



The VHHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



“NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT,
NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT.
DUTY FIRST!”

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FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR...

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

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

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

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By the time you read this the holidays will be on us, so I truly hope each of you has a great Thanksgiving, Chanukah/Hanukkah, and Christmas. The new year will be right around the corner and before long we will be at our reunion. Registration will open on 1 March, so register early to make sure you are able to attend the events you want to do.

The Nugget is going to close their sports bar to the public and let us use it as our O'club. It will be the first time we will have full food service, a bar



and amenities like pool tables. Even with inflation, we have a great room rate and reasonable food prices. However, our outside events will most likely be affected. Our hotel also hosts entertainment events like Travis Tritt, The Marshall Tucker Band, The Price is Right and Wheel of Fortune. As we get closer to our reunion, if there are any events planned, the staff will let everyone know.

If you are planning travel during the holidays, make sure you do a good preflight before you pull pitch.

Stay safe....jp.

Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage (FVSO) Kontum, Vietnam

Donations are tax deductible with 100% going to the kids, providing support for over 800 Montagnard children who live in 8 Vinh Son orphanages in the Kontum/Pleiku area of Vietnam. For over 20 years, FVSO donors have supplied food and medicine, dental care, education, clean water, housing and more.

Patrick Leary
FVSO PRESIDENT AND LIFE MEMBER VHPA



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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. Mark your calendars now!

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!

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

"Finally a book ... by a 101st Airborne aviator on his heroic role in the eight-year secret war conducted during the Vietnam War by SOG Green Berets. Over the last decade there have been compelling books printed by SOG Green Berets who ran missions across the fence into Laos, Cambodia and N. Vietnam, often understating in general terms the critical role of helicopter units and aviators like Roger Lockshier.

Now, Roger flies readers into the secret war, jutting through ack-ack anti-aircraft gunfire and the horror of being shot down in Laos, providing a well written account that grabs readers' attention. Thank you Roger"

~ John Stryker Meyer,
author of

On the Ground, Accross the fence, and SOG Chronicles



101st Airborne Missions in Vietnam and Laos During the Vietnam War

From the Managing Editor...



Before covering any admin areas, the Aviator staff wishes our readers a joyous holiday season.

In addition, we note our appreciation for those same readers who share their stories for

everyone's enjoyment. The chapter activities as well, are educational and not only inform people about the VHPA, but the war and its participants who, in the main, appear to be fairly rational and interesting people.

It is the decision of the Executive Council to modify the publishing schedule for the Aviator. It will become a quarterly publication as of January 2024. As do all things, prices have steadily risen for not only printing, but especially mailing. Another reality of note is the fact we are all reaching fairly advanced ages. Our health may not severely limit our activities, but surely our memories are not as readily recalled. The story submission has declined over

the last few years. Those are, at least, an important feature of the magazine, if not a main element. This is obviously a good place to ask for all of our membership to submit a story if you have one to recall and share. For our regular submitters, advertisers and VHPA chapters, we will prepare a new schedule for submissions. Stories are accepted at any time!

One area of clarification on article submissions: Please do not place photos within the Word document. Send them as attachments (in the same email is fine) with appropriate captions and where they are not the personal photos of the author – an attribution indicating the photographer. The placement of your photos within the article will be in accordance with the layout artist's best use of space and balance.

It is a pleasure to note our readers in their various communications are complimentary, courteous, and understanding (where an error has been made). This is a great incentive for our staff to provide the best product possible

- Thank you.

Tom Kirk

VHPA 2024 CALENDAR



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The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assoc. and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new VHPA 2024 Calendar, now available for immediate delivery. This is the 31st annual calendar produced by the VHPA.

Each month presents scenes of the men and machines that flew over Southeast Asia, plus detailed captions about what is pictured. * The VHPA Calendar also commemorates the 2,167 helicopter pilots who died or whose bodies were not returned (BNR) from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-75).

Printed in full-color, this 16x11-inch (BIG) wall calendar is the perfect gift for all VHPA members and their families.

Only \$15.95! (plus shipping & Missouri state taxes if applicable).

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

MAKES A GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT ... ORDER TODAY!



A Letter About Butch McHugh

Dear Jeanne,

I attended the funeral for your uncle and had the opportunity to tell his sons and a number of his other family and friends about my friendship with him. Although we lived far apart, we shared a life-long friendship and connection that began in combat. I related that story and am happy to be able to tell it again to you.

In February of 1970, after completing flight school, I and three other members of my flight class arrived at the 119th Assault Helicopter Company, which was then stationed at Ahn Khe, in the central highlands of Vietnam. Your uncle was one of the first people I met and he immediately took me under his wing and made sure I was made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. He got me assigned to a bunk adjacent to his in a temporary squad room with about thirty guys.

As time went by, we were moved into better housing and since he was an "RLO", real live officer, as opposed to me, a "warrant officer", he and the other RLO's were housed in separate quarters. We remained friends however, and after a couple of months I was assigned to his flight platoon.

It is important for you to know that prior to being assigned to his flight platoon, I had been bounced around from in-country training with the first platoon, to the gun platoon, then to the maintenance platoon and then finally to the second platoon with your uncle. The main reason for all the movement was that in my short couple of months in country I had managed to get shot at more than anybody in the company including being shot down and wounded while in the gun platoon. I was even given the nick name "magnet ass". Although I wasn't having a great deal of luck with my tour, two of the guys I came into the company with had already been killed by mid-May when I was assigned to second platoon.

Since your uncle was the platoon leader of second platoon, he had his choice of who he wanted for his copilot. I have never understood why, but he chose

me to fly with him. He certainly didn't care about my apparent jinx or he was just plain brave enough to ignore it. We made a good team and flew a number of missions together including several during which we were exposed to enemy fire. He never got excited and his normal reaction was to just take evasive action and continue the mission. We never took a round although we could see tracers and could hear the gunfire. As I said, he didn't seem to be much bothered by the enemy gunfire but he would always pull in a little more power and move out of the area if he could.

On the morning of June 22, 1970, the second platoon was tasked with moving the remaining personnel from an artillery fire base just south and east of the Mang Yang pass. This area was known enemy territory but by that time in the war many units were either moving to larger consolidated bases or standing down. That morning I was assigned as your uncle's copilot and he was the flight lead for the second platoon's ten UH1 helicopters. The mission was scheduled to go off beginning as early as possible so we could get everyone out before dark. Unfortunately, the weather was not cooperating. There was fog and low clouds all over the area. Finally, around mid-morning and after some prodding by the Colonel in charge of the artillery base, we took off with about a quarter mile of visibility and two-hundred-foot ceilings to see if we might be able to get into the fire base and begin the operation. (One quarter mile visibility and two-hundred-foot ceiling was the absolute minimum weather conditions that we were allowed to fly in and it didn't leave much room to maneuver.) We loaded the Colonel and his radio operator on board and took off single ship. After flying very low level for about forty-five minutes we were able to locate the fire base, which was situated on a small rise surrounded by triple canopy jungle, and landed. The Colonel and his radio operator got out and George went to flight idle to wait. While we were waiting, I got out to relieve myself and proceeded to move around

toward the back of the aircraft and take care of a very urgent need.

Practically as soon as I got situated, facing the helicopter at the beginning of the tail boom, I heard a very loud explosion about fifty feet behind me. My first thought was the arty guys were blowing up extra ammunition, but then there was another explosion about fifty feet to my front. It was immediately clear to me the explosions were enemy mortar rounds and the placement meant they had bracketed us. That meant the next round was likely to land on us. George was already bringing up the throttle to flight speed as I jumped into the helicopter. The crew chief and door gunner were both strapped in and ready to go but since I had been outside the helicopter I just jumped into the seat and began reading off the torque while moving my hand to keep the collective lever from going into an over torque. George knew and expected me to do this so he could concentrate on flying while I made sure he didn't have to worry about an over torque. We got into the air and had reached about fifty feet in altitude when the next round hit. I don't know if the aircraft was hit for sure but the nose immediately dropped and as the rotor blade came around from my right I saw it strike the ground and several feet of it peeled off and went flying off toward the trees.

I learned later on the explosion had caused the helicopter to go out of balance and we flew into the ground with the right side of the helicopter, where I was, impacting first. Since I was not buckled in, I was not killed immediately by the impact, but was thrown through the windscreen and front of the helicopter, which then bounced over me and came to rest upside down beyond where I was. George and both crew members tried to locate me before taking cover in some nearby foxholes. Apparently, some short period of time passed before I regained consciousness and attempted to stand up. Since my leg was broken, that did not work out and I fell face forward into the red clay mud. I was still wearing my flight helmet with the visor down and when I fell in the mud it covered my face plate, blinding me. I pulled the release on the chin strap and let the helmet fall across my shoulder onto the ground. By then George had seen me and with mortar shells landing all around us, he and an arty Lieutenant came out of the safety of the fox hole they were in,

grabbed me under my arms, and helped me back to where they had taken cover. After several more minutes of shelling the attack stopped and we began looking at the damage. We never found my flight helmet. A mortar had hit exactly where I had been laying and a two-foot-deep crater about six feet in diameter marked the spot. Had it not been for your uncle's courage I would have simply disappeared in the explosion.

George came to visit me in the hospital later that day or the next. He had been wounded in the crash also and that is where he earned one of the "Purple Hearts" that you saw him wearing. I didn't see him again until many years later at a reunion in New Orleans. We picked up the friendship as if it were the next day and have enjoyed each other's company and conversation over the years.

I spent some months in the stateside hospital and later became a flight instructor at Fort Rucker. In August of 1972 I returned to Viet Nam to finish what I had started. I was shot at again a number of times but was never hit again. During my second tour I was awarded a number of medals and got to work with a Medal of Honor winner, Colonel Millet. I later worked as a Sheriff's deputy and recently retired after twenty-two years. I have told many people that over the years I got to meet and work with a lot of real heroes, George was one of them.

Thanks for letting me tell you our story. I hope it explains some of the things George was unable or too modest to talk about.

By Donald Spivey

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LOOKING FOR

Looking For

I'm a member of the VHPA and you were suggested to me, as a person who, may be able to help me. I'm a former Army CW2 and would like to replace a set of CW2 bars that I have managed to lose. It was suggested that I write you to see if I could place a want add in the VHPA magazine.

If I could, would the following be allowed?

"Wanted, for purchase, a set of Vintage CW2 rank insignia bars of the Vietnam era, before the Army changed them from Gold & Maroon to Silver & Black."

Please contact:

Ed Ban @ 1-630-632-1987 (C) or
e.ban@sbcglobal.net

*No need for a "want ad" this is
appropriate for a Looking For entry ~Ed*

.....

Hi,

My name is Brian Andrew, I am ex RAF. During Desert Shield/Storm I was working for British Aerospace in the Middle East on BAe Hawks and I was friends with flight surgeon Major Rhonda Lee Cornum. Me and two colleagues were invited to a Christmas 'get together' in December 1990 at KFIA Saudi Arabia with the guys from W/2 BN 229th Attack Helicopter Regiment, Fort Rucker. We later learned, sadly, that four men who made us so very welcome that day, were crew on the Black Hawk shot down (callsign Bengal 15) while bravely trying to rescue an F16 pilot during Desert Storm on 02/27/1991. Major Cornum was badly injured and captured by the Iraqis.



I took 21 photos on our visit, and I believe they include CW4 Philip Garvey. Possibly the last photos of Philip alive. Can anyone identify Philip in the photo? Can his family be informed? I believe Philip was a potential VHPA member.

Thank you, Kind regards,

Brian Andrew bxa@live.co.uk

If anyone recognizes any of the crew by name or picture and has contact with the family, Andrew has additional photos to share. ~ Ed

.....

Looking for details about a 361st AWC Cobra shot down at Ben Het 9 May 9, 1972 VHPA prospective member Clarence Lewis wrote that recently he has been in contact with VHPA member William 'Bill' S. Reeder who was in AH-1G #68-17053 with John Timothy Conry on that day. 1LT Conry was KIA and CPT Bill became a POW. When Bill was released in March 1973, the Army learned 'the rest of the story.'

Recently Clarence put the following on the 57 AHC website: "I am looking for the original after-action report I filed for this incident. I filed it to be archived with the 57 AHC daily operations log/reports. The National Archives Records Administration in College Park, MD has been checked and no records were found. Would anyone know how or where I should look for the original records in the 57 AHC archives?"

Also does anyone know who the call sign Rocket 44 was? They took a resupply Huey of small arms and anti-tank ammo into Ben Het just prior to Panther 36 (CPT Reeder) being shot down.

Anyone who can add to these details is encouraged to contact:

Clarence Lewis at cclrel@yahoo.com

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In the Sep/Oct issue, there was a request from Mrs. Janet Price looking for information regarding her husband's awards. She did receive a few replies, but wanted to check again for anyone who may have known her husband, Murray R. Price of the 179 ASHC. Please refer to the entry in that issue if the name is familiar. Her contact info is:

Janet P Price
jprice1926@gmail.com
254-405-2503

.....

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 6 New Members and covers the period 9.13.23 to 10.19.23

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)

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

Buehler Frank J. **
Airway Heights Washington
Army
66-23 66-21
161 AHC in 67-68

Lorenz Robert Charles 'Bob' **
Broken Arrow Oklahoma
Army
69-1
330 TC CO in 69-70

Picofsky Conrad M 'Mike' **
Vacaville California
Army
68-503 68-1
12 AVN GP in 68-69

Saxton Jeffery C. **
Fountain Hills Arizona
Army
67-3
114 AHC in 66-67

Whitmore Dale N. **
Live Oak Florida
Army
71-23 71-21

Wilson Joseph M. **
Carmel New York
Army
66-19
117 AHC in 67-68; C/101 AVN
101 ABN in 71-72

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A rough definition of the term "Stolen Valor" is when someone takes credit for a heroic action that they did not take. For instance, there are those who claim service in Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan and the valor that goes with many of the actions that were witnessed there. Many of those claiming heroism in those wars never even served! With that in mind, this mission documents the awarding of a Distinguished Flying Cross to someone who repeatedly denied that they performed the action for which they were being awarded. Quite the opposite of Stolen Valor. Therefore, the title of this mission is:

MISSION 21

~ It Never Happened!

By Colonel Rodger McAlister



Colonel McAlister calls this photo, "My special aircraft with one SS-11 on each side." (Charley Model Huey)

I was a First Lieutenant and I was flying Charlie model Huey gunships with the 2/20th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, out of An Khe, South Vietnam. These were the 48 rocket Hog "C" models, 24 rockets on each side of the helicopter. When we fired off a pair of rockets, it was the same as a 105 howitzer round when it hit the ground. There were three Batteries of ARA, Aerial Rocket Artillery, to cover each of the 3 Brigades. Even though our unit call-sign was "Falcon", I went by the call-sign "Ramjet" on company frequencies (Roger Ramjet was a patriotic superhero cartoon character who tries to save



Close up of the 24 round SS-11 rocket system and the Crew Chief's M-60 door gun and mounting.

the world in the 1960's), as we had our own personal callsigns when simply talking on the company frequency among ourselves.

Covering troop insertions was our "bread and butter mission." We would meet with the lift ships on their way to the landing zone and we would fly about 1000 feet ahead of the flight. As a team of two gunships, we would fire one pair of rockets at a



Then Captain McAlister receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross from General Casey. It appears that his door gunner, Sgt. Donald Frederick, is standing at McAlister's right. Note 1st Cavalry Division patch on Frederick's left shoulder.

time around the landing zone as we flew one aircraft on each side of the lift ships. We would fire our rockets into bushes, tree lines or anywhere that we felt the enemy could be lurking. As the lift ships would touch down, we would fly what we called a "daisy chain" to cover the landings. A daisy chain being one aircraft firing as the other circles around to cover the landing zone again. With our door guns and rockets, this gave us the ability to provide constant cover for the aircraft on the ground and the troops entering the landing zone as well as also covering the empty aircraft as they departed the landing zone.

This coverage of troop insertions would usually take about five or 10 minutes or so until the ground company commander gave us the okay to return to base to refuel and rearm. We also carried PRC-25 radios which the ground units used, so that we could monitor their progress. We could tell by their radio calls to each other on the ground as to what was happening and it would give us some idea if they needed us to immediately return for support. On this particular mission, there were three bunkers and the guys on the ground were

busy taking out targets.

As we were leaving the LZ on this particular mission, I got a call from the ground unit, saying "We've got three bleeders here and Doc (the ground medic) can't get 'em stopped. Can you get out a call for a Dustoff?" I could hear the demeanor in his voice and knew that they were in serious trouble. His next statement confirmed the urgency, "We may have to bag 'em here" meaning body bags and unless they got a quick medevac, the men would probably die. I immediately put out a call and it appears there were three other units in contact that day near LZ Two Bits and all of the Dustoff aircraft were busy. Their reply was that they could not be there for about 20 minutes; much too long for the guys bleeding in the LZ.

Because our company policy was that no gunship was to land in a hot landing zone, we knew we would not be able to help them out. We had all kinds of radios on our aircraft, we could talk to B-52s, the Navy and just

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APO San Francisco 96490

ORDERS
1089

14 March 1967

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

NAME, ROGER L. 05224673 FIRST LIEUTENANT ARTILLERY United States Army
A, 2d Battalion, 20th Artillery

AWARD: Distinguished Flying Cross
Action: 18 December 1966
Location: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For extraordinary heroism while participating in aerial flight. First Lieutenant McAlister distinguished himself by heroism in action on 18 December 1966, while leading a section of aerial rocket artillery helicopters on a medical evacuation cover mission in the Republic of Vietnam. The intended pick-up zone was surrounded by enemy automatic weapons positions, making it extremely dangerous for the medical evacuation helicopter to land. Using his own aircraft as a target for the hostile fire, Lieutenant McAlister led the medical helicopter into the area. Boldly flying into the face of the enemy, he was immediately taken under fire from three directions. His action diverted the enemy's attention, however, and the medical helicopter was able to land and board the casualties. In order to get the heavily loaded aircraft out of the pick-up zone, Lieutenant McAlister again flew low over the enemy positions, exposing himself to heavy fire. Once again the decoy maneuver was successful, and the medical helicopter was able to depart the area without sustaining casualties. Lieutenant McAlister then braved the hostile fire for a third time to engage the enemy with rocket and machine gun fire, succeeding in destroying two of the positions. Lieutenant McAlister's courage and determination under fire stand in keeping with the highest traditions of the military.

Actual award of McAlister's Distinguished Flying Cross.

about anyone else that we wanted to, but we were not permitted to rescue the men on the ground and risk losing all of those valuable radios to the enemy, not to mention the aircraft and crew. The orders were very plain and very strict; You will not land in a hot LZ!

With those orders at the forefront of my mind, I looked around inside the aircraft at the copilot, crew chief and door gunner; they all gave me a thumbs up, they understood the situation. I'm thinking I may go to Leavenworth prison for doing this, but I will have to go alone. Knowing that the Commander in the Command & Control (C&C) aircraft could hear my radio calls, I called the ground commander back:

"You have a Dustoff 1/2 mile inbound to your south, you need to lay down suppressive fire to cover them."

He replied "I see you with your rocket pods on short final."

I replied "Negative! That's not me, it's a Dustoff Huey with a red cross on the nose. I am not allowed to land in a hot LZ."

The guy must have been a West Point Officer as he finally got it. "Roger! Now I see the Dustoff!"

We took 17 hits in the tail boom and rotor blades on that rescue, but no one in the aircraft, not the crew nor the patients was hit. I am thinking that we took them to the MASH unit at LZ English, we were only three or four minutes away. I called them and told them I was two minutes out with three serious bleeders, and they needed to have the medics ready when we got there. As soon as we

landed, they had three gurneys ready, and they ran with the patients into the hospital tent. All three survived.

As we are getting ready to lift off from the hospital pad, this Sergeant comes out to my side of the aircraft and says, "Sir, I got your tail number but I need your callsign for my records." I reached out

and grabbed the top page of his clipboard. I crumpled the paper in my hands as I told him, "I was never here!" and I lifted off to rearm and refuel.

Returning to base, one of my guys in the back got my attention on the intercom saying "Sir, we have a problem. There is blood all over the floor back here, how do we explain that?" So, I landed on a sand bar in a nearby river where I had seen other Huey pilots washing their aircraft. I shut down on that sandbar and we all grabbed our steel pots (infantry helmets) and started throwing water into the helicopter to wash out the blood. We soon returned to base to rearm and refuel.

About two weeks later, our Sergeant Major came to my quarters and said that the Colonel wants to

see me ASAP. I asked him what it was

about, and I was told, "It's not about the Medal of Honor!" As I entered the office of my Commanding Officer, CO, I gave him my best salute and relaxed. His immediate response was, "I didn't tell you to relax, soldier. Stand at rest!" I see that someone has put you in for the Silver Star, he said that you landed in an ultra-hot landing zone to pick up three severely wounded soldiers and that all three survived. I also have the record of damage to your aircraft dated the same day. I'm sure you understand the rules about not landing in a hot landing zone, Lieutenant!"



Then Captain, Rodger McAlister in Vietnam.

I replied "We were low and slow covering the Dustoff. I made a low pass as he landed and then came around and made another low and slow pass as he lifted off. One of the soldiers on the ground must have mistakenly remembered my tail number for the Dustoff tail number. Those wounded guys probably had morphine in them and did not remember correctly." The CO told me, "Then I will have to send this award back. If I would march your Copilot, Crew Chief and Door Gunner in here would they tell me the same pack of lies?" I tried to keep my best straight face as I answered him, "Yes, Sir, they would."

About three months later, I was now a Captain and I was called back into the Commanding Officer's office. "This Silver Star thing just won't go away. One of the wounded that remembered your tail number said he would re-enlist for six months more in Vietnam if he could be a door gunner on your aircraft. (Sgt. Donald Frederick, one of the three wounded, did re-enlist for an additional six months and flew as my door gunner.) Your 'West Point' ground commander has written up the citation." "Yes, Sir, he must have gotten my tail number confused when I made those low passes." My CO continued, "Major General Casey is going to pin the Distinguished Flying Cross on you. Be sure and take your door gunner with you."

Two-star General Casey did pin the medal on my uniform and asked me who that was standing with me. I explained that he was my door gunner and one of the three wounded men who were picked up that day. Gen. Casey looked at Sgt. Frederick and said to him, "You are a lucky man to fly with Captain McAlister." Sgt. Frederick certainly had his sense of humor

when he replied to the General, "Sir, you have no idea!"

I stayed in touch with Sgt. Frederick over the years, having found him on the Internet many years after Vietnam. It turns out that he lived only a few miles from my parent's house and while I was over-

seas, he spent a day with them as well as my grandparents and gave them a full accounting of that day many years ago. We communicated many times after that but not having heard from him for some time recently, I was able to get him on the phone and realized that he did not sound well.

He told me that

he had Stage IV Pancreatic Cancer and was not expected to live much longer. The next day, I was on a plane to his home in New Orleans to stay with him. He died three days later and went on ahead to prepare the next LZ.

(Book Author's note: Carefully read McAlister's Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross. It documents his claim of repeated low passes rather than what he actually did, landing in an "ultra-hot" LZ to save the lives of 3 bleeding soldiers. It's an award he so deservedly earned. During my interview with Col. McAlister, he noted that the term "Stolen Valor" applies to someone who takes credit for something that they never did. While he certainly flew this mission and was rightly recognized for it, he still says "It never happened", which it most assuredly did! ~Phil)



A painting by an artist known by many Vietnam Veterans, Joe Kline, who was a Huey Crew Chief in the 101st Airborne Division, "Screaming Eagles", Joe personalized this print for Col. McAlister to include McAlister's "Falcon" nose art; the painting is titled "Have Guns, Will Travel", a play on the subtitle of a popular television western at the time, "Paladin".



LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND

Lewis D (Lew) Ray
LTC, U.S. Army Retired

Captain Larry L. Taylor.

It is a rare occurrence and an honor to be part of a truly historic act of heroism and valor! On September 5, 2023, I had that opportunity and witnessed a true act of heroism and valor being recognized as a friend and old Army comrade was being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in a ceremony at the White House. Captain Larry L. Taylor's heroic actions that occurred on a dark night over fifty-five years ago in Vietnam on June 18, 1968 were historic and unprecedented when he rescued four soldiers from certain death with his Cobra helicopter. In that courageous act that night he not only saved the lives of four soldiers, but forever changed the future of numerous family members and their generations to come. In doing so, he illustrated the actions of a genuine Patriot!

Captain Larry Taylor and I were both young First Lieutenants assigned to D Troop (Air), 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division (commonly known as the Big Red One) and located at Phu Loi just north of Saigon. We both arrived



Captain Taylor and I on September 5, 2023 after the CMH Ceremony.



Captain Taylor (then Lieutenant) in his UH-1B Gunship shortly after arriving in Vietnam in August 1967.

there on the same day fresh out of helicopter flight training.

Since we were both US Army Armor branch officers, we were both assigned to an air cavalry unit. He became the attack (armed) helicopter platoon leader, and I became the aero-rifle platoon leader with troop carrying Huey helicopters. Also, as part of the troop was a platoon of scout helicopters.

Our daily routine was to provide support throughout the 1st Infantry Division area whenever troops were in enemy contact or were in trouble and needed additional firepower, troops or airlift. Much of the time, we spent days on standby and would be alerted ("scrambled") to react immediately to action when the siren went off. Then, we had about two minutes to get to our helicopters, get them fired up, get our infantry troops on board and be ready for takeoff. Most of the time, we did not know where we were going or what we were getting into until we were in the air. And, we had pre-planned missions as well.

One of those preplanned responsibilities was to support the 1st Infantry Division Ranger Battalion Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) missions. On these missions, the LRRPs would deploy a 4 to 5-man reconnaissance team into a remote area to "sneak and peek" to observe and report on enemy activities. These highly-trained and skilled infantrymen were often secretly infiltrated on the ground or were airlifted into position by a Huey helicopter team. When their mission was complete or if they had to be extracted prematurely under enemy pressure, attack or fire, the same Huey helicopter team that airlifted them in (which would be on standby waiting for a call) would immediately scramble to pick them up.

Usually, a fire team of two attack helicopters were also part of the operation and would provide aerial firepower to suppress enemy fire if an emergency extraction had to take place. In the spring of 1968, the new AH-1G "Cobra" helicopter gunships arrived in our unit. The Cobra, the Army's first designed attack helicopter, was flown only by a pilot and copilot/gunner. It was sleek, fast, and could deliver devastating minigun and rocket fire on enemy positions. These helicopter pilots became quite skilled and adept at completing these dangerous LRRP missions but would sometimes incur small arms fire damage to their aircraft since they needed to be so close to attack the enemy positions. Captain Taylor and I flew several of these missions together—he leading the AH-1G Cobra attack helicopter team and me flying the UH-1B Huey to insert or pick up the LRRPs in a remote location.

On the night of June 18, 1968, Larry and his fireteam of two Cobra gunships were scrambled to support a LRRP team that had found themselves in an enemy staging area near a



D Troop "scrambling" to get the helicopters ready and troops on board after the alerting siren went off.



Typical Ranger LRRP Team.

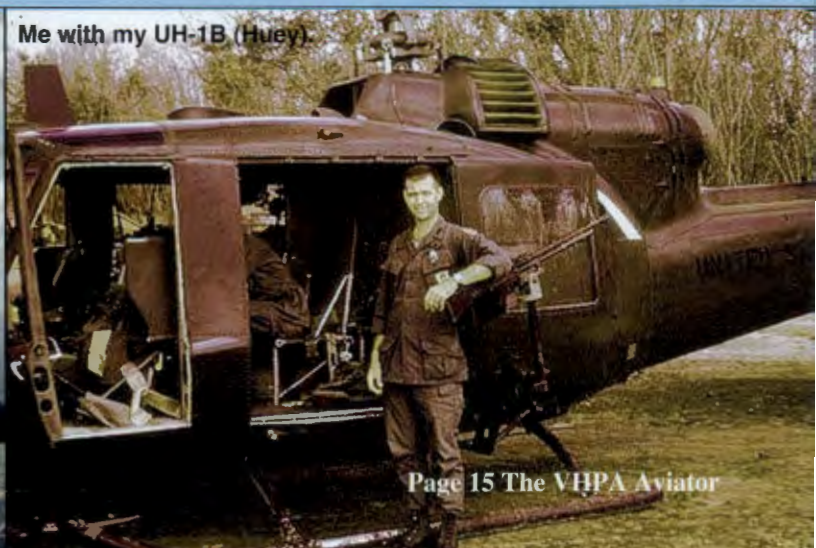
small village of Ap Go Cong, Binh Duong Province, Republic of Vietnam, in a marshy area of the Saigon River delta and the LRRPs found themselves being chased, attacked and surrounded. It was during the rainy season. Although these men were trained in how to escape and evade the enemy, in this situation there was nowhere for them to escape and evade to. Larry's fireteam was alerted to provide whatever support they could as they flew in the dark guided to the loca-

tion only by the LRRP radio antenna signal. In Larry's own words, "It was so dark it was like peering into an inkwell!"

However, as he drew closer, assisted by his copilot/gunner Warrant Officer J. O. Ratliff, he could make out in the darkness the green enemy small arms tracers and explosions caused by the enemy attacking the LRRPs on the ground. After pinpointing the LRRP location, for the next 45 minutes he and his other Cobra wingman aircraft, piloted by CPT Roger Trickler and CPT Dirk LeMay, delivered all the aerial firepower they could on the surrounding enemy positions while the enemy fired back at them. He fired 152 rockets and over 16,000 rounds of minigun at the enemy. Finally, when he and his wingman had expended all of their ammunition and rockets, he and his copilot, WO J. O. Ratliff, made strafing runs on enemy positions to draw the enemy fire away from the surrounded LRRPs. However, soon the enemy caught on to the diversionary tactic. The LRRPs were down to their last



CPT Taylor's AH-1G Cobra.



Me with my UH-1B (Huey)



General area around Saigon where the LRRPs were operating.

magazine of ammunition and were outnumbered at about 15 to 1. Larry was also nearly out of fuel in his helicopter with the 20-minute warning light glowing brightly in the dark cockpit.

He sent his wingman Cobra aircraft back to their base at Phu Loi because they were also out of ammunition and nearly out of fuel. He learned that the Huey helicopter normally used for the extraction had experienced radio problems and would not be coming. Adding to the situation, his superiors were directing him to stand down, abandon the LRRPs, and to return to the base. However, Larry could see that if he was to abandon the LRRPs they were sure to be overrun and killed. His motto was to "Leave no man behind!" and he knew that it was now or never to try to save the endangered LRRPs. So, he ignored the order to leave the LRRPs. Larry directed the LRRPs to put in place and discharge any remaining claymore



Village of Ap Go Cong where the battle and rescue took place.



Typical claymore mine.



Typical armament configuration of the AH-1G Cobra.



Typically surrounded LRRPs.



Artist interpretation of the LRRP rescue.

mines they had to clear a temporary path through the surrounding enemy positions and move to a potential safer location where he could attempt to extract them with his helicopter.

They followed his directions as he blacked out all the lights on his helicopter and attempted a landing in the pitch-black night. He explained later that he and the LRRPs miraculously arrived at the same "dark hole in the mud" at the same time!

What happened next had never been attempted by a crew in an AH-1G Cobra helicopter. The helicopter, about 36 inches wide and designed only for a pilot and copilot/gunner, had no troop seats for anyone else. Larry knew the desperate LRRP rangers were resourceful and would figure out how to cling onto the helicopter wherever they could for extraction. Sergeant David Hill and



(Left) Sergeant David Hill (LRRP) (then) and (Right) (now, the lone survivor) who led the CMH recommendation team.



(Left) Larry Taylor, Cadet, JROTC.
(Right) Commander, ROTC Honor Guard and Drill Team).



Captain Larry L. Taylor and wife, Toni.

Specialist Bill Cohn sat astride the rocket pods and Specialist Gerald Patty and Sergeant Bob Elsner clung to the skids.

The LRRPs pounded on the side of the helicopter to signal they were securely attached and ready. Larry lifted off and climbed to a safe altitude with his helicopter still blacked out. He could hear enemy rounds striking his helicopter and was concerned for the LRRPs hanging on outside. He had to fly fairly low and slow because he knew the men clinging to the helicopter were wet and muddy and would get really cold if he flew too fast and, perhaps, lose their grip and fall off.

He selected a secure location at a nearby water treatment plant, landed using his landing light, and the LRRPs got off the helicopter. As they got outside the rotor area and in the glow of the landing light, they all turned and gave Larry a salute and a grateful thumbs up indicating a "Thank You" and a sign they were all right. Then Larry and his copilot returned to their base camp at Phu Loi and landed with only fuel fumes!

Captain Taylor was threatened with court martial disciplinary action for refusing the order to return to base camp and abandon the LRRPs. Eventually, more rational minds prevailed and he and his copilot were recommended for the Dis-



US Army Dignitaries who attended and spoke at the Ceremony.



SecArmy Christine Wormuth presenting commemorative plaque.

tinguished Flying Cross for their deeds on that night. I, as the troop Awards and Decoration officer, conducted the interviews, prepared the narrative statements, and composed the citations for the awards. However, when the recommendations for the awards were processed at the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters, Larry's was upgraded to a Silver Star medal. All of us with knowledge of the action were pleased with the upgrade but always felt that it merited higher recognition. However, we realized that, in those days, heroic actions by helicopter pilots were fairly routine and the war, time, and other priorities had to march on.

It was over two decades later at a unit reunion before Larry met again the LRRPs he saved that night in 1968. It wasn't until early in 2017 that Sergeant David Hill, the only surviving LRRP that was rescued, spearheaded an effort to get Larry's action upgraded to the Congressional Medal of Honor. After years of effort by many concerned supporters and working to meet the exacting Army Regulations covering the award, Dave

and his team were successful in completing the tasks and achieving the goal. In his efforts to get this accomplished, both Dave and Larry exemplified the 1st Infantry Division motto, "No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great. Duty First!" A simple, straightforward directive. It was not a motto you would easily forget. Efforts are now underway to get the initial award for his copilot, J. O. Ratliff, upgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross.

Larry has lived a lifetime of selfless service. He is a Patriot! From an early age, he felt a duty to serve his country. In high school, he was a leader in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC). At the University of Tennessee, he was the Commander of the ROTC Honor Guard and Drill Team and graduated with a commission in the US Army and the rank of Second Lieutenant.

His great uncle fought in WWI, his father served with the Navy during WWII, and an uncle flew bombers over Germany in WWII. While serving in Vietnam, Larry flew over 2,000 combat missions, was forced down five times, and under enemy fire at least 340 times. After leaving Vietnam, he served three more years in Germany before leaving the Army to operate his family roofing and sheet metal business in Chattanooga, TN. After returning home he also taught at the Tennessee School for the Deaf, was active in several Vietnam Veterans Associations, and, when retiring and breaking up his sheet metal business, he donated materials to the Boy Scouts of America, the Habitat for Humanity, and the Railroad Museum.

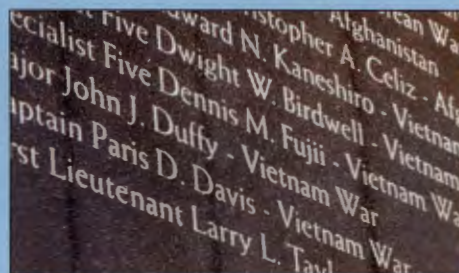
Larry's heroic and valorous actions live on as long as we



Sec Def Lloyd Austin presenting official MOH Flag.



Medal of Honor wall at US Army Museum.



Lieutenant Taylor's name inscribed on Wall.



Sergeant David Hill (lone surviving rescued soldier speaking).

remember them. To this day, his actions on that night are taught at the US Army Ranger School as an example of resourcefulness and initiative under pressure, enemy fire and dire circumstances. His actions that night brought calm and clarity to a desperate situation. He demonstrated exceptional bravery, strength and courage under fire. The Congressional Medal of Honor is a small token of a nation's appreciation for Captain Larry L. Taylor's actions that demonstrated inspiration and resolve. We honor him now and forever as a Patriot and a hero!

On September 6, 2023, while attending the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMH) ceremony for CPT Larry L. Taylor on September 5, 2023, my son and I attended the induction ceremony for CPT Taylor into the U.S. Army Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon. The ceremony was held on Fort Myer, VA and attended by numerous significant Department of Defense officials to include: Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin; Secretary of the Army, Christine E. Wormuth; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Mark Milley; Vice Chief of Staff, US Army, GEN Randy A. George; Sergeant Major of the Army, Michael R. Weimer; and, Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, KS, MG John V. Meyer. All spoke in tribute and honor of CPT Taylor.

CPT Taylor was presented the CMH Flag and the official photograph to be display with his other memorabilia in the Hall of Heroes (located in the Pentagon). Also present at the

induction ceremony was the sole survivor of the daring rescue on June 18, 1968 in Vietnam, Sergeant David Hill. Sergeant Hill was the initial nominator and spearheaded the movement to get CPT Taylor's initial Silver Star Medal award upgraded to the CMH. Sergeant Hill also spoke at the ceremony.

Later in the day, I visited the new National Museum of the US Army located on Fort Belvoir, VA and witnessed the unveiling of CPT (then Lieutenant) Taylor's name inscribed. We also toured the numerous exhibits at the Museum and, in particular, the Vietnam War exhibit. I served two tours in the Vietnam War as an infantry unit leader and as a helicopter pilot.



YOU DONE GOOD!



Courtesy of...

Dick Gray
HORNET 27

VETERAN'S QUILT PRESENTATION AND QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

I am pleased to announce that, to date, the quilters have presented 66 quilts to VHPA veterans. Looking forward to the 2024 reunion in Reno; I encourage each quilter to devote one day this year to construct one (or more) block(s) for the 2024 reunion.

If anyone is interested in presenting a quilt to that special veteran (husband), inform me of your desire so we can coordinate your presentation.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BLOCKS:

- Fabric to be quilt quality, 100 percent cotton
- Fabric is to be prewashed, to prevent bleeding
- Request colors to be red, white/cream, and blue
- Any design is welcomed
- The blocks are to be 12 1/2 unfinished

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



WO1 Fantroy's quilt was made/quilted by Lou Gutsch who also presented it.



CWO4 Tom Hirschler's quilt was presented by Maricela Brown, blocks sewn by Maricela Brown and The Ladies of Kestrel Quilting Bee.

Vietnam Helo Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

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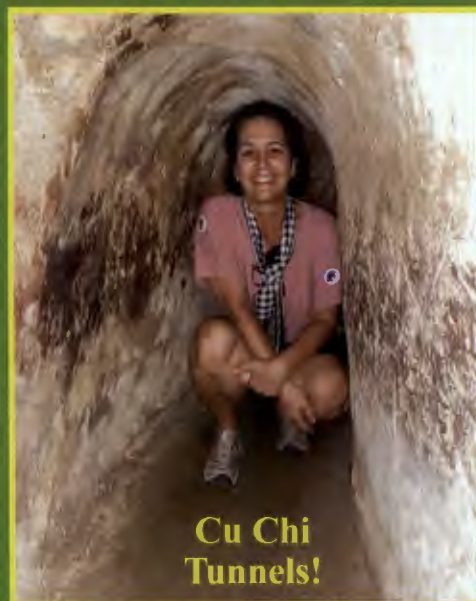
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

My personal opinion is -The VHPA Legacy Committee is Unnecessary

As Neil Sheehan said on pages 726-727 in his book - A BRIGHT SHINING LIE: "The aviation units were the sole combat element of the Army that did not come apart under the stress of the war in Vietnam. Nearly 6000 helicopter pilots and crew members perished, but the Army airmen never cracked. Whether it was the oneness of man and acrobatic flying machine, whether it was the equally shared risk of officer pilot and enlisted crew member, whatever the reason, the men of the helicopters kept their discipline and their spirit.

I know this can be said of all helicopter pilots and crew members, regardless of Branch of Service, that served in Vietnam and SE Asia between 1961 and 1975. This is our Legacy. What we did in that conflict! This and the Monument we put in Arlington National Cemetery to honor our fallen comrades and the VHPA Scholarships we will continue to endow to our descendants through the Army Aviation Association of America long after VHPA is no longer viable. This is our legacy!

While I feel the ideas put forth by the VHPA Legacy Committee are well intended, I believe they are misguided. The VHPA is a social organization, not a philanthropic one. The investments currently in our financial accounts are there to fund the operations of VHPA and existing Life Members until the Association ceases to exist, whenever that may be. At this years' ABM too much time was spent on how to create a legacy that is already there.

More VHPA donations to The National Vietnam War Museum and Archives at Texas Tech was brought up. Guys, we have already donated in excess of \$250,000 in VHPA earnings to fund interns to aid in cataloging all the materials given to the archives. I believe

that the need for additional donations is there and if you, as an individual wish to donate, do so, either through VHPA or directly. But VHPA as an organization has done more than its part.

A stronger relationship between VHPA and Ft. Rucker and The US Army Flight Museum was also discussed. The donation of a plaque to the Museum was brought up and we were told how it will hang in the Museum forever – well that, same statement was made in 2005 by those in control when almost 100 Vietnam era Pilots attended the 50th Year Anniversary of Ft. Rucker and presented a plaque to the Post Commander and Museum Director. In 2020, those in charge couldn't find it. In the last 50 years Ft. Rucker has never invited VHPA to any function or reached out in any way. We are just not important to them. They change Post Commanders and Museum Directors. What they want now are our donations for the Museum restoration. Again, if you as an individual, wish to donate, either through VHPA or directly, please do so. Personally, since I left Rucker in 1973, I've been back twice; 2005 to present the Plaque, which they couldn't find, and 2011 after the Orlando Reunion to show Hunter the Post and go through the Museum. Doubt if I'll ever go back again.

I would, however, be open to putting a small monument outside the Museum, similar to the one in Arlington National Cemetery, honoring all the Pilots and Crew Member's that trained at FT Rucker and then flew in Vietnam and SE Asia between 1961 and 1975. I'd personally donate to that and attend the dedication.

I love the Army Aviation Association of America. Of all the scholarship money, my son, Hunter received over the last seven years, \$5,500 came from Quad-A. As a member of the VHPA Scholarship Committee I would

attend the Annual Summit to talk Scholarships with the AAAA Scholarship Board. Bill Harris, CEO and Joanne Hanscote, my contact on AAAA Scholarship Board, are great people. I'll be a member of AAAA till I die but I doubt I'll ever attend another Summit in Nashville. No reason to go. That is unless I'm named "Army Aviator of The Year" and, we all know, that will not happen.

Fellow VHPA Members, this is my personal opinion. I'm a Life Member, I donate approximately \$1,000 or more a year to VHPA Scholarships and I make sure the check or donation says "VHPA Scholarships Only" so it gets where I want it to go. I encourage you to donate to any of these causes you feel deserve your donation BUT, in my opinion with the exception of AAAA Scholarships,

VHPA, as an organization, has contributed enough.

See you in Reno.

Mike Sheuerman

Dear Editor I have a complaint. In the drawings of a logo for the reunion t-shirts, the first helicopter in Viet Nam, the CH-21, has been excluded since 2010. I know there might not be any CH-21 pilots around anymore, but I was a door gunner, shot down on the same mission, CWO Holloway, was killed on. and I would like to see the first helicopter in Viet Nam honored.

Al Doucette, Life member

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~ 1SG (Ret.) Mark Hicks - June 13, 2023

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Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



President Chip Brown hosting the luncheon.

ALAMO CHAPTER

Not a lot happening during the high summer months of South-Central Texas. The extremely high temperatures and humidity kept most folks close to home and the air conditioner. We did get together for lunch though. A joint luncheon was enjoyed by all at the Indian Oven Restaurant. A bit different cuisine for most of us but enjoyable none-the-less. Our annual business meeting and dinner is scheduled on Oct 4, in which next year's leadership will be elected. Not much else happened, again mostly because of the weather. If anyone has some rain they'd like to send our way, we'd be most appreciative. A severe drought still has a strangle hold on us.

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



Enjoying the meal.



Good times and great food.

Brown continues to lead the chapter with plans of some future activities to be scheduled.

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

ALASKA CHAPTER

What a wet crazy summer ... Things have been different this year as weather has been significantly different! But we worked around and still had nice gatherings.

The Halibut fishing went off as usual, but with a smaller number of fishermen this year. We had a campfire dinner the night before and next day filled our freezers with halibut. You could sell tickets for this event as our brothers are very entertaining on board while waiting for fish to bite, hilarious!

Then our annual picnic was also down in numbers but a beautiful day and great company. Food is always good at a picnic



and there seems to be an endless supply of stories and what's happening around the State.



Annual Picnic

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

We will be hosting our annual dinner and business meeting on Sunday November 12th at the Eagle River VFW. This year we will be catered with Mexican cuisine and plan a fund-raising auction of donated items. Our last event for this year will be the participating in the Wreaths Across America in December.

Looking at next year we will have our usual gatherings, but we plan to add a Vietnam Memorial Day event and will be encouraging a nice turnout at the Reno Reunion.

A side note our chapter members certainly enjoy reading about all the other chapters activities thank you for sharing with your Chapter news each month!

Lynn Kile
President, Alaska Chapter
www.VHPA-Alaska.org



Annual Picnic

AMERICAN HUEY 369 CHAPTER

In the last two issues of the Aviator, we have featured the Vietnam history of the first two Hueys we restored to flight. Our 498th Medical Company Dustoff Huey, 369, and our Slick, 803, Warrior 11; neither of which was ever supposed to fly again. This issue of the Aviator, we will feature our Crown Jewel, "Gunship 049". This B Model Huey, 64-14049, was REALLY never supposed to fly again! Upon thorough inspection, our Maintenance Director Dick Hosmer quietly informed the Founder of American Huey 369, John Walker, that 049 was "Economically infeasible" to restore...it would cost far more than the aircraft was worth to restore it back to flight.

But John knew the history of the aircraft. It flew as a Gunship in the Battle of the Ia Drang, just as 803 flew in the Battle as a 1st Cav Medevac Huey. It escorted Ed Freeman and Bruce Crandall into and out of LZ Xray during the battle; the same missions that Freeman and Crandall were awarded the Medal of Honor for their many times in and out of Xray for resupply and extracting the dead and wounded. To not restore 049 back to



Gunship 049. Photo by Robert Fureigh, VN Veteran Pilot.



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

flight would be like finding one of the two 1968 Mustang "Bullitt" cars from the movie in "Economically infeasible" condition and not restoring it. But it was a done deal in John Walker's mind, Gunship 049 would be restored to flight, regardless of the cost.

So today, Veterans and others get to see and hear one more genuine Vietnam Warbird in the air, not on a stick in front of a VFW somewhere in Kansas. This aircraft is full of history; besides being an icon of the War, this restored to flight Huey is flown in its former glory with a genuine M-21 system attached, not a reproduction. Research of the aircraft records shows it had virtually every Huey weapon system mounted on it at one time or another to include wire guided missiles. Further research has tracked down two former crew chiefs of 049 who get to sit on her seats and fly her again, 50+ years later. (Are we really that old?) As far as we know, 049 is the only flying B Model with the M-21 gun system in the World. See 049 on display at our temporary Museum on Grissom Air Reserve Base or come to a flying event in 2024 to see and hear her in "all her glory". Touch her with the respect and the admiration she deserves, 049 is one of the very few things left that will take you back to a time when we were young, handsome, and living an adventure like no other.



Original Viet Nam 049 Crew Chief "Chick" Jones at left, last VN 049 Crew Chief Lance Hopkins at right. Photo by Robert Fureigh.

Come to the National American Huey History Museum near Bunker Hill, Indiana, now under construction. Over 1,000 individuals and businesses have contributed to build the Museum, but we still are short of our goal. Have YOU contributed yet? Contact us at american-huey369.com to find out how you can become a founder of the Museum and see your name in bronze at the main entrance of the Museum. It's our legacy.

1965 Purchased by U. S. Army

1965 to Aug 1968	Served with 229th ABAH "Smiling Tigers," 1st Cav, Vietnam
Aug 1968 – 1969	B-Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav Reg., 1st Cav Div, Vietnam
1969-1970	282nd AHC "Alley Cats"
1970-Jan 1971	Co. A, 335th AHC "Cowboys/Falcons"
Feb 1971-end of 1972	Returned to USA, Bell Helicopter Overhaul/Modifications, Amarillo, TX
1973	ARADMAR Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas
1973-1978	AASF MT ARNG; Helena, Montana
1978-1979	AASF WA ARNG, Tacoma, Washington
1979-1982	AASF NV ARNG, Reno, Nevada
1982	AASF OK ARNG, Lexington, Oklahoma
1982	Mounted on trailer for urban assault training

Philip Marshall

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**

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

GEORGIA CHAPTER Luncheon:



On 19 SEP we gathered again in the Epworth Room at Dunwoody United Methodist Church.

We sat 29 to Lunch and had a very active program.

Reports:

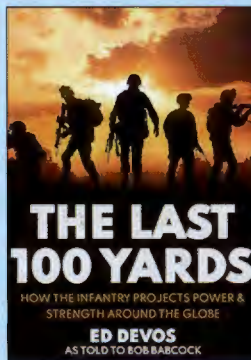
We introduced several guests and had a quick report from Clyde Romero. He had just returned from a Reunion at FT. Campbell for the 2nd of the 17th of the 101st ABN DIV. Clyde presented his prepared slides to this group on Lam Son 719.



Clyde Romero speaking at 2/17, 101st Reunion Speaker:

Our Speaker was Ed Devos, author of *The Last 100 Yards*. This book is "as told to Bob Babcock".

I thought it appropriate to have a US Infantryman's perspective of the Vietnam experience late in the war (1972 - 1973) since our last two speakers spoke of the invasions of Cambodia (1970) and Laos (1971) respectively.



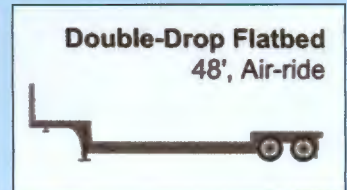
As Aviators, many of our MOS's existed for the Infantry and Ed's 20 years in the Infantry is properly conveyed through this book and four others. Ed DeVos is a highly decorated officer earning a Ranger Tab early in his career. The Last 100 Yards is required reading in many military colleges and ROTC programs throughout the US. This book goes beyond Vietnam and describes in detail lessons learned, development of new US Infantry doctrines, equipment, and new training philosophies. It is an encouraging read for all who served.

Updates:

Georgia Veterans Day Parade and UH1 on a Trailer:

We are edging closer to this reality of our Huey on a Trailer for the 11 NOV Parade down Peach Tree Street in Atlanta! Our Trailer Availability is secured and our UH1 is promised. And we have advised the Georgia Veterans Day Association of our intent. In the coming weeks, we will be conducting test loads and route procedures.

Georgia DOT has approved our route, and we are very close to being ready.



Cobb Veterans Memorial Status

While Our Chapter is on schedule with its endowment, the County Commissioners have had their challenges with the contractors who have committed to construct this beautiful tribute to Cobb County Veteran Veterans. Chapter VP, Chuck Bayless and Carl "Skip" Bell and gave detailed updates as to our giving status and status with the County Commissioners. The better news is that Skip Bell has joined the Cobb Veterans' Memorial Foundation as a Vice President. He is

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Skip



Donna

joined by a very good friend and frequent speaker to our Chapter, Cpt. (Ret) Donna Rowe, who is now the President/CEO of the Foundation. Donna was the Head Triage Nurse at the Third Field Hospital in Saigon in 1967 (see link below)

With these two in charge of this project, we look forward to more positive updates in the very near future.

www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com/story/news/2022/03/28/ashland-county-vietnam-era-veterans-hear-head-triage-nurse/7170052001/.

Other Announcements:

Our Chapter's former President, and current President of the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association, Carl (Skip) Bell is headed to Columbus, GA on 4 NOV to be inducted into the Georgia Military Hall of Fame. "Well Done, Sir" goes here.

Doug Lackey
Chapter President

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter kept busy through the summer with a variety of events.

From Mark Benjamin: Wednesday the 7th of June was a nice group of 10 who enjoyed perfect weather out on the rooftop dining at the Hotel Indigo in Traverse City with lots of good chatter and camaraderie. We discussed such things as the differences between the B and the C model Huey. Various methods the Army used to determine what aircraft a new aviator flew after flight school and in Vietnam. Of course, that method changed several times over the years. For example, you couldn't fly the Chinook or Sky Crane unless second tour. Later you could do either as a new guy. No one seems to remember the way the flight time was broken up between CA, DCS, and OCS flight time. Anyone want to help us out with that?

[Note: Information from flight records: CA, DCS, and OCS. (Combat Assault / Direct Combat Support / Other Combat Support) flight time in each category toward awards of the Air Medal, 25 hours CA, 50 hours DCS, and 100 hours OCS.]

Everyone was briefed on upcoming events such as Open Ramp at the CG Air Station on 30 June (see open ramp AAR below), 22 to 25 September free veterans Pheasant hunt in Morley, Michigan and various pheasant hunts at Tails a Waggin in Marion, Michigan. These

will be fun events and we plan to display our tent and other items at both.



Bob Rich headed up a Michigan Chapter VHPA SE meet-up on Wednesday evening June 7th in Belleville, MI before attending the Historical Presentation event at the Yankee Air Museum. The three attendees were Glen Veno, Paul Boucher and Bob Rich. Both Glen and Paul hold positions within the Yankee Air Museum organization and were able to relay upcoming scheduled events and news for the 2023 season.

The Michigan Chapter members met first at the Twisted Rooster Restaurant and then attended a Historical Presentation at the YAM Willow Run Airport. The topic presented was very familiar to VHPA members, it dealt with the missions and history of the AC-

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

119 Shadow and Stinger aircraft, some of which were built at Willow Run. It was a very interesting subject and showed the close relationship that all the military services in Vietnam had with the "Shadow" missions.

The Yankee Air Museum hosts a monthly Historical Aviation Presentation event throughout the year and has been doing so for many years. The June 7th presentation was one of the rare events that dealt with Vietnam War history and was well attended by about 70 people, many of whom were Vietnam Veterans from



Mark Benjamin reported that approximately 6,500 people attended this year's Open Ramp at the USCG Air Station Traverse City on June 30th. All Air Show aircraft including the USAF Thunderbirds were on display for all to see. Many people viewed our display and discussed our operations and were entertained big time by Walter Topp, Sandy McLeod, and Clay Maxwell.



USCG Open Ramp June 30th

Bob Rich reported that the VHPA 40th reunion held at the Marriott River Canter Hotel in San Antonio was a huge success! 700 Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association members and associates were able to come together from all over the country to share their stories and memories. Wives and other family members were able to attend be a part of the event and renew acquaintances.

At least five VHPA Michigan members were in attendance and were able to connect with old flight school classmates, Vietnam unit buddies, and National Guard or Reservist friends. Everyone was able to catch up and reminisce about their experiences and participate in a number of tours and attractions around San Antonio.

The next two reunions will be hosted in Reno and St. Louis for the yearly events. Hopefully, even more pilots and their families will be able to attend and make even more memories.



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Joe Meredith was OIC for the 2 August MI VHPA Lunch meeting at the Hotel Indigo. He got the job since Ed Canright has gone and moved to Florida. There were three former RVN pilots out of the area visiting. The interesting discussions and stories were about Fort Polk and flying in Germany after their respective Vietnam tours of duty. Lots of laughter and jokes as usual when these guys get together.



Dave James was the OIC for our participation at the Mason Aviation Day on August 19th, joined by Brian Lipiec and Rich Deer. The event always draws a lot of fly-in aircraft and many local spectators and this one was no exception. We were visited by numerous veterans including many Vietnam Vets along with lots of family groups including youngsters. Dave had brought a wooden model Huey which was made in Vietnam and it served well in describing the helicopter's features.



Dave James Brian Lipiec Rich Deer



But since Brian is a Marine Cobra veteran with several tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, we had numerous discussions and questions amongst ourselves about the notable differences in our war time missions and experiences. It gave quite a different spin on our war stories – with no “embellishments” needed.

Dave is also a member of the local EAA chapter, so he spent time recruiting young visitors as potential future pilots and mechanics to participate with that group.

Also on August 19th several Veterans were honored with Quilts of Valor during the recent Lee Greenwood concert at the Park Place Hotel and Conference center in Traverse City.



September 6th was another monthly lunch gathering in Traverse City. Discussion centered on upcoming veterans free hunting events coming up in Michigan - Pheasant hunts at both Tails-A-Waggin in Marion and Wings of Freedom in Morley.

Charlie Eliason briefed us on how he got to be a rare bird: a first tour guy flying CH-54s.

There was a discussion regarding the National Quilts of Valor program (see Lee Greenwood story above). All attendees have received a Quilt with the exception of Charlie Eliason: The group nominated Charlie and he will receive a quilt at the first meeting after his return from Florida in the spring.

Walter Topp briefed all regarding the activities of the Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition.

The Michigan chapter attended the Annual fly in at Maple Grove Airport in Fowlerville MI on September 10th. VP Dave James organized the event and was joined by Mark Benjamin, Bob Carusi, and Bob Rich. A very foggy day without much flying until about 11 AM.

But several aircraft did arrive after about 1030 or so for the annual fly in pancake breakfast. Several people stopped by the display tent to say hello, trade war stories or just to talk. Much interest in our display from the younger set who were full of questions.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Mark Benjamin, Bob Carusi, Dave James, Bob Rich at Maple Grove

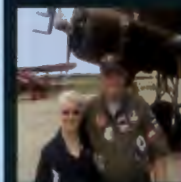


The Michigan Chapter VHPA SE held an August 2nd meet-up in Belleville, MI at the Twisted Rooster. Afterward, we attended the Historical Presentation event at the Yankee Air Museum. The group of Mi. VHPA members attending were Bob & his wife Lee Gallant, Steve Matthews, and Bob Rich. Unfortunately, no group picture was taken. The events covered the WWII oral history of Captain Bill Behrns and the history of his P-38 "San Joaquin" in the China Burma India Theater with the 459th Fighter Squadron.

The September meet-up for the Historical Presentation at Yankee Air Museum was originally scheduled for Sept. 6th then was canceled and rebooked for Sept. 20th. Unfortunately, we did not meet up before the presentation at YAM. Two members did attend, Bob Rich and Steve Matthews. The lecture covered a Museum sponsored "Band of Brother" type trip, following the WWII actions of the 101st Airborne Div. from D-Day in Normandy through the Battle of the Bulge ending in Berchtesgaden, Germany.

Yankee Air Museum
**HISTORIC
PRESENTATION
NIGHT**

**ON TO
VICTORY...1945**



**SPEAKER:
LORI DAY AND
GEOF BUSH**

On September 20th, join Yankee members Lori Day and Geof Bush as they share their May 2023 adventures retracing the route of the final decisive battles of World War II. The trip took them from D-Day in Normandy in June 1944 across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands and ending in Berchtesgaden, Germany in May 1945. This is a continuation of a 2019 trip they made for the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 20TH

7:30 PM EST (DOORS OPEN AT 6:30)

\$10 per Person: non-members

Free: Museum members with registration



Thanks again to Bob & Lee and Steve for participating in our YAM meet-ups. And thanks to the Yankee Air Museum for presenting the monthly historical night events.

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

September 30, 2023

The North Alabama VHPA (NAVHPA) primarily spent our summer with family and friends.

Sixteen NAVHPA members and spouses attended the Rocket City Trash Pandas Double A baseball team's Military Appreciation Night on 22 August 2023. Veterans were recognized in a very nice pre-game ceremony. The Trash Pandas are affiliated with the Angels and played the Birmingham Barons that night. While everyone enjoyed the game, the beer and hotdogs, the Pandas lost 10-4, primarily due to struggling pitching in the late innings.

A major event that was significant to our mission was the Madison Street Festival. The festival was held on October 7th, 2023, from 9 AM to 4PM in historic downtown Madison. The editors of the Aviator allowed us a delay in submitting our report so that it could be covered. Thank you!

Before we could display Buc-3, she needed to be cleaned and washed. After that, the equipment required for the display was loaded aboard and she was towed to the venue, the "Captain Jesse Ollie Wike Jr." Veterans Memorial Park off Front Street. All was in place before 1300 on October 6th. This is the second year that the NAVHPA has supported American Legion Post 229, of Madison. The post uses this display to publicize themselves and recruit new members.

The Madison Record newspaper covered the Festival. Their announcement said, "NAVHPA will display the UH-1C helicopter in...downtown Madison during the Madison Street Festival. Festivalgoers can examine the vintage helicopter, manipulate the flight controls, get the feel of flying a warbird and ask questions of docents, who are all Vietnam helicopter pilots." Post 229 Commander Larry Vannoy, who is also Commander of the American Legion 12th District, was quoted as saying, "We are appreciative of the NAVHPA for sharing this iconic symbol of an important part of U.S. military history with our community. Lots of work goes into the logistics of preparing this aircraft for display, and the American Legion is thrilled to have it displayed in our veterans' park for the Madison Street Festival this year."

Several hundred festival attendees were able to get hands-on with Buc-3 throughout the day. One former member of the 82nd Airborne Division explained how he would sit on the floor of helicopters with legs dan-



Chapter members cleaning up Buc-3 for the Street Festival on October 6th, L-R Bob Monette, Rick Davis, Marshall Eubanks, Rich Hudgen, Sam Maki Ernie Megli.



Buccaneer 3 on display at the Madison Street Festival.



Bob Monette and Ernie Megli showing youngsters the ins and outs of the helicopter flying.



Stan Souvenir, Bob Wrinkle and Sam Maki explain helicopter flight to Madison Street Fest attendees.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

gling out and, on signal, push himself out. He also went into Grenada with the 82nd. Many folks expressed gratitude for not only our service, but for sharing BUC-3 with the community. Several of the visitors, especially the children, remarked that the late 1950's technology incorporated in Buc-3 looked "so complicated."

As the chapter displays Buc-3, we are always on the lookout for Vietnam veterans because we are a Commemorative Partner of DoD's Vietnam War Commemoration. At the festival we found two. This allowed NAVHPA president Marshall Eubanks to present to them the Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin. Both had families with them, and the families were very thankful for the recognition. One wife stated, "this is the first time he has been recognized in this way."

As the festival closed NAVHPA was presented a \$500 check from American Legion Post 229 as a thank-you to help with operations and maintenance of BUC-3.

October and November look to be as busy as normal. We will display Buc-3 again in Cullman, AL, about 25 miles South of Huntsville. Many members will accompany Buc-3 marching in the Veterans Day Parade in Huntsville on November 11th. We'll also be fluffing and generally fixing more than 3000 wreaths in preparation for placing them on Veteran's graves. We are looking forward to our NAVHPA Christmas party at the Huntsville Country Club. Our guest speaker will be our own honorary members, Julie Kink and MOH recipient Mike Sprayberry will discuss their trips to Vietnam explaining their motivation and pur-



Marshall Eubanks along with Malcolm Brown receiving check from Larry Vanoy, Commander, American Legion Post 229.

pose in returning so often.

On October 8th the Huntsville Times published, in part, the following: "Huntsville is naming a street near Bridge Street Town Centre after a former astronaut and retired U.S. Army brigadier general whose career impacted both Marshall Space Flight Center and Redstone Arsenal.

The Huntsville Planning Commission last month voted to change the name of Eagle Drive in Cummings Research Park West to Bob Stewart Drive in honor of former shuttle astronaut and retired Brigadier Gen. Robert L. Stewart, who served as deputy commanding general of the U.S. Strategic Defense Command at the arsenal.

Stewart earned several honors during his military career before joining NASA's astronaut core. A Vietnam combat veteran, he flew several aircraft and helicopters during his service, earning the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and other military honors. While still on active duty with the Army, he became an astronaut in 1979."

Bob Stewart is an active member of the NAVHPA. Congratulations, Bob! We'll include more about the street renaming in the next report.

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.

The North Alabama Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the 2nd 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, 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

THIS COULD BE WHERE YOUR STORY STARTS!

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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

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

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



M16A1.

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

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

One 'customer' as he called himself, spent a great deal of time looking at our exhibits and I noticed he was having quite a time with his emotions. He introduced himself as Joe (not his real name). He said he was an 11B10 with the 52nd Infantry, 1st Cavalry. We had a long chat. This



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



Display at Rocky Mountain Airport Car Show.



Aimi and Kelly in the Bell 47.

had been his third trip to our Museum at the Airport in the past three years. He had spoken to several other members on previous visits. He referred to us as his emotional support group. Good going guys! This is one of the reasons we are out there, to support other members of our unique club of Vietnam Veterans.

The event In September with the Wings Over the Rockies Museum was to Honor the Vietnam Air War Veterans and the 50 year anniversary of the End of the Vietnam War. It was held over a four-day weekend culminating in a Banquet held at the Centennial Airport at the Exploration or Flight Museum. The banquet was hosted by USAF Major

General John L. Barry, CEO and President of the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, and guest speaker USAF General Ronald R. Fogelman, former Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force.

We had a good Docent turn out over the four days with Bill

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Bates, Rick Beaver, Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Wick Clark, Dale House, Phil Lanphier, Cliff Lawson, Greg Mann, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, Bill Robie, Robert Simms, and Chris Town. A special Thank You to Member Gary Worthy for providing his OH-6 for our chapter display, and Pilot LTC Roddy Dill (Ret) for providing pilot services to move the Loch around. He let me fly it into the Wings Over the Rockies Museum parking lot in Lowry. Very exciting indeed.

Gary flew LOCH's in Vietnam with Air Cavalry Troop, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, under the call sign "Black Horse". He was wounded by enemy fire during a recon of a suspected enemy encampment. The AK47 round hit his chicken plate and ricocheted into his skull. He still carries the AK47 round lodged in his skull. He found the OH-6 at a Museum in a Houston, TX. He maintains it in flyable condition.

We get visitors from around the world. To name a few: Canada, England, Germany, Malaysia, Maldives, Vietnam, Ukraine and Russia (I wonder what the discussion might have been had they arrived at the same time). One of our guests was an American School Teacher who spent 20 years in Vietnam teaching Vietnamese school children of all ages. She said, "After the Vietnam War ended it was very evident how the communist government took control over every



AK47.



Terry Olson and Carl Cavalluzzi inside the Museum with Guests.



Terry Olson and Carl Cavalluzzi inside the Museum with Guests.



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



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



Terry Olson and Carl Cavalluzzi inside the Museum with Guests.

aspect of life for its citizens". She said of orphans, "They are not recognized by the government, so they cannot participate in any programs. They are considered non-citizens." The orphanages survive primarily on donations.

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

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

Visit our Web site at www.RMCVHPA.com for any updates. We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com

Dale House
President



Bill Bates speaking with Guest outside the Museum.



Display at Centennial Airport with DC-3 taking off in the background on a dark and stormy night.



Display at Centennial Airport, Exploration of Flight Museum Banquet.

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The September meeting of the South Missouri chapter of VHPA was held in Jefferson City on the 8th at Madison's Café. We had a speaker, Bob Depperman LTC USAF Ret, and several other special guests.

Our first guest was Cyndi Moloney, Webmaster of our chapter website and daughter of Karen and Don Merritt. Cyndi faithfully supports the website whenever needed, and also assures that our license and domain name are up to date.

We were honored to have our next two guests who share similar and unique experiences in aviation history. Wilburn Rowden and Ralph Kalberloh were B-17 air crewmembers during WWII. Wilburn was a waist gunner/radio operator on Sleepy Time Gal and Ralph was a tail gunner on Dixie's Delight. Wilburn was on his 6th mission on March 8, 1944; and Ralph on his first mission on February 4, 1945. They were shot down by flak and fighters and were forced to bail out.

Fortunately, they both survived and became POWs. Today, Wilburn is 100 years of age and Ralph is 98. They were accompanied by family members- Ralph by Barb his wife and Wilburn by Sarah Miller his daughter.

Upon his return to the States, Wilburn attended a trade school to learn communications and electronics. Upon graduation, he joined the Missouri Army National Guard and retired as a CW4 in 1983 after 38 years of service. He was later inducted into the Missouri National Guard Hall of Fame.



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



Ralph worked in the auto industry and was head of the Missouri Automobile Dealers Assn. for over 30 years. He was known nationwide for enhancing laws regarding safety in the auto industry and hired a lobbyist to help him change or create laws that would enhance auto safety.

The stories of their dedicated service to our Country and their survival as POWs under extremely difficult conditions is inspiring. As combat helicopter pilots, we rendered our respect, admiration and recognition for their service, patriotism and sacrifice. Accordingly, Ralph and Wilburn were elected Honorary Members of the South Missouri Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn.

Credit for bringing us all together that day goes to John Clark, COL USAF Ret. an Honorary Member of our chapter. John was a POW during the Vietnam War for 2,170 days in Hanoi's infamous prison better known as the Hanoi Hilton to almost 600 Americans held captive there.

Our speaker Bob Depperman, who was accompanied by his wife Ruth, has an impressive list of aviation accomplishments. After graduation from flight school in 1955 he began flying the C-119 Flying Boxcar and later the C-124 Globemaster. He went to Air Traffic Control school followed by the FAA Academy for qualification as a Flight Inspection Pilot. Flight Inspection services were required to assure the accuracy and reliability of all TACAN, ILS and PAR/GCA navigation systems throughout Vietnam. Though we did not use TACAN and, with few exceptions, did not fly IFR, there were times when a PAR/GCA approach meant an Army helicopter made it down safely in bad weather. Bob spent two years flying between Clark AFB in the Phillipines and Phan Rang in EC-47s inspecting all navigation aids. Bob remembers one particular flight when, breaking out of the clouds, he saw a "swarm" of Army helicopters. It was during operation Lam Son 719. Understanding the cost of that operation, he paused and asked for a moment of silence for those helicopter crewmembers who

did not return. Bob later became commander of a Facility Checking Squadron flying Lockheed Jetstars and retired in 1973. Subsequently, he became a DC-3 Captain and then a company Safety Supervisor and pilot of a Beech Baron. His



last flight was in 2019 when he logged the last of his 10,500 flying hours, over half of which were in the Air Force. Thank you, Bob for a great presentation.

The third Friday in September has been designated as POW/MIA Recognition Day by the Pentagon. This year it is on Friday the 15th. Today, approximately 82,000 are still unaccounted for from conflicts dating as far back as WWII. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency remains committed to providing the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel. Please acknowledge the day and the missing by flying your flag at half-staff.

Our next meeting will be held at the College of the Ozarks on Veterans Day November 11th at 1100 in the Silver Dollar City Parlor. The CofO choir, under the direction of Mr. Gregg Busch, will sing for us after lunch. More details to follow.

Chuck Guy
Chapter President

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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Social Security No.:

Information about each Vietnam unit:

	From	To	Unit	Location	Call Sign
1 st Unit					
2 nd Unit					
3 rd Unit					
4 th Unit					

Information about you: Helicopters flown, medals/awards, talents, hobbies, and anything else:

How did you learn about the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association? Referred by? Was this a gift membership? From whom?

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.

***Chapman, George**
E.USA; Flight Class: 66-4Q; RVN: 67 176 AHC; DFC; Callsign: Musket 4.



George Chapman longtime resident of the Charlotte area, passed away peacefully at home on September 15, 2023, with his wife Carolyn and their children by his side.

George was born on October 8, 1937 in Boger City NC. His earliest job, which he had while in school, was working at Highland Park Manufacturing. In 1957, he graduated from Harding High School and went on to serve in the U.S. Army in 1960.

After returning home from Vietnam, George discovered he was very good at sales and spent many years in sales and home improvement. He worked for over two decades for Web-Don in Charlotte NC, and closed his career as their General Sales Manager. A proud and vital part of George's retirement was his continued service to his country through membership in the North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, where they present a piece of living history to the public, schools, and the generations that will carry on their stories

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Faye.

Cornwell, Donald O. USA; Flight Classes: 69-23, 69-70; C/158 AVN 101 ABN; Callsign: Phoenix 67.



Donald (Don) Owen Cornwell passed away peacefully on July 6, 2023, at the Community Living Center at the Veterans Hospital in Des Moines IA. Don was born on April 22, 1948, in Riverside CA. Don graduated from Ankeny High School in 1966 and went on to college in Marshalltown IA, before volunteering for the United States Army

After his service, Don transitioned from being a bulldozer and RV mechanic to farming in Dallas County. Eventually, he became a Journeyman Electrician and worked for Glass & Sons Electric until his retirement.

Attending his three children's activities and volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America was another passion of Don's. Through weekly meetings and camping trips, he formed lifelong friendships.

Left behind to cherish his memory and share humorous Don stories is his wife of nearly 50 years, Kathy.

Davis, Alfred N. USA; Flight Class: 71-5; RVN: 72-73 C TRP, 3/5 CAV; BS.

Al Davis passed away on June 2, 2023. He was born in 1948 to Military parents in Osaka, Japan, Al fulfilled his life-time passion in Aviation. He soloed at age 14 and obtained his pilot's license at 16.

Al retired from a long Aviation career in 2012 after seven years of Active Reserve and flying for several helicopter companies around the United States

including Alaska. He Retired from Aviation with an additional 15 years of Air Ambulance Service.

He is survived by his Wife Sandra.

Davis, Rudy P. USA Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-21, 67-19; RVN: 68-69 135 AHC; Callsign: EMU 29.



Rudy Paul Davis was born December 5, 1943 in Everett WA. He passed from this life with his wife of 54 years at his side on August 14, 2023.

Rudy graduated from Naches High School in 1962. He attended Brigham Young University, where he earned a degree in History. He was commissioned as a Warrant Officer, alongside his younger brother, Jon, by his oldest brother, Elmer. They were all military aviators. Rudy held a master's degree in executive development from Ball State and a master's degree in occupational health & Safety Administration Management from Texas A&M University.

Following his retirement from the U.S. Army in 1986, Rudy spent time working as a logger, and later as a helicopter pilot flying security along the Alyeska pipeline in Fairbanks, Alaska. He also served as an occupational safety office for the state of WA.

Rudy served as an Aviation Safety Officer with the Department of the Army. He enjoyed educating fellow aviators and helping to avoid mishaps and accidents. He served as a forward deployed safety officer in 2009 when he was stationed in Baghdad, Iraq.

He is survived by his eternal companion, Janine,

***Deane, Howard D. USA Ret.; Flight Classes: 63-4TQ, 54-LP; RVN: 66 A/25 AVN 25 INF, 70-71 HHC 164 CAG, 70-71, 114 AHC; LM, DFC, BS, PH (2), ACM; Callsign: KNIGHT 6.**



Howard Deane, 93, of Auburn AL, passed away on September 28, 2023. He was born in 1930 in Hackensack NJ. Howard graduated from the Aquinas Institute of Rochester and earned a Degree in Philosophy from St. Bonaventure University.

After graduation he served in the Army National Guard and worked for the Lily Paper Company and the Ford Motor Company.

Howard enjoyed a 20-year aviation career as a U.S. Army Officer, flying rotary and fixed wing aircraft. Following his retirement from the U.S. Army Agency for Aviation Safety at Fort Rucker AL, he worked for Diversified Products in Opelika AL. Howard grew up with the experiences of World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the first Gulf War.

***Ebbinga, Clarence T. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 67-1, 66-23; RVN 67 92 AHC, 68 155 AHC, 68 165 TC DET; Callsigns: Stagecoach 14/Stagecoach 24/Bootlegger 14.**

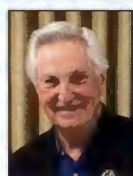


Clarence T. Ebbinga, of Enterprise AL, a dedicated husband and loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away July 31, 2023. He was 79.

Clarence was born September 22, 1943 in Avoca MN. He retired from the military after 24 years of service.



Fairley, Gerald B. USA; Flight Class: 69-5; RVN: 69 C/158 AVN 101 ABN; BS.



Gerald Bruce Fairley, a cherished resident of Columbia SC, passed away in his sleep on the morning of July 7, 2023. He was born in 1946.

He was a 1964 graduate of Butler High School before attending Augusta College. After his military service, his professional journey in banking and automotive financing led him through Augusta, Raleigh, Virginia Beach, Port St. Lucie FL, finally culminating in a well-earned retirement in Columbia, where he discovered companionship and comfort with Debra Burton during his twilight years.

***Fowler, Gary S, USA LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 69-47; RVN: 70-71 C/229 AVN 1 CAV; DFC, BS; Callsign: Flower.**



Gary S. Fowler passed away peacefully at his home in Greenville, TX, on July 19, 2023.

He was born on October 11, 1950, in Hackensack, NJ. Following his tour in Vietnam, he completed a Criminal Justice degree at the University of Nebraska, Omaha under the Army's "boot strap" program. After graduation, he transferred into the USMC, completed Marine OCS and Navy Flight School, and flew fast movers for a short time until a back injury forced him back into the Rotary Wing world. Gary transferred back into the US Army Aviation Branch; He played an important role as a member of the US military team supervising the dismantling of the USSR's nuclear arsenal.

After retiring from the Army, he worked as a contract Blackhawk pilot

and was wounded in action during the Columbian drug wars. He was recalled to active duty after 9-11 and served in the Pentagon for several years. Following his second retirement after 24 years active duty, Gary moved to north TX to be near his children.

***Frazer, John W. USA; Flight Class: 66-12; RVN: 66-67 48 AHC.**



John Walker "Jack" Frazer, Jr., 80, died on August 10, 2023 after a brief illness. He was born in Richmond VA.

He graduated from Orange County High School. He also graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1965 with a BA degree in history. Jack was subsequently awarded a MS degree from the University of Wisconsin in adult education administration and also completed graduate studies in program evaluation and statistics from the University of Southern California.

In 1969 he was appointed a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and for 25 years investigated or supervised a wide range of complex federal criminal and intelligence related investigations. In 1982 he was detailed to the House Appropriations Committee of the United States Congress for a four-year period as an investigative team leader. During his FBI career he received 16 personal commendations for investigative excellence, exceptional performance, and bravery.

After retirement from the FBI in 1994, he was employed by the American International Group (AIG) managing insurance claims and fraud investigations until 2013.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Dr. Susan Hume Frazer.

***Garcia, George T. USAF, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 55-Q, 55-T; RVN: 66 606, ACS, 67 20 SOS; Callsigns: Indian/Green Hornet.**



I recently learned via our friends at www.USAFROTORHEADS.com that Tom passed last summer, 29 June 2022 in FL. When I first came to know him, he lived in AZ. For many years he had a house in Brunswick ME and in Lake Worth FL. He was born in 1934.

Tom's VHPA member number is in the low 500s which means he joined the VHPA about 1987. In those early days the VHPA had very few non-Army pilots. I remember calling him as the Directory Committee developed a list of USAF helicopter units for the directory indexes. Since the Air Force used TDY and provisional unit designations VERY FREQUENTLY in the 1960s plus posted very small detachments (like just two aircraft) in Thailand but they really worked in Laos plus North Vietnam and northwestern South Vietnam then in Cambodia – some USAF pilots only knew their family and PCS base was in the States but they were TDY 'someplace in' Thailand! Anyway, I called him A LOT! Sometimes he knew the answers – sometimes he'd say, "I'll get back to you." Well, a few days later the phone would ring, and the caller would say, "Tom told me you want to know ..." "That's how KV Hall (and others) taught me about CH-3 units and Army Fiola (and many, many others) about HH-43 units. The 20th SOS was the Air Force's only UH-1 unit (until late in the game); so Tom knew all those details. That just left the H-53 units for me to learn about, plus the Advisor Teams to VNAF, etc. In my book, Tom Garcia is one of the BEST. Don't believe I ever shook his hand; but I'll do my best to look him up in Heaven.

Courtesy of Mike Law

***Harbison, Kenneth R. USAF; Flight Class: 67-23; RVN: D/1/10 CAV 4 INF; Callsign: Papa November.**



Kenneth Raymond Harbison, 75, of Las Cruces NM went to see our Heavenly Father on 12 July 2023 after a courageous, hard fought battle with Cancer. Kenny was born on 22 May 1948 in Woodland CA. After he graduated from Yuba City High in 1966, Ken enlisted in the Army.

After his military service, Ken returned to CA, settling in Fresno where he enrolled at Fresno Community College. During his undergrad, to support his family, Ken flew as a Fire Spotter for the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park which, until the day he died, said was his favorite job of all time. Toward the end of college, he was hired by the California Air National Guard (CANG) and was sent to Air Force undergraduate pilot training at Williams AFB, AZ.

After Air Force continuation-training, Ken flew the F-106 Delta Dart for the 194th Fighter Interceptor Squadron out of Fresno Air Terminal. He also finished his undergraduate degree in Biology from Fresno State in 1976. While flying for the CANG, Ken was hired by Continental Airlines and flew for Continental/United Airlines until 2001 when he and his bride retired to Las Cruces NM.

He is survived by his ever-loving wife Barbara.

Dr. Huddleston, Elton M. USA; Flight Class: 66-10; RVN: 66-67 C/229 AVN 1 CAV, 67 A/9 AVN 9 INF; DFC, BS; Callsigns: Wagon Wheel, Jayhawk 88.

Dr. Elton Mac Huddleston passed away on August 27, 2023, at Sanctuary Hospice

House in Tupelo MS, after a life marked by service to his fellow man. He was born September 16, 1943, and was raised in Holmes County, MS. He graduated from Durant High School and later went on to Mississippi State University, where he studied accounting and was a member of the ROTC. After graduating from MSU, he served in the United States Army, flying helicopters in Vietnam.

After his military service, he obtained his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Auburn University and worked as a veterinarian in north MS, including Pontotoc. He worked for several years for his alma mater, Mississippi State, in both the College of Veterinary Medicine, where he was among the first faculty, and the Division of Development before eventually settling back in Pontotoc, where he was known by his friends as "Dr. Mac" and worked many years as a large animal veterinarian and was executive secretary of the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association and Mississippi Board of Veterinary Medicine.

Later in his career, he served the citizens of Pontotoc County as sheriff's deputy and later criminal investigator for the Pontotoc County Sheriff's Department before being elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives, where he served the people of District 15 from 2008 until his death. In the legislature, he served as chairman of the University and Colleges and Ethics committees and was previously vice-chairman of the Appropriations committee.

He was a longtime member of West Heights Baptist Church in Pontotoc and led the Praise Sunday school class for many years.

He is survived by his wife of thirty-two years, Dr. Flavia Ruth Hutchinson Huddleston, of Pontotoc.



***Kilduff, Rodney E. USA LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-19, 66-17; RVN: 67-68 B/229 AVN 1 CAV.**

Rodney Eugene Kilduff of Conway AR, was cleared for his final take off on Monday July 3, 2023. He was born October 27, 1946 in Baltimore MD. Choosing his destiny, he enlisted in 1964 so that he could join the Army and become a 1st Calvary Helicopter Pilot.

Rodney came home from Summer Camp on a motorcycle, saying this was the closest he could get to flying while on the ground. He was one of the founding members of Naturally Beemers BMW Motorcycle Club.

He loved flying so much that after retiring from Axiom (25 years), he became an Air Evac Helicopter pilot for four years. When he fully retired, he volunteered at the Conway VA Clinic.

He is survived by his wife, Jo.

McCown, Leland A. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 69-29; RVN: 70 HHC/210 AVN BN, 70-71 25 AVN, 71173 AHC; BS; Callsigns: Red Carpet/Robinhood.



Wanting no fanfare, in your typical ornery voice, no memorial, no obituary, Lee chose his final gift of service to donate his body to medical research, new cancer treatments, and for brothers and sisters suffering from Agent Orange health issues. But, Lee, we needed an obituary, and in your own words, you'll get over it.

Lee McCown peacefully transitioned home on September 10, 2023, following a lengthy battle with metastatic bladder cancer and myasthenia gravis brought on by one of his cancer treatments. He was born on October 15, 1947, in Clinton, IL. Following his graduation from Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park IL, in 1966, Lee attended Southern Illinois University and traveled in Europe for a short time

before answering the military draft call in 1968.

After leaving active duty in 1977, Lee continued serving in the Army Reserves until retirement. He entered federal Civil Service, working as an Occupational Safety and Health Specialist at Tooele Army Depot UT; Dugway Proving Ground UT; Fort Shafter HI; Johnston Atoll, Fort Rucker AL; and earned his Degree in Business Management at Troy State University.

Retiring with 40 years of service, he continued his service volunteering at the Veterans Counseling Center, supporting Veteran counselors and service members who walked in the door.

With his brilliant gift, he was able to minister in ways counselors legally could not. Many came to see him, just to sit and talk, even without a counseling appointment. In recognition of his 13 years of volunteer service, Lee was awarded a coin from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Denis R. McDonough, and honored again on April 20, 2023, at the Volunteer luncheon at Fort Douglas.

He is survived by Robyn, soulmate/partner for life; Trish (ex-wife/first soulmate).

***Poe, Gerald D. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-4, 66-2; RVN: 66-67 498 MED CO, 68-69 236 MED DET; SS, BS, MSM (3OLC); Callsigns: Dustoff 62, Dustoff 103.**

Gerald D. (Don) Poe passed away on 29 September 2023. He was born August 28, 1936 in McCrory AR and grew up in Hot Springs AR. He resided in San Antonio TX.

Don graduated from Hot Springs High School, Hot Springs, AR in 1954 and from Henderson State University in Arkadelphia AR in 1964 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and continued his education with Master of Arts degree in Management from Webster

University, US Army War College and Command and General Staff College. He also served as the Aviation Consultant to the US Army Surgeon General; was the Chief, Military Science Division/Course Director for the US Army Officer Basic and Officer Advanced courses; was an Instructor in the Medical Field Service School, Academy of Health Sciences, Ft. Sam Houston TX.

Don was a key proponent in the development of the Aeromedical Evacuation System for the State of Louisiana. Don was a Charter Member of the DUSTOFF Association, a member of Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association, and a Founding Member of the Society of Solo Pilots.

He is survived by his wife, Betty of 45 years.

***Potter, Leroy D. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 71-41, 71-35; RVN: 72-73 F/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 73 1 AVN BDE; BS, MSM, ACM; Callsign: Saber 23.**



LeRoy "Lee" Potter, was born on December 3, 1946 and passed away on August 13, 2023. He grew up in Manteca, CA where he graduated from Manteca HS (class of 1964).

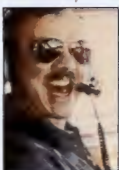
Following the Cease-Fire, he flew Hueys for the four-party ICCS (The International Commission for Control and Supervision). At the completion of this assignment, LeRoy was awarded Canadian Armed Forces Flying Wings, for his support of the Canadian Members of the ICCS.

During a brief break in-service, he flew Bell 206's as a commercial helicopter pilot, over the Grand Canyon. He attended both Mendocino College and Sonoma California State University, before earning his



TAPS

***Scott, James O. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-35, 69-37; RVN: 70-71 C/159 AVN 101 ABN; DFC (OLC), BS, MSM, (OLC); Callsign: Playtex 11.**



James Scott was born in Booneville MS on September 3, 1945. He died on August 27, 2023. He was a veteran of Vietnam and Desert Storm.

Retiring from a career that held enough challenges for several lifetimes, Jim was always in pursuit of higher learning and achieved several degrees. He continued a life of service by earning Registered Nurse credentials and embarking on an entirely new vocation dedicated to helping his fellow man.

Jim served as the nurse onboard life flight helicopters, hospitals providing in-patient

care, and oversaw safety in an army MED-DAC. Jim brought the leadership and exacting standards he learned in the Army to best aide those most in need.

After retiring from the U.S. Army, he worked for the U.S. Government, primarily in the fields of safety and legal medicine. His last position was as the Nurse Consultant in the Office of Legal Medicine at the Defense Health Agency. Jim served with a dedication matched only by his compassion and legendary sense of humor.

He is survived by his wife, Katherine E. Robertson, LTC, USA retired.



***Sullivan, Vincent J. USA; Flight Class: 70-19; RVN: 70-71 361 AVN; Callsign: Panther.**



Vincent James Sullivan of Kellogg, MN, passed away peacefully on Monday, August 28, 2023, at his home in West Concord MN surrounded by his family. Vincent was born September 22, 1949, in Wabasha. He graduated from St. Felix High School on June 4, 1967. He went on to serve in the US Army for 6 years.

For many years Vincent was the owner of a dairy farm in the Kellogg area of MN. Later he worked at Lakeside Foods in Plainview and then at Seneca in Rochester. Vincent loved to collect belt buckles and pocket watches. He was a long-time member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

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.

Diuguid, Randolph S. USA; Flight Class: 69-1; RVN: 59-70 175 AHC; BS, ACM; died on August 11, 2023.

Keele, Jackie H. USA; Flight Class: 69-9; RVN: 70 281 AHC; died on July 17, 2023.

O'Day Nat R. USA LTC Ret.; RVN: 66 D/3/4 CAV; died on August 8, 2023.

Hobstetter, Peter G. USA; Flight Classes: 68-515, 68-27; RVN: 69 B/7/17 CAV; died on April 24, 2023.

Lambert, George C. USA; Flight Classes: 68-503, 68-1; RVN: 293 MED; died on July 31, 2023.

Shuler, Harold N. USA; Flight Class: 66-15; died on October 3, 2023.

Kath, Robert L. USA; Flight Classes: 70-11, 70-7; RVN: 70 281 AHC; BS; died on January 10, 2015.

Manning, Bruce A. USA; Flight Class: 67-11; died on August 25, 2023.

Welch, Elliot J. USA COL Ret.; LM, BS (2OLC), MSM (2OL); died on June 22, 2022.

Motley, Lyle C. USMC; RVN: 65-66 VMO-6; died on August 3, 2023.

Ziebert, Frank R. USA MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 70-8; RVN: 70-71 C/16 CAV; Callsign: Dark Horse 17; died on October 8, 2020.

Book Reviews

by Phil Marshall

Phil Marshall, is a Life Member and was President of the VHPA in 1994. He flew Dustoff in 1969 in Northern I Corps and he is also a Life Member of American Huey 369. He has authored over 25 books to include 19 books documenting the rescue missions that we all flew in Vietnam.



Huey War, Vietnam From the Backseat
By Bruce Nesmith
ISBN 9798374523126



Flying with B Company, 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, this "Lancer" Crew Chief tells it all; the Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

Bruce Nesmith spent 2 years with the Lancers and most of that time was "In-Country". He specifically enlisted for a 67N20 slot and found himself

to be part of the men that formed B Company at Fort Carson, Colorado. Nesmith filled several different slots with the Lancers, starting with Supply and once in Vietnam, his duties included Door Gunner, Crew Chief, Section Sergeant, Technical Inspector, and Platoon Sergeant...pretty much in that order. So for him to claim that he knows the back seat of a Huey, I would think that Bruce Nesmith has pretty good credentials.

Regarding the book's contents, Nesmith of course starts at the beginning prior to enlisting and works his way up to DEROS, when he shows up at LAX Airport still in jungle fatigues. "...the protesters in the Concourse were giving me a wide berth. You would have thought that I was Moses parting the Red Sea. The Hari Krishnas went to one side and the war protesters to the other. I must have been a sight in my jungle fatigues and with my thousand-yard stare." With Nesmith still in his Vietnam Jungle Fatigues, his Uncle picked him up in Shreveport, Louisiana, and on the way to his Grandmother's house, Nesmith's Uncle jokingly asked him if he would like to stop at a Biker Bar on the way. "Sure!" was the answer. "Cold Beer!" he was thinking. "It must have been the jungle fatigues and the 101st patch. We drank several free beers on the bikers before moving on."

Overall, the book was very entertaining and, of course, I learned a few things; actually, I learned a lot of things. Bruce Nesmith's writing is easy to read, informative, concise and kept my interest while "pulling no punches". I expect the reader will enjoy many of his adventures...and "mis-adventures".

Cobra Reunion

On 1-5 October some 200 plus met in Savannah for the second Cobra Reunion. Many VHPA members attended with AAHF members to. On Tuesday 4 October we attended a tour of HAAF led by the Garrison commander and team. HAAF fully supported the event with TF 160 having a UH60G and CH47 Night Stalker aircraft, the USMC had an AH1Z Cobra there. At the old Cobra Hall now called Saber Hall.

We donated a plaque to all the Cobra Pilots, maintainers

and others that supported Cobra Hall Operations from 1967 to 1973. Also included all those who served in Cobra operations in Vietnam. Dave Sale, Denny Dvorchak, Bob Sullivan and others supported from the AZ chapter of VHPA.

It should be noted that Bob Bull out of FL flew his own AH1G Cobra, one of very few G's left to Cobra Hall. On the last evening we held our farewell dinner at the DeSoto Hotel in Savannah with Commander "General" Cody as our guest speaker. It was a very special gathering.

Dave Sale



THE DEVILS' FRONT PORCH

By Stephen Helm

Ghia Nhia, a fire base up north.
A beautiful place surrounded by stone.
"LZ" at the bottom of the point of a cone.

No way to get in without being seen.
Anyone landing at Ghia Nhia,
got to be just plain mean.

Refugees living in holes, skin red from the
dust. Conditions beyond their control.
One American advisor, his time he would devote.
Forsaken by the people he helped
the VC cut his throat.

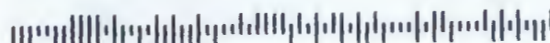
I sat in my chopper 100 yards from the gate.
Felt rather naked with that old 38.
Natives walked toward me, carrying machete
and axe. I figured if they were going to kill
me, I might as well relax.

I stripped down to my drawers,
they continued to come.
Seat cushions together, I lay in the sun.
Hat over my pistol. Had it cocked in my hand.
Didn't think I'd need the gun, but I planned.

They stopped about 10 feet away. I looked over the
group with one eye. Skin weathered, texture of
leather. Individualism in their faces cry.
The same individualism oppression denies.

One laughed sheepishly, another joins in.
Soon all, in genuine humor reach within.
All laughing hard....and I start to grin.

Though we shared a moment of joy in strife,
I wondered if they placed a price on life.
Honest to God... while I lay there to scorch,
I believed I was sunbathing
on the Devils' front porch.



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