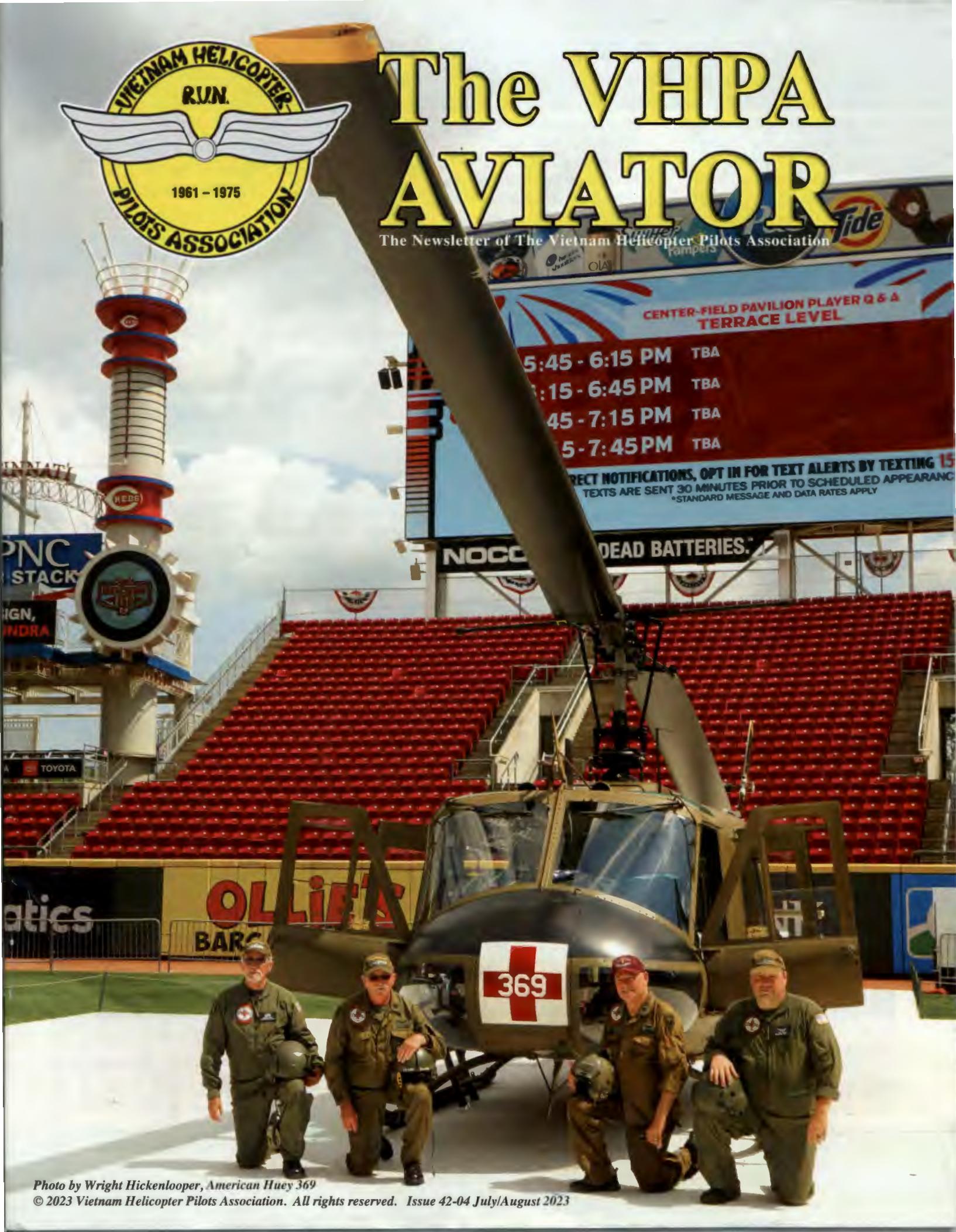




The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



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FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR...

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

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

In summary, the time has come to say the last few words as the 40th President of this INCREDIBLE organization. This year has been a bit of a blur with all the work that's been accomplished by the Executive Council, and its Committee's, on your behalf. This will be a brief After-Action Report of the last 13 months, not necessarily in the order of occurrence. As mentioned in earlier Aviator's, our focus, in large part, has been to establish, and initiate, an effective winddown and legacy plan for the VHPA. Art Jacobs, the Legacy Chair, will present the Glide Path strategy, and its documentation, in the business meeting at the reunion.

We've reaffirmed our multilateral stakeholders in which the VHPA must rely on to carry our legacy into the future. They are the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA), Texas Tech University, Vietnam Center and Archive (VNCA), and the Army Aviation Museum (AAM) at Ft. Novosel (Ft. Rucker). To that end, we have strengthened our relationship with all three.

Beginning with AAAA, a VHPA contingency attended the 1st Annual Scholarship Banquet in Huntsville, and the AAAA Summit in Nashville. AAAA fully sponsored an unforgettable tour of the 160th SOAR (A), Night Stalkers at Ft Campbell, in which we had 22 of our members participate in. AAAA now provides VHPA 2 full pages in their magazine, at no cost to us. The AAAA Liaison will continue to work with AAAA in anticipation of additional benefits from our coalition. Additionally, the VHPA/AAAA total blended dollar amount of scholarships awarded to VHPA descendants, this past year, was an UNPRESIDENTED \$175,500! Truly outstanding.

In 2016 the VHPA initiated an Endowment



agreement with Texas Tech University/VNCA. The thrust of the agreement was to provide funding for student assistance in the digitization and archive process for material donated by the VHPA membership and their families. It was a small endowment that has now grown substantially, and because of a recent redrafting and modification of the Endowment, it now encompasses annual scholarships, potential operational assistance in the future museum, and "brick and mortar" acknowledgement throughout the future Vietnam War Museum (The Helicopter War). While the Archive receives artifacts from all service branches and many different sources, the VHPA has by far its largest contribution inventory.

Lastly, the Army Aviation Museum at Ft. Novosel. We had the opportunity to replace the VHPA plaque, given to the CG, of then, Ft. Rucker, several years ago. The plaque had been misplaced and it was decided to replace it with a new one. In January, we presented the new plaque and a framed Joe Kline poster to the museum and MG McCurry, the CG. Both the plaque and poster are hung in a place of honor at the entryway to the Vietnam Crewmember Memorial, as you enter the museum. The museum foundation has graciously provided FREE VIP membership to all VHPA members.

A special acknowledgement to Art Jacobs, Past President, Legacy Chairman, Consigliere, and Co-conspirator, the Architect and driving force behind the majority of our successful projects.

Once again, THANK YOU for allowing me to be a part of a very capable and dedicated leadership team, it has been my complete privilege.

Donald R. LeMaster President

FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

**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!**

We hope everyone that attended R2023 in San Antonio had a great time! Just a reminder that 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!

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*

**Sales to date of the
Final Flight of Curious Yellow
Have generated over \$6500 for the
VHPA Scholarship Fund!**

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



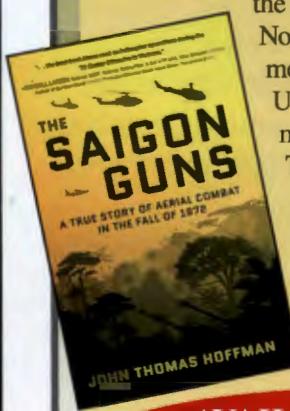
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... So sweepingly adventurous, death defying, and overflowing with bigger-than-life characters—that readers must remind themselves that Hoffman's account all really occurred."

*~ JOSEPH BATHANTI,
North Carolina Poet Laureate (2012–2014)*

FEW AMERICANS KNOW the facts about the final year of US combat operations in South Vietnam. As political will to sustain the fight shrank and most of their ground forces were withdrawn. The Soviets and North Vietnamese sought battlefield success to strengthen their negotiating position at the Paris peace talks. In March of 1972, North Vietnam invaded the South with the men and equipment needed to sweep the US air assets from the sky. They, however, miscalculated the difficulty of that task.

The remaining US aviation forces, (Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines) would not be easily neutralized. This is the untold story of heroism, dedication, and refusal to yield the battlefield despite being largely considered by US political leaders as "expendable".



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A Bad Day at the Office

The U Minh Forest is a scary place. It was deadly for the French and not much better for us. In 1952, five hundred French paratroopers were dropped in there and never heard from again. The Human Forest as I think of it: sort of a Marvel anti-super hero. Some of the biggest skirmishes I witnessed in-country were in or near there. It was a bad place to visit and probably worse to live there.

I believe it was May 3, 1970. I was flying with Russel Parish (Linus), who was the AC, on some ash and trash mission in Ca Mau. I remember it was near the end of the day. We were flying around with an advisor. He was either a Captain or a Major. He wanted us to go into an obviously dangerous area without gunship support. Linus was having none of it, except the advisor said there were wounded that needed to be evacuated. That put a different light on the matter, so Linus and I discussed it. Neither of us was wild about the idea, but at the same time, neither of us felt right about abandoning the critically wounded, so we agreed to go.

It went about as smoothly as you'd expect to get into a tight LZ. No one fired at us. We picked up the wounded, who were ambulatory and didn't appear to be critical, as we'd been led to believe. But I'm not a doctor, nor do I play one on TV. The advisor hopped out to talk to the ground commander. We were ready and believe me, we were rarin' to go, but we couldn't leave without this guy. We sat there possibly as much as five minutes. It was a very long time as in, "come for the wounded, stay for the picnic."

Not soon enough, we did depart, taking off over the tree line and quickly gaining altitude. Pop-pop-pop, the firing started up just behind us. Linus glanced over his shoulder and at that instant, a 50 cal started firing in front of us. Now that, my friends, is fearlessly scary. There is really no mistaking those rounds and like any self-preserving pilot, I would do anything to get away from them. I said, "Linus, 50 cal ahead!" He immediately did an amazing turn heading right down

to the tree tops... right into the small arms fire we'd just crossed. Linus was a damn good pilot, but there was simply nowhere else to go that didn't put us nearer the 50 cal.

We were just about thru it when my left foot went flying up. I felt like someone had jammed a hot poker right thru my foot. Of course, I knew what had happened and my immediate thought was to grab the controls. I mean I'd recently turned 21 and was invulnerable. If they hit me, they must have slaughtered everyone else in the aircraft. As it turns out, that was the only round that hit the aircraft. Guess I'm not invulnerable.

I told Linus I'd been hit, and I remember him saying, "That settles it. We're going to Binh Thuy." I was glad of that as I wasn't particularly interested in, say, dinner and a movie. The pain was exquisite. Feet have a lot of nerves, and they were all screaming. Honestly, I don't remember too much about that flight, except that it was very long. If I hadn't been watching, I'd have thought we were taking the scenic route. I almost passed out, but fought it. Odd as this might sound, I realized that however terrible, this was a unique experience and since I was "already committed," I might as well stay awake and experience it all. I remember thinking that, but perhaps I was hysterical.

We got to Binh Thuy and they put me on a stretcher, into the emergency room, cut off my boot, and eventually after an interminable amount of time, gave me a pain killer shot. The relief was palpable, so much so that I think I might have been hallucinating.

There's not much more to add. Anything else is a recovery story which is somewhat separate in my mind. So that, my friends, is how the "Human Forest" took a bite out of me.

By Brooks "Jay" Setzer 121 AHC 70-71

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THE PEN FLARE INCIDENT

By Life Member John Harris, CW5 Ret.

Editors note: Mr. Harris felt it was not appropriate to name the LTC featured in this story. We agreed it did not affect the recounting of events and honored his wishes.

In January 1973, shortly afterward the Paris Cease-Fire had been announced, an incident took place which came very close to ending my military career forever. Some troops on the opposite side of Can Tho Army Airfield were discharging their weapons into the air, whose tracer rounds we could see in honor of the cease-fire, an action that in later mid-east conflicts would often be referred to as "celebratory gunfire". A group of about 8-10 pilots and crew chiefs from my unit, the 18th Corps Aviation Company (CAC) Huey Flight Platoon were hanging around the pilots' hooches, drinking beer, when someone came up with the idea of celebrating the cease-fire as well, but instead of firing weapons, to fire some emergency pen-flares instead. These small flares were carried in every aircrew member's survival vest, and could fire a flare straight up about 150' above ground level.

Several of us did so, but shortly after we had finished firing, we walked around a corner and ran smack into the 164th Aviation Group Commander, a LTC John Doe. Note: Doe had a very negative reputation as a stern disciplinarian; he had handed out a Field Grade Article 15, a career-killing event for any active-duty officer. A 1LT in our platoon was a victim, for simply having arrived back on base shortly after curfew. He had also attempted to give an Article 15 to one of our best SP5 crew chiefs for "disrespect". Approaching the SP5 from behind while in the middle of a strenuous detail, the soldier swore and complained about the task, before Doe had even identified himself as an officer! Fortunately, our C.O., MAJ Childers, was able to talk Doe down off the cliff and no charges were pursued against the SP5. When we recognized Doe, a group of four of us almost reactively came to the position of attention and formed a single file facing him. The detained group of "culprits" consisted of me, (WO1 John Harris) and WO1 Mike Grant, WO1

Lynn Skuza and a SP4 Cross. (See attached photo of us three WO1's taken while shut down in Vi Thanh, shortly after escaping the wrath of our Group Commander.)

Doe then ordered one of the other pilots not in the culprit group, to go get our C.O., MAJ Jerry Childers and return on the double. When MAJ Childers, who had already been asleep, returned, Doe ordered the group of us four to go get fully dressed in jungle fatigues and to report to his office in 30 minutes. He briefly stated that our actions of firing the pen flares over the billeting area had endangered the lives of numerous personnel and therefore, he intended to "charge us accordingly". As soon as Doe left, MAJ Childers asked us what had happened and we simply explained that we too had been celebrating the end of the war, and did not believe that we had really endangered anyone.

When we all reassembled at 164th Group Hqs, just outside LTC Doe's office, we were also met by a JAG (Judge Advocate General) lawyer who with no notice, had himself been hurriedly summoned to meet with the four of us and to act as our defense counsel. Note: It should be remembered that back then, most of the junior JAG lawyers in Vietnam had actually been drafted into such roles and therefore, were rarely career officers. In a quick huddle, he advised us to not agree to anything with LTC Doe during our initial meeting, and to defer any decisions until we spoke with the JAG again afterwards.

The next move was for Doe to summon SP4 Cross into his office alone. After only about five minutes, Cross exited and spoke to the three pilots. In summary, Cross related that Doe had apologized for the actions of the three Warrant Officers and advised that no charges would be brought against him. Copper then summoned Grant, Skuza, and I into his office, where he placed us at the position of attention, with our JAG counsel following us in as an observer. As the Convening Authority, Doe then proceeded to read us our rights under Article 31 of the UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice.) These rights generally conform to

the right to remain silent, right against self-incrimination, and right to an attorney. Essentially, he advised us that he was going to prosecute the three of us, by imposing Field Grade Article 15s. He implied that since he had personally witnessed our actions, it was clear that we were at fault and should therefore, simply accept our punishment. That said, we were ordered to report back to his office the next morning, after consulting with our JAG counsel.

The JAG said we sim-

ply had two choices: either accept the Colonel's career-killing Field Grade Article 15 punishment or refuse to do so and instead, demand a Court-Martial. He made it clear that if we accepted the Article 15, we were at most, looking at paying a likely fine of one or two hundred dollars. However, should we instead opt for a Special Court-Martial, we in theory

could be subjected to confinement for up to one year. This fact alone was often enough pressure to cause most accused soldiers, to accept an Article 15 and avoid any chance of greater punishment.

Fortunately for us, it quickly became apparent that our JAG was not a career officer, as he offered his frank assessment of our situation. With the war over and the primary goal of the command to get all U.S. personnel out of Vietnam in an expeditious manner, he firmly believed there was absolutely no chance that our higher headquarters could convene a formal Court-Martial, during the few remaining weeks we all had left in country. This would mean a Court-Martial would have to be set up at a post in the U.S., after we had all returned home. Since everyone involved; i.e., the accuser, the three defendants, all witnesses, the commanders, etc., were already on PCS orders to widely dispersed locations, the trial would have to take place at one base and everyone would have to be flown in

while TDY.

This is when the JAG opined: "With the war just having ended, can you imagine what the news media would say, once it was revealed that the Army was going to hold a Court-Martial, at great expense to the taxpayers, of three recently returned Combat-Veteran Helicopter Pilots, for having over-enthusiastically, celebrated the end of the Vietnam War?" He finished by saying that his best legal advice was that all three of us should refuse the Article 15, and instead, unanimously demand a Court-Martial.

We then held

a meeting with MAJ Childers who said he agreed with the JAG's assessment and advice. Following a quick huddle, during which somebody mentioned the old phrase attributed to Ben Franklin from 1776 that goes: "We must surely

hang together or

surely we shall hang separately", the three of us agreed to unanimously refuse Doe's Article 15, and told MAJ Childers of our decision. MAJ Childers gave us what I would characterize as a slight smile of approval and said he would convey our decision to LTC Doe.

The next morning, we re-assembled at Doe's office, then were called-in and placed at the position of attention. It was readily apparent that Doe was furious that we had decided to refuse his Article 15. He proceeded to go on and on in a tirade which fluctuated from a few conciliatory comments to open hostility. But it was when he concluded his rant with a declaration that during our remaining time in country, he would be closely monitoring the three of us for any additional blunders, we knew that our calling his bluff had worked; we had successfully pushed his envelope & survived!



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by Joseph Sheridan

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over 350 combat missions from September 1970 to September of 1971, he earned two Bronze Stars with "V" device (valor), twenty Air Medals with valor, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

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A real, welcome home boys!

**Available on Amazon Books ~ Angel In the Cockpit by Joseph Sheridan
ISBN # 9798367893915 . Hard Cover, Paperback, and Kindle**



The Saga of Roy Sudeck and the An Khe Pass.

By Martin Kleiner

If you recall, in late March of 1972 we were all pretty well disbursed just waiting for our stand-down date of 6 April. We had elements at Cam Rhan Bay, An Khe, and Lane AHP flying a wide variety of missions. Once the NVA began the invasion we were ordered to pull up stakes and reconstitute at Camp Holloway and begin conducting air cav operations in support of II Corps. Most of us arrived up at Camp Holloway expecting to stay a few days and then head back for our stand down. When it became apparent that we would be there for an extended period of time, I convinced LTC Bagnal to give us a few days to go back and retrieve our gear, cloths, etc. Roy had been down at Cam Rhan Bay/Tuy Hoa, so he flew there and picked up a number of items. Somehow, he had "procured" an M2 .50 cal and mount to use as a door gun so he was also packing 4,500 rounds of ammo, as

well as a bag of mail for the troops at Holloway. As I recall, both he and I spent the night at Lane and were heading back to Holloway the next day. I took off and headed over to Phu Cat AFB and then picked up Highway 19 and started up into the An Khe pass. I remember the first time I flew through there, at the beginning of this tour, the AC (maybe Jeff Drolshagen) pointed out all of the crashed helicopters and fixed wings and warned me against trying to get through there during bad weather. As I started up the road, I could tell that I would be in the clouds before I reached the summit, so I turned around and picked up an orbit, waiting to see if the clouds would lift. About that time, I heard Roy check in with the local Arty control center asking for clearance and I contacted

him on our Troop FM frequency. I told him of the situation, but Roy, being Roy, said he was going to give it a look for himself. Again, I advised against it but up he went. As he went along he was giving me updates and told me he could make it. The next thing I heard was him saying "Oh Shit" and then silence. I made a couple of calls on our FM freq and got no response. I remember thinking "Oh crap, now I have to go up and see if I can find him." I started to follow H-19 up the pass (very slowly I must admit) when I heard Roy calling on Guard with his survival radio. I made contact with him, and after he assured me that he and the crew were alive and pretty much OK, I asked if he wanted me in to try and come in and pick them up. He very strenuously said no, he would make it down to the base of the mountain and I could pick him up there. As things progressed, he gave me a running com-

mentary. First, he saw a PA&E truck coming down the road and thought he had it made since they were Americans. He stood on the side of the road waving it down, but they just sped by as fast as they could, so Roy said he would stop the next vehicle. As he told me later, he stood in the middle of the road with his .38 drawn and pointing up the road. About then a Vietnamese vegetable truck came down the road and came to a stop. Roy crowded in the front, with his pistol pointed at the driver, while the crew squeezed into the back. Roy then motioned the driver to go down the hill. Once at the bottom and near a clear area he had the driver stop. He then had the crew take out all of their MPC and, along with him, gave it to the driver, probably making him wealthy, at least for a couple of



Martin Kleiner.

days. (Roy may have been wild, but he did have a good heart. I had known him at Ft Bragg between tours.) I then landed and picked them up. Once the crew was on board I climbed out and headed back to Lane. Roy hooked up and told me what had happened. He said that he got to a point where he knew he couldn't get through the pass and was going to bring the aircraft to a hover, do a pedal turn and head back down. Unfortunately, with all of the weight on board, he got into a settling with power situation and tried to set it down by the side of the road. He almost made it, but the slope was a little too much and he didn't have enough power to keep it steady and it slowly rolled over, tore the rotor system off, and began rolling down the hill. Luckily the fuselage hit a large tree after one or two rolls and came to a stop. The CP (Webster?) had a dislocated shoulder, but that was the extent of the injuries. Roy then mentioned that he needed a drink, and I told him that I had a bottle of Chevis in my helmet bag. He told me that he hated scotch and then proceeded to take several large gulps. By the time we landed, he was half drunk. When Ed Brown asked him what happened he said that he lost power and they may have taken a round through the engine. Later that night Roy went to Ed and told him the truth, there had been no hostile fire. Ed thought about it and decided that Roy didn't need to have all of the hassle of an accident investigation. He was doing the best he could to accomplish the mission and had owned up to it. The next day or two, when the weather had cleared, Ed and 1Lt Al Evanitski took an OH-6 and I took a Huey with a recovery crew out to the area. Ed did a low recon, circling the crash several times. He then pulled off and I went in and landed on the road. The recovery crew went down to collect the mail, the data plate, and log book, and check the aircraft for any signs of enemy damage. Lo and behold there were several bullet holes through the engine cowling and at least one into the engine (Al Evanitski was carrying an M-16, you figure it out.) If they had recovered the aircraft and done an engine teardown, they would have noted that the engine was stopped when the bullet penetrated it). I went in and picked up the recovery crew and we flew back to Lane. We had felt fairly secure because the Koreans had a fire base at the top of the pass and nobody messed with the Koreans.

It was not long after that that the NVA attacked the fire base from bunkers within 100 meters of the perimeter and it took several weeks to relieve the fire base. It was clear that they had been in place when we conducted our recovery operation. It is really lucky for us that they were well disciplined, plus that gave credence to the rounds in Roy's aircraft.

Years later when I was at Lakehurst NJ some of my civilian pilots were also in the NJ National Guard aviation battalion. One Friday we were in the club telling war stories and I mentioned Roy Sudeck, and they said that he was a member of the unit. We got together sometime after that and had a good waltz down memory lane. Roy had left the Army sometime around '73-'75

But I guess he missed flying so much that he joined the NG. At the time I met him he was a CW-3. I remember one time when we were in-country he told me he thought that I was an OK guy, but I wasn't aggressive enough. This was after the II Corps Senior Advisor (a BG just prior to J.P. Vann) had told me that my mission was to ensure that we had no more American casualties, but Roy wasn't buying it. RIP Roy

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SELECTIONS FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

This issue's column is from Mar/Apr 2000.

Air America Bell 205 takes on VPAF An-2s Dogfight over Pou Phathi

By John Konek

During the second half of 1967, a flurry of activity was focused on the Phou Phathi ridgeline in Sam Neua Province, northern Laos, as a modified TSQ-81 system was being installed by U.S. Air Force technicians under cover as Air America employees.

The disassembled radar system, modified for deployment in rugged terrain, was first flown to forward jungle airstrips (Lima Sites) in Sam Neua and then slingloaded to the Phou Phathi mountain summit by Air Force Pony Express and unmarked CH-47s on loan from the U.S. Army.

Sited on the edge of a sheer cliff overlooking the southwestern face of the ridge, the station was shared with the TACAN beacon established in August 1966.

The Air Force technicians and the five-company, BG 206 defense unit of the Royal Lao Army and Team Z-16 of the Royal Thai Army tasked to provide security to the radar site compound, received their supplies via a helipad 300 meters to the southeast.

The Phou Phathi compound served a dual purpose: Besides serving as a radar/TACAN site, it continued to serve as a paramilitary launch site which was overseen by two permanent site CIA case officers.

Terry Quill had served at the site since the previous summer when he was an adviser to the Interrogation Center at Pha Khao in MR 2. The second CIA officer, Woody, was an air operations specialist. He previously served stints at Udorn, Luang Prabang, and Long Tieng.

These two case officers operated from a number of huts and a bunker on the south side of the helipad. Their main duty at the site was focused primarily on running road watch and

intelligence teams across the Sam Neua Province.

By November 1967, the TSQ-81 was pressed into heavy use as the Air Force Barrel Roll bombing campaign of the DRV stepped up its momentum. The TSQ guided 55 percent of the Barrel Roll missions.

Because of the impact Quill and Woody's teams were having on the NVA's Ho Chi Minh Trail system that cut through Sam Neua Province, a handpicked commando team from the NVA 305 Dac Cong Command was tasked in October to recon the Phou Phathi ridgeline.

What the 305 DC team expected to recon atop Phou Phathi was paramilitary activity such as team strength, time, direction, etc. What it discovered was an added bonus of the TSQ-81 radar and TACAN complex.

Finishing its recon efforts the following month, the

Dac Cong team submitted its findings and suggested an air strike on the radar site, since a ground assault would not be possible without softening the target first.

The NVA discovered the site to be heavily defended by five companies of BG 206, Hmong militiamen of FAR 1 Company of BV 26 and Team Z-16 led by Capt. Chamlong Srimuang, a 33-old-graduate of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. Forming the last line of defense, the Thai Z-16 team ringed the mountaintop helipad with machine guns, rocket launchers, and mortars.

Because of the questionable loyalty of the local Hmong, especially Gia Too (call sign "Pig Fat" by the local CIA advisers), who were suspected of collaboration with the Pathet Lao; relatively little effort was given initially to expanding the ADC net in the immediate area around the ridgeline. However, about January 4, Gen. Vang Pao decided to add some



This file photo shows an Estonian Air Force An-2 similar to those belonging to VPAF (Vietnamese People's Air Force) were shot down by an Air America helicopter.

muscle to Capt. Gia Too's Phou Phathi garrison, which blocked the south approach to the ridge, by airlifting in a 105 mm howitzer.

To feed the lone artillery piece, Air America Bell 205 choppers, over the ensuing week, shuttled ammunition from the Phou Phathi helipad down to Gia Too's base camp.

At 1 PM on January 12, while two Air America 205s were unloading 105 ammunition on the pad, explosions erupted from near the radar station which was comprised of three air portable vans resembling olive drab mobile homes, one of which was topped by a free-rotating radar dish. To the amazement of those present, the site was being bombed by two biplanes!

The air attack on Phou Phathi and the ensuing dogfight between the attacking planes and one of the Air America 205s ranks as one of the more unusual applications of air power during the war.

Taking the Dac Cong November 1967 recommendation to heart, Hanoi had ordered the first VPAF (Vietnamese People's Air Force) airstrike on foreign soil. But instead of using one of its MiG jets, the VPAF had elected to modify some of its Soviet-made An-2 Colt biplanes into bomber/fighters.

Originally developed as a crop-duster, the An-2 was an unlikely strike aircraft, even though, for lack of airframes, it had in 1966 explored its use as an attack plane to interdict SVN commando boats infiltrating along the coast. During five such An-2 missions that year, one boat had been sunk by air attack.

There was a second reason for the decision by VPAF leaders to use the An-2: Had the MiG been used for the attack, there was a good chance the Americans would have detected the MiG's departure and flight path by Mainland Southeast Asia Air Defense Section (MSEAADS at Tan Son Nhut) and relayed the information to the U.S.A.F./RTAF Radar Communications Facility Control and Reporting Post (CRP) at Udorn.

The Royal Australian Air Force, stationed at Udorn for purposes of air defenses intercept, had eight MF-6 Sabres ready to meet any intercept scramble requirements to protect southern Thailand and northern Laos airspace.

Who, on the other hand, would suspect a few slow-flying crop-dusters? Also, the closer to the Thai/Lao border the An-2s came, the more likely MSEAADS would be to attribute the intercept signal as nothing more than a few helicopters — probably Air America!

To give the An-2 teeth for the Phou Phathi mission, the VPAF modified two airframes with 57 mm rockets in wing pods and a section of floor had been cut open to hold a cluster of tubes.

Each tube would take a 120 mm mortar round, which, when released, would be armed in the slipstream to detonate on impact.

This is the same MAD (mortar air delivery) system the U.S. Army used in its helicopters.

On Jan. 12, four An-2s had launched from Duc Thang Airfield toward Laos. Two of the aircraft orbited the Lao border while the other two continued on a southwest heading toward Phou Phathi.

Dropping low, the pilot in the lead aircraft established radio contact with another Dac Cong commando, who had infiltrated to the base of the mountain. With the commando vectoring them toward their target, the two aircraft made a rocket pass over the summit.

The radar, however, was well camouflaged with olive netting, a precaution taken the previous month due to reports of VPAF MiG activity making shallow forays along the Sam Neua border area. Due to the camouflage and inexperience of the VPAF crews, all the rockets missed their targets, hitting only empty jungle.

Circling the ridgeline, the biplanes aligned themselves for a bombing run.

The 120 mm rounds salvoed from the tubes and spread across the edge of the helipad, the SGU compound, and surrounding jungle. Two SGU troops were killed, while two more were wounded. A Thai from Z-16 was hit from shrapnel as were some of the structures near the helipad.

Before the planes finished their second bomb run, the site defenders returned fire, riddling one with small automatic arms fire. The An-2 wavered as it headed northwest.

CRUMP! CRUMP!

At the helipad, Air American Capt. Ted Moore, his CE Glen Wood, and an RTA officer kicked out the 105 mm ammo stacked in the back of their Bell 205 and lifted from the helipad as the 120 mm mortar rounds impacted around them.

Banking northwest along the ridge-line, Moore looked over the starboard side and saw one of the An-2s coming out of the clouds below him.

Wood, retrieving an AK-47, leaned out the sliding door and took aim on the biplane.

Damaged and riddled with small arms fire from the defensive positions along the ridgeline, the plane was fast losing altitude. While its VPAF pilot fought to clear the ridge, it plowed into the jungle and exploded.

As Moore banked and watched the first biplane burn, Wood yelled over the intercom that a second An-2 was closing fast on their six.

Kicking left peddle, Moore swung the nose left so that Wood could use the only defensive weapon on board, the AK-47.

Small arms fire was exchanged between Wood and the An-2 gunner with Wood coming out on top. The biplane pitched forward, then banked in a lazy arc. It plunged into the triple canopy, ripping off its wings, but not exploding.

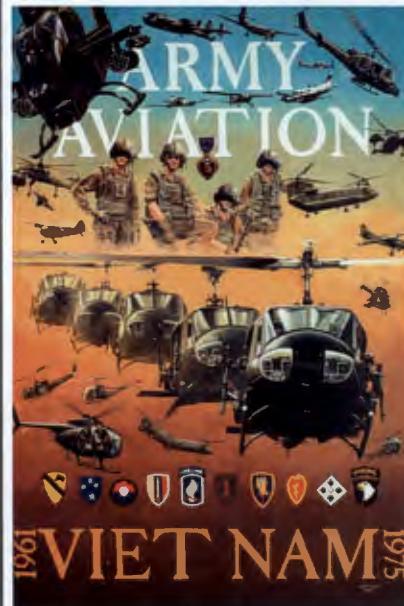
At 4 PM, a mixed Hmong PARU team was helilifted by Air America to the crash site. Inside the wrecked plane, the team found a dead bombardier. Both pilots were injured, but still alive. The two survivors were immediately executed by the Hmong.

Two of the bodies were removed from the plane, but the third had a leg pinned under the engine. Ever resourceful, one the Hmong took his machete and hacked off the leg. All three bodies were brought back to Long Tieng and displayed in open body bags at the edge of the runway for two days.

As the stench on the apron grew unbearable, the three corpses were turned over to the DRV Embassy in Vientiane.

As a less grisly war trophy, an U.S.A.F. HH-53B sling-loaded the An-2 wreck back to Nakhang. It was then lifted to Vientiane and put on public display.

EDITOR'S NOTE: much of the credit for this story must be given to Mr. Kenneth Conroy. Other sources and credit go to the USAF PACAF — Historical Office in Hawaii and USAF Historian in Washington, D.C.



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HOW I BECAME *an Army Helicopter Pilot*

By Martin Kleiner

Some of my earliest and fondest memories are of dreaming about flying. Not with an airplane or some other physical mode, just simply flying like a bird. Looking at mythology and lore from most civilizations this would seem to be a rather common dream/wish of mankind and I was bitten hard by it. My first real flight was when I was six years old and we flew on an Eastern Airlines Lockheed Constellation from Houston to New York City, probably LaGuardia. It took about six hours and I think I had my face pressed to the window the entire time. A few years later "Whirly Birds" came on the air and I am sure that I watched every episode (along with "Ripcord" "Sea Hunt", "Victory at Sea" and "West Point Story").

About the time I was 10-11 years old I was out doing yard work one Saturday morning and heard a loud noise approaching. When I looked up there was a flight of three H-21 "Flying Bananas" going directly overhead at about 800-1,000 feet and I was gob-smacked. I desperately wanted to fly, but that certainly wasn't in the books for me. We were solidly middle class and expected to do well, but not to exceed our "station" in life, which was, how shall I say, boring.

High school came and went and, unlike my two older brothers, no one, not my teachers, not my par-

ents, nor even myself thought that I was college material (I don't even know if we had guidance counselors then, but if we did, they didn't call me in). Upon graduation in the Spring of 1965, sitting around doing nothing was not an option, so I took a job with a steamship agency in downtown Houston, TX. I started out as the junior office boy (JOB) and shortly afterwards was promoted to senior office boy (yes, SOB). It was a fun job doing routine paperwork and visiting the arriving and departing ships to

collect and deliver bills of lading, manifests, sailing documents, etc. One of the shipping agents was 10 years older than me, single, owned a Porsche 356 and a Jaguar X K - 1 4 0 , drank scotch and had

served in the

Submarine service after high school. I was impressed to say the least. He took me under his wing and life was good, but about 10 months into this I received a letter telling me that I needed to report for my Selective Service physical.

About three weeks after that was accomplished, I received a notice telling me I was classified 1A. All indications were that I had maybe two months before I would receive my draft notice so I seriously started looking at options. Since I was working in downtown Houston the Air Force and Navy

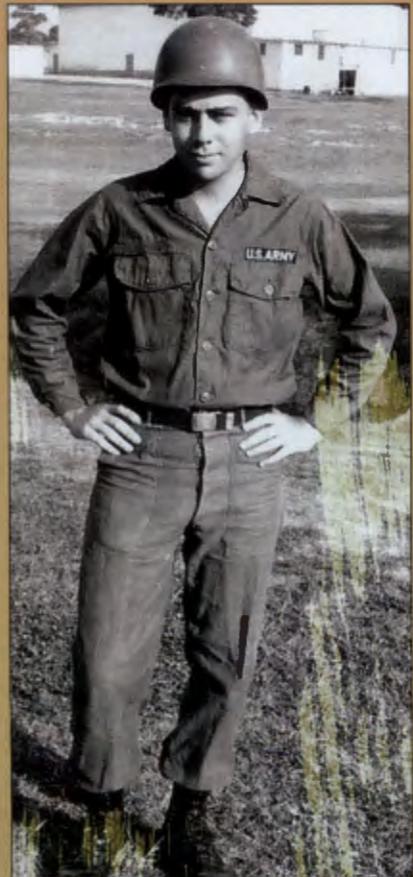


116th AHC Gun Platoon.

recruiters were close by so I could visit them on my lunch break. I am sure that there must have been an Army recruiter also nearby, but for some reason the only one I found was out in Bellaire, about a 25-minute drive away.

So in the next couple of days I walked over to the USAF recruiting office and found two very rotund senior NCO's sitting back at their desks. I have no idea what rank of grade they were, but this was back when the AF still wore summer khakis and they had an array of many stripes going both up and down. They casually looked at me and asked what they could do for me. I explained that I was likely to be drafted soon and wanted to see what options I might have. They asked what I was interested in and I said being a pilot, whereupon they assured me that I had come to the right place because that was what the AF was all about, although I detected what I thought was some underlying mirth in their tone. They then asked me when I had graduated from college and I told them that I had not, but I had just graduated from high school. They explained that all of their pilots were college graduates, but they might be able to find a job for me shoveling coal for one of their bases up north. I left, not a little crestfallen, and think that I heard laughter as I walked down the hallway and out of the building.

The next day I went over to the Navy recruiters and made the same initial presentation but added that I had not graduated from college. The folks seemed actually interested and explained that if I had two years of college I could apply for flight



"Joe Duffle Bag": BCT Ft Polk, LA 1966

training and I said "thank you, but I am two years short of that". They told me that I would be drafted long before they had any openings for other duty. Following that, I took a couple of hours off in the following days and went out to see the Army recruiter (NB: seeing a USMC recruiter was never in the equation).

Having honed my opening presentation several times by now I gave him the same thing as I had the Navy, but explained that I had no college. He then enthusiastically told me that the Army had a program called "High School to Flight School" and asked if I had graduated high school or at least had a GED. I assured him that I was a high school graduate and he then explained the program to me, and explained all about Warrant Officers by saying that they were just like regular officers, except that all you did was fly and you didn't have to be bothered with all that other stuff that officers did (I had no idea what that "other stuff" might be and I am not sure that he did either). He went on to say that if you stayed in long enough you could be promoted to CW-4 and that was just like being a major.

Well, this certainly got my blood pumping and I asked what I had to do next. He said I should drive down to the main induction station in the Old Post Office building and he would arrange for me to take some tests to see if I could qualify. I took the tests and returned to see the recruiter. He said I passed and that I just needed to fill out an application, which he would submit. Once that was approved, I would need to go up to Ft. Sam Houston and sit



116th AHC 1969.

which he would submit. Once that was approved, I would need to go up to Ft. Sam Houston and sit before a board of officers for an interview, which shouldn't be any problem. Heck, they were even going to give me a round trip bus ticket and buy me lunch. What a sweet deal!

Well, I filled out the application and dutifully answered all of the question. Along with the basic information was also the fact that during the previous eight months I had three speeding tickets and an arrest for possession of alcohol by a minor. This did not seem to bother the recruiter and, by the standards of the time was no big deal, at least in Texas. The recruiter said it would take about 5-8 weeks to get a reply.

About two weeks later when I returned home from work there was a letter from the Selective Service telling me that I needed to report to the induction station in two weeks (sometime in August 1966). I called the recruiter the next day and told him that it didn't look like things would work out as I was going to be inducted. He said not to worry, he would get a 90-day extension on my induction. I couldn't believe that and asked him if he was sure. He said he was positive and that he would go straight to the State Selective Service board. Sure enough, about a week later I received a 90-day deferment on my induction. A week or so after that the recruiter called and told me that my application had been rejected as a result of the speeding tickets and possession of alcohol. I was morally unsuitable to be an Army Warrant Officer. I was crushed (note: it would take me many years to appreciate the irony of this). A week later I received a letter from the Selective Service rescinding my 90-day extension and telling me to report for induction on 9 September 1966, which I dutifully did. That night

I arrived at Ft. Polk, LA for basic training.

A couple of weeks into BCTP they called a relaxed formation in the evening and said that many of the trainees were qualified to take the Officer Candidate Test (OCT) and that if they passed they could apply for OCS. It seems like they read out about half of the names of the company, but I was not amongst those. At this time my attitude was, "screw you" I am going to do my two years and get the hell out (if I survive of course). A few weeks later, on a hot afternoon we were out on a parade field doing massed PT/grass drills and an H-34 flew over at about 500 ft and I thought to myself, "damn it, that should be me", but obviously it wasn't. Upon graduation I, along with almost the rest of the company,

got on buses and headed up to North Ft. Polk for advanced Infantry training (AIT). Somewhere around four weeks into the nine-week course we were out in the field on bivouac when at morning chow they called eight or nine of us out by name and told us to get on a truck back to the cantonment area to



Flying the Chief of Staff US Army as Commander of the RW Priority Transport division Davison USAA 1980.

take the OCT (there was no asking). We all hopped on, glad to know that we would miss a day in the field. We took the test and most of us passed it. One of the other trainees in my platoon, Troy Wise, also wanted to be a helicopter pilot and we had discussed the merits of going to OCS or going the WOC route. Once we got the test results we had to make a choice (note: in order to go to OCS you needed a minimum score of 110, for WOC you needed 115, which we both exceeded). For some reason I chose OCS, but he chose WOC because he didn't want to miss the opportunity to go to flight school if he didn't make it through OCS.

In years past, those trainees that had applied for OCS or WOC would, upon graduation, be signed in as permanent party to the Ft Polk Garrison while

awaiting approval of their application, which usually took three to four months. Since you had a little under six months of time-in-service by the time you graduated that meant that you had 9-10 months when you were notified if you were accepted. Many of the applicants turned down the acceptance out of hand knowing that they would have less than 12 months left on their term of service before they came down on levy for Vietnam. It didn't take long

for the Hq's to figure out that they were gaming the system and changed the policy so that all graduates were on orders to Vietnam, with their departure put on hold until they accepted an assignment to OCS or WOC. When graduation rolled around the folks that had applied for OCS were called out and signed in as "holdovers" with deferred shipment orders, but Troy was not. When he checked with the 1st SGT, they called personnel and were told that there was no record of him having applied for the WOC program and that it was too late now. He shipped out to Vietnam.

When we made our applications for OCS our company commander (a note about him later) called us in and told us that we could request three branches of service upon commissioning. He told us that if we were approved they would offer us a branch and if we didn't want that branch we could decline. The request would go back and we would be offered another branch, and the same thing would happen, but we would be required to take the third offering or decline OCS and ship out. Having done some research I had seen that the two branches with the highest percentage of aviators were Trans-

portation Branch and the Signal Corps (the research materiel was seriously outdated), so those were the top two choices and I have no idea what my third choice was but I suspect it was not Infantry (BTW, I now held an MOS of 11B10 and had fired expert with the M-60 machine gun (what was I thinking?)). About two months later we were out in the field on bivouac again, but this time I was a PFC "assistant cadre" with a shiny helmet liner and living a life, not quite of luxury, but much better than a trainee. At morning chow, the field first called me out and told me to report to the AG section and meet with a 1st LT regarding my OCS application. I dutifully reported into him at his desk and the first thing that I noticed was that he was sporting AG brass and a CIB. He told

me to stand at ease and notified me that I had been accepted for Infantry OCS, did I accept? I said no, I would decline and see what the next offer was. He looked at me a little askance and asked what I was talking about, so I explained what our CO had told us. He

informed me that that information was absolutely wrong and that I could accept or would be shipping out within the week. He was actually a compassionate man and seeing the look of incredulity on my face asked if I'd like to step outside, smoke a cigarette and think about it for a minute, to which I agreed. I went outside and probably smoked about 5 cigarettes in 5 minutes and kept going back and forth "Infantry OCS at Ft. Benning or Vietnam as an 11B10 machine gunner"? Realizing that I probably wouldn't die at Ft Benning, and the war

Greeting the Queen of Thailand on the Pentagon HeliPad prior to flying her to Annapolis, MD 1980.



would be over before I graduated, I reported back and accepted.

While in OCS I applied for flight school and upon commissioning was sent back to Ft Polk as a training officer awaiting acceptance to flight school. In April of 1968 I reported to Ft Wolters for IERW training. In July I was getting ready to head out to Ft Rucker for completion of flight school and decided to stop in the new PX which had just been completed. As I was walking in from the parking lot, a brand new WOC candidate passed me and saluted, which I returned and as we made eye contact we recognized each other. It was Troy Wise, my fellow trainee from AIT. He had been assigned to the 1st Cav Division as an 11B10, but had his heart set on flying so applied for WOC flight training while in country. After six months they pulled him up and made him a door gunner on Hueys for the remainder of his tour. I am happy to report that Troy got his wings, returned to Vietnam for a tour as a Huey pilot, rotated back to the states and has had a successful life.

I completed flight training at Ft Rucker and graduated on 3 December 1968. In January of 1969 I arrived in the RVN and was assigned to the 116th AHC, where I flew slicks for three months and then moved over to

the "Stinger" gunship platoon and flew Charlie models until I was MEDEVACed in June. I returned to the RVN in July of 1971 and served 12 months with C Troop 7/17 air Cav and its successor units. I remained in the Army, alternating between Aviation and other assignments and eventually retired on Halloween 1992, a happy man.

Regarding the CO that gave us the bad information about our OCS choices, he was reassigned shortly after that conversation. I think that he was misinformed because that may have been the way it worked back in the "old days". After I was wounded and MEDEVACed on my first tour I was assigned to fly for the 6th SF Group at Ft Bragg, NC. One Friday at the Smoke Bomb Hill Officers Club (the SF hang out) I ran in to him, although his name escapes me. I asked him if he had commanded the company at Ft Polk. His face lit up and he said he had and asked me if I had been one of the other company commanders (I had recently been promoted to captain). I explained that no, I had been one of his trainees. His smile left him and he didn't seem interested in carrying on the conversation. I didn't have the heart to mention the misinformation that he had provided.

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Book Reviews

by Phil Marshall

"Flying Dustoff, My Journey in Vietnam"

by Allan Parkhurst



CWO Parkhurst's "Flying Dustoff" is a Vietnam Veteran pilot's effort to document a very important and impressionable time in his life, as many of us remember those times. We each have those very important "chapters" of our lives as Vietnam Helicopter Pilots; this book is one more Veteran's effort to document those experiences before we all (hopefully) go to our reward.

The Author is very concise in his writing and covers many different facets of his time in country. Of course, he includes his high pucker factor missions but he also documents the everyday living in country. He includes the "routine, but different" missions... and the occasional mundane days as

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



well as the often-harrowing nights.

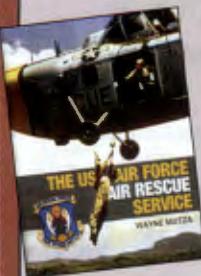
The book is well over 90% Vietnam related; not a whole lot of before and after Vietnam. Mr. Parkhurst gets to the point of his book quickly and concisely. A well written recounting of the many quite different missions and occurrences, including a hoist mission to rescue 3 kidnapped Vietnamese women. (That, my friends, was a "new one" on me!) Or flying with your future Brother-in-Law..that's in there, too. No two missions alike, for certain.

As I read the book, I could imagine hearing his stories one after the other in quick succession while sitting around a campfire with adult beverages in our hands. The missions in his book come that quickly, with Parkhurst barely able to catch his breath in between and just long enough to take another sip.

ISBN 979-8391659457

The US Air Force Air Rescue Service

by Wayne Mutza



Wow! Anything and everything one ever wanted to know about Air Force rescues is in this book...and then some! For the Viet Nam rotor-heads like us, there is plenty of 1960s and 1970s helicopter material in this very thorough volume, not just fixed wing "stuff" that one might expect for Air Force history.

The quality and appearance of the book jumps out at you immediately upon opening it. Open to virtually any page and one will see lots of high gloss black & white and color photos on page after page as well as illustrations and written history in this 9 x 11-inch hard cover book.

Army Airborne Infantryman and Crew Chief Wayne Mutza has obviously spent hundreds...no, probably thousands, of hours putting this compilation together. This is only one of his 30+ books. A Vietnam veteran, the Author starts with World War I seaplane rescue his-

tory and marches right up to the present; I don't think he missed a thing. Tail numbers and insignias alone take up 25 pages.

Numerous interviews and "war stories" are also included by Mutza, further establishing the authenticity of his research into the development of the many rescue methods developed over the years. Some of the rescue ideas worked, some didn't work so well; the Author tells us why and why not.

Don't plan on reading this in just a couple of sittings, there is a LOT of material to take in; 288 pages. However, the material that is there is well worth it and it is not a boring read. Want to know how "Jolly Greens" got their nickname? It's in there. No military library will be complete without this high-quality research book. It will be an asset to researchers and in my opinion, if it isn't already, it will become the definitive answer to any Air Force rescue question. Very well done, Sir!

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\$2,500 - \$2,500 for 1 year(s) - Ainslee M Cruce, Bowling Green, KY - University of The Cumberlands

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA-Helene Westreich Memorial) Heritage Matching Scholarship

\$2,500 - \$2,500 for 1 year(s) - Madelyn J Whiteing - Grandchild of Capt Leonard Whiteing, Omaha NE - University of Nebraska Lincoln

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA-IMO UPI Reporter Joe Galloway) Heritage Matching Scholarship

\$2,500 - \$2,500 for 1 year(s) - Carrie A Byars - Grandchild of LTC Harold Byars, Newport News VA - Texas A&M University

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA-MG Carl H. McNair Jr., Ret) Heritage Matching Scholarship

\$2,500 - \$2,500 for 1 year(s) - Madelyn L Swartz - Grandchild of CW5 Richard Crosley, Pottstown PA - Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA-MG Carl H. McNair Jr., Ret) Heritage Matching Scholarship

\$2,500 - \$2,500 for 1 year(s) - Madelyn M Diep - Grandchild of CW4 Ransom Beckwith, Liverpool NY - Keuka College





2024 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS REQUESTED

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT DATES
TO APPLY FOR THE 2024-2025 VHPA SCHOLARSHIPS:

- ❖ Application submission **OPENS: September 1, 2023**
- ❖ Application submissions **CLOSE December 15, 2023**

Awards early-mid April 2024

Since 2000 all VHPA Scholarships are administered for the VHPA by the AAAA (Army Aviation Association of America) Scholarship Foundation. All VHPA scholarships are open only to descendants of VHPA members in good standing currently or at the time of their death regardless of BRANCH OF SERVICE. The only exceptions are if the Father or Grandfather of the applicant flew helicopters in Vietnam or SE Asia and was killed in action or died after his service as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and SE Asia before VHPA was formed prior to the beginning of VHPA in 1983.

Because the VHPA scholarships are administered by the AAAA, all our applicants must abide by the rules of the AAAA Scholarship Foundation. One of the rules, required by AAAA, is that each applicant or the sponsor (Father or Grandfather) be a member of AAAA. However, the requirement of membership for one year prior to submission is waived for VHPA applicants. Student memberships are usually the least expensive way to go.

To find out exactly how to apply,
go to the AAAA website at:

www.quad-a.org/index.php/scholarship/application-procedure

There you will find all the requirements and details of how applications must be submitted.

VHPA has endowed funds with the AAAA Scholarship Foundation to provide individual scholarships every year, the number and dollar amount may vary from year to year. And, since AAAA administers our scholarship program, our applicants are also eligible for the AAAA awards. However, an applicant can only receive one VHPA/AAA award each year.

This past application cycle eighteen (18) VHPA applicants received awards of \$2,500 each. Another ninety-seven (97) VHPA applicants received awards totaling \$130,500. That is a total of \$175,500.

Good luck and continue to apply every year until you finish your education. Feel free to contact VHPA HQ or the VHPA Scholarship Committee with any questions.



UPCOMING REUNIONS

LIGHTHORSE D TROOP 3/5 CAVALRY & C TROOP 3/17 CAVALRY 2023 REUNION

Where: The Marriott Cool Springs, Franklin TN.

The attached link will take you to the Marriott Lighthorse Nashville Reunion reservation site; where you can book from Tuesday September 12 through Sunday September 17. The room rate is \$159.00 plus tax and fees.

Book your group rate for Light Horse Reunion

When: September 12 through 17 2023

Additional information:

Facebook Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/587613165166285>

OV-1 MOHAWK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION

Where: Charleston, SC North Charleston Marriot Hotel

When: September 21-24, 2023

Information: OV-1 MOHAWK ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to All Who Serve, Las Vegas, NV

THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION ASSOCIATION AND THE ALAMO

Eagles Chapter are hosting the Annual Reunion

When: August 23-26, 2023

Where: San Antonio, at the Westin North, on Colonnade

Information: <http://www.screamingeagle.org>, or directly by phone at 931-431-0199.

There is a large contingent of Comancheros, and Medevac pilots that attend each year.

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friendsfirearms@comcast.net

or by telephone:

765-857-2109

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VHPA SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

Future

VHPA Scholarship *Suggestion*



VHPA Members,

The current plan is to have VHPA Scholarships available to our descendants through Quad-A long after our Association ceases to be viable. Our organization will have a Corpus with the Quad-A scholarship program in excess of \$400,000 and hopefully more. Quad-A provides .035% interest on that Corpus every year, currently about \$15,000. That amount will fund six or more \$2,500 VHPA Scholarships every year into perpetuity. Pretty cool to think our descendants will still be able to receive awards after we are gone. And our applicants will also be eligible for any of the Quad-A awards offered.

But who will vet our applicants after we are gone? Who will decide if an applicant is eligible? Here is a suggestion that the Scholarship Committee believes will help.

Give each one of your direct descendants a notarized copy of your DD-214 (ARMY) or the equivalent document for your Branch of service. They would submit the document when they apply for the VHPA Scholarship. We realize this document doesn't say you were a member of VHPA but it does state you attended and graduated from a military rotor wing flight program and served in Vietnam and or SE Asia between 1961 and 1975. You also can personally add your VHPA Member Number to the document. And copies of this document can be passed down to your descendant's descendants. This will continue our Legacy of Education to our descendants long after we are all gone.

Mike's Son, Hunter, already has a notarized copy of Mike's DD-214. Over the past seven years he has received over \$8,000 in VHPA and Quad-A scholarships. Here's hoping one of his descendants, if he has any, will one day, long after we're gone, receive a scholarship, either VHPA or Quad-A, in memory of us.

Tom Payne
Chairman, Scholarship Committee

Mike Sheuerman
Scholarship Committee, Fundraising

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 5 New Members and covers the period 5.11.23 to 6.20.23

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

This roster is presented in alphabetical order by last name

Colding Michael H **
La Coste Texas
Army
70-13 70-11
117 AHC in 70; 25
CAC in 70-72

Newman Jan A. **
Saginaw Michigan
Army
70-43
187 AHC in 71-71

Preddy Robert M.
'Mike'
Harlingen Texas
Army
71-35
F/8 CAV in 72-73

Villarta Jose R. **
Springville Utah
Army
68-519 68-35
HHC 326 MED in 69-
70

Etter Michael D. **
Brighton Colorado
Army
69-17
498 MED CO in 68-69

Vietnam Helo Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

5—18 Aug 2023 &

13—26

Apr

2024

Tour

Historian: Bob
Hesselbein,
C/16 Cav



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TAKE YOUR GROUP
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OWN DATES

“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, putting 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, Across the fence, and SOG Chronicles



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

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(Celebrate Freedom) Chapter
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Email: armyav8r11@msn.com

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Email: alexbromen1@comcast.net

Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALASKA CHAPTER

Finally, spring is in the air and the Alaska Chapter gets going with a grateful Memorial Day Service. We are enjoying our 10th year as a Chapter this year. The original eight formed the Chapter in February 2013. We have grown to 96 at our maximum membership. Unfortunately, we are losing members and are now only 88 strong. We had two activities in 2013, a fall dinner and a summer picnic and we added the Byers Lake Memorial service with overnight stay one year later. It is a touching Memorial Service honoring fallen Veterans and has become a yearly event for our Chapter.

This year we had 17 folks stay at the Princess Lodge with dinner the night before and 19 folks at the Memorial. Absolutely a super experience enjoying time with friends and a heartfelt touching Memorial Service the next day. This service is special as it has very little political and news media frenzy, just soldiers, family, and special dignitaries that support our military community. We have now done this event for 9 years, and a picnic in the parking lot followed the Service before the 150-mile drive back to our homes.

Nice weather, food, good friends and a great reason to gather made this a fantastic weekend for our Chapter.

Our summer plans include the Halibut fishing and cookout, August picnic (one of our biggest events), a fall dinner, and the Wreaths across America in December.

We certainly hope any VHPA members who visit Alaska will get in touch with us as we can always find a fish and chip place for lunch!

*As always there is Pride
in Knowing we flew.*

Lynn Kile, President

www.VHPA-Alaska.org



Dinner Group.



Memorial.



Picnic.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

For the next few issues, we would like to highlight each of our restored-to-flight Vietnam Huey Warbirds. The namesake of our organization, UH-1H 70-16369, was the first 1971 - Delivered to the U.S. Army and assigned to



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Photography2019

369 parked in the Outfield of Great American Ballpark, home of the Cincinnati Reds, in celebration of Veterans Appreciation Day, July 4, 2019. It was the 150th Anniversary of the oldest professional baseball team in America, the Cincinnati Reds.

the 498th Medical Company, 369 would fly as an Air Ambulance "Dustoff" aircraft. The 498th was deployed as a company to Vietnam in 1965 and returned to the U.S. (Ft. Jackson, South Carolina) by

1972. We look forward to meeting anyone who knew her!

1976 - Transferred to the 3/507th Medical Company, Fort Hood, Texas, where she continued her Medevac tradition in the state of Texas, where she was born.

1980 - Transferred to the Army National Guard, Decatur, Illinois, where devoted maintenance personnel kept her airworthy and air crews remained proficient in their flying skills.

1995 - Transferred to the Army National Guard, North Canton, Ohio, where her career in the Military would come to an end.

2001 - Like most Army Hueys, "369" was retired by the Army to make way for the new Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter and was transferred by the General Services Administration (GSA) to the state of Maine. For the next four years, "369" would be maintained by a Not for Profit search and rescue organization, DEEMI (Down East Emergency Medicine Institute). DEEMI currently flies a former Army UH-1H Helicopter in the state of Maine.

2005 - American Huey "369" was acquired from DEEMI and her new owners trailered her 1,300 miles from Bangor, Maine, to her new home in Peru, Indiana. Her members have preserved her to flight condition in her hangar/museum, so she may educate current and future generations to the history of THE AMERICAN MADE HUEY!



Helping the Reds celebrate their 150th Anniversary was a once-in-a-lifetime event for American Huey 369. According to the Reds Organization, it was the only time ever that military aircraft were parked in a Major League Ballpark. The Reds gave out 40,000 tickets to Veterans and their families that day; I doubt there were very many tickets unused!

Phil Marshall

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FLORIDA CHAPTER

We're back...again! After having to cancel our 2022 Annual Reunion last October due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Ian, we're once again Going and Growing strong! Our membership has actually increased, including life memberships!



Our 2023 'comeback' began with supporting and participating in the SUN n' FUN Aerospace Expo held at Florida's Lakeland-Linder International Airport March 28 -April 2nd. As the second largest air show in America, this aviation extravaganza is a mixture of general aviation convention, camping, fly-in, spring break for pilots, and yes, an air show.

SUN n' FUN has grown tremendously since its founding in 1975. The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida has supported this event for close to thirty consecutive years. Even though the number of atten-



SUN-n-FUN Aerospace Expo held at Florida's Lakeland-Linder International Airport - Preparing the LOACH for Static Display.



SUN-n-FUN Aerospace Expo held at Florida's Lakeland-Linder International Airport. VHPAF Chapter Treasurer, Tom Tomlinson "on duty." at the LOACH & Prepared to answer questions about the items on the table (mini-gun, chicken-plate, M-60 machine gun, etc.)



Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall on display at Wickham Park in Melbourne, FL.



Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall on display at Wickham Park in Melbourne, FL.

dees seemed less than in previous years, SUN n' FUN is still the busiest airport in the world during the show, with over 2,000 movements (take-offs and landings) a day. Over the course of the week, there are normally around 10,000 such movements.

Our second event was participating in the annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida, May 4-7th. This is one of the largest and longest running veterans' reunions in the country and the largest in Florida. The Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall was on display and always triggers intense emotional responses. We supported this event with our LOACH on static display. As always, we received numerous very positive comments and words of gratitude for our Vietnam service from both veterans and non-veterans.

Everyone is invited to our 29th Annual Reunion, 25 - 27 October, 2023 at the Drury Inn & Suites, Ft. Myers, Florida. You can download the Registration Form (www.VHPAF.org) with all the important details for Reunion Registration, dinner, and information on how to make your hotel reservation. Thanks, and we hope that you'll join us!

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, President

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

GEORGIA CHAPTER

A fairly busy two months for Our Chapter.

Cobb Veterans Memorial

On 25 April, we gathered at the Cobb County Commissioner's Meeting in Marietta to attend the Commissioner's Meeting to witness a \$250,000 endowment from LGE Community Credit Union.



Many Veterans Organizations attended this meeting. We were able to meet with the Commissioners and Directors who are principals in directing this Memorial for the County and the whole State.



Chief among this Development Team is their Director, Tony Alexander.



The donations from Our Chapter Membership will place us well ahead of schedule to assist in this worthy Veterans Memorial.

Veteran's Day Parade Project

On 11 April, we met with John Woodward, a former director of Army Aviation Heritage Foundation. We reviewed our progress toward trailers to accommodate one of AAHF's UH1 display units for the Veteran's day parade in November.

Several options were reviewed, and our confidence builds toward having this display ready for the parade. We are looking very much forward to having before and after pictures. Believe it or not, this is the "Before" picture!



Georgia Memorial Day

On 15 May, at the request of Trish Ross, Georgia's Director of Veteran's Services, we attended The State of Georgia's Memorial Day Ceremony at the Capitol Building. Numerous heads of local Veteran's Organizations were asked to attend, and our principal speaker was Governor Brian P. Kemp.



L-R: GA-VHPA Pres Doug Lackey, AVVBA Board Chair, John Butler, Georgia's First Lady, Marty Kemp, Governor Brian Kemp and AVVBA Executive VP, Art Katz.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Chapter Luncheon 16 May

In March of this year, the Chapter took a vote to pursue another venue for our Luncheon Gathering.



We proposed a large and accommodating room within the Dunwoody United Methodist Church campus in Dunwoody. Centrally located in North Atlanta, the facilities offered a large, quiet and comfortable room with an adjacent kitchen.



We gathered for our Luncheon on 16 May and everyone agreed that it was our Special Place.

Our featured speaker on 16 May was Clyde Romero, a long-time GA-VHPA member and former President of the VHPA.

Clyde gave a very memorable and impassioned presentation of his experiences during Lam-Son 719. Clyde flew OH6-A's for the 101st Airborne during this entire invasion, averaging well in excess of 100 hrs. per month (you LOACH drivers can well appreciate that).

He was shot down once during this operation which brought his total in country shoot downs to four. If you ever have an opportunity to hear him speak on Lam-Son 719, don't miss it.

After his tour as a Warrant, Clyde joined the US Airforce, flew F-4's KC-135's, and F-101's in the Air National Guard.

His total Military Flight time was in excess of 4,000 hours. He retired as an Air Force Colonel. He also flew for American Airlines for 38 years (33 years as a Captain). His total civilian flight time is in excess of 30,000 hours. His awards and decorations are too numerous to list.

Clyde remains a Military Hero in the truest sense of the word, he served and survived in a very difficult era of the Vietnam Conflict, he has 33 Air Medals and the Purple Heart and we will always be very proud to have Clyde Romero as a member of Our Chapter.

**Doug Lackey, President
VHPA Georgia Chapter
770-365-6558**



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter continued regular activities in the spring along with a delayed chapter business meeting.

The April lunch gathering was held on the 5th. Dana Graham and his wife Emily joined in from near Grand Rapids. All in attendance introduced themselves and briefly discussed their tours of duty in Vietnam as well as adventures afterwards. Dana briefed us on his 1967 assignment as an H-13 Scout pilot with the 1/9th. During his tour, Dana was awarded 4 DFCs.

Another successful lunch meeting hosted by Mark Benjamin was held on May 3rd in Traverse City. We discussed Flechette rockets and how to rearm them in flight. We also discussed various upcoming events that we intend to support such as the September Veterans Pheasant hunt. A shooting competition sponsored by the 82nd Airborne Association, Traverse City Chapter, proceeds will go to veterans' suicide prevention group 22 to None. Traverse City Coast Guard Air Station Open House featuring the USAF Thunderbirds as well as other nationally known air show performers.

The several-years-delayed annual Michigan Chapter business meeting was held on May 23rd at the Eaton Pub and Grille in Charlotte. Thirteen people attended including members, an associate, a wife, and a guest. They included Dave James, Jeff Butler, Mark Benjamin, Glenn Youngstedt, Glen Veno, Tom Burgess, Ken Hand, Bob Keller, Bob Rich, Bill Andrew, Gary & Kathleen Copp, and Rich Deer. On arrival, the greetings, socializing, and war stories commenced and continued through lunch. As lunch was wrapping up, a drawing was held for several books about Vietnam War related topics with emphasis on aviation and helicopter operations.

The business meeting agenda started with a brief overview of the Michigan Chapter history given by Rich Deer. He explained the chapter was started by Charlie Martin around 2012 and was originally based for meetings at the Army Aviation Support Facility at Grand Ledge. Full bylaws and other documents were developed and expectations of significant actions by the chapter were discussed. While some things did occur, the lack of member-



ship support reduced the expectations and the chapter settled in as a social organization. Charlie had designated Rich Deer as vice president, but other offices were not filled. Charlie had to step down for

health reasons (from which he has recovered) and Rich continued as president of the chapter. Dave James was appointed vice-president but the offices of secretary and treasurer were not filled, so Rich has covered those duties. Additionally, as certain members of the chapter were identified for their roles in helping the chapter they have been designated as members-at-large.

Some of the key personnel in the Michigan Chapter were then identified:

Charlie Martin, past president and founder of the Michigan Chapter. Mark Benjamin, member-at-large, high activity especially in the Traverse City area. Hosts monthly lunch gatherings, leads maintenance efforts of the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Traverse City, obtained at least four canopies with Michigan Chapter logos and designators for display use at events, leads Memorial Day flag displays on veterans graves, coordinates with USCG on multiple events including Open Ramp, involved with multiple veterans organizations including MOAA and 22 to None, recognized as Veteran of the Year by Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition.

Glen Veno, member-at-large, the esteemed S2 of the Michigan Chapter, the reference liaison for the American Huey 369, Yankee Air Museum, and the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation, active participant in events with some cool "toys."

Glenn Youngstedt, member-at-large, hosting gatherings in southwest Michigan, arranged tours of several



In the April 5th Traverse City photo are L to R: Bart Halliday USMC, John Lefler President Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition, Kim Lefler, Emily Graham, Dana Graham CWO 1/9th 1967, Barry Witt, Mark Benjamin. Not pictured: Ron Hoffmeister, Ed Canright.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

education museums and businesses, recruits informative speakers for gatherings.

Bob Rich, member-at-large, creator of the Michigan Chapter logo, webmaster for the Michigan Chapter website and Facebook page, creator of Michigan Chapter challenge coins, coordinating ongoing attendance at Yankee Air Museum historical presentations, hosted gathering in southeast Michigan.

Dave James, vice president, heads up Mason Aviation Day participation, heads up Michigan Chapter participation at Maple Grove Fly-In, offers transportation and lodging opportunities for Oshkosh.

Lee Luck, member-at-large, headed up Michigan Chapter participation at event in Oscoda coordinating with Wurtsmith Air Museum, represented the Michigan Chapter in presentation of check supporting the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument.

Ed Canright, member, frequent host of monthly gatherings in northwest Michigan.

Walter Topp, member, Michigan Chapter representative in the Northwest Michigan Veterans Coalition serving some 8,500 veterans in the region, awarded Quilts of Valor along with Bart Halliday and Fritz Barratt by MOAA chapter.

Sandy McLeod, member, contact liaison for Michigan Chapter participation in Thunder Over Michigan, contact liaison for Michigan Chapter participation in the Selfridge Air Show.

Ken Hand, associate, driving force for possible Michigan Chapter participation in Reno Air Races.

Tom Payne, VHPA Chapter Liaison, noted for his support of all VHPA chapters, great resource for information flow between chapters and from the National VHPA, appreciated for his expressed support of Michigan Chapter activities.

The next agenda item was the membership report. The Michigan Chapter has 126 members and associates on the roster, including 102 members and 24 associates. Members are those who flew helicopters in Vietnam during the war. Associates include Vietnam War enlisted crewmembers, fixed wing pilots, other veterans, and interested participants. The services represented include 112 Army, 9 Marines, 3 Air Force, 1 Navy, and 1 Coast Guard. Two new members have been added this year. It was noted that since 2021 if a member passed away his status is noted on the roster as DAT for died after tour. This is to remember



May 3rd in Traverse City.

L-R Ron Hofmeister, VP GT Area Vets Coalition, Kim Lefler, John Lefler, Pres. Grand Traverse Area Vets Coalition, Bart Halliday USMC, Joe Meredith, Walter Topp, Mark Benjamin, Clay Maxwell, Linda Maxwell. Not pictured, Ed Canright.

those who have left us as our membership ages.

Treasurer's report lists \$891.94 as the balance at the start of the meeting. (With dues collected at and expenses from the meeting the total is now \$981.94.) It was noted that the funds have been sufficient for current chapter needs unless there is a desire for a major project.

Lists of activities for possible Michigan Chapter participation had been emailed earlier and copies provided at the meeting. Anyone interested in heading up our participation can contact Rich Deer to spread the word and coordinate supporting equipment. Michigan Chapter canopies are available along with other materials. Upcoming planned events include the USCG Open Ramp in Traverse City coordinated by Mark Benjamin, and Mason Aviation Day & Maple Grove Fly-In headed up by Dave James as noted earlier. Bob Rich confirmed there will be Michigan Chapter representation at the upcoming VHPA Reunion. He was asked to represent the Michigan Chapter at Tom Payne's chapter presidents gathering there.

All members are encouraged to host lunch gatherings, golf outings, etc. on a monthly, quarterly, annual basis. Let Rich Deer know the details and he'll put the word out.

The topic of Legacy Issues was next. Including input from the National VHPA there has been discussion about leaving a permanent reminder of our role in the Vietnam War. Honoring a specific helicopter pilot KIA from Michigan or Vietnam helicopter pilots and crewmembers as a group by creating a monument or renaming a street or building have been among the examples. Rich showed a list of KIAs listing Michigan homes of record compiled from the VHPA roster and noted how extensive it is. The

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

group discussion noted that such a project as this would have to address specific requirements of any local authorities such as placement in cemeteries or parks, that it would involve fund raising, and that someone would have to head up the project. The consensus was that such a project did not seem feasible but left the door open if someone wants to work on it.

Another issue is how the Michigan Chapter should spool down when the time comes. Rich Deer explained that in the event of his disability or passing that his family will be instructed to contact one of the members-at-large to turn over the treasury and archives of the chapter. Failing that, the instructions would be to send those items to the National VHPA. It is expected the treasury would be used in support of the scholarship program that the VHPA and Quad-A conduct. (Quad-A aka AAAA = Army Aviation Association of America.) Discussion noted that should the National VHPA shut down that Quad-A is expected to continue so there should be a continuation of the program. The consensus of the group was that the Michigan Chapter will follow the "Last Man Standing" posture of the VHPA and status quo for our activities until then.

With the agenda items completed, member Gary Copp gave a very informative presentation on Honor Flight. He told of the increase in number of flights involved with each event as the number of veteran honorees who apply grows. Each flight is a three-day, two-night event involving a gathering at a location in Michigan with an overnight stay, the flight to Washington, D.C. the next day for an all-day tour of pertinent memorials, then the return flight late into the evening and another overnight stay before leaving for home the next day. Each veteran is free but is accompanied by a paying escort along with other support staff. There is support along the way from military units, airport personnel, and greeters at arrival points. Gary noted the World War II veterans have become very small in number and the participants are including more Vietnam veterans. More information can be found at <https://www.midmichiganhonorflight.org/> and <https://www.honorflight.org/>.

For the Memorial Day observance, on May 26th Mark

Michigan Chapter Business Meeting

Dave James, Jeff Butler, Mark Benjamin, Glenn Youngstedt, Glen Veno



Tom Burgess, Ken Hand, Bob Keller, Bob Rich, Bill Andrew, Gary & Kathleen Copp



Not Pictured: Rich Deer

May 23rd business meeting.

Benjamin coordinated the placement of flags on the graves of veterans in Oakwood Cemetery in Traverse City. This annual custom serves to remember and honor our veterans.

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

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NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

On May 9th, 25 NAVHPA members and spouses attended the funeral service for our member Harold (Hal) Stitt. Hal passed away on 26 April after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Hal was preceded in death by his lovely wife of 52 years, Virginia. Hal and Virginia loved attending our meetings and participating in veterans' events. Hal was inducted into the Madison County Hall of Heroes in 2016. He was a huge supporter of our chapter and VHPA and will be missed by all whose lives he touched.

NAVHPA was happy to donate to two charitable organizations in May. We donated \$500 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and \$200 to the Redstone Arsenal Army Emergency Relief (AER). The VVMF was responsible for building The Wall in Washington. They also maintain and carry The Wall That Heals around the country. VVMF's mission is to "honor and preserve the legacy of service and educate all generations about the Vietnam War". AER – well, everyone knows what AER does to support our soldiers in need.

The chapter supported the 50th Anniversary of Army ROTC at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville by providing our UH-1C/M helicopter for their military display on April 13th. Members Bob Stewart, Bob Monette, Les Haas, Sam Maki, Ernie Megli, John McDaniel, George Kitchens, and Marshall Eubanks explained helicopter operations to future aviators. Many other military equipment displays provided a variety of learning opportunities for ROTC cadets.

Six NAVHPA Life Members of both VHPA and AAAA departed the Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN on April 26th at oh dark thirty. We, along with another 17 mature aviators meeting the same qualifications, headed out for a day tour to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (ABN) unit at Ft Campbell, KY. The NAVHPA members were Art Jacobs – see his article in The Aviator for more details and photos, Don LeMaster, Chuck Cranfield, Rich Hudgens, Richard Ready, and Sandy Weand. A NAVHPA "shout out" to Bill Harris, Executive Director, AAAA, and his Board for sponsoring the tour! (Once the tour was completed and we began our return to Nashville, we made a quick stop, well not so quick, at the Night Stalker Association Gift Shop in nearby Oak Grove, KY. This resulted in several smoking credit cards and multiple shopping bags of goodies being carried back onboard the bus by smiling old aviators.)

Four NAVHPA members attended AUSA's "An Evening in the Ia Drang Valley – 1965" on May 9th. Bob Stewart, Bob Monette, Rob Glasier, and Jim Roop enjoyed a panel of six battle participants (four company commanders including



Displays at the Alabama A&M ROTC event included a Chinook and a Blackhawk.



Les Haas giving some basics of flight instruction to Alabama A&M ROTC cadet.



Bob Stewart and Sam Maki talking to ROTC cadets about BUC-3.



La Drang veteran panel at AUSA, "An Evening in the Ia Drang Valley-1965," event.

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MOH recipient COL(R) Joe Marm, a platoon leader and a squad leader) from the 7th and 5th Cavalry Regiments and 21st Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division discuss that battle and their role in it. The event supported the U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum in Huntsville and the Army Heritage Center Foundation.

On May 21st, NAVHPA members Malcolm Brown, Stan Souvenir, Julie Kink, Phil & Rebecca Freeze, Marshall & Sharron Eubanks, welcomed the New England Route of Carry The Load to Huntsville. Carry The Load remembers the sacrifice of our fallen heroes with a month-long series of marches, rallies, and fundraising events all around the nation. The National Relay travels 20,000 miles covering all continental 48 states and over 500 cities. The Relay teams walk and cycle throughout the 32-day Memorial May campaign, beginning on April 27th and terminating in Dallas on May 28th for a Dallas Memorial March honoring and remembering the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military.

On May 27th, Cullman, Alabama conducted a Memorial Day Ceremony and Dedication Ceremony for a Huey that was placed ("on a stick") among other military equipment in the Veterans Memorial area of Sportsman Park. The ceremony was attended by several hundred people, including nine VHPA members and spouses: John McDaniel, Sid Souvenir, Ernie Megli, Malcolm Brown, Les Haas, Sandy & Carol Weand, and Marshall & Sharron Eubanks. The Huey was dedicated to five local Huey pilots and crew members who lost their lives in Vietnam. The families of each of these veterans were presented with a cased American Flag.

The Huntsville Memorial Day program was held on May 29th at the Huntsville Madison County Veterans Memorial. The program included the reading of the names of Gold Star families in attendance and the raising of the US Flag to full staff at noon while Taps was being played. Also, 40 veterans and fraternal organizations laid their organizational wreaths as part of the program. The NAVHPA wreath was laid by the daughters (Amy, Becky, Mary Lee) of member Hal Still, who passed away in April. They were very grateful to be able to honor and remember their dad on



NAVHPA members with some of the Carry The Load walkers on the New England route.



NAVHPA members, spouses and family members attending the Memorial Day program.



Cullman Huey dedication attendees were, L-R: Les Haas, Sharron Eubanks, Marshall Eubanks, John McDaniel, Carol Weand, Sandy Weand, Sid Souvenir, Malcolm Brown, Ernie Megli.

this Memorial Day in this manner. There were 15 members, spouses and family members attending.

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 want you to join our chapter. You can contact us at navhpa@gmail.com or on 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

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NORTH CAROLINA VHPA

Spring 2023 has been a busy season for NC VHPA with participation in activities that showcased our Vietnam War-era helicopters, their history, and the lasting connection they have with the crews that flew them.

The first activity in this period was a Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day on 29 April in Jacksonville, NC during which Ed Hughes and Danny Elize were presented with Vietnam War Medallions.

During the same period and in preparation for Camp Legacy, our OH-6 and the UH-1H were dressed in a new coat of paint to have them looking great while on



Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA) Grand Knight Sir Paul Siverson and VFW Post 9133 Commander Wendy Silvera presented Vietnam War Medallions to LTC Ed Hughes USA (Ret) and MSG Danny Elzie USA (Ret).



display in Washington, DC. Presiding over this major undertaking was Jerry Seago, Operations Officer, who was ably assisted by Brock and Colleen Nicholson, Ed Hughes, Tom Braaten, and Bob Ingles.

On May 10, NC VHPA members, wives and other family left their homes in various parts of the state with helicopters in tow to meet at a truck stop in Virginia, and then continue up I-95 to our laager site just south of the Washington, DC Beltway (a hotel we have used in the past having plenty of space to park helicopters). The initial plan was to continue in late afternoon to the Camp Legacy grounds south of the Reflecting Pool on the National Mall to position the helicopters in the allocated space; however, a logjam of exhibitors entering the camp postponed moving in and setup until the following morning.

The opening ceremony and ribbon cutting for the Camp Legacy - Vietnam War Commemorative commenced at 1100 hours on 11 May. During the following three days, NC VHPA and 170+ other exhibitors participated in what Camp Legacy flyers termed "to illustrate in visuals, words, and interactions the legacy of the service and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans and their families." Our four helicopters – OH-6, OH-58, UH-1H slick, and UH-1M gunship – were a primary attraction for busloads of school children, families of tourists, and, especially, Vietnam veterans who had tales to tell (to us and to their families) of their experiences during the war.

A week later, three NC VHPA members are supporting the Wings Over Wayne airshow at Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base near Goldsboro, NC with the Kiowa and the Huey slick. Scheduled months ago, our participation was cancelled due to budget constraints before traveling to

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Washington, and then given the "Go" again for display to veterans and schools on Friday the 19th and the two-day airshow over the weekend.

Attendees and participants had to contend with rain, winds, and chill on Friday, and then Mother Nature decided to cooperate and weather was fine for Saturday and Sunday with crowds estimated over 100 thousand to view the static displays and aerial performances featuring the Blue Angels (The Air Force Thunderbirds obviously had a priority prior commitment).

At the time of this writing, another scheduled event, the Memorial Balloon Festival at First Fruits Farm in Louisburg, NC, at which we were to display four helicopters, is postponed due to projected stormy weather and is rescheduled on June 3rd and 4th. Whether NC VHPA will choose to attend depends upon members' previously committed activities.

Please visit our website at ncvhpa.com to see the upcoming events schedule and photos of our activities.

Contributed by
Jerry Seago,
Ed Hughes,
Brock Nicholson,
Phil Keith
and Vic Rose.



UH-1H and OH-58 at Seymour-Johnson AFB, May 19-22, 2023.



Certificate of Appreciation presented to NC VHPA for its participation in Camp Legacy in Vietnam War Commemorative in Washington, DC, May 11-13, 2023, and signed by the NC VHPA participants.



At right: NC VHPAers Phil Keith, Brock Nicholson and Bob Ingles with Seymour-Johnson AFB support team.

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

We held our May and June meetings at the American Legion Post #1. We Zoom our meetings also, for those that are not able to attend in person. We had approximately 20 members in attendance at those meetings.

At our May meeting I provided a slide show presentation of my visit to the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, Texas. They were very hospitable, as my wife and I had a little snafu with RV parking arrangements. The Museum allowed us to park our RV on the premises for a day or two while we searched for alternate accommodations. That proved to be fortuitist because we were able to get a personalized tour the next day on Easter Sunday from Jim Messinger. I met with the Curator, Ean Tillet, the following day. Ean provided me with an update on some of the things they are planning for the future. Among those developments are seeking Accreditation through the National Museum Excellence Program which is a mark of distinction that most major national museums belong. They are breaking ground on Phase 2, building another 20,000 square foot building later this year.

Also, at our June meeting, Post 1 of the American Legion in Denver asked us to help provide pictures and memorabilia for a proposed "Honor Wall" depicting operations during the Vietnam War. We are busy gathering up pictures and other items from our archives for the display.

We had our first Museum event this past Memorial Day weekend at the Veterans Plaza located in Spring Canyon Community Park, Fort Collins, CO. In preparing for it, we had our usual work party. That's Rick Beaver and George Mayl on the ladder, with Cliff Lawson, Doug Neil,



Army Jeep Fire Power.



Dale with Enactors at the Wall.



George Mayl Instructing Helicopter Flying with Guests.



Dale and Guest in the Museum also John Mitchell.

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and a bystander looking on. Bill Bates is keeping the trailer steady.

We displayed our Museum in conjunction with the "Traveling Wall", Vietnam era vehicles, Pining Ceremonies, "Reading of the Names", and the "Field of Honor". The Plaza had over 6,000 visitors over the three-day weekend and our docents, I am sure, feel as though they talked to every one of them. Bill Bates, Rick Beaver, Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Ken Hamburger, Dale House, Gregg Mann, John Mitchell, George Mayl, Doug Niel, Terry Olson, and Larry Tomek, put in yeoman duty as docents during the event. Our Museum is being transported by Wiers Transportation Company now; our new driver, Doug Parino, has been driving transports for 43 years. Plenty of experience to take care of our Museum.

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

Stay Safe, and above all, Stay Happy.

Dale House
President



Guest Nadine joins the Cavalry.



Museum setup Memorial Day at Fort Collins.



NVWM Jim Messinger.



Work Party.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

Our January meeting was a Zoom call so our snowbirds could participate. Unfortunately, we didn't attract a quorum, so no official business could be conducted. We did have some discussion of where the Chapter is headed, potential bylaw changes and our next meeting.

Our May meeting was at the Crooked Pint Ale House in St. Paul. We managed to attract 11 members and five of our significant others. We conducted a little business, but mostly focused on renewing friendships that have suffered from COVID separation. Everyone was in good spirits and happy to be getting back together.

On Memorial Day there will be a program at the Woodbury Mn Veterans Memorial. The program will begin at 11 AM.

On July 15th, there will be a Viet Nam welcome home at the High Ground Memorial in Neillsville, Wisconsin. While not a regular chapter event, it is well worth the time



Left Side front to rear Dale Dobesh, Rick Koehnen, Mike Rynerson, Lloyd Enos, Don Abrams, Bruce Hunter, Tim Callister

Right side Tom St. Hilaire, Dean Lind, Dave Larson, Steve Huemoller, Mitch Madison

End of the table Significant others being camera shy.

to visit this beautiful memorial. Weather permitting there will be a static display Huey and a flyable Huey there for the event. The event will be from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, there will be lunch available at 12:30. For more info or to RSVP, contact the site at (715) 743-4224.

The Stillwater Veterans Memorial benefit dinner cruise on the St. Croix River will be August 21. More details will be published on their website in the next couple of months.

Don Abrams, Chapter President

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TAPS

AWARDS LEGEND

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

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

***Bills, Arthur D. USA; COL Ret.; Flight Class: 57-13; RVN: 65-66 120 AHC; LM (OLC), DFC, BS, MSM, ACM; Callsign: Snoopy 6.**

Arthur Bills, born in Cohoes NY, passed on April 20, 2023 in Springfield VA. He had a distinguished career spanning the Korean War to Germany in the Cold War. He retired after 30 years of service.

Arthur joined the Titan Co., providing programs for the DoD throughout the world.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Mary Joan.

Bliss, Lorin A. USA; Flight Classes: 68-509/68-11; RVN: 68-69 D/3/5 CAV; SS, DFC (OLC), BS, ACM; Callsign: War Wagon 17.

Lorin Adam Bliss was born on April 29, 1945. He entered the gates of heaven on December 10, 2022.

He enlisted in the Army in 1968. Despite his many decorations from his Vietnam service; he was a humble hero. After his military service, it can neither be confirmed nor denied that Lorin worked for the CIA.

He retired after 24 years with Boeing Aircraft, in a conventional career, as an engineer. Thereafter, he raised cattle on his ranch in Shasta County CA, along with weeds and rocks.

He is survived by his only living relative, his sister Linda Arnold.



Bray, David M. USA; Flight Classes: 63-2WT/63-2; RVN: 65-66 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; Callsign: Fixer 17.

The passing of Davis Bray was noted, but no obituary could be located.

***Carter, John P. USA; LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 68-9; RVN: 69 B/4/77 ARA 101 ABN, 69 HHB/4/77 ARA, 70 C/4/77 ARA; Callsigns: Toro/Griffin 17E.**

John Carter passed away on March 13, 2023. He was born in the Canal Zone on September 4, 1946. In addition to many command assignments, John served as a Joint Staff Officer on the National Airborne Emergency Command Post.

Upon retirement, John gained multiple college degrees, which he availed in construction work oversight and architecture in the Phoenix AZ region.

He is survived by his wife, Imelda.



***Curry, Alexander E. Jr. USA; Flight Class: 64-4W; RVN: 66 178 ASHC; Callsign: Boxcar 32.**

Alexander "Al" Curry, Jr. of Enterprise, passed away February 11, 2022. Al was born November 25, 1926 in Orange NJ. Al was known as the best "Gran-grad." He served his country proudly in the U.S. Army as well as serving over fifty years in the Masonic lodge. He enjoyed working on old cars, NASCAR, and aircraft.



***Ervi, James R. USA; Flight Class: 58-2; RVN: 65-66 D/229 AHB 1 CAV, 69 E/725 MNT 25 INF.**

Jim Ervi was born on February 19, 1933, in Electra TX. He was raised by his mother, Gladys Ervi, until her death when he was 8 years old. He moved to Bartlesville OK, where he lived with his grandparents on a farm.

His grandmother died when Jim was 15, and with the assistance of his aunts, who lied about his age, he enlisted in the US Army at age 16. Jim did well at his basic training and attended leadership school. After being in the Army for only a year, he was sent to Korea to fight in the Korean War. He saw his first combat in August 1950. He became a platoon sergeant while in the war, still only 18 years old.

After Vietnam, he worked for a Military Service Company selling to the varied units on Fort Hood. He was very successful, and then operated a car lot in Killeen for a few years, while also aiding Roxie in operating a convenience store in Granger. They moved to Salado on 10 undeveloped acres that they transformed into a small cattle ranch.



***Farrance, John S. USA; Flight Class: 69-27; RVN: 70-71 283 MED DET; Callsign: Dustoff 61.**

John S. Farrance of Boiling Springs PA, passed away at home on Thursday, April 27, 2023. He was born December 12, 1948, in Healdsburg CA.



John was a proud member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Carlisle Vietnam Veterans, Dustoff Association and



TAPS

the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association.

John was a business owner in the automobile industry for many years and a financial and insurance professional with Horace Mann Companies for 28 years, retiring in December of 2015.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 52 years, Linda.

**Franklin, James W. USA;
CW4 Ret; Flight Class: 63-
2W; RVN: 65-66 E/82
ARTY 1 CAV, 67-68 144
AVN.**



James "Jim" Franklin, age 90, of Enterprise AL, passed away peacefully surrounded by loved ones May 17, 2023 at Flowers Hospital.

He spent his early years learning the meaning of "hard work" as a dairy farmer in southern Georgia beginning at the young age of five-years-old. After retiring from the Army, he worked for PHI and then as an Instructor Pilot training Fort Rucker's future Aviation Warriors. To all of us, he will forever be "Above the Best...of All the Rest!"

Previously posted obituary was associated with the wrong photo in an earlier issue.

**DFC Godwin, Ronald B.
USA; Flight Classes: 68-40,
69-522; RVN: 69-70
B/229th AHB, 1 Cav; DFC
(OLC), BS; Callsign: Killer
Spade 26.**



Ron Godwin of Irving TX, passed away on November 15, 2022. Born and raised in Tyler TX, Ron graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1963. Upon graduation from Stephen F. Austin State University in 1967, he joined the Army, attending OCS and Army Flight School.

After Vietnam, Ron was an instructor pilot at Fort Wolters TX, and ultimately became Final Check Pilot for Primary I helicopter training. Departing the Army in

1972, he became an insurance adjuster for J.O. Lochridge Company that later became Unified Building Services in Dallas, TX. Ron worked in the Disaster Division, estimating tornado, hurricane, and fire damage.

Ron was a member of the J. L. Burgess Lodge #1305 and a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason, Valley of Dallas.

He is survived by his wife, Susan.

***Harvey, Paul E. Jr. USA; MAJ
Ret; Flight Class: 69-34; RVN:
69-70 57 AHC; PH, MSM.**



Paul Enos Harvey, Jr. of Carthage MO, passed away due to complications from renal failure on April 14, 2023. Paul was born on March 10, 1943, in Carl Junction MO. He graduated from Carl Junction High School in 1961.

He proudly served as President of the Carl Junction Alumni Association and Treasurer of the Four State Chapter of MOAA.

**Henry, Arthur R. USA; CW4 Ret; Flight
Classes: 68-16/68-510; RVN: 68-69 DIV
ART 9 INF, 71-72 120 AHC, 72 165
CAG; DFC, (2 OLC), BS (V) Callsigns:
Snow Snake/Dean/Flight Watcher.**

Arthur Ronald Henry, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and decorated Army veteran, passed away on April 8, 2023 at the age of 81, after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Art, as he was fondly known, was born on Christmas Day in 1941. He spent his early years in Dallas TX where he attended South Oak Cliff HS (class of 1958) before enlisted in the U.S. Army.

After military retirement he worked for a local police department and then the Home Depot for several years. Art loved being a motorcycle cop, occasionally finding himself in perilous situations, including suffering a broken leg in the line of duty, but he couldn't turn down an offer to return to the Army when the call came in 1978. Art returned to the military as a warrant officer

and learned to pilot the Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk.

He is survived by his wife, Johanna.

***Holbrook, Charles D. USA;
Flight Class: 62-3; RVN: 64
120 AHC.**



Charles "Chuck" Holbrook of Valencia was born on January 9, 1939 and passed away on April 16, 2023.

Following his Army service, he led a very successful career as a Sales Manager for Woodmen of the World Insurance Company. Chuck was also an avid woodworker and spent much of his free time creating furniture for many of his children and grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Joan "Joni".

***Horish, Paul T. USA; Flight
Classes: 66-19/66-21; RVN:
67 A/229 AHB 1 CAV, 69
358 AVN DET.**



Paul Thomas Horish was born on March 1, 1946, in Ellensburg WA. He passed away April 14, 2023, peacefully in his sleep. He grew up in Cle Elum and was a Cub Scout & Boy Scout.

He graduated high school (barely) in 1964 and entered the U.S. Army in December of 1965. Paul was discharged in November of 1968 and employed by the Navy in Keyport WA. He joined the National Guard and flew out of Fort Lewis WA. He became fed up with the Government, so he quit and moved to New Orleans LA. There he flew to offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1977, he was hired by Arabian Helicopters (ARAMCO) in Saudi Arabia.

Paul flew various aircraft from B-17 to Concordes. He traveled to some 69 countries and finally hung-up guns and returned to Cle Elum WA.

TAPS

***Houck, Ronald C. USA, CW3 Ret; Flight Classes: 67-17/67-21; 68-69 7 AVN PLT, 70-71 HHC/12 CAG; Callsign: Blackjack.**

Ronald Houck was born on April 18, 1939 and died on February 20, 2023. No other biographical information provided.

King, Erwin T. USA; Flight Class: 55-E; RVN: 67-68 145 AVN; BS.

Erwin Thomas King, born March 28, 1933, died on October 26, 2022, in Winter Springs FL.

Tom attended North Carolina State University and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia.

Following his active duty, he joined the Federal Aviation Administration where he held numerous positions as a controller, supervisor, evaluator, and Air Traffic Tower Manager at Greensboro NC, retiring in January 2000. In his civilian life, Tom held several pilot ratings in fixed wing, rotary wing, glider, instrument, multi-engine aircraft, and certified flight instructor.

Tom was interested in all forms of aviation from early childhood, starting with models. He obtained his Private Pilot license at the age of seventeen. Tom received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in recognition of more than 50 years of accident-free pilotage. He was also a member of the Quiet Birdmen organization.

He is survived by his wife, Esther.

***Koschnick, Jerry C. USA; Flight Class: 66-7; RVN: 66-67 162 AHC; DFC, PH (2OLC); Callsign: Copperhead 13.**

Jerry Koschnick passed on 3/11/23 at 87 years old from Lung Cancer attributed to Agent Orange exposure. He was eligible to be buried in Arlington, but declined. In fact, told us to "throw him in a hefty bag and throw him in the ditch" instead.



***Kreger, Milton G. USA, CW4 Ret; Flight Classes: 70-29/70-25; RVN: 70-71 571 MED DET, 71 326 MED; Callsign: Eagle Dustoff 908.**

Milton Gene Kreger, 73 of Leland NC passed away at home on May 3, 2003. Milt, as he was called by most, grew up in Liberty PA. He helped on the family farm during his high school years. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army. Milt served his country in the Vietnam War as a Huey rescue helicopter pilot (DUSTOFF) and was the co-pilot in the Final Flight of Curious Yellow in 1971.

He completed his bachelor's degree at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and continued his education in Business at the University of Tennessee. He worked for Lockheed Martin and retired from Y-12 in 2012. He spent time on the space shuttle programs and trained staff in nuclear safety.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Mary Jo.

Livingston, William D. USA; Flight Class: 66-12; RVN: 66-67 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF, 69-70 B/2/17[CAV 101 ABN; DFC (OLC), BS, ACM; Callsign: Outcast.

William Livingston died on March 22, 2022. There was no obituary submitted.

Marciniak, Lawrence M. USA, CW4 Ret; Flight Classes: 69-45/69-43; RVN: 70-71 C/7/17 CAV.

Lawrence "Big Al" Michael Marciniak, was born on September 11, 1949. He passed away at his home on March 31, 2023, with his loving wife, Brenda Marciniak, next to him. He was born in Rochester NY. He attended school at Livionna Public Schools in Livionna NY. After graduating, he entered Embry Riddle Aeronautical University where he ranked in the top ten of his class.

After Vietnam, he moved to Texas and



was in the Texas National Guard. He served in the 2-149th aviation regiment of the National Guards until his retirement. He served his country for thirty years. He was also a member of the DFC Society.

Living in Texas, he started his family, and he began flying for different companies. He would also fly offshore. Big Al worked as a flight instructor as well. He was recognized in the Professional Pilot of April 2012 for McCoys Building Supply. He worked for McCoys Building Supply in San Marcos, Texas for over twenty years as a pilot and aviation manager. He retired from McCoys in 2013.

He is survived by his wife, Brenda.

***Mills, Richard L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 62-7Q; RVN: 70-71 A/4/77 ARA 101 ABN, 66-67 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV.**



Richard "Dick" Lee Mills died January 20, 2022 at Renown hospital from complications of surgery. He was born October 12, 1935 in Sacramento CA. Dick spent time in both Sacramento and Fallon after his parents divorced. He graduated from Churchill County High School in 1953, earning three scholarships to attend the University of Nevada, Reno.

Dick launched his military career while still in college, being active in ROTC and the UNR Rifle Team. After graduation, he joined the Army as an officer and became a pilot, flying helicopters and airplanes in both the Korean and Vietnam wars. His final assignment in the Army was at Weber State College in Ogden, Utah as Professor of Military Science and the head of ROTC.

Retiring from the Army as a Lt. Colonel, Richard continued his campus career as the Director of Student Financial Aid at Weber State. Retirement from the college left him time to dedicate to his lifelong passion, the Boy Scouts of America. He was also very active in Kiwanis, serving as both Governor

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and Lt Governor of the Ogden Club before turning his gavel over to the next generation.

Oram, Charles J. USA, COL Ret; Flight Class: 55; RVN: 66-67 1 CAV, 68-69 213 ASHC; Callsign: Black Cat.

Charles Oram was born on January 26, 1934. He died on November 7, 2020. No obituary was provided.

***Pollock, Melvin W. USA; Flight Classes: 61-7/62-1; RVN: 63 57 TC CO, 63-64 120 AHC.**



Melvin W. Pollock, 88, passed away April 21, 2023. He was born in Central TX. He attended public school in Santa Anna Texas followed by McMurry College in Abilene, Texas. In November 1959, he enlisted in the United States Army with the express purpose of learning to fly helicopters.

In 1949, one month after his fifteenth birthday, he originally enlisted in the Texas National Guard, 36th Division, and achieved the rank of Sgt 1st Class prior to active duty.

In 1965, Mel was briefly employed by Southern Airways as a primary helicopter flight instructor at Ft. Wolters, Texas when he was recruited by Pan American World Airways in the Aerospace Services Division. He and his family moved to a NASA research range at Ft. Churchill, Manitoba on the Western shore of the Hudson Bay in Northern Canada. He flew both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft providing logistic support, recovery of rocket nose-cones and high-altitude research balloon packages. At the age of thirty-one, he became Pan American Airways' youngest chief pilot.

After three years with Pan Am, Mel and his family returned to Texas. He joined Bell Helicopter as a production test pilot, later moved into the training center as an

instructor pilot, and then into marketing as a demonstration pilot. Prior to retirement, he was the worldwide marketing manager for police and fire departments and was the first civilian to serve on the Board of Directors of the Airborne Law Enforcement Association.

Mel retired from flying December 31, 1999 from a flying career that spanned thirty-nine years.

He is survived by Pat, his wife of 62 years.

***Rowley, Leo W. USA; Flight Class: 67-15; RVN: 67-68 A/101 AVN 101 ABN, 68 DIV ARTY 101 ABN, 69-71 180 ASHC; Callsign: Big Windy 33.**

Leo Rowley died on May 23, 2023 in Fayetteville NC. No obituary was provided.

Samples, Virgle L. Sr. USA Ret; Flight Class: 66-17; RVN: 67 281 AHC, 70 355 HHC.

Virgle Lee Samples, Sr., AKA "Bud" or "Buddy" of Rowlett TX went to be with the Lord on 28 December 2022. He was born on the 27 August 1938

Virgle was also devoted to this country. He served in the Army for 20 years. Working his way up from the enlisted ranks to become an officer and then a helicopter pilot. He did work for the civil service after Desert Storm.

He is survived by his wife, Karoll.

***Sickler, James W. USA, MAJ Ret; Flight Class: 67-9; RVN: 67-68 173 ABN BDE, 70-71 163 GS 101 ABN; BS, PH, MSM; Callsign: Casper 22.**

James Weldon Sickler passed away peacefully at his home on April 23, 2023, after a lengthy battle with pancreatic cancer.

Mr. Sickler, who was known by those closest to him as Jim, Big Jim, or Grandpa, was born on August 10, 1945, in Houston TX. He spent his childhood years in TX and graduated from Perryton High School in

1963. Jim entered the U.S. Army immediately after graduation when he was just 17 years old. He served on Active Duty for twenty-two years in various capacities and locations. He began his career as an enlisted Radar Repairman before becoming an Aviation Warrant Officer. He ultimately applied for and received a commission as an Armor Officer.

Upon retirement, Jim transitioned his love of flying into a twenty-five-year career as an Instructor Pilot at Fort Rucker. He worked in the Initial Entry Aviation Training School taking the responsibility to teach those who had never flown before all the skills they would need to have successful careers. After routine vision issues that come with aging prevented him from being at his best in the cockpit, Jim grounded himself for safety reasons. During the final years of his career as an instructor pilot, he also became a restauranteur up until just a few a years ago.

He is survived by the love of his life and wife of 47 years, Margaret.

Smith, Billy V. USA Ret; Flight Class: 61-1; RVN: 67-68 213 ASHC, 70-71 213 ASHC; Callsigns: Black Cat 3/black Cat 6.



Billy Vaughn Smith was born on February 12, 1935 in Parker KS. He grew up on an Iowa dairy farm.

He was privileged to live through the fabulous fifties and developed a strong belief in America, The Land of Opportunity, during the war years. By the time he was ten he decided on a military career, especially as a pilot.

Starting in 1952, Bill earned a bachelor's degree at Iowa State, and later a Master's at the University of Georgia.

Upon leaving the service, Bill started a career in the San Antonio commercial real estate market. Over five years he brokered the sale of five million dollars of multi-fami-

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ly property while supervising the construction of 756 apartment units.

When the real estate business took a tumble in the eighties, Bill formed and managed three limited partnerships, then two sole proprietor businesses. He sold all of these business interests by 1993 and retired for a while, finding time to write his memoirs and three novels about flying during the Vietnam War. But his entrepreneurial genes couldn't rest and in 2020 Bill and his son built a small RV Park which was in the green two months after opening.

Bill died on January 24, 2023 after eighty-seven flights around the sun. He lived a full and eventful life.

Smith, David R. USA; Flight Classes: 70-47/70-49; RVN: 71-72 361 AWC; DFC; Callsign: Panther 25.

David R Smith, passed away on May 25, 2021 after a bout with COVID. The Unit just found out. We should have known something was wrong when he didn't attend the last Reunion in Tampa. Only being dead would have kept him from partying with the Panthers. He resided in Florida.

'Smitty' was a great pilot, excellent Mission Lead and as wild as they come.

***Stitt, Harold W. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-23/66-21; RVN: 67-68 191 AHC, 70-71 120 AHC; DFC (OLC), BS, PH; Callsigns: Boomerang 17/Dean 36.**



Harold William Stitt ended his 18-month battle with cancer on April 26, 2023. He passed away at home surrounded by his loving daughters and faithful dog. Born on December 8, 1942, in Altoona PA, he lived his early years in Altoona before graduating from Altoona High School in 1960. After graduation, he worked as a bookkeeper at a local shop and as a machinist apprentice for the Pennsylvania Railroad

Company in 1962 before enlisting in the Army on January 29, 1966. He went on to complete flight school for the Army, graduating in 1967. During his last tour of Vietnam in 1970, he was an Aircraft Commander for General Creighton Abrams.

While in the Army, he also earned his Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Columbus College in 1977, and a Master of Science in Business Administration from the University of North Alabama in 1984.

After retiring from the Army in 1986, Harold worked at EER for a few years, eventually retiring in 2005 from Sparta Corporation as a project engineer after 16 years.

He served as an active member of multiple Vietnam Veteran Associations, including the 191st AHC, National Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and North Alabama Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. Harold was a member of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in South Huntsville. In November of 2016, Harold was inducted into the Madison County Hall of Heroes.

***Sword, David G. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-13/66-7; 66-67 48 AHC, 69-70 478 HHC.**



It is with heavy hearts that we share that on March 19, 2023, David Grayson Sword passed away in Alamogordo NM. He was born on September 29, 1941, in Jamestown NY. He graduated from Torrance High School in 1959 and immediately joined the military. He served in the United States Air Force and then enlisted in the United States Army in 1963, where he honorably served until 1980, when he retired. He volunteered to go to Vietnam for four tours.

Following his retirement from the Army out of Fort Hood TX with the 11th ACR ECAST as the Cobra Test Manager, David was an FAA inspector and an FAA mainte-

nance chief and worked with contractors at White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base. He also worked with NASA and GAF on T-38's.

David was a very active member of many organizations in the city of Alamogordo, including Breakfast Lions Club, VFW, EAA-251, The Golden Gears Car Club, the BMW Riders of New Mexico, CVMA 47-4, the Patriot Guard, the Burro Flats Volunteer Fire Department, and the American Legion Post. He was on the Board of Directors for the Armed Forces Museum. David was a member of the Blue Stars 48 AHC, and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He is survived by his wife, Linda.

***Tronstad, Barry A. USA; Flight Classes: 67-19/67-17; RVN: 68 128 AHC, 68 A/3/17 CAV; SS, BS, PH; Callsign: Spur 19.**



Barry Tronstad April 28, 1947-April 14, 2023. The world lost a true humanitarian who liked nothing better than anonymously giving or helping others. Funding thousands of non-interest loans to women around the world, picking up trash, taking care of endangered birds, helping neighbors, doing a community garden, or supporting in the protection of animals and national parks were just a few of the things that gave his life meaning and allowed him to give back.

He was medically retired from the Army in 1969 due to wound suffered in Vietnam.

Barry earned his BA from Cal Poly Pomona and a Masters degree from USC. His career was devoted to building programs for the handicapped by being involved with the development of state testing and administering programs at Pacific, Lanterman and Camarillo State Hospitals and Developmental Centers. He came to Ventura from Pomona Unified and became the Director of Ventura Adult and Continuing Education where he was instrumental

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in creating the Technology Development Center which became known throughout the state. He was a visionary who was way before his time creating online learning, competency-based classes and specialty computer programs with multi-media and computer-aided drafting.

Interesting note: Barry was one of the soldiers in a film on the History Channel—"The Personal Experience—Helicopter Warfare of Vietnam" April 2001. This was the first time since the war that he and others in the show had spoken about their experiences.

He is survived by his loving wife, Denise.

Wynne, O. B. III USA; Flight Classes: 67-1/67-3; RVN: 67-68 45 MED CO, 70-71 2/20 ARA 1 CAV; SS, BS (OLC), PH; Callsigns: Dustoff 27/Blue Max 70C.



Oscar Boyd Wynne, III was born February 3, 1943 in Tampa FL and died on April 11, 2023. Boyd attended Woodrow Wilson Junior High School and H.B. Plant High School. He attended Florida State University before enlisting in the U.S. Army where he was selected for the warrant officer flight program and later received a battlefield commission

After leaving the service in 1971 Boyd returned to Tampa and went to work at Food Equipment Supply Company where he would spend his entire professional career. He never lost his love of flying and

spent his weekends flying the Eagle 8 helicopter for WFLA News Channel 8 through the next three decades.

Boyd was an active leader with the Boy Scouts of America guiding many young men in Troop 23. He was also a most enthusiastic member of Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla for over 35 years where he formed the Special Events Committee representing the Krewe in the community and the City of Tampa across the country.

In addition to YMKG, Boyd was a member of Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church, The Rotary Club of Tampa, The Tampa Yacht and Country Club and a 50-year member of The Merrymakers Club. He was also very proud of his membership in the American Legion and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

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OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

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

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

Chamberlain, Jack D. USA; Flight Class: 70-14; SS (OLC), DFC (OLC), BS, (OLC), PH, MSM (2OLC), ACM; died on February 16, 2023.

Cooney, Christopher J. USN; RVN: 66- HC-1 DET 29, 66-67 HA(L)-3; DFC, NCM (V), AM; died on April 23, 2023.

Guenther, Richard A. USA; Flight Class: 71-15; RVN: 71-72 101 DIV; Callsign; Black Widow 15; died on March 11, 2023.

McDowell, Bryan L. USAF; Flight Class: 71-28AF; RVN: 72- 40 ARRS; SS; died on April 29, 2023.

Prince, Robert E. USAF; died on April 7, 2023.

Nguyen, Hoi V. VNAF; died on January 31, 2023.

Rice, Gregory N. USA; Flight Classes: 67-503/67-23; RVN: 68-6971 AHC; Callsign: Firebird 93; died on May 19, 2023.

James A Scott USA, LTC; RVN: 67 92 AHC; DSC, SS, DSSM, DFC, BS (OLC), PH, (OLC) MSM, ACM, AFCM; died on August 18, 2022 (LTC Scott was inducted in the Army Aviation Hall of Fame on April 27, 2023).

Stice, Jack K. USCG, CDR Ret; Flight Class: 6-67 (U); RVN: 72-73 37 ARRS, 73 40 ARRS; DFC; died on March 29, 2023.

Thompson, Donald Y. USAF; RVN: 69-70 40ARRS; DFC; died on May 31, 2016.

Wagner, Henry M. USA; MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-11; RVN: 67-68 (No dates for second tour); DFC, BS (2OLC); died on October 3, 2020.

Wolf, William M. USA: Flight Class: 68-36; RVN: 67-68 334 AHC; died on April 15, 2011.

Help Prevent Mailing Lists

We now have tens of thousands of old paper VHPA membership directories out in the public. As you know these directories contain our names and mailing addresses. We are having increasing occupancies of some of these directories being placed on eBay.com for sale. Please help us to try to prevent these from getting in the wrong hands. eBay has a policy that membership directories are prohibited from being sold on eBay, however, this policy is very poorly enforced. If you see a VHPA Membership Directory for sale on eBay, please report it by following these steps: about a third of the way down the page on the far right is a link that says, "Report this item." Click on that link then select "Prohibited and restricted items" under Report Category. Under Reason for report, select "Illegal items and items encouraging illegal activity." Under Detailed Reason, select "Mailing list and personal information." Then click on Submit Report. If you would like to have a notification when one of these appear on eBay, send me your e-mail address so I can send you a link for you to then join the rest of us in submitting a report. If eBay starts getting hundreds or reports, they may finally wake up and begin preventing membership directories from being sold.

You can also help by shredding, burning or recycling your old membership directories so they do not end up in the wrong hands. Early on we were successful in appealing to the sellers to remove them as they typically acquired them at yard or garage sales and were trying to make a profit. That has now changed as more and more sellers are doing this as a business rather than a way to make a couple of bucks. We currently have a seller who has tried black mail by saying if you don't want it sold then buy it. Each time we successfully get the directory removed, he (or she) waits a couple of weeks then puts it back up for sale. For sellers like this, we need to complain in a way that hurts his Sellers' rating.

Thanks for your help,

Gary Roush, Director Editor
groush2@earthlink.net

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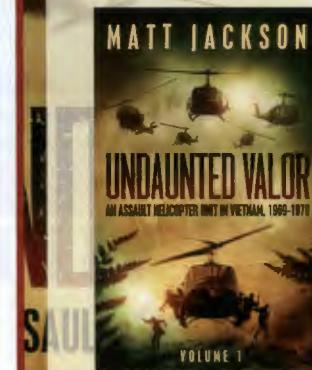
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while participating in an aerial flight."*

DFCSociety.org/membership

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

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

*His brothers in arms
will find it accurate
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