It's almost as if it went by in slow motion" but, of course, it was at "full speed". (This author has been told by more than one Vietnam helicopter pilot that they observed the enemy take aim at their heads, and even though the aircraft was sitting on the ground with no movement other than the blades turning, the enemy would then aim in front of the aircraft and finally pull the trigger. Apparently, these young enemy soldiers were taught to take a bead on the pilot, then lead the aircraft before firing. However, it seems that it was never explained to them that they should fire in front of the aircraft only when it was flying, not stationary on the ground!)



Aircraft Commanders Dave Gomez, age 19 left, Gary Brink, right, age 24.



Co-Pilot Rob Halvorson, 19 years old.

Brink and Halvorson were able to depart the area with no further enemy fire and were on their way to the hospital with their patient when a call came on "Guard". The UHF, Ultra High Frequency, radio has a position for transmitting and receiving "on Guard". When the UHF selector is tuned to Guard, a crew can make a radio call and every aircraft within many, many miles of that radio receives the transmission, unless they have specifically disabled Guard reception. As Dustoff crews, we always had the selector on "Guard Receive" as we never knew when an emergency call would come in. Of course, being young and stupid, full of urine and vinegar helicopter pilots, occasionally one would hear a transmission such as "This is God on Guard, the 1st Cav sucks!" Of

course, not to be outdone, a crew might then hear a reply such as "God on Guard, say again, you were cut out by a Mayday."

The emergency call on Guard was from a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol, LRRP team, that was in trouble. Brink answered with his DMZ Dustoff 7-oh-7 call sign...the reply was "Hey Dustoff, we've got a mission for you!" "Where are you" was Brink's question. "Can't tell you, where are YOU at?" You can't tell me? Brink is thinking how do I know which way to go? He replies to the LRRPs "I'm just north of the firebases" was Brink's reply. "How are we going to find you?" "Just head North!" Uh, oh; 7-0-7 was already only a couple of clicks away from the DMZ and they want him to go closer! So, they head north and before long, they cross the river in the middle of the "Z". "I just crossed a river" with both parties knowing full well "which" river he was referring to. "Just keep coming north." The crew of Dustoff 7-0-7 was now in North Vietnam.

As they neared the pickup site, another call to the LRRPs (pronounced "lurps") sent a proverbial chill down the spines of the Dustoff crew. The LRRPs were now whispering on the radio, a sure sign that the bad guys were very close! "What are your casualties, and have you received recent hostile fire? From what direction?" typical need-to-know questions asked on virtually every mission to the guys on the ground. "One casualty at this time" and "We hear voices about 20 meters to the north" was another whispered reply.

Twenty meters??? Wait a minute, that's roughly the length of a Huey, and that's how close the enemy is??? And we are supposed to come in, land and load them, all without "disturbing" the bad guys??? No way! The LRRPs would not pop a smoke grenade to mark their position, but they said they would flash a mirror or lay out a red panel to mark the LZ. Finally locating the red panel in a small field of tall elephant grass, the attempt to land, as always, was made, and here is what happened:

Brink spotted the ground guide. Usually, the guys on the ground would stand with their weapon over their head to show the pilots exactly where they wanted them to land, that was the normal procedure. "I had been to a party with most of these guys just a week or so before" Brink recalls. "For some reason, the RTO (Radio Telephone Operator) was this big Indian guy, (Native American) and was almost always the ground guide. Why they chose the biggest guy in the outfit to stand up in an LZ, I'll never know! It seemed like either myself or (WO1) Bob McKeegan was always flying first up when they got in trouble." Immediately as they touched down, Brink saw the ground guide "freeze" and then drop to the ground. Brink called to the guys in the back to get the ground guide, and then, almost immediately, the crew of Dustoff 707 started taking fire.

"We had to have landed in the middle of the bad guys, there were NVA (North Vietnamese Army) all over the place but the good guys were there and it was a hell of a firefight," said Halvorson. Brink remembers Johnson dragging the ground guide back to the aircraft and Crockett now found himself very busy on his side trying to get everyone onto the aircraft.

Halvorson looked out his windshield and saw an NVA soldier with an AK-47 pointed at him. "The guy could not have been more than 14 and he fired his whole magazine at us. Had I not been on the controls with Brink, I could have fired my .38 pistol at him and hit him without aiming, he was so close." The young enemy soldier was not done, however, and as Halvorson was congratulating himself on not being hit, the teenager loaded another magazine and emptied that one into the helicopter, too! Again, Halvorson got lucky and was not wounded, but as this was going on, things were heating up in the back of the Huey.

The LRRPs were jumping into the back of the aircraft while being shot at and the moment that Johnson got the ground guide on board, one of the LRRPs was hit in the head, sending blood and brain matter all over the inside of the aircraft, even onto the windshield. "Apparently the round came from the back of the aircraft, through the engine compartment" Brink stated. At that exact moment when the soldier was hit by enemy fire, Halvorson caught movement out of the left corner of his eye; "Lt. Brink's legs were flying out and I saw his head slump forward. With all the debris on the inside of the windshield, I thought for sure Gary was dead. There was even hydraulic fluid spraying around the inside of the aircraft. It was one of those moments where I thought to myself 'Oh, shit, Oh, shit, Oh, shit!'"

Lt. Brink, picks it up from here. "A bullet came from behind and nicked my helmet, then exited out the front window. I went into a prenatal position, trying to take off looking through my chin bubble. At about the same time bullets hit my seat exploding ceramic shards into my legs, but I didn't realize it at the time. Bullets went between my legs, right past my cyclic, and into the radios. What was strange was I can still see the bullets moving in slow motion into the center console. Realizing the situation we were in, I tried my best to assume the best possible fetal position I could, considering I needed to get my feet back on the controls! If I could have crawled inside my helmet, 'I would have!' Gary Brink's helmet was grazed by a bullet from behind, "just as I tried to pull myself into that fetal position" he recalled. Had he not made that movement when he did, who knows what damage that bullet would have done to him.

In the back of the aircraft on the right side, Medic Frank

Crockett has by now pulled his .38 revolver from his holster and has begun shooting in an attempt to protect the LRRPs who are also shooting and trying to scramble aboard the rescue helicopter on the right side.

On the left side, Crew Chief Tommy Johnson of Oklahoma began grabbing more bodies, pulling the one LRRP who is now dead, and then others, some of whom are now wounded, across the hard metal floor of the cargo compartment. "Sometimes we had to stack them like cordwood" he remembered, but this time it was just get them on so they could get the heck out of there!

Back up front in the cockpit, with all the bullets flying around, Halvorson is thinking he may be the only one of the crew left alive in the aircraft when he gets a slap on the back of his helmet from one of the LRRPs, shouting "GO,GO,GO!" Of course, all of this rescue so far has taken place in maybe 15 to 20 seconds at the very most, but the Huey is still on the ground. It's time to pull pitch...time to get out of Dodge City! Halvorson calls out "Brink's been hit! I've got the controls!" At the time, Rob didn't realize it, but no one could hear him.

Whether it was because both pilots were actually on the controls or because there was still some hydraulic fluid left in the helicopter's system or whether it was pure adrenaline pumping through their bodies, Brink and Halvorson were able to lift the Huey out of the LZ, making a left turn as most of the NVA seemed to be to the right. A Huey with no hydraulic assist is like driving your car when the power steering goes out, only much harder. One pilot can work the controls when this happens, but it is extremely difficult; two pilots on the controls are better, but it's still very difficult. Even though they were lifting out of the LZ, Crew Chief Johnson knew they were still in trouble. "The aircraft was all over the place as we took off." He could tell the pilots were having trouble with the controls; it was not a normally smooth departure.

And Johnson had his hands full, too; one of the LRRPs was not inside the aircraft yet when they took off. With the soldier's feet on the skids and only one hand holding onto a litter pole, the other clutching his weapon, Tommy reached outside the aircraft and grabbed the guy by the belt to haul him in.

"I was halfway outside the aircraft myself", he said, "but I was tethered into the aircraft, so I knew that I wasn't going anywhere! If that guy had lost his grip on the pole, he would have been a 'goner'."

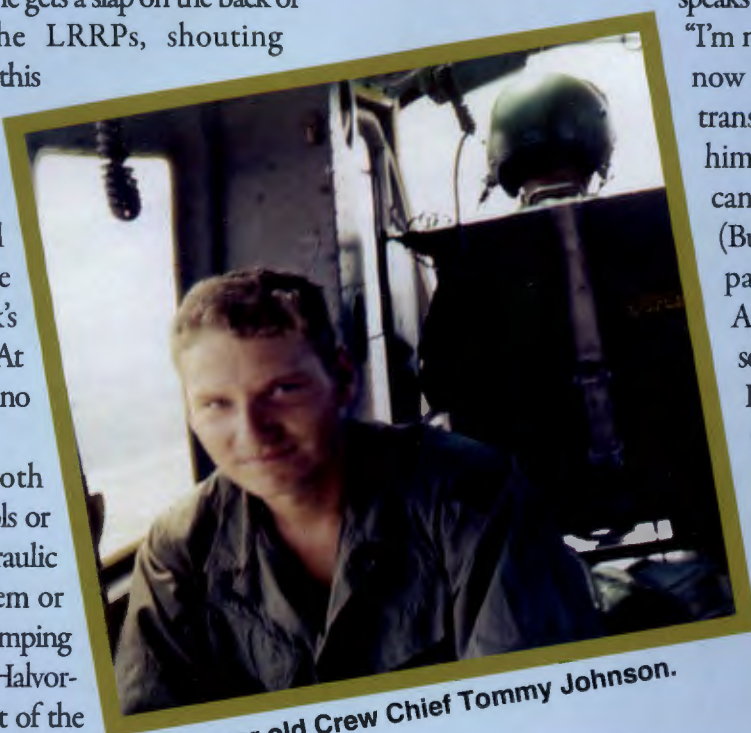
Clawing for altitude, Aircraft Commander (AC) Brink has difficult and sluggish controls and realizes he is also "kind of" fighting the co-pilot for the "advantage". Brink glanced to his right and says to Halvorson "Get your God-damned hands off the controls". Halvorson looked back at the AC "like he had seen a ghost" Brink said. Halvorson now realizes that Gary is, in fact, OK and is flying the aircraft, so he let's go of the controls. Without looking this time, Brink comes over the intercom again; "You're fighting me on the controls!" Halvorson

speaks back over the intercom "I'm not on the controls" but now realizes that he is not transmitting, he can't hear himself in the headset; he can only hear the others. (Bullets in the radio compartment can do that!) Again, Brink tells Halvorson he is fighting him. So, Rob holds up his hands towards the left seat, showing he is not on the controls. Brink looks over, and his reply? "Oh!"

Now out of immediate danger, but flying a very badly

crippled Huey, Brink tries to call Quang Tri

tower but gets no response. His radio is out, so he tells Halvorson, "Call Quang Tri and tell them we need a straight in (approach). Tell them to clear the area and get the crash trucks ready. Have them call the hospital and let them know we're coming. We won't be able to land at the hospital pad" as he continued to fight the controls. Rob pulled the microphone away from his face and mouthed the words to Gary "I have no commo." Noticing that the AC is not quite understanding him, Halvorson pulls out his grease pencil, and finding a clear spot on the inside of the blood spattered windshield writes "I have no commo". As it turned out, not only did Rob have no commo, most of the instruments on the control panel were not working either. However, a few flight instruments including the airspeed indicator and altimeter were apparently still



19 year old Crew Chief Tommy Johnson.

working properly.

In the cargo compartment of the Huey, Crockett and Johnson are tending to the wounded and they are trying to "take stock" of what they have on board. Johnson, monitoring what is going on over the intercom, noticed the message on the windshield. "Why don't you use your survival radio, Mr. Halvorson?" Early in the history of the 237th, for over a year, DMZ Dustoff crews were short on equipment and had to fly these single ship, single engine aircraft rescue missions with no emergency radios whatsoever. But fortune was trying to smile on this crew, and Halvorson pulled out his emergency radio to call Quang Tri tower. They needed a nice long paved runway to put this puppy down and their home base at "QT" was the ticket.

Grabbing the hand-held radio and transmitting on Guard, Halvorson alerted the tower to their situation. "This is Dustoff 7-oh-7 on Guard, north of Quang Tri about 20 miles out. We have multiple wounded on board, no idea of their condition, no hydraulics, and no instruments. We need a straight in. Clear everything, I need to be first in line." It

was about this time that Gary noticed one of the few instruments still working was the engine temperature gauge "And it was running pretty hot!"

All appropriate measures were immediately taken by the tower controller. Dustoff 707 was in serious trouble, they were fighting to stay in the air, yet they were still about 10 minutes away and limping home. Of course, transmitting on Guard alerted every other aircraft in the area and it wasn't long before the crew of 707 heard on their radio "This is Pachyderm 38, Dustoff, we're at your 9 o'clock and we're bringin' ya home!" Of course, it was somewhat comforting to know someone else was there. Pachyderm was one of the call signs of the CH-47 Chinook helicopters that the 101st Airborne Division flew, and there was more to come. Soon the Huey crew also heard

"Dustoff 7-oh-7, this is a heavy fire team at your 3 o'clock; we're takin' you home, too, buddy!" Now they had three Cobras, the heavy fire team, covering their butts!

Halvorson remembers, "There must have been 27 helicopters and fixed wings following us to QT. Yeah, I'm probably exaggerating the number a little, but not by much!" As they approached the runway at QT, the tower called back with landing approval and "The hospital wants to know how many wounded you have." "I don't know, several," was Halvorson's reply. "Just clear the runway." Still very busy on the controls, Brink is setting up the Huey for a long, low approach to the runway, the best way to make a landing with no hydraulic power. The pilots continue their narrative. "About the time we

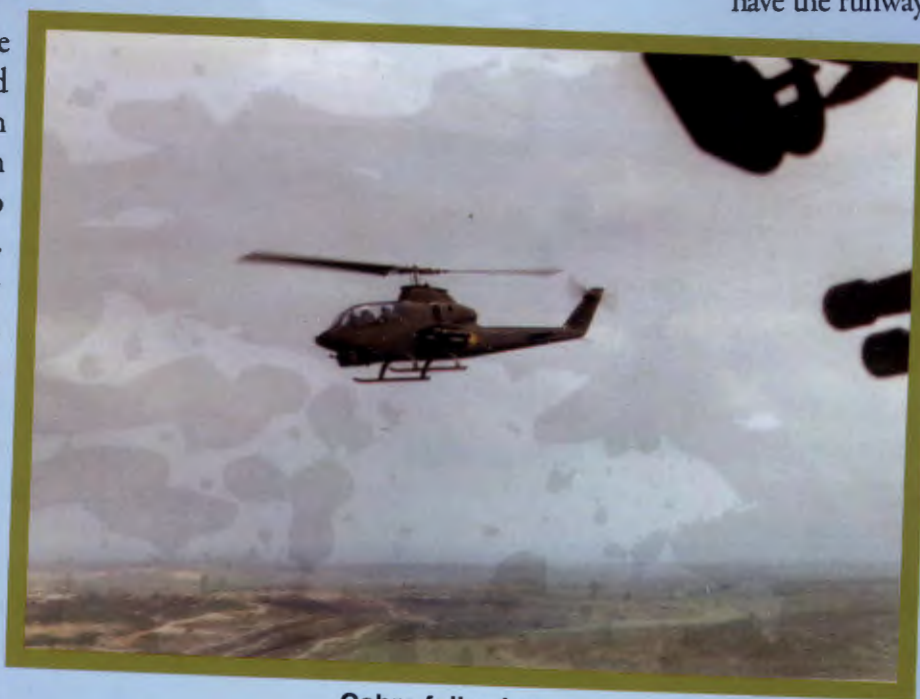
have the runway in sight, we get a call

from this Command and Control General from the 5th Mech" (5th Mechanized Division, which DMZ Dustoff supported for most of its time in Viet Nam). "He's in his Huey and is also following us. He's telling us 'Dustoff, this is Red Devil 6. Boys, just remember your training, just like in flight school. It's gonna be OK, Gentlemen, just

rely on your training,

you're going to do fine' and Rob is thinking, 'Just be quiet and let us land the darn thing!'"

Well, the boys did remember their training and with both pilots on the controls, they were able to put the Huey down on the runway, skidding to a halt, skid shoes smoking and smelling of that distinctive odor all Huey crews remember from practicing emergency procedures such as this. They were able to put it down, under control, with no further damage. The 18th Surgical Hospital had their ambulances waiting and took care of the wounded. Medic Frank "Davey" Crockett left the aircraft and accompanied his patients to the Emergency Room. While Crockett was put in for the Bronze Star for his actions on this rescue, I have lost contact with his family and do not know if it was actually awarded. Whether it was awarded or not, he



Cobra following.

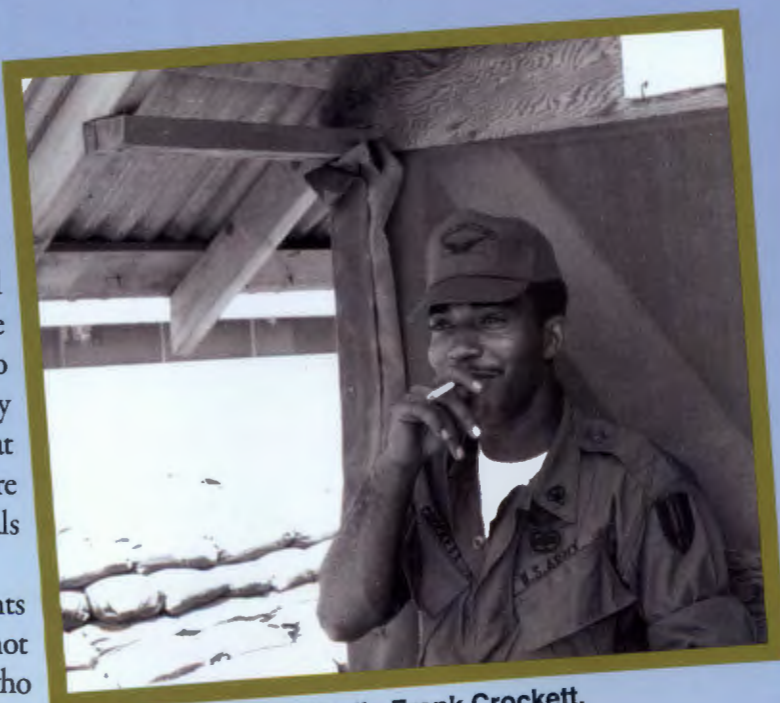
certainly deserved it for his heroism in defending his patients.

Also of note, perhaps because of his actions during this mission, WO1 Robin Halvorson was made an Aircraft Commander the next day, having proved himself under heavy enemy fire. Incidentally, other than the award for Crockett mentioned above, there were no medals awarded any of the crew on this mission, mostly because they went into North Vietnam "illegally". But after all, even if they hadn't crossed "the river", they were only doing what they were supposed to be doing; it's what they were trained for. They were all volunteers and medals were not expected.

1LT. Brink offered these additional comments on this mission: "The interesting thought that is not mentioned much is that poor wounded soldier who we had first picked up. I bet he avoided ever riding a DUSTOFF again." And this: "I have always felt that Tommy and Davey were the heroes on that mission, going back and dragging the ground guide LRRP into the aircraft after he froze there at the nose of the aircraft. As far as the bullet holes, many of the hits were in the underneath of the aircraft as the NVA were shooting as we were taking off." That same day, Brink filled out an after-action report, detailing the mission for headquarters. "It was tough. I knew those guys we picked up and now at least one of them was dead. Some of them I had just met at the party." What was even tougher was this: when 67th Medical Group found out 7-0-7 had crossed "that river", they grounded him! He was temporarily not allowed to fly because he violated the agreement with North Viet Nam. (Like the NVA honored the agreement!) But when Red Devil 6, a one star general, heard about the grounding, he overrode it, and Brink was back in the air two days later.

Here is one of those times where memories differ. Halvorson stated, "I don't think we crossed the river this day. I'm not saying I never did, I just don't think we did this time." Without a doubt, however, both agree that they were at least deep into the DMZ, whether they crossed the river of demarcation or not. Brink says they crossed, Halvorson says they didn't.

And speaking of 1LT Brink, remember those shards of his armored seat that knocked his feet off the pedals? Months later, Brink noticed his legs were itching a lot. While scratching them one time, he noticed that he pulled out a piece of the ceramic that surrounded his armored



Medic Frank Crockett.

seat. "I didn't even realize those pieces penetrated the skin.

I was pulling stuff out of the back of my legs for years after that!" The seat was stopping the bullets, but the rounds were disintegrating the coating and sending shards into his legs; he didn't even realize it at the time.

And the Helicopter? Oh, that! As a Huey is shut down, the normal procedure is to wait two minutes at a reduced RPM to let the engine cool down. Being the good pilots they were, Brink and Halvorson were waiting out the cool down period and at the two minute mark, Rob cut off the fuel, shutting down the engine. It was at this time, with no fuel forcing the engine to run, when the engine suddenly seized; "it just locked up" both pilots recalled. Looking at each other in disbelief, they couldn't quite figure out what had happened. As the crew performed a post flight inspection, they found the problem with the engine- there was no oil in it, a bullet had drained it all. Remember it was running hot on the way home? The engine had seized after shutdown, as good fortune had continued to smile on them; it just as easily could have quit in the air rather than on the ground. Further inspection of the aircraft also showed no transmission oil (the oil cooler had taken a hit) and no hydraulic fluid, as would be expected with the control problems. Oh, yes, they counted about 100 bullet holes. While Halvorson remembers 121 hits, Brink says, "That seems a little high, but it was at least high double digits!" Regardless of who is correct, they counted a whole bunch of incoming rounds in 6-2-7.

Since the Huey was still virtually intact, the common practice was to sling load it to the repair facility at Red Beach, on the west side of Da Nang Harbor, about an hour flight away. Poor ol' 627 was rigged for its inglorious ride South, having already served the 237th Medical Detachment for just under two years, and having flown for DMZ Dustoff a very honorable 1,212 hours. But at this post-flight part of the mission, we have another conflict of memories.

A few days after this last landing, and having saved literally thousands of lives over her career, 627 left the ground one more time as the Chinook that was sling loading her headed for the coast and the flight to Da Nang. Halvorson remembers that "at about 100 to 150 feet, the aircraft broke free of the rigging and crashed back onto the airfield". But Brink remembers it differently. He says, "I was told that somewhere over the choppy South China Sea, 627 came loose and was lost over water, never to be recovered."

Regardless of who, or both, is correct, the fact is that she had at least one more hard landing. Although there is some "paper" evidence that 627 did fly again months later, it is highly doubtful, considering the amount of damage it received, even if it wasn't dropped. Regarding the sling loading of 237th Hueys, Halvorson had this to say- "As I recall the mast broke when ours was slung, which was the reason it dropped. I also remember the skids being massively sprung. Of course, as I said, I have slept since then, so who knows. As to whether it could have been slung more than once, I am sure it was. Having our birds slung out to Da Nang was a semi-regular occurrence for a while there."

Whether the loss of this very heavily damaged Huey occurred over land or over water or both is still uncertain at this time, 40 years later. Was it "punched off" over the water because it was dropped over the airfield or because it was so badly shot up that no one in Red Beach maintenance wanted this wreck taking up space? We just don't know for certain. Both pilots could be correct, but one thing is unquestioned; UH-1H 67-17627 always brought her crew home, even when she was terribly wounded. Being dropped at either place or both, it was a fate she certainly did not deserve.

One final note. When I started researching another mission, I was told about Crockett having to fire his weapon to protect his patients on this mission. I had to know more about what happened. But the pilot who told me about it wasn't sure who else was on board except Halvorson, and no one knew how or where to locate him. When I finally found Halvorson months later, he told me Brink was the AC and who the crew chief was. "I know the crew chief was TJ (Tommy Johnson) on

this mission. He had that Texas drawl (Tommy says it's an Okie drawl, "it only sounds like Texas") and he carried this great big honkin' screwdriver in his tool kit, biggest one I ever saw. He used it to intimidate POWs when we picked them up. It was Tommy, for sure!" When asked about the screwdriver, Johnson said "We knew the POWs might go for our personal weapons and I didn't want any bullets flying around inside my helicopter, so I would just grab that screwdriver and make sure they saw it." And that's no April Fool!



627 being hoisted from Quang Tri.

EPILOGUE TO MISSION 1

*Two years after this book was first published,
I received the following email:*

Dear Mr. Marshall,

I was in the Memorial Day Parade in Royal Oak, Michigan when I saw a gentleman wearing a jacket with "DMZ Dustoff" on the front. I was struck numb, hopefully I will be able to say thank you for the bravery of your crews so many years ago.

My name is Ayleet (Bud) Wease. In 69-70 I served with P Co. 75th Rangers. Before we became Rangers we were LRRP teams; name change but same job. I believe it was May of 70, my team and I were operating in the DMZ and set up an ambush. In short, we took on more than we should, we had two wounded and were trying to get to high ground and the only relief in site was one of your Medevac Hueys.

They said they they looked down and the NVA were all around us, they committed and came in anyway. I remember running for the chopper and seeing one of your medics standing there holding a .38, I thought are you shitting me. The NVA shot the shit out of the helicopter that day. I remember the pilots glancing at each other as the windshield in front of them disintegrated in front of them and them yelping when bullets hit the back of their seats. I figure at least one hundred hits that day. Only Shorty next to me was killed. Lucky we were on a hilltop because the helicopter's "up and down" didn't work. We slid in back at Quang Tri. (Author's note: Bud is referring to the loss of hydraulics when he says, "up and down" and also refers to the running landing that the pilots were forced to make due to the same loss of controls.) Our unit didn't know where we were as the radios were shot out.

I served with some very brave people (especially) your people that took my breath away with their guts and determination. Would you thank them for me, plus I can be contacted by email, my wife thanks you. Well maybe, but I know my kids and their families thank you. I've thought of you and your unit many times through the years and then reading about the mission in your book. Well, the emotions are still there. Again, thank you for my life and God bless all of the men from your Medevac unit.

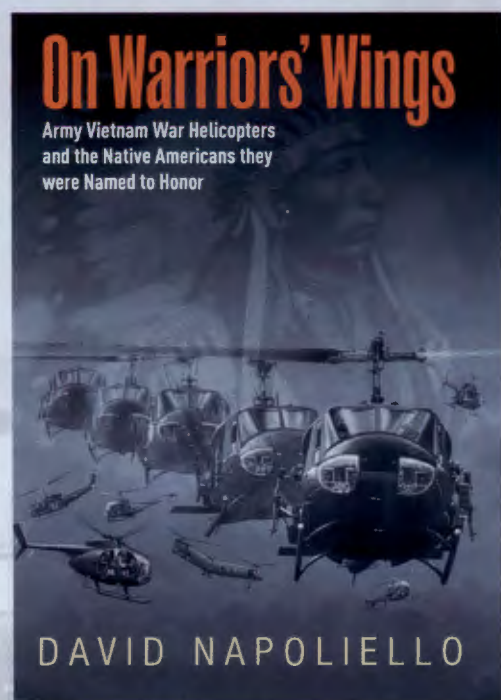
Bud (aka Killer Wease) in reality I was a skinny red head just keeping my head down.

A phone interview with Bud revealed the following information:

"We were a unit of six and we set up an ambush along a trail with about 10 Claymore mines. We sprung our trap on what apparently were the lead point men for a much larger force. We immediately took two casualties and headed for higher ground behind us. The wounded were able to keep up with us with assistance and that's when we called for the Dustoff. As we were getting on the aircraft, a round came from behind and went through the bulkhead, spraying hydraulic fluid all over the inside. Bullets were hitting the back of the pilot's seats and the windshield glass was flying apart. I could hear the pilots yelling at each other." (Author's note: remember, the intercom was shot out.)

When asked about his position as he climbed aboard, "I was not the guy hanging outside the aircraft, it must have been on the other side of the helicopter. I was trying to make myself as small as possible and didn't notice who it was!"

And when asked about the mission/story in general, he commented "Yes, it's true to form, that's how I remember it 40 plus years later."



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David Napoliello is a retired Army Colonel and combat veteran of Vietnam where he served as a fire direction officer, forward observer, and aerial observer in I Corp Tactical Zone. He worked with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial fund to raise funds for the Education Center at The Wall and for the overdue tribute to Native American veterans of all wars.



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VHPA Legacy Update

On November 28-29, 2023, VHPA representatives attended a Legacy Summit with representatives from The Army Aviation Museum, Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA), and Texas Tech University to discuss preserving the memory of Vietnam War helicopter operations, and indeed, the VHPA. The purpose of the summit was to determine steps needed to ensure our efforts and sacrifice are not forgotten. Some high schools do not teach the Vietnam War and colleges history courses are limited. Thankfully, we have people dedicated to preserving our service. This article provides an update while clearing up rumors and misconceptions.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

United States Army Aviation Museum and Foundation:

1. The museum prominently displays a VHPA plaque and poster. An original plaque presented in 2005 disappeared, perhaps mistakenly taken by a departing post commander.
2. The museum permanently displays the aircraft we flew, ensuring a lasting historical presence.
3. Current proposals include VHPA recognition of a graduating rotary-wing aviator from each flight class, and merit awards for the top enlisted member seeking aviation certification.
4. An additional project proposes moving the last remaining CH-47 "Guns A Go Go" from Huntsville, AL to the museum.
5. The museum has offered all VHPA members complementary life membership.
6. Lastly, the committee seeks to repeat our Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) success by possibly erecting a monument within the museum memorial garden.

AAAA:

1. The committee is encouraging the AAAA to grant VHPA members free life memberships.
2. AAAA has agreed to publish VHPA articles in their magazine.
3. AAAA has agreed to make the VHPA a virtual chapter of AAAA.
4. Although the VHPA will no longer add additional funds to the current existing fund, scholarships will continue. Individual contributions, such as those gathered during the VHPA Annual Meeting "passing of the

CAV hat" will be added. In 2023 the contributions totaled \$37,893.75.

5. The recap of our scholarship program with AAAA over the years has netted 956 qualified applicants with 489 receiving scholarships totaling \$801,500.00. \$213,500.00 have come from VHPA and \$587,000.00 from AAAA. Scholarships from AAAA amount to about 74% of total funds.

VNCA (Texas Tech University)

1. The Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive (VNCA) has an extensive collection of our war artifacts and oral histories, and importantly, possesses expert resident expertise.
2. Today additional collections continue to be added from members.
3. VNCA plans a museum of "Vietnam, The Helicopter War" where our contributions will be highlighted.
4. The existing VHPA endowment funds a merit scholarship to a student studying the Vietnam War.
5. Texas Tech takes student groups to Vietnam every other year and a merit award will be given to one deserving student.
6. Several years ago, the VHPA created the endowment fund, which is an interest-bearing fund paying for VNCA staff to catalog, store, preserve, and post information submitted by VHPA members. This will keep our history alive and available. Our funding of VNCA support was completed some time ago, and no further funds are required. Individual donations do continue, however.

The Legacy Committee continues to pursue ideas that will preserve our shared history and sacrifice, collaborating whenever possible to achieve important outcomes. Memorials such as the ANC Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument will be considered for all service museums possessing a memorial garden or appropriate viewing area. As ideas develop, updates will be provided.

Please send your questions
or suggestions to: HQ@VHPA.ORG.
John Powell, VHPA President

Obtaining Military Records

In previous issues members and their families have sent requests to the Aviator asking for help in obtaining military records and getting assistance from the VA. The starting point for records is the Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records. This form can enable you to get everything from a DD214 to medical records. *The link to this form is:*

<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>

Additionally, this link also provides a way to obtain military records including awards:

<https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>

Additional sites that can help are:

<https://www.servicememberscivilreliefact.com/blog/search-military-personnel-records/><https://www.archives.gov/veterans>

Replacement medals can be obtained here: <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals>

For survivors of veterans, each Army post has a survival assistance office to assist both retirees and veterans. I urge everyone to call the closest Army post and request a copy of their guide for survivors. Expanded VA benefits include benefits from life insurance to burial costs.

This link will show how to assess these benefits: www.va.gov/plan-ahead

I urge each of you to make copies of this and give to your family members, but don't stop there .Go to these sites to make sure you and your family are covered for the future.....jp



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INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION SHEET FOR SF 180, REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

1. General Information. The Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records (SF 180) is used to request information from military records. Certain identifying information is necessary to determine the location of an individual's record of military service. Please try to answer each item on the SF180. If you do not have and cannot obtain the information for an item, show "NA," meaning the information is "not available". Include as much of the requested information as you can. Incomplete information may delay response time. To determine where to mail this request see Page 2 of the SF 180 for record locations and facility addresses. Medical information may be withheld from a patient if determined that the information would be detrimental to the patient's physical or mental health or would likely cause the patient to harm himself or someone else. Online requests may be submitted to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) by a veteran or deceased veteran's next-of-kin using eVetRecs at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>.

2. Personnel Records/Military Human Resource Records/Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) and Medical Records/Service Treatment Records (STR). Personnel records of military members who were discharged, retired, or died in service **LESS THAN 62 YEARS AGO** and medical records are in the legal custody of the military service department and are administered in accordance with rules issued by the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, Coast Guard). STRs of persons on active duty are generally kept at the local servicing clinic. After the last day of active duty, STRs should be requested from the appropriate address on page 2 of the SF 180 (See item 3, Archival Records, if the military member was discharged, retired or died in service more than 62 years ago).

a. Release of information: Release of information is subject to restrictions imposed by the military services consistent with Department of Defense regulations, the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974. The service member (either past or present) or the member's authorized legal recipient has access to almost any information contained in that member's own record. The authorization signature of the service member or the member's authorized legal recipient is needed in Section III of the SF 180. Others requesting information from military personnel records and/or STRs must have the release authorization in Section III of the SF 180 signed by the member or authorized legal recipient. If the appropriate signature cannot be obtained, only limited types of information can be provided (DoD 6025.18-R C8). If the former member is deceased, the surviving next-of-kin (NOK) may be entitled to greater access to a deceased veteran's records than a member of the general public (DoD 6025.18-R C6.2.1.2). The NOK may be any of the following: unmarried/surviving spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother. Requesters **MUST provide proof of death such as the DD Form 1300, Casualty Report, a copy of a death certificate, newspaper article (obituary) or death notice, coroner's report of death, funeral director's signed statement of death, or verdict of coroner's jury.**

b. Fees for records: There is no charge for most services provided to service members or next-of-kin of deceased veterans. A nominal fee is charged for certain types of service. In most instances, service fees cannot be determined in advance. If your request involves a service fee, you will receive an invoice with your records.

3. Archival Records. Personnel records of military members who were discharged, retired, or died in service **62 OR MORE YEARS AGO** have been transferred to the legal custody of NARA and are referred to as "archival records".

a. Release of Information: Archival records are open to the public. The Privacy Act of 1974 does not apply to archival records, therefore, written authorization from the veteran or next-of-kin is not required. In order to protect the privacy of the veteran, his/her family, and third parties named in the records, the personal privacy exemption of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(6)) may still apply and may preclude the release of some information.

b. Fees for Archival Records: Access to archival records are granted by offering copies of the records for a fee (44 U.S.C. 2116 (c)). If a fee applies to the copies of documents in the requested record, you will receive an invoice. Copies will be sent after payment is made. For more information see <https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-programs/military-personnel-archival/ompf-archival-requests.html>.

4. Where reply may be sent. The reply may be sent to the service member or any other address designated by the service member or other authorized requester. If the designated address is NOT registered to the addressee by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), provide BOTH the addressee's name AND "in care of" (c/o) the name of the person to whom the address is registered on the NAME line in Section III, item 3, on page 1 of the SF 180. The COMPLETE address must be provided, INCLUDING any apartment/suite/unit/lot/space/etc. number. NOTE: If requester desires to send his/her record to a third party, he/she must fill out a DD Form 2870 authorizing the releasing agency to release the record and the timeframe of the authorization. The form may be downloaded using most commercial web search tools by entering "DD Form 2870" as a search term.

5. Definitions and abbreviations. DISCHARGED -- the individual has no current military status; SERVICE TREATMENT RECORD (STR) -- The chronology of medical, mental health, and dental care received by service members during the course of their military career (does not include records of treatment while hospitalized); TDRL -- Temporary Disability Retired List.

6. Service completed before World War I. National Archives Trust Fund (NATF) forms must be used to request these records. Obtain the forms by e-mail from inquire@nara.gov or write to the Code 6 address on page 2 of the SF 180.

PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

The following information is provided in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3) and applies to this form. Authority for collection of the information is 44 U.S.C. 2907, 3101, and 3103, and Public Law 104-134 (April 26, 1996), as amended in title 31, section 7701. Disclosure of the information is voluntary. If the requested information is not provided, it may delay servicing your inquiry because the facility servicing the service member's record may not have all of the information needed to locate it. The purpose of the information on this form is to assist the facility servicing the records (see the address list) in locating the correct military service record(s) or information to answer your inquiry. This form is then retained as a record of disclosure. The form may also be disclosed to Department of Defense components, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, U.S. Coast Guard), or the National Archives and Records Administration when the original custodian of the military health and personnel records transfers all or part of those records to that agency. If the service member was a member of the National Guard, the form may also be disclosed to the Adjutant General of the appropriate state, District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico, where he or she served.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

Public burden reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be five minutes per request, including time for reviewing instructions and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of the collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to National Archives and Records Administration (MP), 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001. **DO NOT SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO THE APPROPRIATE ADDRESS LISTED ON PAGE 2 OF THE SF 180.**

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Requests can be submitted online using eVetRecs at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE BELOW.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much information as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, full middle)	2. SOCIAL SECURITY #	3. DATE OF BIRTH	4. PLACE OF BIRTH			
5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below.)						
	BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER	ENLISTED	SERVICE NUMBER (If unknown, write "unknown")
a. ACTIVE				☐	☐	
b. RESERVE				☐	☐	
c. NATIONAL GUARD				☐	☐	
6. PLEASE LIST LAST FOUR DUTY STATIONS, IF KNOWN: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____						
7. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? ☐ NO ☐ YES - MUST provide Date of Death if veteran is deceased: _____						
8. DID THIS PERSON RETIRE FROM MILITARY SERVICE? ☐ NO ☐ YES						

SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:

- ☐ **DD Form 214 or equivalent:** Year(s) in which form(s) issued to veteran (Date of Separation):
This form contains information used to verify military service. An UNDELETED DD Form 214 is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits. If you request a DELETED copy, the following items will be blacked out: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and, for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost. Please note - recent veterans may be able to request a DD Form 214 through milConnect by visiting: <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>
An UNDELETED copy will be sent UNLESS YOU SPECIFY A DELETED COPY by checking this box: ☐ I want a DELETED copy.
- ☐ **Official Military Personnel File (OMPF):** The OMPF may include duty stations and assignments, training and qualifications, awards and decorations received, disciplinary actions, administrative remarks, enlistment and/or discharge information (including DD Form 214, Report of Separation, or equivalent), and other personnel actions. Detailed information about the veteran's participation in battles and their military engagements is NOT contained in the record.
- ☐ **Medical Records:** Includes health (outpatient), extended ambulatory, and dental records. If inpatient/hospitalization records are requested, please specify below.
☐ I request inpatient/hospitalization records from _____ (facility), last treated in _____ (year). (NOTE: Fields are required)
If available, you may receive copies of inpatient narrative summaries, operative reports, discharge summaries, etc. contained in the record.
- ☐ **Dental Records:** Please check this box if ONLY dental records are needed from the medical record.
- ☐ **Other (Please Specify):** _____

2. **PURPOSE:** (Providing information about the purpose of the request is voluntary; however, it may help to provide the best possible response and may result in a faster reply. Information provided will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.)

- ☐ Benefits (explain) ☐ Employment ☐ VA Loan Programs ☐ Medical ☐ Genealogy ☐ Correction ☐ Personal ☐ Other (explain)

Explain here: _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER NAME: _____	2. RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN: _____
3. ☐ I am the MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN identified in Section I, above. ☐ I am the DECEASED VETERAN'S NEXT-OF-KIN (MUST submit Proof of Death. See item 2a on instruction sheet.)	☐ I am the VETERAN'S LEGAL GUARDIAN (MUST submit copy of Court Appointment) or AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (MUST submit copy of Authorization Letter or Power of Attorney) ☐ OTHER (Specify): _____
4. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO: (Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.)	5. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE: I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section 3 is true and correct and that I authorize the release of the requested information. (See items 2a or 3a on the accompanying instructions sheet. Without the Authorization Signature of the veteran, next-of-kin of deceased veteran, veteran's legal guardian, authorized government agent, or other authorized representative, only limited information can be released unless the request is archival. No signature is required if the request is for archival records.)
Name _____	
Street Address _____ Apt. # _____	
City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____	
Daytime Phone _____ Fax Number _____	
Email Address _____	Signature Required - Do not print _____ Date _____

* This form is available at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html> on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) website. *

The various categories of military service records are described in the chart below. For each category there is a code number which indicates the address at the bottom of the page to which this request should be sent. Please refer to the Instruction and Information Sheet accompanying this form as needed.

BRANCH	CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE MEMBER	Personnel Record	Medical or Service Treatment Record
AIR FORCE	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 5/1/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 9/30/2004	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/1/2004 – 12/31/2013	1	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014	1	13
	Active (including National Guard on active duty in the Air Force), TDRL, or general officers retired with pay	1	
	Reserve, IRR, Retired Reserve in non-pay status, current National Guard officers not on active duty in the Air Force, or National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force	2	
	Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force	2	13
COAST GUARD	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1898	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1898 – 3/31/1998	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 4/1/1998 – 9/30/2006	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/1/2006 – 9/30/2013	3	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 10/1/2013	3	14
	Active, Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve or TDRL	3	
MARINE CORPS	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1895	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1905 – 4/30/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 12/31/1998	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1999 – 12/31/2013	4	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014	4	8
	Individual Ready Reserve	5	
	Active, Selected Marine Corps Reserve, TDRL	4	
ARMY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 11/1/1912 (enlisted) or before 7/1/1917 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 11/1/1912 – 10/15/1992 (enlisted) or 7/1/1917 – 10/15/1992 (officer)	14	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/16/1992 – 9/30/2002	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired (including TDRL) 10/1/2002 – 12/31/2013	7	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired (including TDRL) on or after 1/1/2014	7	9
	Current Soldier (Active, Reserve (including Individual Ready Reserve) or National Guard)	7	
NAVY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1886 (enlisted) or before 1/1/1903 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1886 – 1/30/1994 (enlisted) or 1/1/1903 – 1/30/1994 (officer)	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/31/1994 – 12/31/1994	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1995 – 12/31/2013	10	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014	10	8
	Active, Reserve, or TDRL	10	
PHS	Public Health Service - Commissioned Corps officers only	12	

ADDRESS LIST OF CUSTODIANS and SELF-SERVICE WEBSITES (BY CODE NUMBERS SHOWN ABOVE) – Where to write/send this form

1	HQ AF Personnel Center HQ AFPC/DPSOR ATTN: Military Personnel Records Custodian 550 C Street West JBSA-Randolph, TX 78150-4721	6	National Archives & Records Administration Research Services (RDT1R) 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20408-0001	11	Department of Veterans Affairs ATTN: Release of Information Claims Intake Center P.O. Box 4444 Janesville, WI 53547-4444 Fax: 844-531-7818 https://www.va.gov
2	HQ ARPC/DPTSC 18420 E Silver Creek Ave, MS 68 Buckley SFB, CO 80011	7	US Army Human Resources Command's web page: https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/1113 or 1-888-ARMYHRC (1-888-276-9472)	12	Division of Commissioned Corps Officer Support ATTN: Records Officer 1101 Wootton Parkway, Plaza Level, Suite 100 Rockville, MD 20852
3	Commander, Personnel Service Center (BOPS-C-MR) MS7200 US Coast Guard 2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE Washington, DC 20593-7200 https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/omaf	8	Navy Medicine Records Activity (NMRA) BUMED Detachment St. Louis 4300 Goodfellow Boulevard, Building 103 St. Louis, MO 63120 Fax number: 314-260-8128	13	AF STR Processing Center ATTN: Release of Information 3370 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 116 San Antonio, TX 78217
4	Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps Manpower Management Records & Performance (MMRP-10) 2008 Elliot Road Quantico, VA 22134-5030 SMB.MANPOWER.MMRP-10@usmc.mil	9	AMEDD Army Record Processing Center 3370 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 116 San Antonio, TX 78217 Fax Number: 210-201-8310	14	National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) 1 Archives Drive St. Louis, MO 63138-1002 https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/
5	Marine Corps Forces Reserve 2000 Opelousas Avenue New Orleans, LA 70114	10	Navy Personnel Command (PERS-313) 5720 Integrity Drive Millington, TN 38055-3130		

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

I would like to discuss the VHPA Legacy plans.

Mr. Sheuerman is absolutely correct in his letter to you concerning our legacy. The VHPA was founded to provide a vehicle where old stick buddies from Fort Wolters and guys we flew with in Vietnam could get together and talk about old times over an adult beverage. I know because I am one of the original 66 who started the VHPA. We never had any talks about raising money for kids to go to college. Money for college kids was not even on the horizon.

One of the messages that came through loud and clear at the San Antonio reunion is that the VHPA is running out of money. The Aviator is going to be printed less frequently to save money, other items about saving money were brought up at this meeting too. Well, why in the heck are we giving money away then?

One of the things that was extremely unprofessional for a business meeting was the passing of the hat for donations for college kids after the speakers put pressure on the audience to "dig deep into your wallets". There was no one following the hat giving out receipts, there was no accounting for that cash money, and I distinctly heard one of the guys carrying a cowboy hat state that he was going to make sure that his son applied for and got some of this money. Is this how business meeting at Ford Motor company, General Motors, 3M, or any fortune 500 company does things? Obviously not. My old roommate from Fort Wolters was at his first ever reunion and he stated that after seeing this nonsense he wasn't sure that he would ever come again. Nice going board members. Student loans are available.

Rod Dykhouse
VHPA founding member
Life member #238

Ron, I need to note our organization, while having a large number of Army Aviators is open to Vietnam helicopter pilot veterans of all services. ~Ed

.....

To the Editor,

As a proud Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Life Member (L01070), I felt compelled to engage in the ongoing conversation sparked by Mike Sheuerman's recent "Letters to the Editor," where he expressed the view that "The VHPA Legacy Committee is unnecessary." Based on this discussion, I propose a broader consideration: the potential transfer of the VHPA to the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA).

The VHPA's mission, "To enhance and accredit the cohesiveness, esprit de corps, and traditions of valor of rotary wing aircrews that flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era," stands as a testament to our commitment to preserving the legacy of our esteemed community. This was the only organization that fulfilled this vital role at our founding.

As a life member, I have always taken pride in the VHPA's nonprofit status and dedicated board, ensuring the fulfillment of our mission. I think any compromise about this would have violated fiduciary responsibilities. While the governance of VHPA has consistently surpassed expectations, it is prudent to explore the possibility of transferring the rich Vietnam heritage to the AAAA.

The AAAA's mission, "to support the United States Army Aviation Soldier and Family," aligns seamlessly with our shared commitment to honoring the legacy of those who served in Vietnam. This transition allows us to pass on our rich heritage and extend our reach even further.

"Formed in 1957, the AAAA is the only not-for-profit organization dedicated to representing the broad interests of Army Aviation. With a global presence encompassing 79 chapters and a diverse membership exceeding 18,000, the AAAA is well-positioned to carry forward the essential work initiated by the VHPA."

Considering the significance of this decision, I would like to ask the members for input on how to proceed. Their perspectives and insights can contribute valuable considerations to this deliberation. Together, we can ensure the continuity of our mission and the preservation of the legacy we hold dear.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Dennis P. Vasey, Colonel U.S. Army (Ret.)
701 Retreat DR Unit 215 Naples, FL 34110-7961.

.....

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~ ISG (Ret.) Mark Hicks – June 13, 2023

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<https://a.co/d/grwwpcc>



BOOK REVIEWS

by Phil Marshall

ON WARRIOR'S WINGS

Army Vietnam War Helicopters and the Native Americans they were Named to Honor

WOW! Everything you could possibly want to know about the development of the helicopters that flew in Vietnam and the history of each Native American tribe or chief they were named for is in this book! No collection of Vietnam helicopter books will be complete without this compilation. Years of experience and research have gone into this book and all the work has, in my opinion, been worth it.

Vietnam helicopter pilot Colonel David Napoliello has a long list of credentials and he has used his experience, knowledge and desire to intertwine the story of Native Americans with our history of flying helicopters in combat. Not only does Col. Napoliello tie in the history of the tribes to each aircraft, he has included much detail concerning each tribe and the development of the helicopters that bear their names as well.

The reader will not only learn about the development and history of each aircraft model, the background of the naming tribe is also detailed. One thing that kept going through my mind as I read about each aircraft and the associated tribe was all the "hub-bub" the National Football League has gone



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 rescue missions that we all flew in Vietnam.



through renaming their teams so as not to offend Native Americans. Not so for Army helicopters. Tribes are proud to be associated with Army helicopters; they participate in ceremonies naming the aircraft and the tribes actively approve the names. Proud warriors! And proud air crews!

In summary, tons of data and history is included here, both Vietnam helicopter and Native American history. Lots of research into the development of each model and detailed backgrounds of the tribes and chiefs that were so honored. Of course, there's more, lots more. Want to know how the UH-1 got it's Huey nickname? I think we all know it's due to it's original "HU-1A" designation but WHO is on record as coming up with "Huey" first is recorded here. No spoiler alert from me but according to the Author, lots of beer was consumed at the time. (I'm betting a bunch of Warrant Officers were included.)

As someone who enjoys History, I learned a lot from this effort, but "On Warrior's Wings" is not a quick read. It is a detailed history of the helicopters we flew and the Native Americans associated with them; that information is more than worthy of very detailed research. The Author shares with us his devotion to both subjects and he shares it quite well!

THE COST OF VALOR

"The Cost of Valor portrays the courage, dedication and loyalty of helicopter crews in Vietnam who performed against unimaginable conditions at the time of the first mid-intensity encounter by Army Aviation. It depicts the biggest battle Army Aviation has ever fought in, prior to or since.



We need your help to make this motion picture happen...

A portion of proceeds received by the screen writer will be shared with VHPA Scholarship Fund, Army Aviation Museum and the Wings of Liberty Museum to name a few."

~ Gary Bridges USA Col Ret.

PLEASE DONATE TO:

<https://gofundme.com/f/cost-of-valor>.

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Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

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

VHPA CHAPTERS



ALAMO CHAPTER

In our last update I noted that not a lot happened during the High Summer months of South-Central Texas because of extremely high temperatures and humidity that kept most folks close to home and the air conditioner. Well, it went from hot and humid to a cool damp Fall over a 5-minute period, which is a typical Texas weather pattern. Because of that, folks started to emerge from their homes and enjoy the world.

We had a fantastic annual meeting and luncheon in which

next year's officers and directors were elected. Beginning 1 January, our new chapter leadership will be: Tim Worley, President; Oscar Castillo, Vice President; Chic Carter, Treasurer; Mike Clark, Secretary; Ron Spearman, Senior Member-at-Large;

Ace Cozzallo Story

Mike Law, Member-at-Large; Jim Boykin, Junior Member-at-Large; and, Dale Stout, Immediate Past President.

As a real special event at our business meeting, chapter member Rex Gooch made a wonderful presentation on the quest to

upgrade the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Ace Cozzallo to the Medal of Honor. Ace was a legendary Vietnam scout and Cobra pilot that was shot down on six different occasions. Quite a story. Pictures are attached.

The ladies from the chapter had their own luncheons this Fall and the guys did as well. I guess the ladies had enough of hearing the various war stories and decided to tell a few of their own among themselves.



70th Anniversary.



Nov 08 luncheon.



Annual Business Meeting and Dinner.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Tim, Chic, and Ray.



President Chip Brown.



Dale Stout & Jim Boykin.

A real milestone that was celebrated was the 70th, yes, 70th anniversary of Presley and Mac Osborne. Presley has been a long time Life Member of VHPA and our chapter. A milestone indeed.

The chapter's annual Christmas dinner is scheduled for December 2nd at the Army Residence Community in San Antonio. Dinner is always an outstanding event with lots of food, music, and fellowship. Really looking forward to it.

The chapter continues support of the Huey 369 project and the Vietnam Archives Project at Texas Tech.

The chapter is alive, well, and active. President Chip Brown continues to lead the chapter but will soon turn over left seat to Tim Worley.

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



Rex Gooch presenting.



The Ladies.

ALASKA CHAPTER

As the darkness and cold began to creep in, we gathered at the Eagle River VFW to celebrate our 10th year as the Alaska Chapter. Wow time sure flies!

A nice Mexican theme dinner and guest speaker from the VA Voluntary Service Office, Jeanne Fox, offered tips for working with our VA and the health care system. Her presentation was well received. She listened intently and took fire on difficult issues, but held her ground. A very informative presentation.



10 year cake.



Cutting the cake!

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

We entertained next year's schedule and ideas about our fall picnic location and the National VHPA reunion. The last time in Reno we had a big turnout from our Chapter and a great time, including a wedding! The Reno location is a much shorter trip for us and hopefully another nice turnout will result!

Meantime, heavy snow made the Wreaths Across America event challenging and a very low turnout from our group. Eugene Ori led the way and shared the heavy snow event. Nevertheless, a worthy cause and glad to see the community turn out is full force!

Until we thaw...

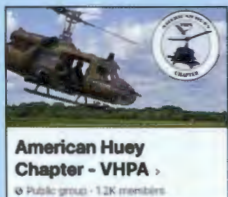
Lynn Kile
President, Alaska Chapter
www.vhpa-alaska.org



Group.



Wreaths Across America.



AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

As we fly into 2024 (how did we make it this far?) the National American Huey History Museum is on Final

Approach. By the time you read this, the building will be "weathered in" with heat, air conditioning, and lights. The Museum is on a long final approach; not quite short final yet but getting there. We expect completion sometime this year. While we have yet to fully fund the construction costs, smoke has been popped and we have verified Goofy Grape on the LZ at 12 o'clock. We are comin' in hot!

Mark your calendar for August 10 and 11 for this summer's Annual Gathering of Veterans and Patriots at the Huey Muse-

um. It's about an hour's drive north of Indianapolis on Highway 31 near Bunker Hill, IN; just across the Highway from Grissom Air Reserve Base. We fly a helicopter assault re-enactment on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons to include membership flights afterward. Please consider supporting YOUR Museum with a tax deductible donation. Check out the website

at www.americanhuey369.com for more information. The 33+ acres of prime real estate is fully paid for, and the Museum is approximately 90% funded as of this writing, so we still need your help.

Thank you SO much to all of you who have already help build this important piece of our legacy!

Phil Marshall



Photo taken December, 2023.



Photo taken January, 2024.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Not much activity on the West coast this past year, but a few of our members got together for Veterans Day on 11/8/2023 at Sierra College in Rocklin, CA. The college's Veterans Success Center celebrated its 10th anniversary. CCN manned a display with Al Doucette, Ken Lake, and Curt Knapp (behind the lens). Many attendees stopped by to ask questions of us old vets and marvel at Al's flyable aircraft models.

Dave Anderson
Secretary, VHPA-CCN



FLORIDA CHAPTER

The plan, including detailed preparations, was perfect! We were all set for the next annual reunion. Yea! "Boots on the ground" reconnaissance of the local area of operations – Check! Outstanding hotel accommodations – Check! Five-star restaurant reservations – Check! But then, just prior to execution of the plan, it happened -- the arrival of Hurricane Ian, a category 4 hurricane with sustained winds exceeding 150 mph. and creating catastrophic damage! On September 24, 2022 Florida Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency for all of Florida and on that same day President Joe Biden approved a state of emergency declaration for Florida. Public school districts across the state announced cancellations along with colleges and universities. Officials at the Kennedy Space Center delayed the launch of NASA's Artemis 1, and the rocket was returned to the Vehicle Assembly Building. Many airports and ports in Tampa, Tampa Bay, Orlando, St. Petersburg, Key West, and other places suspended operations. Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando closed attractions, and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida (VHPAF) cancelled its annual reunion for 2022!

Our 31st Annual Reunion was held October 25-27, 2023 and was no doubt one of the best reunions ever! It was very well attended and especially joyful since our previous year's reunion was cancelled. We decided to keep the previous year's reservations at the Drury Inn & Suites Fort Myers Airport. All guestrooms were suites, featuring refrigerators and microwaves, a 43-inch LCD television with cable programming, complimentary wireless internet access, and a host of other amenities including a complimentary buffet breakfast, and complimentary buffet evening meal. One of the highlights of our Reunion was when the Mayor of Ft. Myers, Kevin B. Anderson, signed and had Mayor Pro Tem Darla Bonk present to the VHPAF the following document **PROCLAIMING OCTOBER 26, 2023 as "The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida 31st ANNIVERSARY DAY" IN THE CITY OF Ft. Myers, Florida:**

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida was organized in 1992 through the efforts of Richard Antross, Timothy Bliss, Gary Bortolus, Judd Chapin, Edward DeFreitas, Fred DeLoach, Richard Doty, Stephen Foster, Lance Ham, Marty Heuer, Robert Johnson, Don Joyce, Ray Kingsbury,

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John Parcels, Richard Peters, Howard Smith, Barry Speare, and Joe Tosolini; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida's mission is to enhance and accredit the cohesiveness, esprit de corps, and traditions of valor of helicopter aircrews that flew in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era; and

WHEREAS, These men demonstrated their patriotic commitment and sacrificed themselves for the preservation of the Republic of South Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, More than 45,000 helicopter pilots fought and served in the Vietnam War from 1961 until 1975, many of them killed in action, making the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The City of Ft. Myers is pleased and honored that members of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida have served this great nation with such distinction, both in peace time and in war; and

WHEREAS, our community has a continuing sense of gratitude to those who have given so much in the defense of the freedoms which we all continue to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida has had annual reunions in several locations throughout Florida, but most recently in Ft. Myers,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kevin B. Anderson, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ft. Myers, Florida, do hereby proclaim October 26, 2023, as:

"The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida 31st ANNIVERSARY DAY"

The following week, on November 3rd, we supported the "Take a Veteran to School Day" event at Sea Park elementary school located in Merritt Island, Florida. "Take a Veteran to School Day" is a national program developed and sponsored by HISTORY (The HISTORY Channel) and was launched in 2007 to link veterans with students nationwide. Schools and communities invite veterans of all backgrounds to share their stories and receive thanks for their service, typically on or around Veterans Day. The day begins with a light continental breakfast followed by an all-school assembly program. The school principal started the program by welcoming the mostly Veteran group, and then a student led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the wonderful, student-led program, we were invited into the classrooms to share our military experiences with the

students and teachers. It was a great way to connect generations and bring history to life in the classrooms while helping young people learn about the past. The day ended with all guests being served a wonderful hot lunch, a great way to end a very special day!

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, Chapter President

OUR REUNION DINNER WAS HELD AT CONNERS STEAK & SEAFOOD, FT. MYERS, FL



It seems that John Rob is confirming that he made an excellent meal choice!



There is nothing, but nothing like an outstanding steak dinner!



Bryan and Debbi O'Reilly confirm that the prime rib is tender enough to cut with a fork.

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Our "hospitality suite" is sometimes a place of quiet enjoyment and meaningful conversation.



Our "hospitality suite" is also a place of fun activities, food, and of course "war stories".



VHPAF President Dr. Joe Ponds receives a PROCLAMATION from Ft. Myers Pro Tem Mayor Darla Bonk, signed by Kevin B. Anderson, Mayor of the city of Ft. Myers, proclaiming October 26, 2023 as The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida 31st Anniversary Day.



VHPAF President Dr. Joe Ponds presents Darla Bonk, Pro Tem Mayor of the city of Ft. Myers, Florida with a VHPAF Challenge Coin.



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter started to settle in for the winter with a continuation of monthly gatherings. October 4th was the monthly meeting at the Hotel Indigo in Traverse City. John Van Etten, call sign Nail 32, was a USAF OV-10 Bronco pilot in Vietnam. John briefed everyone on the specifics, as well as some inside information, on the mission to rescue Lt. Col, Icael "Gene" Hambleton, Call Sign Bat 21. Gene was a navigator aboard an EB-66 escorting three B-52s. The EB-66 was on an intel mission to assess radar and missile capabilities of the North. The aircraft took two SAM hits and LT Col Hambleton was the only survivor. Nail 32's story is fascinating. Of course, there is much more to this story, and we thank Sandy McLeod for bringing Jim along to our meeting. In addition, Peter Fabian had many stories of flying the CH-21 in his time in Vietnam matched only by Bart Halliday with tales of the CH-34 in 1963 with the USMC.

Also on October 4th, Barry Witt was honored with a Quilt of Valor presented by Jean Perkins, Michigan Chapter, Quilt of Valor Foundation. Barry served with the 61st AHC and the 335th AHC from 1 Nov 67 to 1 Nov 68, then to Ger-



Traverse City October 4th - left to right clockwise: Walter Topp, John Lefler, Bob Matlis, Peter Fabian, Miriam Fabian, Gary Perkins, Jean Perkins, Bart Halliday, Barry Witt, Mark Benjamin, John Van Etten, Sandy McLeod.

many. He left the Army after his four-year commitment and operated a rental business in Traverse City for 35 years. He kept his interest in aviation by owning and flying a Beech Bonanza N35 for over 25 years. Congratulations Barry!



Quilt of Valor Presentation.

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Barry Witt was in charge of the November 1st monthly gathering in Traverse City, subbing for Mark Benjamin. He reported: As you can see in the November 1st Traverse City photo we had a light but enthusiastic turnout for lunch and the stories did not disappoint. To begin, Ron Hofmeister shared some info about a Vet's lunch at the Elk's on Sunday the 5th from 12 -3 PM and promotions for a few other benefits. Bart Halliday shared some great stories about the A-4 and we both had experience in the H-34 so that was of great interest to me. I think Bob Matlis was senior to the rest of us at the table as he began his RVN tour in 1965 which I believe was ahead of the major buildup in '67 and '68.

At the 6 December lunch meeting in Traverse City, Quilts of Valor were awarded to Denny Klein and Clay Maxwell pictured with Jean Perkins who is the Northwestern Michigan representative of the Quilt of Valor Foundation. Both Denny and Clay flew slicks and gunships during their respective tours in Vietnam. Discussions during the meeting centered around Denny and Clay's experiences in Vietnam as well as other well placed Pilot tales. All Chapter members brought their quilts in honor of the two awardees. In the group picture from left to right: Mark Benjamin, Bob Matlis, Denny Klein, Clay Maxwell, Paul Fitzsimons, and Barry Witt.

The main event for the January 3rd lunch gathering in Traverse City was the presentation of a Quilt of Honor to Vietnam Veteran Ron Reinhold. Gary Perkins, also a Vietnam Vet representing the NW MI Quilts of Valor Foundation made the presentation to Ron who was accompanied by his daughter Dacia. Ron was an Avionics Repair Technician on Hueys and Mohawks. He returned from Vietnam and went into the oil business. Along the way he authored two books: Creative Genius for Everyone: Smart, Fast Ideas for Everything and Predicting the Bite. Predicting the Bite will teach you EVERYTHING you ever wanted to know about how to catch a fish. Joining Ron beside Dacia and Gary were Mark Benjamin, Paul Fitzsimons, Clay Maxwell, and Bob Matlis.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation has awarded more than 360,000 Quilts to deserving veterans of all the various conflicts since and including WW II. The Michigan Chapter intends to coordinate other Quilt presentations for those of us who have not as yet received this honor.

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



November 1st Traverse City.



Denny Klein, Jean Perkins, Clay Maxwell.



Quilts of Valor Composite.



Quilt of Valor Presentation to Ron Reinhold.



Quilt of Valor Presentation to Ron Reinhold.

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NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

On 12 December 2023, NAVHPA held its annual Christmas Dinner and Meeting at the Huntsville Country Club. Since our chapter was established, in mid-2010, this was our 13th Christmas Dinner and Meeting (would have been number 14 except for COVID in 2020). We had a record number of attendees – 92 members, spouses and guests attended. We had a remembrance table set up with a single place setting to remind us of those whom we have lost and a single rose to remind us of their families and loved ones. In April 2023, we lost Hal Stitt after an 18-month battle with cancer. Since 2010, our chapter has lost 11 members, seven spouses and three children of members. We honor and remember all these great Americans.

The December 2023 Business Meeting was called to order. All normal Board of Director and Committee reports were suspended until the January 2024 meeting (NAVHPA meets monthly).

President Marshall Eubanks presented a summary of our 2023 membership, activities and events. We currently have 68 members, including four Honorary Members. Fifteen of our members live outside of the North Alabama area – three in Birmingham, AL and 12 in the states of FL, TN, OH, TX, MO, MS, NC and WI. This has not always been the case.

Since our founding in 2010 when we had five dues paid members and we were living on donations by members/prospective members – as an example, the cost to submit a 501(c)3 application to the IRS was \$600. By June 2011, we had 30 dues paid members. We were off and running.

In 2023 NAVHPA participated in 13 events and activities. Five of the 13 were helicopter (BUC-3) display events: Alabama A&M University ROTC 50th Anniversary support; Armed Forces Week at the Veterans Memorial Museum; Support to American Legion Post 229 during Madison Street Festival; Cullman Alabama Veterans Celebration; and the Huntsville Vet-

erans Day Parade. Examples of the eight non-Buc-3 activities include: Cullman Alabama Huey Dedication; Ia Drang Valley AUSA Dinner; VHPA/AAAA's 160th Aviation Regiment tour at Ft Campbell, KY; Huntsville Memorial Day Ceremony and Wreath Laying; Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Dedication in



Views of the 2023 NAVHPA Christmas party.



NAVHPA Secretary with a truck-full of wreaths collected by scores of volunteers at Maple Hill Cemetery.

Decatur, AL; and Huntsville Wreaths for Veterans (our largest community support activity). NAVHPA purchased an 8x8 inch brick paver at the Aviation Museum at Mother Rucker (oops). The paver has a Huey picture and an inscription that reads "Blessed to Fly, Honored to Serve, Army Aviation, Vietnam 1961-1975".

After a festive Christmas dinner, our speakers for the evening were introduced – who do not need an introduction to NAVHPA (or VHPA). Mike Sprayberry and his wife, NAVHPA Honorary Member Julie Kink gave a very interesting talk about what they do to help the families of Vietnam MIA's by researching for a more precise location of MIA incidents. Mike served in Vietnam in 1967-68 as a Platoon Leader and Company Commander with 5/7th Cavalry. He received the Medal of Honor because of his actions on April 25, 1968, in the A Shau Valley. When Julie was eight years old, she lost her 19-year-old brother David while he was flying a helicopter in Vietnam. Her desire to know more about David led to a decades-long involvement with the VHPA and other Gold Star families, and her marriage

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to Mike. Julie has made six trips and Mike has made eight trips to Vietnam. They follow leads and interview witnesses who might be able to provide more details on locations of incidents and in some cases burial sites. They do not do any digging – that is left up to others, like the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (What a story Mike has to tell about working with that agency!). Most of their work is centered around the A Shau Valley, where Mike's unit fought. He has a DVD (which he will give a copy to anyone) titled "The M.I.A.'s on Tiger Mountain". Their very interesting talk was much appreciated by all.

On 9/10 January 2014, NAVHPA members helped the Wreaths of Veterans organization retrieve and box around 3600 wreaths from Maple Hill and Valhalla Cemeteries in Huntsville. These boxed wreaths, at 10 per box, are trucked to the Huntsville City Schools warehouse to be placed on pallets and stored until November. NAVHPA has been supporting Wreaths for Veterans since 2013 and is our major community service project. Each year members spend two days in January retrieving wreaths, four days in November cleaning and preparing wreaths, and two more days in November placing wreaths on veterans' graves.

We have a dedicated page on Facebook. You can see it by searching for "North Alabama VHPA" in the search bar in Facebook. See what we are doing.



NAVHPA Secretary with a truck-full of wreaths collected by scores of volunteers at Maple Hill Cemetery.

The North Alabama Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the second Tuesday of most months at 4:30 PM (1630) at the Huntsville Country Club. Stop in when you get a chance. If you live in the North Alabama and Middle Tennessee areas, (and even if you don't) we invite you to join our chapter. You can contact us at navhpa@gmail.com or through the Facebook page. Come on out!! We know all those war stories need to get out of your system. We need to hear new ones.

Ralph Weber

North Carolina Chapter

The waning months of 2023 were still active for NC VHPA with four major displays and participation by individual members in smaller, hometown events.

2023 events continued on August 28 when Jerry Seago, Ed Hughes, Brock Nicholson, Gerald Phelps and Bob Ingles brought the OH-6, UH-1H and UH-1M to NC State University to welcome the students back to college and to support State's ROTC program. Throughout the day students showed great interest in the helicopters and our guys fielded questions and related their experiences in the quest to induce incoming students and current freshmen to serve their Country via the ROTC route.



NC VHPA helicopters between rainstorms at the ALCOVETS Balloon Festival. Photo by Vic Rose.

Low clouds and heavy rains severely hampered the next major event at the ALCOVETS (Alamance County Veterans Service) Balloon Festival between September 8 and 10. The balloonists either sat in their hotels expecting the morning fog to lift, or waited in trail formation on the road into the park for better weather. We spent a lot of those days sitting in our personal vehicles waiting out the heavy downpours, and when the skies somewhat cleared, we would get out to chat with the few persons who braved the elements to visit us. The weather finally improved late Sunday morning and thereafter was a good crowd viewing the helicopters. Then, when we had prepped the aircraft for road travel and were pulling out of the park for home, the balloons were finally inflating.

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In late September, Brock & Colleen Nicholson and Ben & Janet Gay, accompanied by the H-model Huey, travelled to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to take part in the 48th AHC reunion. The Huey was especially appreciated as its markings have been changed by Brock from a medevac scheme to 48th AHC livery.

Next, Brock Nicholson, Ben Gay and VHPA member from Texas, Pat Ewing, attended the 4th Annual Flags For Heroes tribute in Angier, NC on October 7th with the UH-1H. Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Angier, this event seeks to honor



48th AHC Reunion, September 2023.

even more satisfactory with the display site at the water's edge in the Front Street park to take advantage of the cool breeze off the Neuse River.

Over the Veterans Day weekend in November, NC VHPA attended the festivities at the Old Armor Beer Company in Kannapolis. Our three helicopters were parked on the sidewalk outside this veteran-owned brewery, and in spite of the cold, sometimes-wet weather, attendance at all the events during the weekend was good. Along with our helicopter exhibit, Old Armor hosted a celebration of the U.S. Marine Corp's 248th birthday during which the cake was cut with a USMC dress sword by the youngest and oldest Marines present. This weekend was also the occasion for a mini-reunion of nearly 20 veterans of NC Army National Guard Detachment 1, 449th Aviation Company based in Salisbury - camaraderie among the group remains strong after all these years! It was also at this gathering that our UH-1H, serial number 64-13767, was reunited with Glen Klutz, who was the last to fly 767 (Glen relates it was a maintenance test flight) before being released by the U.S. Army to NC VHPA in 1996.



L to R: Pat Ewing, Ben's grandson Aiden, Ben Gay and Brock Nicholson at Angier Flags For Heroes. Photo by Janet Gay.

individuals or groups that the local populace regard as heroes through contributions for flags that are placed on display in an open lawn area.

NC VHPA's following major event was, once again, accepting New Bern's invitation to display at the annual Mum Fest in mid-October. According to Ed Hughes, there was a continuous flow of people to our four aircraft on both Saturday and Sunday, which was made



NC VHPA President Ben Gay, "inspects the troops," prior to the New Bern Mum Fest display. Photo by Brock Nicholson.



NC VHPA helicopters on display outside Old Armor Beer Company on Veterans Day. Photo by Vic Rose.

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NC VHPA Members at Old Armor Beer Company. L to R: Vic Rose, Ben Gay, Gerald Phelps, Ed Hughes, Jerry Seago, Phil Keith and Brock Nicholson. Photo by Janet Gay.

Another event in mid-November saw Brock Nicholson, Ed Hughes and the Huey present the purpose and history of our association at a meeting of the NC Women's Republican Party at the NC State Alumni Center.

Conclusion of our activities in 2023 included Ed and Claudia Hughes and Tom Braaten participating in the Town of Trent Woods (part of New Bern) Christmas Parade with the OH-6 and Tom and Ed presenting a NC VHPA coin to New Bern Mayor, Jeffery Odham, for his generous donation of primer and paint to improve the condition of the UH-1H for the Vietnam War Commemorative that was held in Washington, DC last May.

February 3, 2024 again finds NC VHPA gathering at the Vietnam War Memorial on the State Capitol grounds in Raleigh to read the names of North Car-

olinians who are still listed as Missing in Action or Prisoner of War from that conflict. And this year, instead of holding its annual business meeting that same afternoon in a nearby restaurant, the members decided to delay the meeting until March 2d and convene at the Old Armor Beer Company in Kannapolis where it is more convenient to attend by those living in the western part of the state.

To see the NC VHPA 2024 events schedule, please visit our website at ncvhp.com.

Submitted by Vic Rose



New Bern Mayor presented with an NC VHPA coin by Tom Braaten and Ed Hughes. Photo by Charlie Parker.



Tom Braaten and Claudia Hughes with their "Loach sled," at the Trent Woods Christmas Parade. Photo by Ed Hughes.

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

The Holidays are behind us and we are looking forward to a new year of adventures. Aside from our Chapter Meetings, we will be busy (when it stops snowing and blowing) getting our Helicopter War Museum ready for a new season. We didn't have much activity at the end of the year. The Denver's Veterans Day Parade event had to be canceled due to unforeseen circumstances with our transportation, Wiers Fleet Partners. The General Manager tried very hard to remedy the situation. We do appreciate his efforts. And once again,

what happens at our annual Xmas Party, stays at our Xmas Party.

I know I'm not alone when I say, I've lost several friends during the year; among them were Jim Castillo, Al Davis, and Michael Brown. All Vietnam Combat Helicopter Pilots. We are getting older and time "don't take no prisoners". This brings me to my point which I want to share with you in this article: Take time out to reach out



Mill Fragment Grenade.

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to those that were a part of your life's experience that you haven't spoken with in a while. It only takes a few minutes, and the paybacks can be surprisingly good. A simple outreach may make your day.

Okay, there is one more thing:

I met with member Don Kent, Class 67-19, one of our chapter members who actually lives in Illinois and visits here fairly often. He gave me a call to say he had some stuff for the Museum. Among those things was a Mk II fragmentation Grenade. Although manufactured for WWII, it was used extensively in Vietnam and carried by infantry soldiers, and most likely was mounted in the door frame of a LOCH (OH-6) when out on recon in the AO. (Of course! it has been defused and de-armed). Thank you Don.

Oh Yes!, Just one more thing, then I'll go:

I read with much interest Uncle Sheuerman's, "Letter to the Editor", in the last Aviator (Nov-Dec 2023); As a

life member of the VHPA and AAAA, I agree that the VHPA has done its part toward the preservation of the History of the Vietnam War at the Texas Tech Archive in Lubbock, TX. It's time we focus on other areas of our membership. (Just my opinion). (Please read Mike's article in the last Aviator in which he, very eloquently, expressed his opinion. You'll understand what I'm talking about, when you do).

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

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The South Missouri Chapter had a very busy and successful Veterans Day Week. On Wednesday November 8th a beautifully restored UH-1 H model Huey flew to the College of the Ozarks (CofO) campus from the Mid America Flight Museum in Mt Pleasant TX. Along with the AH-1G model Cobra on static display at the CofO and a classroom with Loach and Chinook photos in the Patriotic Education Center, 7 volunteer chapter members spent all day on Thursday briefing over 275 Freshmen class members. They were told about the roles each helicopter played in the Vietnam war and about many personal experiences each pilot had while in Vietnam. The response was very successful with many questions being asked.

This event occurred because of John Sorensen's vision and close relationship with the CofO. His purpose was to have the students understand more of what happened in Vietnam and how important the helicopter was to conducting military operations in SE Asia. In fact, John flew this exact Huey during his service in Vietnam.

On Friday morning, the CofO held a Veterans Day memorial at the main flagpole in the center of campus. It was a very special remembrance ceremony made even more so when the Huey slowly circled the crowd before it headed



Tom Payne, Rick Sherman and John Sorensen.



Doug Groesbeck and Wayne Twiehaus.

back to Texas. It was a very moving event!

On Saturday, the Chapter held its Veterans Day Quarterly meeting in the Keeter Center. We had a very good turnout with 50 people in attendance. A delicious meal was prepared

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and served by CofO student staff members. Our main speaker was Dr. Marci Linson, VP of Patriotic Activities and Dean of Admissions. Dr. Linson talked about the many activities on campus that promote core American values, to include Patriotic Education, Military Science courses and the Travel Program. The Travel Program pairs CofO students with Veterans taking them back to battlefields where they fought. Destinations have included Europe and the Pacific from WWII, as well as sites in Vietnam and Korea. The program honors Veterans and helps educate the younger generation.

Next, we heard from Julianna Boldman in the Development Office. Julianna is Development Manager and oversees our Chapter scholarship Endowment fund which now totals nearly \$24,000. Since 2019, five students have been awarded scholarships totalling over \$3,800. Awardees must be in the Military Science program and have at least a 2.5 GPA. Its goal is to help deserving students to graduate debt free.

Dr. Brad Johnson, President of the College, then welcomed us and expressed his appreciation for the close ties our VHPA chapter has established with CofO and our involvement in Patriotic Activities on campus.

Next, the CofO Chapel Choir under the direction of Gregg Busch, Asst. Professor of Music and Theater, provided an amazing and inspiring choral performance for 45 minutes. The program was a collection of spiritually inspiring hymns designed in honor of Veterans Day. It began with Dr. Busch signing the National Anthem with the Choir in support.

It was truly a beautiful performance. Upon completion, the Choir left the risers and joined us for some social time.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this memorable meeting. We have a unique relationship with College of the Ozarks because we share the fundamental values necessary for America's success as a beacon of freedom in the world.

Chuck Guy
Chapter President



Ken Sherfey and Dick Elgin.



Dr. Marci Linson, V.P. Patriotic Activities at College of the Ozarks.



Huey departing campus over Veterans Day Ceremony.

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UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Chapter has participated in several activities over the past quarter. Beginning the day before Veterans Day was the Veterans Day program at the Spring Valley, Wisconsin school. Four Chapter members and the traveling Huey participated in an all-day event at the school. All classes kindergarten through 12 rotated out to get a short introduction to the Huey and its use in Viet Nam. They had an opportunity to ask questions and then get turned loose on the aircraft to

mix the controls like you did your first time trying to hover. We all had a ball. In mid-afternoon there was a program with the choir, band and orchestra followed by a rifle salute and taps (outdoors of course).

On the day before Thanksgiving four of us and one members granddaughter volunteered to help ETS serve a Thanksgiving meal to local veterans in Minneapolis. ETS (every third Saturday) is an organization serving needy vets and is located next to the Minneapolis VA hospital. They provide resources, guidance, physical and mental support to veterans throughout the month and provide a free lunch every third Saturday. The turnout before for Thanksgiving meal was great and was appreciated by the guests. The American Legion provided a number of volunteers as well.

December 18th was Wreaths Across America. At least seven Chapter member's participated at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery. I can't give you an exact count because the turnout of volunteers was so large we couldn't find each other. Last year there were only about half as many volunteers due to an overnight gift of a foot of snow and temperatures in the low teens. This year the weather was more pleasant resulting in the crowd. It is heartening to see that many people who care about veterans giving up their Saturday to volunteer. This will definitely be on my calendar



Wreaths Across America Ken Elliott Black Widow 39 101st Abn C-101 Agent Orange RIP.



Jim Bankston, Tim Callister, Don Abrams, Jim Ottman At Spring Valley School.



Ken Sherfey and Dick Elgin.

for subsequent years. We spent a number of hours carrying wreaths, searching out the graves of comrades and placing wreaths on their headstones. I was beat to a frazzle by the time I got home.

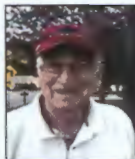
Don Abrams
Chapter Past President

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.

***Anderson, Thomas E. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 54-C, 57-6; RVN: 64-65 62 AVN, 64-65 A/502 AVN, 69-70 13 CAB, 70 HHC/1 AVN BDE; LM (2OLC), DFC (OLC), BS (2OLC), ACM (OLC); Callsigns: OUTLAW 6/GUARDIAN 6.**



Thomas E. Anderson passed away on April 7, 2023 at INOVA Fairfax Hospital. Tom Anderson was born October 19, 1930, in Carrington, ND. The family moved to Chinook, MT in 1936 where he attended elementary school. In 1940, the family moved to Havre, MT where he attended middle and high schools, graduating from Havre High School in 1948. Because of his family's financial situation, he had never considered attending college. However, he applied to attend Montana State University. He graduated in 1952 with both a degree in Journalism as well as a commission as an Army Infantry 2nd Lieutenant.

In 1964, he was selected by the Division Commanding General to activate and command a helicopter company and deploy it to Vietnam within 35 days. Returning to the states in 1965, Tom attended the army's Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS followed by an assignment in Washington, D.C. in the Army's Officer Personnel Directorate. After promotion to Lt. Colonel, he moved to a staff officer position in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army. In 1970, while serving in the Pentagon, he was requested by his former Vietnam Battalion commander to return to Vietnam to take command of an Aviation battalion in the Mekong Delta. After his combat com-

mand, he returned to the states in 1965, again assigned to the Pentagon with an assignment to the staff of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. He then pursued a year of advanced military schooling at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, PA.

Following military retirement, Thomas began a short stint in real estate sales, Tom was hired as a District Manager by PRC Realty Systems in McLean, VA. For the next 13 years he held various management positions within the company until retiring once more in 1999. In 2005, Tom and Pat moved to a 55+ community in Springfield, VA where he served 15 years on the Board of Directors.

***Brown, Gary A. Sr. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 61-I; RVN: 66-67 D/3/4 CAV, 69-70 HHC 14 CAB, 70 196 ASHC; BS (OLC), PH; Callsign: CENTAUR 36.**



Gary A. Brown Sr. passed away on November 8, 2023, at Agrace Hospice. He was born in Chicago on September 21, 1934. Gary grew up in Hessville, in, and graduated from Bishop Noll High School.

Gary enlisted in the US Army In 1955. After two years of serving In the Infantry, he graduated from Officer Candidate School. He then transferred to Aviation. Following military service, Gary received his small engine repair certificate from Matc and enjoyed working as the head Mechanic for A-to-Z rental for 18 years.

Gary was a devoted Member of St. Albert The Great catholic church, a longtime Bingo caller for St. Albert And the Knights Of Columbus, as well as one of the Volun-

teer Managers At The Round Table. Gary was fond of Technology and had fun coding and creating new games.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Jeri.

Butler, Richard E. USA: Flight Class: 70-37; RVN: 71 335 AHC, 71-72 114 AHC; Callsign: KNIGHT 21.

Richard Butler passed on November 12, 2023. He was born on September 13, 1948.

He was a successful builder and developer, peppering the western US with quality buildings, much applauded by his mostly governmental customers. He built Colorado's first Leeds Platinum office building, the majestic Signature Center in Golden.

He is survived by his wife, Jamie.

***Castillo, James G. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-19, 68-33; RVN: 69 121 AHC, 69-70 114 AHC, 70 C/2/20 ARA 1CAV; Callsigns: VIKING 23/ROAD SERVICE/BLUE MAX 71G.**

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of James Gilbert Castillo, born on July 29, 1948, in Los Angeles, CA. Surrounded by the love of his family, James departed this world on November 14, 2023, leaving behind a legacy of courage, dedication, and unwavering love.

Professionally, James Castillo forged a remarkable career as a helicopter pilot, retiring with honor from Federal Services. His commitment to duty extended beyond civilian life. His distinguished military career exemplified bravery, leadership, and a steadfast dedication to his country.

He is survived by his wife, Rachel.

***Connolly, Terrance R. USA; Flight Class: 70-38; RVN: 71-72 A/227 AVN 1 CAV; Callsign: CHICK-ENMAN 17.**



Terrance Randall Connolly passed away August 29, 2023. He lived in Vienna, West Virginia.

He was part of several service organizations including the Lions Club, the motorized unit of the Nemesis Shriners, Vienna Lodge 172 of the Masons, and the Royal Order of Jesters Court 156. Terry's faith in Christ shaped his heart for others, he attended Grand Central Church of Christ.

He is survived by his wife, Linda.

***Cooper, Larry E. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 68-2; RVN: 68-69 C/159 AVN 101 ABN, 69 A/159 AVN 101 ABN, 69 B/228 AVN 1 CAV; Callsigns: PLAY-TEX/LONGHORN/PACHYDERM.**

Larry E. Cooper died on July 6, 2023 in Wilmington, NC.

He earned a degree in business from Methodist College graduating magna cum laude in 1976. After joining the North Carolina National Guard, he took command of the armory in Wilmington from 1978-1982. He was promoted to Major and assigned to the National Guard's 30th Support Group in Durham, North Carolina. In 1996 he retired.

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

***Davis, George B. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 65-6W; 65 2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 69 101 ABN DIV; Callsign: ARMED FALCON 49K.**



George Bruce Davis of Colorado Springs, Colorado passed away on December 18, 2023 and has joined his wife Elfriede in heaven. George was born in Columbia, MO in 1935.

After retiring from the U.S. Army, George served another 16 years as a Deputy Sheriff at the Broadmoor Police Department in Colorado.

***Drury, Robert N. USA; Flight Class: 69-1; RVN: 69-70 F/8 CAV 23 INF; DFC, BS; Callsign: BLUE GHOST 20.**



Robert Norman Drury of Dubuque, Iowa, passed away on Friday August 4th, 2023, at Mercy One Hospital in Dubuque. Robert was born on July 15th, 1947, in Rockville Center, NY. He attended Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. He worked as the Director of Five Flags, the Dubuque Historical Society, and at Old Creamery Theatre Company.

Bob wrote and performed a one man play "Blue Ghost Two-Zero", reflecting on his experience in Vietnam and his return home.

He is survived by his wife, Poly.

Falcon, John D. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-508, 68-12; RVN: 68 191 AHC, 69 214 CAB; MSM (OLC), BS, PH, ACM (V); BOOMERANG 05.



John David Falcon passed away at his home on April 3, 2022. He was born on July 21, 1943, in Corpus Christi, TX.

After 33 years of military service, John entered politics. He served as Tax Commissioner of Webster County, Georgia and Administrator to the Tax Commission in Nueces County, Texas.

He is survived by his wife, Irma.

***Foster, Charles M. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-518, 68-32; RVN: 69-70 A/3/17 CAV, 575 TC DET; Callsigns: SILVER SPUR 8/VOLKSWAGON 6.**



Charles Marshall Foster passed away on September 9, 2023 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. Charles (Chuck) was born on March 15, 1942 in Vallejo, CA. Charles grew up in Waukegan IL.

In 1966, he was drafted into the Army where he would become an Army Aviator

serving our country flying helicopters in Vietnam. He would later go on to be an Army Comptroller and retired after 26 years of honorable service.

After retiring from the Army, Chuck moved his family to the Lake of the Ozarks to live out his dream of building a house on the lake property he had purchased as a teenager with money earned from his newspaper route and other odd jobs such as golf caddying and setting pins at a bowling alley. At the lake, he developed a thriving mortgage business at the Community Bank of the Ozarks where he made many lifelong friends and acquaintances and helped so many people secure financing for their homes.

He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Kum Young.

***Gates, Anthony A. USAF, MAJ Ret.; RVN: 71-72 37 ARRS; DFC (4OLC).**



Anthony Allyn "Tony" Gates, of Hensley, AR passed away on October 28, 2023, after a valiant battle with Alzheimer's disease. Tony was born and raised in Crossett, AR. Tony was a long-time member of the First Baptist Church of Crossett.

During his USAF career, he piloted the B-52 Stratofortress, the supersonic B-58 Hustler, and finished his service in the CH-53 "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter.

As a young boy, Tony loved flying and was inspired by his uncle Billy, a pilot and veteran of WWII and Korea. So, as early as his mom would allow, he started taking flying lessons, joined the Civil Air Patrol and got his pilot's license before he was able to drive, at the age of 14! Flying was truly the passion of his life, and he was lucky to be able to do that in his career and throughout his life. After his 20-year career in the Air Force, he flew as a private pilot and owned his own airplane, flying as often as he could to see

his grandchildren and family.

Tony was a man of strong Christian faith serving regularly in the roles of Deacon and Sunday School teacher. Faith and family were the most important things in his life.

***Godwin, Doyal V. USA; Flight Class: 57-12; RVN: 61-62 8 TC CO, 65-66 1 CAVDIV.**

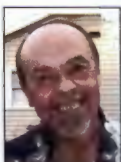


Doyal Virgil Godwin, Jr., 93, passed peacefully at Lake City VA Medical Center on August 20, 2023. Doyal was born and raised in Miami, FL.

After Doyal's retirement from the Army, the family moved from North Carolina to Union County, FL in 1984. He worked for Alachua County Sheriff's Department, and for more than 20 years as a volunteer with the Florida Wildlife and Game Commission. He taught Hunter Education Courses for young and old in North Central Florida. He volunteered with the County Extension Agriculture Agent implementing many programs that benefitted area farmers. Doyal spent much time with his church family in whatever area that he was needed.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Wanda Dukes.

Goin, Eric D. USA; Flight Class: 71-11; RVN: 71-72 362 ASHC; ACM; Callsign: 8-BALL.



Eric "Rick" Goin went to be with his Savior Jesus Christ on November 20, 2023 after battling with esophageal cancer. He passed away peacefully in the company of his wife Jill and brother Brian at Aurora Baycare Hospital in Green Bay, WI. Rick was born on August 10, 1949 in Noblesville, IN.

He graduated from Noblesville High School in 1967. He went on to attend college at Vincennes University where he

studied aviation and received his Associate's degree with top honors. Throughout his life, he worked in various jobs in Indiana, the U.P., and Wisconsin. His last job prior to retiring was in maintenance at the HTR in Manitowoc WI.

He is survived by his wife, Jill.

***Grade, Merlin R. USA; Flight Classes: 70-15, 70-13; RVN: 70 A/228 AVN 1 CAV, 71 OPCON AMERICAL, 711 AVN BDE; BS; Callsigns: WIZARD 1/WILDCAT 17.**

Merlin "Wizard" Randall Grade, 74, passed away on September 25, 2023, in a local hospital. He was a native of Arkansas City, Kansas and was a resident of Madisonville, LA.

After the war, he settled in the New Orleans area. Wizard was a member of AA where he was a Leader and Sponsor for many years.

Wizard belonged to many sailing clubs with the New Orleans Yacht Club. He retired as a Sales Manager from the Oil-field Industry.

Hogan, Kenneth R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-10, 68-14; RVN: 68-69 571 MED DET; Callsign: DUSTOFF 509



Kenneth Hogan took his final flight on May 13, 2023, at home in Puyallup, Washington surrounded by his loving family, among them was his wife who was lovingly by his side for 42 years. Ken was born on January 14, 1945, in Milwaukee.

In 1967 Ken graduated from St Norbert's college with a degree in Biology and he later went on to earn a master's degree from Weber State. Ken proudly served his country as an active-duty Army officer for 24 years.

After retirement, he worked for the state of Washington.

He is survived by his wife, Myon.

***Hurley, Michael W. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 64-4W; RVN: 64-65 118 AHC, 67-68 HHT/7/17 CAV; MSM, DFC; Callsigns: THUNDER-BIRD/RUTHLESS RIDER.**

Michael W. Hurley of Bedford and formerly of Castleton, NY, died April 19, 2023. He was born in Brooklyn, NY. Michael grew up in Island Park, NY and was a member of Island Park High School class of 1961.

Michael was a member, Vice President, and then President in 1997 serving a 1-year term, of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA).

Michael received his Bachelor of Arts (1970) from Park College, in Parkville, Missouri. He later earned his Master of Public Service (1979) from Western Kentucky University, in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Michael continued on to receive his Master of Business Administration (1985) and his Doctor of Philosophy (1987), from Rensselaer Polytechnic University, in Troy, NY.

Following his retirement from the Army, he began a second career as a college professor, teaching Labor Relations, Human Resources Management and Organizational Behavior at multiple colleges over the years including, the College of St. Rose in Albany, NY (1989-2015 upon retirement), Clarkson University (1988-1989), SUNY Albany (1987-1988), and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as an adjunct professor.

For 38 years, he lived with his wife and family in Castleton, NY, before moving to Bedford in 2021.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 51 years, Robyn (Breckner).



The following information is reprinted due to errors in the listing for Mr. Inks. Both his name and date of birth have been corrected.

***Inks, Thomas E. USA; Flight Class: 67-4; RVN: C/3/17 CAV in 67-68; Callsign: Charlie Horse 16.**

Thomas Hinks of Sacramento, CA, passed on March 3, 2023. He was born on March 28, 1940.

***Jacquay, Louis H. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 53-H, 54-T; RVN: 66 A/101 AVN 101 ABN 66-67, 66 13 AVN BN, 66-67 336 AHC; LM, DFC, BS (V) PH; Callsigns: WARRIOR 6/WARRIOR 3/DELTA 21.**



Louis H. "Lou" Jacquay, age 94, a native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, passed away peacefully on Monday, October 2, at Pacifica Senior Living, Tucson, Arizona.

He graduated from The University of NB at Omaha with a Bachelor of General Education Degree in Business Administration and from The University of Southern California with a Master of Science Degree in Systems Management.

Louis was a member of Saint Pius X Catholic Church in Tucson and Saint Frances Cabrini Catholic Church in Littleton, Colorado.

Jones, Gary W. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 63-7WT; RVN: 65-66 114 AHC, 67-68 B/159 AVN 101 ABN; BS (V), PH; Callsign: WHITE KNIGHT 2.

Gary Windle Jones passed away August 20, 2023. He was born in Wichita Falls on October 6th, 1935. He graduated Valley View High School. While in the service Gary Graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Daytona Beach, FL. with a BS Aeronautical Science.

Gary joined the U.S. ARMY in 1963. He began his career as an enlisted PV1,

PV2, PFC, NCO/Sargent & Staff Sargent, then he applied to Helicopter Flight School at Ft. Wolters, TX, became an ARMY Aviator.

He was also one of the oldest current licensed (Jan 2023) FAA Certified Helicopter Flight Instructor current up to his death. Just the way he wanted it!

After retiring from military service, he served several local communities as City Manager. Electra, TX, Holliday, TX, Seymour TX and Burkburnett, TX.

Kielbasa, Robert A. USA, LTC Ret.

Robert Kielbasa age 78, husband of Veeda Duncan Kielbasa, and a resident of Lewisburg, TN passed away on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at Maury regional Medical Center. No other information provided.

***Kochenderfer, Allen W. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 68-4; RVN: 68-69 7/1 CAV; BS (OLC-V), ACM (OLC); Callsigns: APACHE 25/APACHE 2.**



Allen Wayne Kochenderfer, of Town of Belvidere passed away peacefully with his wife and children at his side on November 3, 2023 at Gundersen Medical Center, concluding his journey with Parkinsonism. Al was born September 17, 1945 on the family farm in the Town of Belvidere in Buffalo County, WI. Al attended Cochrane-Fountain City High School. His strong work ethic started young when he went from practice to the Standard Station in Fountain City to help his father, watching and learning, which likely started him on his way to being able to repair almost anything in life.

After graduating in 1963 and then attending UW-Platteville for 3 years, he felt the need for adventure and to fight for basic human rights for his fellow

man. Al enlisted in the US Army in 1966 and trained as a tank crewman. He attended Officer Candidate School and received his officers commission as a 2nd Lieutenant, Armor Branch in 1967.

As Al believed that one should never stop learning, he continued his education at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Studies and also did his graduate work in Airport Management. He then completed the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

After returning to his roots in Buffalo County, Al owned and operated Al's Motor Pool for over 30 years. Always a keen observer of needs that may exist in his community, he was key in the development of a local ambulance service and went on to provide medical service on 2500 calls over 45 years of service as an EMT and Director with Scenic Valley Emergency Medical Service.

Al joined Cochrane-Buffalo City VFW Post 10406 in 1977 and remained a Legacy Life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He served with vigor in a number of roles for the organization, rising up the ranks at the local Post, District and State Department levels, serving as Commander of all between 1994 and 2004. Al especially enjoyed his travels to every post in the state as Wisconsin VFW State Commander. Continuing his passion for advocating on behalf of his comrades, he was elected to the VFW National Council of Administration. With his steadfast commitment, Al traveled to Washington DC annually for many years to champion for veterans' rights on the Legislative Committee.

He is survived by his wife Kathleen (Johnson).

***Koslow, John J. USA; Flight Class: 66-14; RVN: 67-68 229 AHB 1 CAV; BS; Callsign: HACKSAW.**



John (Jack) Koslow died peacefully at home October 31, 2023, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on September 30, 1943, in Palm Beach, FL. He attended Hickory High School in Sharon, Pennsylvania and graduated in 1961. He attended the University of Akron, in Akron, Ohio and graduated in 1965 at which time he entered the U.S. Army through ROTC as a Second Lieutenant.

Jack worked for Merrill Lynch as an investment banker from 1969-1976. From 1976 - 1992 Jack worked at Fort Worth National Bank as a commercial banker, rising to the position of Executive Vice President. In 1993, Jack purchased Leito's Supply Company where he built a successful masonry supply company and helped grow the United Masonry Contractors Association, serving on the board of directors for over 13 years. After 25 years of ownership, Jack sold Leito's Supply Company to a good friend and competitor and began his semi-retirement. He served as former member and President of the Breakfast Tips Club and held memberships in The Fort Worth Club, and Rivercrest Country Club.

In 2008, Jack joined the Town of Westover Hills City Council where he enjoyed serving his neighbors as a Council Member and Mayor Pro Tem. As a strong Christian, Jack had been an active member of St. Andrew's Anglican Church for over 35 years.

***Leith, Robert S. USA; Flight Classes: 68-10, 68-14; RVN: 68-69 187 AHC, 71-72 25 CAC; PH; Callsigns: CRUSADER 26/RED CARPET 3/CRUSADER 3.**

Robert Saunders Leith Jr. of Paso Robles died March 30, 2023 surrounded by

his family. Robert (Bob) was born November 11, 1946 in Ann Arbor, MI. He was a lifelong Rotarian.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Nancy.

***O'Connell, Lloyd M. III USA; Flight Classes: 68-524, 68-44; RVN: 69-70 C/159 ASHB 101 ABN, 69-70 327 TC DET, 70 159 ASHB 101 ABN; DFC, BS, PHACM; Callsign: PLAYTEX 16.**

Lloyd Michael O'Connell III passed peacefully on October 23, 2023, in the presence of his loving family. Mike was born in Reno, NV on September 13, 1945. He attended Sparks High School, graduating in 1963. He then attended the University of Nevada, Reno, graduating in February of 1968, receiving his diploma and commission in the Army as a 2nd Lieutenant on the same day.

After leaving the Army, he went to work for Consolidated Freightways Trucking Company and was with the company for 30 years, running the Northern California and Nevada Division his last 15 years with the company. He followed that with various transportation-related senior management positions before retiring in 2007.

He was a life member of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Combat Helicopters Association, and the American Legion.

***Patnode, Clarence A. Jr. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 55-K, 56-9; RVN: 67 191 AHC; Callsign: BOOMERANG 6.**



Clarence Patnode passed on October 9, 2023. He was born in Churubusco, NY on June 1, 1932. He graduated from Chateaugay High School in 1950. He attended St. Lawrence University, earning a BS in Mathematics and was commissioned into the Army as a Second Lieutenant of Infantry upon graduation in

1954. He received his Master of Science Degree in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Arizona in 1965.

He oversaw the development of the Apache helicopter night vision and weapons systems. Upon retirement in 1980, he and Elaine moved to Salt Lake City where he joined Fiber Science Division of the EDO Corporation. From May 1984 to January 1997, Bud was sole proprietor of CAPCON Ltd, a management consulting firm, which specialized in helicopter, turbine engine, and flight simulation portions of the aerospace business.

His volunteer work included coordinating activities and reunions for the 191st Assault Helicopter Company veterans, being a mountain host at Brighton Ski Resort, distributing lunches for the Good Samaritan Program in Salt Lake City, and serving on the Patient and Family Advisory Council for Intermountain Healthcare. He was a longtime member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church, also volunteering in their fund-raising events.

He is survived by his wife, Elaine.

Quarles, Gary W. USA; Flight Classes: 68-503, 68-1; RVN: 69 238 AWC.

Gary Wayne Quarles, age 77, of Anchorage, Alaska passed away on November 18, 2023. No other information available.

***Rees, Richard L. USA; Flight Classes: 68-524, 68-44; RVN: 69-70 187 AHC; DFC, BS; Callsign: CRUSADER 19.**



Richard (Rick) Lee Rees Jr. was born September 12, 1944, in San Francisco, CA, and died quietly in his sleep in his home in Hua Hin, Thailand, on August 27, 2023. He was raised in Tokyo, where his father was in the shipping business. His home was next to that of Pan Am's Director, so Rick's interest in flying came

early. He was drafted into the Army in 1966 while attending the University of Oregon. While attending basic training, he was selected for Infantry Officer Candidate School and was commissioned at Fort Benning, GA, in 1967.

He flew a wide variety of commercial airliners, including L-1011, DC-10, DC-9, B-737, B-727, and FK-28. With over 20,000 flight hours, he retired from Japan Airlines as a DC-10 Captain in 2004.

Although he had no children of his own, when his closest childhood friend, Steve Roach, died in 1979, Rick moved from Guam to Lake Tahoe to help raise his friend's two boys, Max and Sterling. It was important to Rick that Steve's life story and legacy would be preserved — and so it was. The boys thought of Rick as family and adopted him as a role model. Rick developed a particularly close bond with Max, who called him Pops, while Max's four sons called Rick "Grandpa Rick."

During his later years in Thailand, he was a member of the Rotary Club of Royal Hua Hin. He was also a member of the Combat Helicopter Pilots Association (CHPA) and the Distinguished Flying Cross Society (DFCS). He remained a steadfast, loyal friend to his many military and civilian aviation comrades around the world.

He is survived by his wife, June.

Sanders, Alfred A. USA MAJ Ret. died on September 25, 2020.

***Sibert, Lester H. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-11, 68-17; RVN: 68-69 142 TC CO, 69 282 AHC; Callsign: ALLEY CAT.**



Lester William Howard Sibert of Overland Park KS, closed his final flight plan on January 7, 2024, at KC Hospice

House. Les was born on February 7, 1944, in Kansas City MO. He earned his B.A. in Chemistry and Biology from Drury College, Springfield MO, in 1978.

Patriotism was very important to Les who served as the former Treasurer of the Conservative Republicans of Southern Johnson County. For many years, he attended and proudly held the flag at the beginning of the meetings.

He is survived by his loving wife, Jan.

***Smith, Lawrence B. USA; Flight Class: 69-13; RVN: 69-70 118 AHC; BS; Callsign: THUNDERBIRD 10.**



Lawrence Bruce Smith, known affectionately as Larry to his friends and family, was born to eternal life on December 9, 2023, in Milwaukee, WI. He was born on May 16, 1946, in Camp Lee, VA.

As a young college graduate, Larry chose to join the United States Army to become a Warrant Officer. He served his country as a Huey helicopter pilot.

Smith, Richard M. II USA; Flight Class: 70-41; RVN: 71 C/7/17 CAV, 71-72 129 AHC; Callsign: YELLOW SCARF.

Richard Smith died on December 1, 2023. No obituary provided.

***Stanton, John H. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 69-7; RVN: 69-70 62 AHC, 72-73 COMMAND AVN CO; Callsign: COACHMAN 20/LONG TRIP.**

John Stanton passed away on October 14, 2023 at Emory St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta, GA. Jack was born in Pawtucket, RI on November 9, 1948. He graduated from Washington High School in Fremont, California. He was enrolled at San Jose State. When he learned he was about to be drafted, he enlisted in the Army in 1968.

Jack was a dual rated pilot and had an

interesting career mainly in VIP units. After retiring, he flew for Comair and Eastern Metro Express Airlines where he became a Dash 8 Captain. After Eastern went out of business, and Metro pulled back to Texas, he went to work at Flight Safety as an Embraer Instructor and then King and Queen Air Instructor where many of his co-workers credit his high proficiency and professionalism. He retired from Flight Safety in 2007 after 21 years.

He is survived by his ex-wife, Susan.

Thompson, Donald R. USA; Flight Class: 69-2; RVN: 69-70 C/229 AHB 1 CAV.

Don Robert Thompson passed away on November 21st, 2023 in Little Rock, Arkansas after complications following a planned heart procedure on October 26th. Don was born on November 13, 1945 in Little Rock. Don graduated from Arkadelphia High School in 1963 and then from Henderson State University in 1968 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. At Henderson, Don Robert went through the Reserve Officer Training Corps, earning a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army.

In 1980, Don joined his classmate and longtime friend, Ronnie Echols in establishing Echols and Thompson certified public accounting firm, a business rooted in integrity, hard work, and community commitment for over 40 years.

He was a committed member of the FUMC's Chancel Choir for over thirty years, served on the Arkadelphia City Board of Directors for over 10 years, and was a committed volunteer of the Arkadelphia Human Development Council for over 20 years.

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

***Weigeshoff, Ronald L. USA; Flight Class: 67-15; RVN: 67-68 A/1 AVN 1 INF, 69-70 C/159 ASHB 101 ABN; DFC, BS, PH; Callsigns: BULLDOG 19/PLAYTEX 19A.**



Ronald Weigeshoff passed away on November 3, 2023 in Nashville, Tennessee, surrounded by his children and family. He was born on August 8, 1938 in Jersey City, NJ.

At the age of seventeen, Ronald joined the U.S. Army, and began what would grow to be an illustrious military career of nearly thirty years.

After his retirement he worked for the department of the Army as a civilian, servicing fleets of helicopters around the world to include combat zones in Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This combined with his previous service totaled more than fifty years of service to his country.

***White, Robert E. USA; Flight Class: 71-33; BS, PH.**



Robert E. (Bob) White of Alabaster, Alabama passed away on December 29, 2021.

With family by his side, he peacefully entered the presence of his Savior. Bob was born April 17, 1940.

After the war, he served on the Birmingham Police Department as a helicopter pilot for a few years. He spent many years after that in industrial sales. He finally discovered what he enjoyed the most, which is anything involving computers. He spent many years in IT computer service for various companies.

If you would have asked him, he would tell you that his greatest work was taking care of his wife through her many health struggles.

Upon his discharge from active duty, he returned to service in the Army National Guard, while working at General Motors, where he retired from both.

***Wysong, Keith D. II USA; Flight Classes: 69-47, 70-1; RVN: 70-71 48 AHC; Callsign: BLUE STAR 30.**



Keith Douglas Wysong, age 73, a resident of Danbury, WI passed away on November 28, 2023 with his loved ones by his side. No additional information provided

***Zale, Louis M. USA; Flight Classes: 68-15, 68-26; RVN: 68-69 134 AHC; Callsign: DEMON 89.**



Louis Zale soared to his final resting place on October 8, 2023. After seven years in the military, Mike continued his helicopter legacy for over 45 years working for various helicopter companies in a variety of critical roles, which included serving as certified flight instructor, production test pilot, developing training programs and pilot flight manuals, and being a designated engineering representative for the FAA. He retired in 2014 after 29 years with MD Helicopters. He was a friend to many, especially fellow Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and his Banner Neuro-Wellness Fitness buddies. He was a proud, lifetime member of the VHPA, DAV and VFW.

He is survived by his wife, Jan.



*Gone
But
Never
Forgotten*

TAPS

OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

Individuals wishing to supply a notice of death and/or information such as online link(s) may do so by email to aviator@vhpa.org. 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.

Allen, Byron W. USA; Flight Class: 67-21; RVN: 68-69 68 AHC; died on May 18, 2023.

Brennan, William J. USA; Ret.; Flight Class: 66-17; RVN: 118 AHC; died on August 27, 2023.

Candler, Gary M. USA; Flight Classes: 70-33, 70-29; 71 C/101 AVN 101 ABN; died in May of 2020.

Cantrell, Gary R. USA; Flight Class: 70-27; RVN: 70-71 119 AHC; died on October 9, 2023.

Cantrell, Raymond G. USA; Flight Class: 67-20; SS, DFC, BS; died on May 6, 2023.

Genna, Joseph A. USA; Flight Class: 71-4; died on July 6, 2023.

Grant, Richard N. USN CPT Ret.; died on September 22nd, 2023.

Hardin, Joseph G. USA; Flight Class: 69-50; DFC, BS; died on December 23, 2023.

Holleran, Raymond F. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 60-10Q; RVN: 65-66 162 AHC; died on July 12, 2023.

Kimsey, Forest M. USAF, COL Ret.; RVN: 65-66 DET 5 38 ARRS; SS; Call-sign: JOLLY GREEN; died on December 6, 2023.

Kirk, Lewis L. USA, COL Ret.; BS; died on October 11, 2023.

Macveigh, Mark A. USA; RVN: 67-68 129 AHC, 70-71 D/101 AWC 101 ABN, 72-73 DUSTOFF; Callsigns: COBRA JESTER/HAWK 11/DUSTOFF 52; died on June 21, 2021.

Mulder, Richard R. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67-68 37 ARRS; DFC, PH; died on November 3, 2023.

Schmitt, John H. USN; RVN: 68-69 HS-6; died on December 23, 2023.

VETERAN'S QUILT PRESENTATION AND QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

The Presentation of the Veteran's quilts will be on May 16th, 2024 at 2:00 PM followed by the Quilter's Show and Tell. Everyone is invited to attend the Veteran's presentation; please sign up to ensure we have adequate seating for everyone. The Quilter's Show and Tell portion of the program gives our quilters a chance to display their projects/blocks they are working on or have completed; everyone is invited to stay if they are interested.

The quilts for this year's recipients shall be on display in the vendor's room on 14-15 May. On May 16th, the quilts will be on display in the Quilter's Room until the Presentation. Looking forward to meeting this year's quilt recipients and presenting their quilts to them.

For those quilters wishing to present a completed quilt, I request that the minimum size be 65 X 56 (lap size).

If you have a fabric that bleeds, there is a product "Retayne" which sets the color.

The Reunion is earlier this year, but there is still time to construct blocks or quilts for the 2025 Reunion in St. Louis. The blocks/quilt can be your Show and Tell item. It will be fun to see other projects the quilters are making.

BASIC BLOCKS REQUIREMENTS

- The fabrics are to be red, white/cream and blue.
- 12 1/2 (twelve and one half) inch unfinished
- Prewash all fabrics as some do bleed onto other fabrics when washed.
- 100% Cotton quilt quality fabrics
- 1/4 (one-quarter) inch seams

If you are not able to attend the reunion, the blocks etc. can be mailed to me.

Any questions please contact me...

Kathleen Sherfey~ Quilt Coordinator

12420 W. 53rd Terr, Shawnee, KS 66215

Home Phone: 913-631-6811 Cell Phone: 913-486-7694

Email: klskms@aol.com

NOTE: I shall be calling the potential recipients, if you see that it is a 913 Area Code, please answer as I would love to talk to you. It will not be a Spam Call.

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Issue 43-01 ~ January/February/March 2024