



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



478th Avn (HHC) Co CH-54 at I Corp Camp Eagle in 1970. CH-47 in background,
B/159 ASHB (Varsity). Photo by Tom Hirschler

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

OH MY, IT'S 2023

I know it's a worn cliché, but time is truly flying by at light speed. We are in the first quarter of 2023 and the preparation for the San Antonio reunion is gearing up. But as promised, here's some of what's been happening the last couple of months.

One of the Executive Council's goals, for some time, has been to bring our IT/web site into functionality and the current "century". No easy undertaking, as many of you know. As a part of that task, we wanted to update and standardize the policy SOPs for each of the 14 committees and committee chairmen, and place that information on the site. This may sound mundane and unimportant, however let me assure you it's not. These committees are the primary interface that conduct essential VHPA business. The condensed process version: Each of the committee chairs submit their policy SOP's, the EC approves or amends each of them. Then the policies need to be re-formatted to fit the configuration of our site. Our IT Chair, Frosty Price, put in untold hours reformatting all those SOPs to ready them for transition to the web site.

On the 15th of November AAAA conducted their, FIRST ever, Scholarship Dinner and Concert at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Art Jacobs, in his liaison role with AAAA, brought this event to the attention of the EC as it provides five additional scholarships in the VHPA name. The VHPA delegation at our table, included myself and my wife, Marshall Eubanks, (NAVH-PA chapter President) and wife, BG Ret. Bob Stewart (Army Astronaut, NAVHPA), and wife, Julie Kink (Gold Star Families) and her husband Mike Sprayberry (MOH Vietnam), and Art Jacobs (VHPA Legacy Chairman) and his wife. The food



was good, and the entertainment, country star Michael Ray, was excellent. More importantly, it demonstrated both VHPA and AAAA's commitment to strengthen our ongoing affiliation. The VHPA is, aside from (2) AAAA Chapters, the single largest donor to the Scholarship fund. The real beneficiary of the evening was the scholarship fund itself, as AAAA's version of "pass the Cav hat" netted just shy of \$38,000 dollars. A lofty goal!

WISHING ALL OF YOU A HAPPY,
HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

Donald R. LeMaster

CAR STICKERS

PATCHES

COINS

OPTION #1

OPTION #2

BACK OF COIN

SALE!!
All items
\$9 each

CONTACT:
ART JACOBS
art.jacobs.tn@gmail.com

FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday!

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

REMINDERS:

■ Paper Directories purchased beginning September 1, 2022 will be for the 2023 directory that will be delivered in October 2023. The deadline for ordering the 2023 directory will be August 31, 2023.

■ The price for a pre-ordered copy of the paper directory is \$50.

■ The on line directory is free at <https://directory.vhpa.org>. As of the deadline for this issue, updates to your information is still not available via the on line directory. You can log in and search for members. We apologize for the inconvenience but things are taking longer than expected.

REUNION INFO:

■ The 2023 reunion will be July 2 thru July 5, 2023 in San Antonio, TX. The hotel room rate will be \$129+ tax. Hotel registration & reunion registration will not be available until approximately the first of April 2023. Please consult www.vhpa.org for the most current reunion information & details.

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

Vietnam Helo Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

Join MHT's Group that stays at the same Hue Hotel as Vietnam President Phúc!



15—28 April 2023

Tour Historian: Bob Hesselbein, C/16 Cav

Tour Leader: John Powell, 1/9 Cav
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Incident at Headshed Helipad

Long Binh, South Vietnam

Headquarters – United States Army, Vietnam (USARV)

by Paul Sailer

Records are scarce about the number of helicopter pilots and crew members that died in the Vietnam War because of weather-related accidents. The best data available about these losses does not consistently address the effects of meteorological conditions at the time of the incident. Those of us who flew in Vietnam know the danger presented by weather if not given proper respect. Surviving a potentially deadly event stays with us a long time, leaving an indelible mark on our soul. The following story may jar back some memories for you as it did for me as I wrote about an experience of mine that happened during the 1971 monsoon season.

Seven-niner-niner was a peach of an aircraft. The OH-58 Kiowa, tagged Southern Comfort by her crew chief, had superior lift for the underpowered Allison turbo shaft engine in the "A" model. The ship was light, smooth, and nimble, but pedal-heavy like all early '58's.

I was happy to be flying 799 from Bien Hoa in III Corps to the Mekong Delta on April 29, 1971. I had been a member of the 20th Engineer Brigade's Aviation Detachment for eight months, two of those in Huey's and six in Kiowas. Castle Heliport at Bien Hoa was our home field. My mission on April 29 involved transporting two crew chiefs to our IV Corps base at Binh Thuy, with a side trip to an aircraft direct support company at Vinh Long, to check on an OH-58 engine installation. This fell within my duties as unit maintenance officer.

The trip south was uneventful. We arrived at Binh Thuy about 1500. After an hour on the ground, Southern Comfort lifted off the tarmac for the flight north. Three pax returned with me, a lieutenant and sergeant would be dropped at Headshed Helipad at USARV headquarters in Long Binh, and the other, crew chief Jens "Butch" Mikkelsen, at Castle Heliport. He was heading home on a thirty day leave. Butch sat in the right seat.



Pad 14 at Headshed Helipad, Long Binh, USARV Headquarters, April 1971.



Edge of embankment at Headshed Helipad. On the flat ground below the embankment is where I landed helicopter.

Ten miles northwest of Dong Tam a string of ominous black clouds blocked our path to Saigon. I radioed ahead to Castle Operations and learned Saigon was sunny, consequently I elected to flank the less intense east side of the system. In doing so, I reduced altitude to stay VFR. I had a choice to make, fly just below the 500 foot ceiling or hit the deck. Since we would be an easy target at altitude, I opted to low level over the rice paddy, tree-lined countryside.

North of Go Cong I realized we could get around the storm. Banking left we soon broke into the clear.

Climbing now, we flew toward Saigon. Approaching the east side of the city, I noticed rain clouds in the distance moving into the Long Binh area. I contacted my colleague, Lt Jerry Steele, whose radio chatter I overheard when he landed at the 159th Engineer Group pad not far from Headshed. Jerry said he planned to sit tight until the storm passed. I pushed 799 trying to reach Headshed before the rain hit. Several miles out the tower operator cleared me for landing saying, "Winds are out of the east at 20 knots, gusting to 40." I could see the rainstorm

moving in rapidly. On the north/south final approach, I let 799's nose turn into the crosswind. Getting to a hover wasn't pretty.

The tower operator directed me to Pad 14, a metal PSP pad on the western edge of the helipad where the embankment dropped precipitously away from the shaved off hill-top that was Headshed. Once on the pad, I received approval to park facing east into the ever increasing wind. Then I hollered at the pax, "Get going, here comes the rain!" They promptly unbuckled their seat belts, pushed hard against the back doors, then ducked their heads below the spinning rotor blades as they scampered away.

As Mikkelson and I sat at flight idle, a sheet of rain hammered us. Then two Hueys thundered in northeast of our position. With the visibility rapidly deteriorating, it crossed my mind a helicopter could pancake right on top of 799. Lightning cracked all around us and the wind's velocity increased noticeably. Visibility had dropped to less than 100 feet. Then the tower operator asked one of the Huey pilots to control Headshed traffic while he left his station.

By now Mikkelson and I were soaking wet; our unit flew without front doors on '58's. The PSP pad was slippery. Then, ever so slightly, 799's nose began to drift from an easterly heading to 045 degrees. I continued to hold Southern Comfort at flight idle. Moments later, the wind completely reversed. We held our position briefly as the rain intensified, reducing visibility to near zero. Suddenly a violent gust of wind lifted the tail of the aircraft, pushing us ahead in the direction of the control tower and away from the open area below the embankment. I sensed we were about to flip over.

As we slid forward tail high, my hands and feet went to work. I automatically cranked the throttle on the collective



WO1 Paul Sailer flying left seat, French Fort near Tay Ninh.



WO1 Paul Sailer in cockpit of 799, Castle Field.

to full rpm, countered the torque this created by applying pedal to the tail rotor blades while pulling up on the collective and back on the cyclic to gain altitude. In the instant it took the main rotor blades to reach maximum rpm, I realized we were turning left so added pedal to force 799 into the gale.

I was experiencing fear and a sense of calm at the same time. From many hours of experience flying the OH-58 in Vietnam, I had become one with the machine. My reflexive coordinated response was instinctive.

For a split second it felt like we were tumbling and then the ship abruptly faced into the wind. Where we were in relation to the ground, the control tower or the two Hueys and their dangerous, spinning rotor blades, I did not know. I could not see through the heavy rain pounding the plexiglass bubble in front of me. I was fighting to gain control of the aircraft. In the moments that had elapsed I felt we were going to crash. I thought, "How can we die in such a freak way?"

As I grappled with the aircraft, I triggered the radio button on the cyclic, "Headshed Tower! Seven-niner-niner!" No one answered. Then I remembered that Headshed had gone off the

air. I said, "Any aircraft Headshed, this is Seven-niner-niner! Any aircraft Headshed, this is Seven-niner-niner!" One of the Huey's answered, "Go ahead Seven-niner-niner." I replied rapidly, "I've just been blown off the pad, I'm over the edge somewhere and I don't have control of this aircraft. I can't see!" I did not know our attitude. The possibility of vertigo lurked in the back of my mind. Then something in my peripheral vision caused me to glance out the open side door next to me. Looking down I saw the red, wet soil below the embankment. We had drifted away from the helipad. I

radioed the Huey pilot, "I can see the ground below me. I'm dropping straight down." We gradually descended, albeit erratically, forty or fifty feet. The ground provided the only means of orientation. Once the skids touched terra firma, I kept the power at full throttle.

The red, packed clay was surprisingly hard, so we stayed put. I hunched over, my head and shoulders sagging forward. Drained of adrenalin, I felt exhausted. I gulped a deep breath. Mikkelson and I made eye contact for the first time. He extended his hand. We shook hands, limply. He did not have a radio set so we could not talk. I was glad a crew chief was beside me; Mikkelson had not panicked.

The heavy downpour continued. I radioed the Huey pilots, "I'm safely down over the embankment and will remain here for now." I told them what happened saying, "You guys may want to move off the PSP before you get blown away." One of them replied, "We started getting pushed but I've got full throttle on now, that's holding us in place."

Jerry Steele remained grounded at nearby 159th Group Pad. He heard our radio traffic, but his radio projected a high squeal every time he tried to talk to me. As we sat there two rain-and-mud-soaked tower operators came running down the embankment. One said, "We saw you spin out of sight and then go over the side. We thought you crashed. Why don't you shut it down and come with us?" I decided against this, and they returned to the tower.

As the rain began to subside, Jerry Steele and I finally connected on Fox Mike radio. Jerry said he was leaving for Bien Hoa. Once airborne he radioed, "It's clear to the north." I responded, "Okay, I'm taking off, too." I pulled up to a hover, then tipped 799's nose forward, letting the tough little helicopter carry us home ten miles away to Castle Heliport, where we arrived shortly after 1800.

Fate proved kind to me at Headshed Helipad. As I think about the decisions I made leading up to the weather event, there are things I could have done differently. Yet, hindsight changes nothing. Looking back, what I appreciate the most about surviving the incident at Headshed are the pilots that trained me and the many hours of flying experience that allowed me to react instinctively by turning 799 into the wind. Luck took care of the rest.



WO1 Paul Sailer standing beside 799, Castle Heliport.



Crew Chief Jens, "Butch," Mikkelson.



WO1 Paul Sailer beside wrecked OH-58 at Maintenance Depot, III Corps.

BOTTOMS OUT!

By Mike Bergman

This is a story that I have told again and again. I don't think my story is the only one of its kind, but I hope it was rare. I graduated from rotary wing training at Fort Rucker in August of 1970. Of course, it was customary for those going to Vietnam to be awarded 30-day leave prior to reporting to Oakland, California for their trip to Southeast Asia. My student flight class was 70-24 and there were many of the officers in this class who started appearing at the check in station in Oakland, California prior to our flight to Vietnam. It was a reunion of sorts and good to see everyone even though we all had the same orders.

Once we arrived in Vietnam after what seemed to be a 20-24- hour flight, we all reported to the center where the unit assignments were made. The second morning at the center after breakfast we were told to report to this one room. Once there, we started seeing various unit reps come in. You could tell by some of their patches what unit they represented, but no idea where they were located. The reps started holding up the number of fingers to represent the number of pilots they needed that day. Unit reps and new pilots would start leaving the room to return to their headquarters. One rep held up two fingers and a friend and fellow 70-24 classmate, Lt. Rus Spicer, and I said, hey let's go, thinking it will be nice knowing someone halfway around the world.

We proceeded from Long Binh to the headquarters for the 3/17th Air Cav in Di An, III Corp. It was not a long trip, and once there we were assigned a barrack and told we both would eventually be assigned to Alpha Troop. After getting checked in and unpacked, we were told to report to the Troop commander and officially be welcomed to our new unit. The commander was a major and was not warm by any means. Without much conversation, the major told us, and I quote, "Boys, we are so glad to see you." For about three seconds Rus and I felt pretty good with that welcome. Then the bomb dropped: the major continued his conversation and said, "We have lost three Cobra front seats in two weeks, and that's where you will be flying." I turned to Rus and said, "We are screwed."

Shortly after that piece of news, we started meeting the Cobra pilots we would be flying with. They all seemed well grounded but the Cobra section leader, Capt. Smith, seemed a little high on ego. Our day start-

ed early, and we worked areas 20-30 miles from our base with Cobras covering Bell 58s close to the ground searching for enemy personnel or signs of activity. Cobra and 58 teams would take turns in the AO performing search missions while there was a rescue team standing close by in case of a downed aircraft or engagement was evident.

Rus and I rotated and actually got to fly with all the Cobra pilots in the unit and found that there were some terrific pilots who knew their stuff. About two months into our time in country, I was front seat for the section leader, Capt. Smith, one day where we had started in the AO about 10 am and had completed almost two hours of flight. In flight school we were instructed about density altitude and were told how this affects your aircraft in the amount of weight, from whatever source, you were able to safely take off and fly with. I am sure the density altitude that day was quite high as the heat and humidity were high. The first stop for us was the POL site. That day, Capt. Smith had assigned himself what we called the heavy hog; two 18 rocket pods on each side with full armament: That's 72 rockets. For some reason, I stayed in the aircraft while the Captain got fuel. I don't recall having fuel gauges in the front seat, but Capt. Smith completed refueling as he said he topped off., got back in, and cranked up.

Then it happened. Capt. Smith tilted the nose, rotated for takeoff and with only a 3-5 foot altitude and little forward speed I heard the main rotor speed reduce and then the aircraft slammed down to the ground with skids split where we were sitting on our belly. We hit so hard that my chicken plate bounced off my chin. Another one of our unit's Cobras flown by WO Mike Billow with Rus Spicer in the front seat had taxied in and needed fuel too. They saw the entire fiasco and never let me forget it. Rus Spicer took the opportunity, as with many other situations, to seize the moment with humor. From that point forward, Capt. Smith was known as, in private, Capt. America. I recall flying with Capt. Smith one other time when we lost hydraulics. I wondered if I were jinxed with this pilot, or it was by accident or design. Rus and I were told we would transition to Cobras in country when slots became available, but that never happened as we started getting rated Cobra pilots in, and we went back to lift section.



GENERAL REUNION INFORMATION

Last updated 02 DEC 2022

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS ★ JULY 2 -5, 2023

Who Can Attend the Reunion - As a general rule anyone who is “dues current” in the VHPA can register, order tickets, etc. simply by paying the Reunion Registration Fee. All who served in the Vietnam War as helicopter pilots must not only be a member of the VHPA but also be current with their annual membership dues as of the first day of the Reunion to register. Anyone who was not a pilot is also welcome to attend as long as they are a “dues current” subscriber to the VHPA Aviator magazine. Exceptions are vendors, specifically invited performers/speakers, Gold Star Family guests, and Non-Registered Banquet guests; these people do not have to be a subscriber to attend. Anyone wishing to purchase a ticket for any of our events must pay the Reunion Registration Fee.

As a general rule, since VHPA Membership and Subscriber dues expire on the last day of the month, someone who is dues current when they register could be non-dues current on the 1st day of the Reunion (02 JULY 2023). Because of this, the VHPA Reunion Registration software is “forward looking” regarding dues status.

Reunion hotel: San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter, 101 Bowie Street, San Antonio, Texas, 78205 The VHPA Group Rate is **\$129 plus tax per night for single, double, triple, or quad** over the dates of **02 JULY 2023 thru 05 JULY 2023 (based on availability)**. **The cutoff date for the hotel rate is 05 JUNE 2023.**

Getting to San Antonio:

★ **San Antonio International Airport:** 9800 Airport Blvd, San Antonio, TX 78216

Located just 15 minutes north of downtown, San Antonio International Airport (SAT) offers competitive nonstop ser-

vice to over 40 destinations across 13 airlines. The newest airlines at SAT include both JetBlue Airways and Spirit Airlines. The largest airline operating at SAT is Southwest Airlines which was founded right here in San Antonio.

★ **Amtrak Train:** 350 Hoefgen Ave, San Antonio, TX 78205

San Antonio station hosts two Amtrak services; the tri-weekly Sunset Limited and the daily Texas Eagle. Four days a week, San Antonio is the southern terminus of the Texas Eagle, which originates in Chicago. Three days a week, the Texas Eagle joins with the Sunset Limited, continuing westbound to Los Angeles. It is the second busiest Amtrak station in Texas, behind Fort Worth Central Station. Please visit www.amtrak.com for more information, pricing, schedules and more.

Transportation from/to the Airport: The hotel does not offer a shuttle to/from the airport. There are several options for going to and from San Antonio International Airport: Members can take a taxi cab which is available at the outer commercial curbside at Terminal A. For assistance, please see the Airport Ground Transportation employee (wearing a red shirt). Fares to San Antonio downtown areas start at \$24-\$29 per taxi cab.

Members may prefer Uber or Lyft and pricing will fluctuate. Booking can be done by downloading and using the App on your phone for these approved ride share services.

SuperShuttle provides airport rides to and from SAT to any address in the Greater San Antonio area. SuperShuttle fares are flat rate by zip code with downtown SHARED-RIDE services at \$15 one-way/\$28 round-trip. Private Non-Stop rides can range from \$35 to \$40 per car one-way. Visit supershuttle.com for all shared-ride, private direct and black

car services. SuperShuttle ticket counters are located in the Baggage Claim area of Terminal A and Terminal B and are open from 9:00 AM until 1:00 AM with after hour contact available 24/7 at 210.BLUE.VAN. Use VHPA code KHC6Y for a 5% discount.

Parking: VHPA has negotiated a discounted price for parking. The adjustment will be made on your final hotel statement.

You can also visit:

www.sahbgcc.com/Visit-Us/Location-Directions-Parking for more local parking options. The Marriott Rivercenter is attached to the Rivercenter Mall and across from the Convention Center for map reference.

Internet Access - VHPA has negotiated free internet for attendees in their sleeping rooms. The hotel will provide a special code to access the internet when you check-in.

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

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

Wheelchair Rentals - Toms Wheelchair and Scooter Rentals is located one block from the Alamo and Riverwalk and will deliver to the hotel. Reservations can be made by calling the number below or booking online.

Phone: (210) 223-7878

Website: <https://tomswheelchairs.com/>

Vendor Area: If you are interested or know of anyone interested in becoming a Vendor for R2023 please go to www.vhpa.org and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver, and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules & Regulations. Complete the forms and mail, fax, or email to VHPA HQ. If you know of anyone that you think would be an asset to the Reunion Vendor Area be sure to let them know or contact VHPA HQ to give us the info and we will be happy to give them a call. *Space is limited this year so be sure to send your form in early.*

Oral History Interviews: Mike Law will be available to record and collect Oral Histories. As we have done in past years, we will be signing attendees up for slots in advance.

Please contact Mike Law via email at mglaw@earthlink.net or visit www.vhpa.org for details about how to sign up prior to arriving in San Antonio so you can fit this history preserving events into your Reunion schedule.

Family-Friendly and Local Attractions: There are plenty of things to do around San Antonio for everyone to enjoy, no matter the age. We recommend bringing the kids and grandkids to all Reunions to see what the VHPA is all about and to check out things to do around the city. *Many attractions are within walking distance of the hotel or VHPA will have a City Shuttle that can be purchased that will make a loop around top areas in Downtown San Antonio.* There are numerous places to visit with family outside the inner circle of San Antonio as well.

The following is a list of a few attractions that we recommend visiting, but are not included in our tours and may be within walking/driving distance:

Attached to our hotel is the Shops at Rivercenter Mall that has Legoland Discovery Center, Sea Life Aquarium, Dave and Buster's, and Spyder Jump of San Antonio. Also, there is the Amazing Mirror Maze, Ripley's Believe It or Not and Ripley's Haunted Adventure that is just right outside the hotel. Our hotel is located directly on the River Walk with many food and shopping options. Another area we recommend visiting is La Villita on the River Walk with shops, dining and local art. Expanding further outside the city there is SeaWorld, Natural Bridge Caverns, Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio Zoo, and much, much more...this is only to list a few.

Volunteers: The Alamo Chapter is the Host Chapter this year and as such, will organize the volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are organized around stations and then shifts with the number of volunteers needed for that shift. Sounds like a Duty Roster! We've found that 3-hour shifts will not take up much of your time or make you too tired. Additionally, we can guarantee everyone is trained on their duties. Needless to say, WE GREATLY APPRECIATE having volunteers! Not only do we avoid the cost of hiring local convention bureau temps, but we get a chance to interact with each other while performing the tasks EXACTLY as a VHPA'er would have it done. As is our tradition, the Host Chapter, The Alamo Chapter, gets "first shot" at the Duty Roster. If you are interested in volunteering you can contact Ron Spearman of The Alamo Chapter at 706-244-4255 or ron@ronspearman.com. You can also contact HQ at 800-505-8472. BTW, husband and wife teams are welcome to volunteer.

Reunion T-Shirts - The T-shirts for this year will come in two (2) colors - a tiger stripe with no front pocket and a forest green with a front pocket and will come in sizes small thru 3XL. You are welcome to order as many as you wish with your Reunion Registration until the cutoff date below.

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

Primary Attendee (Member or Subscriber) Registration - The early registration fee for the member is **\$40** through 01 July and **\$50** beginning 02 July.

Please remember that each person 21 years and older who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.

Adult Guest Registration - The early registration fee for the member is **\$40** through 01 July and **\$50** beginning 02 July.

Please remember that each person 21 years and older who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.

Under 21 Guest Registration - The registration fee for someone under the age of 21 years is \$15.

Please remember that each person 21 years and older who wants/needs an event ticket and/or a Reunion name badge and lanyard must pay the registration fee.

Canceling a Reunion Registration - The VHPA Member or Subscriber who made the Reunion Registration is known as the Primary Registrant (PR). A PR may cancel all or portions of his or her registration **any time prior to Monday, 29 May 2023** by contacting HQ via US Mail at 1601 E Lamar Blvd, Suite 117, Arlington, TX 76011, Email to HQ@vhpa.org, Phone at 800-505-8472 or Fax at 817-200-7309. **It is important to note that reunion registration cancellations and hotel reservation cancellations are completely separate business processes. The PR is responsible for both processes. PRs cannot assume that when they cancel their hotel reservation that the hotel will notify HQ to cancel the reunion registration or vice versa.**

Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) Program - It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are non-refundable even with purchase of GRI: the GRI itself,

reunion registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions, cancellation fees, plus any event tickets designated as non-refundable. A PR may only cancel all or portions of his or her registration with GRI **any time prior to Thursday, 22 June 2023** by contacting HQ via US Mail at 1601 E Lamar Blvd, Suite 117, Arlington, TX 76011, Email to HQ@vhpa.org, Phone at 800-505-8472 or Fax at 817-200-7309.

The GRI program covers only specific VHPA events and fees, and does not cover cancellation costs that might be associated with hotel rooms, airfares, rental cars, and other non-VHPA generated expenses.

Reunion Refunds - The Executive Council establishes the official cancellation date (OCD) for each reunion. **The OCD for R2023 is Monday, 29 May 2023 without GRI and Thursday, 22 June 2023 with GRI.** Only cancellations received by HQ by close of business Central Daylight Time (normally 3pm) on the OCD (including those via US Mail) are considered for refunds. **It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are non-refundable even with purchase of GRI: the GRI itself, reunion registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions, cancellation fees, plus any event tickets designated as non-refundable.** As a general rule, HQ starts processing refunds about two weeks after the reunion ends. No refunds are processed until after the reunion is over. For PRs receiving a refund, there is a two-step process. First, the PR receives a letter and/or a statement from HQ outlining the details of the refund including the amount. Normally this correspondence is sent from HQ by US mail but it can be via email. Second, the PR receives a check via US mail from the VHPA's bank (Chase Bank). No refunds are issued back to credit cards. The goal is to complete the entire refund process no later than one calendar month after the reunion ends. Any clerical errors in the details of the refund should be brought to the attention of HQ.

Mini-Reunions: 02 July through 05 July - Keeping in mind that one of the primary reasons for our Reunion is to reconnect with past compatriots from your RVN unit and flight school. The best way to meet up with unit members is to schedule your own Mini-Reunion. If your unit does not have a Mini-Reunion, why not take the initiative to start one up, or you could combine with other sister units you are familiar with if you wish. In addition to specific units and flight classes, we've had Mini-Reunions for such subjects as tandem rotor, Dust-off, Operation Lam Son 719, anyone who was

stationed at Soc Trang, VHPA chapters, anyone interested in radio controlled aircraft models. Mini-Reunions are typically scheduled in 4-hour blocks and are available for booking on most days during the Reunion. You can also request a second four-hour block. However, this second block will be granted on a space available basis with priority for the particular space given to units requesting only one block. Due to decreased usage and increased expenses, the Reunion no longer provides AV equipment for Mini-Reunions. Once your Mini-Reunion is scheduled the details will appear on the webpage. You still should make an effort to get the word out to your buds. Use your directory to contact members (encourage them to re-up with the VHPA if they are not dues current), write a short article for the VHPA Aviator, and schedule early so we can list your unit in articles such as this. **NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS ARE ALLOWED IN THESE ROOMS**

Unit TOC (Tactical Operation Center): If you have a big group that you know is coming (say approximately 20 registrants), then we invite you to schedule a TOC. A TOC is a specific Mini-Reunion room given to your group all day or for several days. This is like a super Mini-Reunion. Since the group is going to “hang out” in the same room for several days, they can bring almost anything into the room (AV stuff,

displays, etc.).

*It is easy to schedule a Mini-Reunion or TOC. Complete the Mini-Reunion Request form available at VHPA.ORG and return by email to Sherry Rodgers at sherry@vhpa.org or mail the completed form to HQ at the address listed on the form. **NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS ARE ALLOWED IN THESE ROOMS***

KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Sponsorship: Use this item to support costs of events for Gold Star Families to attend events. This item was added to the VHPA Reunion Registration form at the request of VHPA Members attending the Annual Business Meeting during the 2010 Reunion in San Diego. **PLEASE NOTE: This item does not provide you with a ticket to the Gold Star Breakfast, it helps to provide events for Gold Star Family Members.** Thank you for your generosity.

O'Club: 02 July -11:00am – 11:00pm / 05 July - 12:30pm – 11:00pm

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

Available from Amazon in paperback and Kindle formats.



Matt Jackson's latest release is based on the March 30, 1972, North Vietnam invasion across the Demilitarized Zone. No US ground combat forces were in Vietnam at the time except a light brigade guarding Da Nang and a brigade down in the Saigon area. Standing with

the South Vietnamese were Army and Marine Corps advisors supported by a few US helicopter companies. This is the story of the gallant actions by those advisors and flight crews and their contribution to turning back the North Vietnamese Army.

Published in Kindle Book format - \$6.99

"This is historical fiction and will give the reader insight into one of the pivotal battles of the Vietnam War. Matt's work putting this together was prodigious. I don't know how he did it. As a historical novel, I think it is great."

~General Walter E. Boomer. US Marine Corps (Ret.)

San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter

101 Bowie Street, San Antonio, Texas

\$129 + tax over these dates of 02 July, 2023 – 05 July, 2023 **BASED ON AVAILABILITY**
(VHPA room rate availability limited pre & post reunion dates)

Cutoff date for VHPA hotel rate is Monday, 05 June, 2023

Hotel Reservations and Reunion Registration will open beginning of April.

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

VHPA 2023 PRELIMINARY REUNION SCHEDULE

Sunday 02 July	Monday 03 July	Tuesday 04 July	Wednesday 05 July
Mini Reunions	Golf	Gold Star Breakfast	Memorial Service
Vendor Room	Vendor Room	Quilters Show & Tell	Business Meeting
Welcome Reception	National Museum of the Pacific War	Vendor Room	Spouse Event
Fredericksburg Winery Tour	Casino Night	Tower of Americas Dinner	Closing Banquet

River Walk Boat Tour



Jump aboard a boat cruise, as it gently winds through the city center to take in the iconic River Walk from another perspective. VHPA Guests will see some of the most significant historical sites in downtown San Antonio and many architectural wonders. Learn a little more about the history and the American, German, and Mexican cultures that helped transform the Alamo City into what it is today.

National Museum of the Pacific War

This museum, located about an hour away from San Antonio and in Fredericksburg, Texas, is the only one in the Continental United States centered on World War II's Pacific campaign and has gained a reputation as one of the premier military museums in the nation. Enjoy the gallery's 33,000 square foot exhibition featuring 40 media installations, approximately 900 artifacts in 97 climate-controlled cases, 15 macro-artifacts, and hundreds of photographs.



Fredericksburg Winery Tour



Take in the views of Texas Hill Country on a one hour bus ride to Fredericksburg, Texas; known for its abundance of views and wineries. Guests will visit several vineyards, learn about the winemaking process of the region, and sample several wines over the course of the tour. Guests will have time to freely explore the beautiful and historic downtown of Fredericksburg for optional lunch, additional wine tastings, and plenty of shopping.

San Antonio Missions Tour

Experience the beauty and history of the beginning of San Antonio with a guided sightseeing tour. Enjoy mission silhouettes like Mission San José, Mission Concepción and others that show the Spanish and Morrish influenced architecture. Guests will see Espada acequia, which is a 270-year-old irrigation system that is still in use today. The missions are a *must see* when visiting San Antonio and the only UNESCO World Heritage site in Texas!



Book A Private Group Dinner Cruise



At The

San Antonio Reunion!



VHPA guests can book their own dinner cruise on the River Walk and have a private gathering with friends, unit and/or flight class at the 2023 Reunion.

With many restaurants to choose from, GO RIO's Dinner Cruises are one of the most enjoyable experiences along the San Antonio River Walk. Food and beverages must be provided by a restaurant or catering company. You may not provide your own food.

All bookings are handled directly with the restaurant.

Visit the following link to view information and restaurants currently participating in GO RIO Dinner Cruises. <https://www.goriocruises.com/Cruises/dinner-cruise/>

**** VHPA HQ is not responsible for booking, confirming, or setting up private group events. ****



SuperShuttle San Antonio Airport VHPA Discount

SuperShuttle provides airport rides to and from SAT to any address in the Greater San Antonio area. SuperShuttle fares are Private Non-Stop rides that can range from \$35 to \$40 per car one-way.

VHPA Discount Code: KHC6Y

To book visit:

<https://www.supershuttle.com/>

or Call:

1- 800-BLUE-VAN (258-3826)



San Antonio Travel Alternative

Gather a group of friends and take a train ride to the 2023 Reunion.

San Antonio station hosts two Amtrak services; the tri-weekly Sunset Limited and the daily Texas Eagle. Four days a week, San Antonio is the southern terminus of the Texas Eagle, which originates in Chicago. Three days a week, the Texas Eagle joins with the Sunset Limited, continuing westbound to Los Angeles.

Please visit www.amtrak.com for more information, pricing, schedules and more.

~ PLAGIARISM ~

Some of you know that I have put together several books documenting the rescue missions that we flew in Vietnam. Over the past year, I have had some of my books plagiarized and The Aviator staff was good enough to advise everyone that other Author's books may have also been plagiarized. To date, there has been 86 (not a typo, 86) copies of my books offered for sale on Amazon under different Author's names over the past year.

I have learned how to spot these fakes, and as I frequently search the internet for my own copied work, I run across other Vietnam Helicopter themed books that are obvious plagiarized books as well. I have been able to identify the true Authors for a few of the books, but not all. Virtually all of the original titles have been changed and enough interior changes have been made so that Amazon/Kindle's automated checker does not recognize the new copy as plagiarism. Here are the obvious thefts of copyrighted material that I have found but can't identify the true Author along with key words and names in the true copy to include the ASIN numbers to look them up on Amazon:

B0B51RY5GZ, B0B5176Z3H and B0B4HJSQZF "Weasel" "Wild Bill" "WO1 Lester Lewis" "Don" "Jap"

B0B56H29SC and B0B53H2ZWM "Wild Bill" "Tan An" "Skip Schwartz" "Dean Rocker" "Hogan"

B0B42J4NYT and B0B4N394SJ "James Whit" "Delta Dustoff"

B0B781P85X and B0B6XN1RPN "Father was a Naval Aviator"

B0B52NGBLH and B0B51YJQ3M "Trout" "Jap" "Alonzo" "To-Jo"

"Hood"

B095Y4WMGF "Scarface" "ILT Richard Crawford" "Hornsby"

B0B4QB6C28 and B0B4NQFXPL "The Boys from Mont Alto" "Sharpe"

B0B4HDP7S4 "Dong Tam" "9th Aviation Battalion"

B0B4QT9L4H "Riverside California: Annie" "Fred" "Marie"

By the way, Kindle will NOT send you a royalty check for the fake books that you wrote, someone else got that!

*The proper form to complain to Kindle is at :
[Amazon.com/report/infringement](https://www.amazon.com/report/infringement)*

Good Luck!

*Phil Marshall DMZ Dustoff 711,
1969dmzdustoff@yahoo.com*

This could be where your story starts....



"There I was, guarding the aircraft revetments. I had my three-candle power flashlight, my 38 revolver and 20 rounds of ball ammunition. The Communist hordes were all about me. Realizing I was surrounded by a superior force, I hid in Gork Creek, thereby living to fly and fight another day."

“The Mascot”

By Steve Helm

I pulled in just enough “pitch” to gently cushion the Hiller helicopter on the ground. Out to my left was a tire painted white in the middle of a spot which could have been a pygmy’s front porch. The tire designated the spot as a confined practice landing area for my flight class.

It was not until I was out of the army and flying as an adjuster for a group in New York (I handled hull and liability aviation claims) that I heard the Hiller referred to as the “Killer Hiller.” I was very incensed when I heard that. I felt rather blessed to have been flying the Hiller rather than the Hughes trainer. The entire time in flight school we lost a couple of Hughes and one Huey but never a Hiller.

The Hiller would never win a beauty contest, and aerodynamic appearing would be the last way I would describe it. It was always a good machine for me even after flight school.

Well, there I was in Mineral Wells, Texas, and I had made it through so far without any tremendous “screw ups.” The day was still young, however, and my mind was active. I noticed that was a problem on occasion.

As I bottomed the collective, I saw out front about fifteen feet away, an armadillo digging intently with his efficient, but ever-so-huge looking claws. He dug around the base of the scrub brush which bordered the landing area. Immediately, I experienced a feeling I had as a small boy as we headed toward my grandmother’s for a short vacation. The feeling felt was that moment I saw a turtle crossing the road. I had to have it. I had to have every one I saw. I recall one trip I arrived with three box turtles, all hiding under the seat of the “54 Belair Chevy.” They would all get my name, phone number, and city painted on their backs with bright colored fingernail polish (my mother’s...not mine) and I would then send them on their way expecting to hear from some stranger ten years hence that they had one of the many turtles I had “sprung.”

It was that same eagerness and joy felt upon seeing the armadillo. The armadillo is mostly nocturnal. It was clear blue and twenty-two so, I guessed I had a “strange cat” or one with insomnia. I set the rpm at flight idle and placed friction on the controls. The creature was

oblivious to the machine, the noise, and my approach. As I examined it a little closer, it struck me that our class needed a real mascot. Not the dead armadillo preserved and sitting in the classroom. I wondered who would take care of the thing and decided it was way too early to think about that. I needed to get the animal back to the classroom.

Reaching down to pick it up, the thing must have figured I was violating his space, and at two feet away it balled up into a size that approximated a soccer ball. I had not planned on that happening at all. I carried the little guy to the right seat position. Setting it down, I had to reason how to secure the harness system around a soccer ball.

If I was sure the thing would not “de-ball” in flight I could be comfortable flying him back. Once, however, he began to wiggle, the harness would lose its effectiveness. He might become hyper, realize he is approximately four hundred feet off the ground, and with the wind whipping by the little guy’s head, he could become frightened.

The thought of a frightened, loose armadillo, in the open cockpit of a Hiller was not how I wanted to end the day. What if he became tangled in the anti-torque pedals? Do you realize an armadillo can jump straight up from three to five feet. He could have broken the plexiglass with his armor plating! Some can run upwards of thirty miles per hour.

Well, I could see the accident report to the school commanding general. “The pilot’s body was found not to be strapped in, but still inside the wreckage of the cockpit, he was found clutching a dead armadillo to his chest.” How could I have the world remember that act as my last?

Well, that tore it for me. I left the little guy rooting in the bushes. Getting airborne again, I figured by the clock it was time to refuel. I headed south to the refueling area and found most of the class was already refueling. I landed in the appropriate spot and exited the cockpit after shut down.

Placing my brown hat (the color for my class) on my head I turned to see the guy in front of me sporting a bright yellow hat. It was not long before the entire

flight was waving their yellow hats in the air all the way along the refueling line. I had worked the wrong confined areas and landed at the wrong refueling point. I thought for a moment wondering how I could hide the situation. Well, it was impossible. All of a sudden, I was caught red-handed stealing the Lindberg baby, or blowing the smoke from the end of my pistol right after I "busted a cap" on Abraham Lincoln.

To add injury to insult I was advised to wait for my instructor pilot. He would fly with me the rest of the afternoon. I lived it down. I had no alternative.

Before confined areas, and we had our solo flight under our belt, we were moved to a six-lane field. To depart from the field, we performed clearing turns and looked front and overhead. All lanes were active with aircraft taking off. It was a place where each kid in kindergarten was given a thirty-eight snub nosed revolver to play with.

I had taken off, and during my climb out, I noticed an aircraft below me and climbing. I confess I was startled as I noticed the distance between us becoming less and less. I decided to pull pitch for positive separation. I must have been a little too aggressive in my pull because I noticed the aircraft screwing itself into the stratosphere and the collective pitch lever in my armpit. Some fellow was on the radio complaining that my aircraft was outside the realm of the days normal training. He prefaced his remark with a rather stern question of "who is that?!! He sounded mean spirited and, I felt answering that question would not bring enrichment to his life, so I remained silent. I discovered a slight bug-a-boo at that point.

The aircraft was still climbing straight up. I had jumped from a twenty-foot cliff into a strip pit as a kid. The water temperature decreases very quickly as you descend into the water. I experienced that same decrease in temperature as the aircraft climbed like a homesick angel.

Have you ever opened your toolbox and found a pair of pliers you have not touched in fifteen years? You force them open and discover you need to close them using some degree of extra force. Well, that was my situation with the collective. I pushed down until it finally relented, and I was able to return to the field. My aircraft blended into the other aircraft and was never discovered.

I became lost on my very first mission in Vietnam. I was flying a Vietnamese General to Da Lat in a Bell Jet Ranger based out of Pleiku in the central highlands. I had never been to Da Lat. I picked the guy up

quite a way south of Da Lat and realized I was lost when my ETA and destination did not coincide. There was no way I was going to open a map in the cockpit. To top it off, I felt I was over the border in Laos. I was looking down on what I thought may be enemy aircraft! So, I asked the General, "Sir, do you know where the hell is Da Lat?" He smiled and pointed to the right. I finally saw it.

That was the last time I was ever lost in Vietnam. I carried the winter cease fire orders of 1972 to all military locations south of Pleiku in the II Corp area. My good friend Horton flew the orders north. I can see him now, huge blonde mustache blowing in the breeze and a smile on his face.

I left before sunrise and returned after sunset. I was able to find every unit without error. I'm sure we all have an opinion about the orders per se, but I was proud of the mission and the way it turned out.

Well, Vietnam finds itself in the history books and we all have much water under the bridge. One of these days when I stand before "the almighty six," He may ask who I think I am? My answer will be simple. "I am an army aviator, and I fly helicopters. I'm looking for my brothers."

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

CONSIDER RUNNING for the VHPA Executive Council at the 2023 Business meeting in San Antonio.

POSITIONS:

- 1. Vice-President**- Only those previously on the Executive Council (3 year term as VP. President and Immediate past President)
- 2. Junior member at Large**- This is our new blood and we need you! (3 year term).

.....
To see the requirements and National Election Policy go to the VHPA site, Login and select Administrative Documents.

Scroll to Policies and open National Election Policy. Familiarize yourself with the policy and then submit a BIO/RESUME of no more than 500 words to:

**Dennis L. Faucher, Junior Member at Large and National Election Chairman Cell: 814-363-1547
E-mail: drfaucher@verizon.net**

NO LATER THAN: 30 days prior to first day of the San Antonio Reunion, which begins on Sunday 2 July 2023, so no later than: 2 Jun 2023. Must be present to run.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

The 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 2023
reunion of Vietnam Veterans

Former members and guest welcome

Where: Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention
Center, Nashville TN

When: April 25-28 2023

Reunion, Registration, Hotel Information

HTTP://reunion.227.ahb.org

Annual Australian ANZAC Day Ceremony

April 25, 2023 Ft Rucker AL.

HELP PRESERVE YOUR HISTORY!

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

WANTED

Helicopter Memorabilia from the Vietnam War

Contact: John Conway

NEW!!! 816-813-3488

JPConway@sbcglobal.net

NEW!!! Website: museum.vhpa.org

ARMY ~ NAVY ~ AIR FORCE ~ MARINE CORPS
Assault - Cavalry - Trans - Medical Rescue etc.

Fair Prices Paid. Not for profit.
References available.

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

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

~ John Stryker Meyer,
author of




On the Ground, Across the fence, and SOG Chronicles



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



ARMY AVIATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC. (AAAA)

593 Main Street, Monroe CT 06468-2806 | 203.268.2450 | F: 203.268.5870 | aaaa@quad-a.org | quad-a.org |   

Supporting the U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family

30 November 2022

Mr. Don LeMaster
President
VHPA

Mr. Art Jacobs
Chairman, Legacy Committee
VHPA

Don/Art: 

What a pleasure meeting you both for dinner a few months ago.

I want you to know on behalf of our 18,500 AAAA members how much we admire and would like to support all of you who gave so much to this country and yet received very little thanks in return.

We literally stand on your shoulders in all we do today from Tactics Techniques and Procedures, to Doctrine, Maintenance and Sustainment and Training.

Thank you.

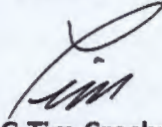
In our free-wheeling discussion we spoke about how AAAA can better support the VHPA in coming years. We look forward to ongoing discussions on everything from welcoming you to be part of our AAAA Annual Summit, to joint membership, and even admin support when needed.

Speaking of support, thank you for the amazing support of our AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc. As one of the largest contributors with over \$400,000 in assets you have impacted many, many, families of our members and truly made a difference in upcoming generations of Americans.

Let us know how we can begin to engage on specifics when you are ready. Please use our Executive Director, Bill Harris as you primary poc.

Again, thanks for all you have done for all of us. What can we do to best support all of you?

Very Respectfully,


MG Tim Crosby, Ret.
President, AAAA

SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATES
GEN W. Scott Wallace, Ret., Chairman
GEN Daniel B. Allyn, Ret.
GEN John F. Campbell, Ret.
GEN David G. Perkins, Ret.
GEN Gustavo F. Perna, Ret.
GEN James D. Thurman, Ret.
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COL Curt J. Henrick, Jr., Ret.
CW5 Randolph W. Jones, Ret.
CSM Buford Thomas, Jr., Ret.
SGM Kenneth G. Rich, Ret.

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COL J. Scott Schisser, Ret.
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COL Michelle F. Yarborough, Ret.
LTC Kevin S. Cochie, Ret.
1LT Chance S. Mathias
CW5 Daniel R. Curry, Ret.
CW5 Brent C. Driggers, Ret.
CW4 Steven J. Alencio
CW4 Latry L. Salt
WO1 Aubrey J P Bloom
CSM Tod L. Glidewell, Ret.
SSG Joshua Davidson
SSG Ashley M. Sanchez

*Plus Chapter Presidents over 150 Members

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 2 New Members and covers the period 11.04.22 to 12.04.22

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

Scarborough David L. **

Anchorage Alaska

Army

TAN MY6

C/1/9 CAV 1 CAV in 69-69; 1

AVN BDE A/T PLAT in 72-72; F/4

CAV in 72-73; JMC AVN DET in

73-73

Yates Alvin R. **

Boulder City Nevada

Air Force

Book Reviews

by Phil Marshal

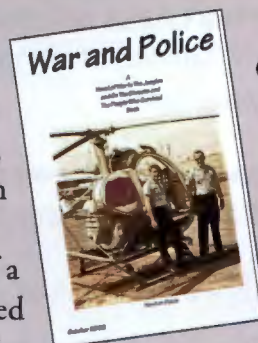
Phil Marshall, is a Life Member and was President of the VHPA in 1994. He flew Dustoff in 1969 in Northern I Corps and he is also a Life Member of American Huey 369. He has authored over 25 books to include 19 books documenting the rescues missions that we all flew in Vietnam.



“War and Police” by Newton Davis

A first time Author's book with a catchy title and lots of action stories like the classic book of a similar name, “War and Police” offers plenty of action for the reader to take in.

Newton Davis, the nom de plume of a Vietnam helicopter pilot, has intertwined his Vietnam experiences and his police helicopter experiences quite well. The chapters flip back and forth between the experiences of a Vietnam helicopter pilot as well as his experiences as a police helicopter pilot in an unnamed city. The main character in this novel shares with us many of his experiences as a slick pilot in the 1st Cav as well as his memorable flights and “ground pounding” as a city police pilot.



The author pulls no punches with each Chapter's details and it is very obvious that the author is giving us true stories based on his fictional character. Each Chapter, whether in Vietnam or back here in the World, highlights a different facet of his career. Sometimes a “good” ending to each Chapter, sometimes not; just like many of us experience throughout our lifetimes and experienced during our time in Vietnam.

As I read Newton Davis' first book effort, he certainly kept me wanting to keep reading as I finished each chapter. He gave us a very detailed accounting of his experiences and shows the reader that Vietnam was not the only place to get adrenaline rushes!

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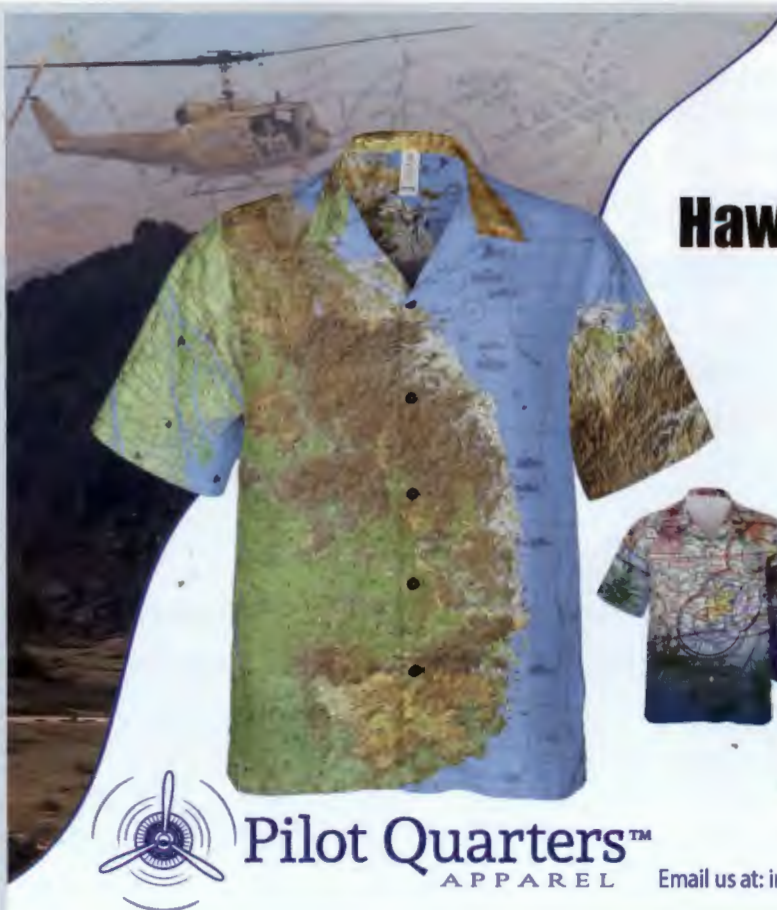
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LOOKING FOR

You would think that this would be an easy question to get answered, but it hasn't worked that way. Can anyone give me the measurements of the M151 5lb fire extinguisher commonly found in the front seat of the AH-1 Cobra? I would certainly appreciate it. Thanks.

Life Member Chad Richmond, MAJ USA Ret.
ch4vetrep@yahoo.com

On 7 January 1967, John Steinbeck was at Pleiku, where he flew aboard a UH-1 Huey helicopter with D Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry. He wrote the following about the helicopter pilots:

"I wish I could tell you about these pilots. They make me sick with envy. They ride their vehicles the way a man controls a fine, well-trained quarter horse. They weave along stream beds, rise like swallows to clear trees, they turn and twist and dip like swifts in the evening. I watch their hands and feet on the controls, the delicacy of the coordination reminds me of the sure and seeming slow hands of (Pablo) Casals on the cello. They are truly musicians' hands and they play their controls like music and they dance them like ballerinas and they make me jealous because I want so much to do it. Remember your child night dream of perfect flight free and wonderful? It's like that, and sadly I know I never can. My hands are too old and forgetful to take orders from the command center, which speaks of updrafts and side winds, of drift and shift, or ground fire indicated by a tiny puff or flash, or a hit and all these commands must be obeyed by the musician's hands instantly and automatically. I must take my longing out in admiration and the joy of seeing it. Sorry about that leak of ecstasy, Alicia, but I had to get it out or burst."

Does anyone know who the pilots were?
willprater@comcast.net

Hello, my name is Chanelle Acheson, and I am the Daughter of Gil Acheson. I am very interested to find soldiers that knew my dad in Vietnam.

He was a Captain with D troop 1/10 CAV 68-70 stationed at Camp

Enari in the Central Highlands flying Hueys and Cobras. I have some names from that time: Al Harrison, Al Smith, Jim Adkins, Melvin Austin, and Pete Kendrick. If anyone remembers my dad, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Thank you,

Chanelle Acheson chanellea@gmail.com

My name is Ronald w. Lauer. I was a Huey crew chief and flew with Leonard Hughes in HHC 2nd BDE 1st Air Cav aviation Section, from Oct 1st 1967 to Oct 1st 1968. He left Vietnam a few months before me. I saw him again a few months later at my next duty station which was Hunter Army Air Field. He was training WOCs. I lost touch later. I went home to PA in 1970. I knew a pilot in the VHPA and in November 2006 he found his address. I wrote him a letter. He wanted to meet somewhere but unfortunately; he told me he was sick with cancer and we could not meet. I found out from his daughter (Britanie?) he had passed away 4/17/2008. I have the letter he wrote me and thought his daughter or other family members would like to have it. If any pilots or friends of Leonard remember him any info would be appreciated. His letter to me was post marked from Houston Texas.

He passed away in St Petersburg FL.

Thank you for any help.

Ron Lauer Fort Myers FL.

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VETERAN'S QUILT PRESENTATION AND QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

You may have noticed in the November/December 2022 of The Aviator, that my article heading was changed. From the Quilters Show and Tell to "Veteran's Quilt Presentation and Quilter's Show and Tell". I think this change better describes the goals of our endeavors, ie, the Veterans.

At the Tampa Bay reunion, Col. Robert Blankenship, one of our selectees, was unable to attend due to a family issue. His quilt was forwarded to his local veteran post and finally presented by SGT First Class Charles Penick and Warren Dupree



Col Bob Blankenship.



SGT First Class Charles Penick, Col Blankenship and Warren Dupree 2022.



SGT First Class Charles Penick, Bob Blankenship and Warren2.

on Veteran's Day 2022 at the Cherokee American Legion Post 143.

Looking forward to seeing how everyone has utilized the charm packs from last year. Hopefully we will see charm pack blocks,

quilt tops or possibly completed quilts, which will be greatly appreciated by our veterans in 2024.

Contact me if there are any questions at klskms@aol.com
Kathleen Sherfey
Quilt Coordinator

a LITTLE HELICOPTER UNIT

~ that Could

During the Vietnam War, the major focus was on helicopter units deployed there, but another unit performed magnificently and went largely unnoticed except by those who were assigned or by patients transported by its crews.

Until 1966, hospitalization capability in Vietnam was limited and critically wounded patients were sent to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. After stabilization, they were placed on propeller driven aircraft and flown to the States. The long flights caused a rise in the death rate, so planners began looking for an intermediate stop.

Japan was obvious because aircraft transiting the Pacific refueled there and three small U.S. military hospitals were already there. Construction began to expand the existing hospitals and three new ones were built around the greater Tokyo/Yokohama area. When finished, the Army had hospitals at Camp Drake, Camp Oji, Camp Zama, and Kishine Barracks. The Air Force had one at Tachikawa and the Navy at Yokosuka.

Shortly after patients began arriving, General Johnny K. Waters, Commander of U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) stopped at Tachikawa Air Force Base. Some will recall him as being the hard charging son-in-law of General George Patton. As a young officer, Waters was captured in North Africa and held in a German POW camp at Hammelburg, Germany. General Patton sent Colonel Creighton Abrams (later MACV Commander) on a dangerous mission to free those POWs.

While General Waters was waiting for fuel, an ambulance bus arrived on the flight line, and he asked what it was doing there. He was told it held patients wounded in Vietnam who had been treated at Yokosuka and were waiting for a flight to the States. General Waters walked to the bus and asked them how they'd been treated. All responded favorably, but several complained about a painful five-hour ride over horrendous roads to and from Yokosuka. When he got back to Hawaii, General Waters requested a helicopter ambulance unit for Japan. None were available, so another had to be activated as the 587th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance).

I had been home less than a week from my first tour in Vietnam when I learned I would be going to Japan to help organize the unit at Camp Zama. Aircraft presented the biggest challenge because Vietnam had priority. Instead of five helicopters authorized by TO&E, we received three old

UH-1Bs left behind in Hawaii when the 25th Infantry Division deployed, they had been used in a door-gunner training program and looked awful.

Our challenge was an environment that demanded all the power we could get because of steep approaches and take-offs at all of the hospitals except Tachikawa and Yokosuka. Kishine Barracks was the worst. We had to land on a narrow street in the middle of a multi-story hospital complex and, if there hadn't been a war going on, the safety people would not have allowed us to operate that way. The hospital sat in a bowl-shaped depression and there were two ways to get in and out of the landing area. There was a Japanese housing area on the hill overlooking one approach and a huge set of high-tension wires at the other end. On take-offs and landings, we could almost touch buildings on either side of us so operations at Kishine demanded careful flying.

In those early days, patients arrived at Tachikawa in old C-54s and C-124s. The Air Force established a Casualty Staging Facility (CSF) at Tachikawa, and our mission was to fly patients from there to the outlying hospitals and return those who would be going to the States for further care. When C-141s entered the inventory in 1967, the CSF was moved to Yokota because the runway at Tachikawa would not accommodate jets.

We hadn't been there long when Jeff Grider had an engine failure while flying a load of patients along the mountainous coastline near Yokosuka. When his engine quit, he turned inland and began looking for a place to land. The only flat spot for miles around was a green on a golf course, so he turned towards it. Several Japanese golfers were standing on the green and looked up to see a helicopter coming at them. They didn't understand it was an emergency, so they just stood there. Jeff saw they weren't going to move so he banked sharply and planted his skids into the side of the green's embankment. It was 10-12 feet high, and the impact caused the rotor blades to flex down and cut off the tail boom, but no one was injured.

Shortly thereafter, General Waters visited again and came to the airfield to present one of our officers a Distinguished Flying Cross earned in Vietnam. Colonel (Dr.) Kenneth Orr was the newly arrived Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command, Japan, so we asked him to talk with General Waters about the poor condition of our heli-

copters and the fact that we now had two out of an authorization for five.

Upon his return to Hawaii, General Waters directed his staff to get us new aircraft and, a short time later, a Navy ship pulled into Yokohama Bay with five new UH-1Ds. They smelled like new cars and could carry six litter patients compared to three in the UH-1B. That was a lifesaver because the war in Vietnam was heating up and our patient load was increasing.

There was some interesting posturing during our first several months in Japan. In 1966, there were few Army personnel stationed there, but a major command called U.S. Army, Japan (USARJ) was located at Camp Zama. It could be summed up as being like an old southern plantation. In other words, it was "sleepyville." The commander was a Chemical Corps general, so that tells you the level of importance it enjoyed.

Rankin Army Airfield was on a hill overlooking main post and we shared it with USARJ's Flight Detachment. A beautiful golf course bordered one side and several sets of senior officer quarters were along another side. The USARJ Flight Detachment had one old U-8 airplane and four OH-23 helicopters. The U-8 was used to transport passengers to Okinawa and Korea and the helicopters were used to fly passengers to downtown Tokyo or other small military locations on the Kanto Plain surrounding Tokyo.

Shortly after we arrived, the USARJ Chief of Staff inquired about using our aircraft to transport passengers because an increasing number of senior officers, congressmen, and VIPs wanted to use Japan as a stop-over on their way to Vietnam. The Flight Detachment's OH-23s could only carry two passengers, so they were overwhelmed at times. We wanted to be good neighbors and offered to help but made sure everyone understood our primary mission was patient transport.

When our new UH-1Ds arrived, the USARJ Chief of Staff took a personal interest. It rained for several days after they arrived, so the maintenance sergeant pulled one into the hangar and painted red crosses on the doors, nose, top, and bottom. When dry, he moved it to the parking ramp, and I recall seeing it there shining like a new diamond.

The Chief of Staff's house was just across a wire fence from our flight line, so he must have come home and saw the newly painted aircraft near his dining room window. About 2 PM, a major in the Chief's office called and told me to get the red crosses painted off that aircraft before nightfall and not to paint any more. Dave Dryden and I jumped into my tiny Japanese Hino and raced down the hill to where our headquarters was located.

As mentioned earlier, Colonel (Dr.) Kenneth Orr had recently taken command of USARJ's Medical Command

and learned he would be promoted to brigadier general. He seemed to like us instantly and appreciated how we were performing our mission. He began calling us his "Good Guys" and referred to us that way until his untimely death.

Anyhow, Dave and I asked to see Colonel Orr. After hearing about the phone call, he grabbed his hat and dashed across the street to see the USARJ commander. He returned a short time later with a beet red face, so we expected the worst. Colonel Orr looked straight at us and said quietly, "Get back up the hill and paint red crosses on the rest of those aircraft as quickly as possible."

Needless to say, we raced up the hill as fast as my old car would go. Fortunately, the weather cleared and all were painted in a couple of days. From then on, the issue of who controlled our aircraft didn't come up, but we continued to help the USARJ staff with non-medical missions. We flew movie stars, congressmen, senior military officers, and other VIPs because we felt it to be part of our mission.

On occasion, we had an unusual mission to transport hundreds of pounds of military pay script from the printing plant in Tokyo to Yokota where it was flown to Vietnam. We joked about how easy it would have been to become instant millionaires if our helicopters had a better fuel range and a nearby country would let us spend military script.

Several years passed before we learned what happened when Colonel Orr went to see the USARJ Commander. We weren't going to ask while in Japan, but I had an occasion to call General Orr later, so I asked about that encounter. He laughed as he described it. He said he ran straight into the Commanding General's office and said, "If the order to paint over the red crosses came from you, I want you to know I will be on the next aircraft headed for Hawaii to see General Waters!" That killed any further discussion about our fate.

On the lighter side, I've been asked about the VIPs we flew and whether any were memorable. Martha Ray was there several times, and we flew Jane Russell, Patti Page, Ann Margaret, Nancy Sinatra, and NFL football star, Rosie Grier. We also flew the Reverend Billy Graham and many others. The NCO who ran the Officers Club system was a wheeler-dealer and managed to get some of the entertainers to put on brief shows at our Zama Officers Club. He also arranged one heck of a promotion party for Dave and me when we were promoted to major. The entertainment that night was Connie Francis, Jane Russell, and Patti Paige.

As we transitioned into 1967, our workload increased exponentially as new units flowed into Vietnam and we began flying seven days a week and many nights. Flying there could be challenging because blinding smog blanketed the Kanto Plain during the day and fog rolled in off the

Cont on pg 37

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Notice to all Members of the VHPA

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

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ALASKA CHAPTER

The years are passing by so quickly it is always nice when we all get together and enjoy each other's company. This year we did the fall luncheon again and the turnout was very good. We opened the gathering this year a little differently as we had a wonderful Marine singer who delivered a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem. Got us all going!

We also had a nice surprise. The local Taste Freeze delivered Ice Cream Sundays with all the trimmings for our enjoyment, a nice touch, and we're very thankful to the men and woman of Taste Freeze! Who doesn't love ice cream! Of course, the usual spread of tasty pot luck style soups and sandwiches were on hand and we're thankful for the women of our Chapter for their continued support and active involvement!

Our silent auction was a huge success. We were graced with incredible donated gifts from local supporters. We received dinner gift cards and various baskets of goodies that were all donated to our fund raiser! The silent auction raised all our funds needed for 2023!

Linda Kau, the State President of Quilts of Valor, was on hand and presented Tom McKinnon and Luke Hardin (Marine singer) their Quilts of Valor. It does not matter how many times a Veteran is honored with a Quilt; it is always touching.

As a Chapter, each year we choose a charity or cause to donate to. This year we donated to three such causes: The Quilts of Valor, VFW post 9785 to help with the remodeling of the room we usually use, and our local



Thomas McKinnon.



Luke Hamlin.

Veteran Museum. Thank you to all our Veterans who graciously stepped up their donations to help us to help other organizations that do so much for so many.

There is Pride in Knowing WE FLEW!!

Lynn Kile

Nomad 23

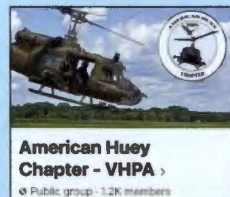
Alaska Chapter VHPA

www.VHPA-Alaska.org

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

This report was intended for the Nov/Dec issue and was overlooked. My apology to the Chapter's members. ~ Tom Kirk

The 2022 "Gathering of Veterans and Patriots at the Museum" is in the books and another flying event of American Huey 369 is chalked up as a huge success. Hundreds of Patriots and Veterans attended the two-day event near Peru, IN, to bid on donated militaria and other items at the live Auction, visit with the Wolfhound and Black Lion re-enactors, reacquaint with and make new friends, watch the four



aircraft re-enactment of a helicopter assault AND...most importantly...include a flight in a real Vietnam warbird Huey as a new or existing American Huey 369 essential crewmember. The H-Model rotor blades hardly got a rest all weekend!

Something that has not been mentioned here before is the fact that two of the three currently restored-to-flight Hueys in the 369 organization (more Huey restorations are in the wings) flew in the historic "Battle of the Ia Drang Valley". This battle, portrayed in the movie "We Were Soldiers Once" with Mel Gibson. It

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



UH-1B Gunship 64-14049.

was also the battle in which Ed "Too Tall" Freeman and Bruce Crandle were awarded the Medal of Honor. Our B Model Gunship, 049, was one of two gunships that escorted Freeman and Crandle in and out of the LZ.

Our Gunship 049 Huey is as rare as one of Steve McQueen's 2 "Bullitt" Mustangs and we are flying it! Of further note, our next H Model to be restored to flight is "959", a Huey that flew in Crandall's unit, Alpha Company of the 227th. While it is probable that it also flew in the Ia Drang, we have yet to find a crew member that can verify it. Also in that battle, our H model 803 (later converted from a D Model) was a Medevac helicopter with the 1st Cav during the battle, and yes, contrary to the movie, Medevac Hueys did fly extractions during the Battle. Subsequent research by myself and 1st Cav Medevac Historian



Terry McCarl has found paperwork by the Commanding Officer of 15th Med ordering crews not to land early in the battle due to damaged aircraft and crew casualties already incurred. Later in the Battle, those orders were rescinded.

As American Huey 369 Founder John Walker puts it, "Today, even a billionaire probably could not find two aircraft that flew in that Battle." We are flying two of them, and probably will be flying another. Acquiring Ia Drang Hueys was purely by chance, restoring them was purely by design.

Come join American Huey 369 and help us "Preserve their history, Honor the men who flew them and Educate the public as to what the Hueys did."

Phil Marshall

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

With another annual flying season in the books, our 18th season as an Organization and our 16th flying season, we begin to "partially" let our rotary-winged girls take a rest with the occasional exercise of the aircraft over the Winter. We exercise each aircraft with either a ground turn or an exercise at altitude. Gotta keep 'em limbered up and ready for our first event when warm weather hits again! Annual maintenance starts in March and continues until our first flying event which usually occurs in April or May.

This past calendar year, we flew one or more aircraft to 12 different events. Hopefully, we will be able to get back to our "pre-covid" number of events soon, usually about 18 events per flying season. Our total number of events attended now stands at 248 with NO events cancelled by maintenance issues or Mother Nature. We



have been able to fly our Hueys to 248 straight events over 16 years.

The building of the National American Huey History Museum continues to progress with the Grand Opening date yet to be determined. Located an hour's drive north of Indianapolis, across "Interstate" Route 31 from Grissom Aeroplex, formerly Grissom Air Force Base, it will be a destination for those who enjoy the sights and sounds of living, breathing, flying helicopters...especially Huey helicopters. Come visit us starting in April at our temporary museum at Grissom and "Relive those days of yesteryear". We invite you to become a Founder of the National American Huey History Museum and a supporter of the American Huey 369 Organization. Be a part of the 369 organization, not just an observer. Look us up at AmericanHuey369.com

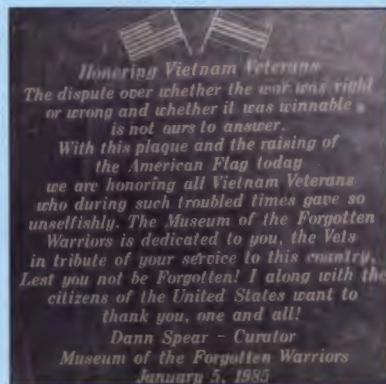
Phil Marshall

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

On October 15, CCN members Ken Fritz, Mike O'Connor, Ken Lake, Al Doucette, Ed Morris, and Curt Knapp visited the Museum of the Forgotten Warriors. Located about an hour north of Sacramento and next to Beale Air Force Base, the home of the U-2 and former base of the SR-71, this is a very good collection of items donated by warriors from all services. Hundreds and hundreds of artifacts and personal memorabilia are on display with most in large glass cases. The museum has items from the Civil War to the present times.

A very tired OH-23 and a tired UH-1C sit outside the museum near this plaque.



Museum of the Forgotten Warriors plaque.



Mike also told a story about how a wheeled machine gun like the one at the bottom of this display case almost shot down him and his crew.

Museum of the Forgotten Warriors <http://www.museumoftheforgottenwarriors.org>

The aim of the museum is to illustrate the warriors – who they are, what they did, what they did it with, and how they did what they did for freedom. There are unit histories, individual histories, uniforms, and weapons,

hundreds of beautiful aircraft and ship models, and all sorts of things that have been donated by those who served and their families. It's an amazing collection of personal memorabilia that cannot be fully understood in a short visit. The museum's extensive library is arranged by war so if you wish to see books about WWI or the Desert Storm, just go to those sections.



Don Schrader, museum director, thanked VHPA-CCN for the generous donation that will help with the continued expansion and upkeep of the museum.



Mike "Conner" described the POW garb that he donated.



A delightful multi-course lunch was served in the Mess Hall.



Curt showed one of his donations from a previous visit.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Curt showed one of his donations from a previous visit, an inscribed photo of him with his Loach in 1968. Mike O'Conner described the POW garb that he donated.

He also told a story about how a wheeled machine gun like the one at the bottom of this display case almost shot down him and his crew.

A delightful multi-course lunch was served in the Mess Hall.

CCN donated a check for \$1,000 to the museum.

Don Schrader, museum director, thanked VHPA-CCN for the generous donation that will help with the continued expansion and upkeep of the museum.

Ken Fritz
President, VHPA-CCN

Edited by
Dave Anderson
Secretary, VHPA-CCN

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter was fairly busy these last several months. We had several individual participants at the Georgia Veterans Day celebration and parade on 12 November. This was the day following our National Veterans Day observance and was well attended by the chapter. The parade at Truist Park (home of the Atlanta Braves) was followed by a formal dinner and ball at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta.

Chuck Bayless added our uniform options to our website (gavhpa.org). These pull overs and dress shirts will be worn with khaki pants and look very sharp!

Our Meeting at the 57TH Restaurant was well attended. We reviewed 2022 events to include:

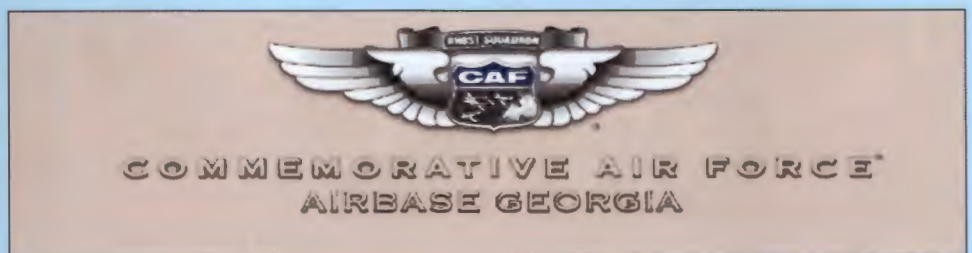
Partnerships with Army Aviation Heritage Foundation,



Commemorative Airforce



Jim Crawford, Skip Bell, George Murray.



And Epps Aviation



Skip Bell and friends.



VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

We outlined our objectives and Calendar for 2023 which included:

- AAHF Pursue the Relationships – First Quarter
- GA Veterans Memorial – Get on their Calendar – First Quarter
- Commemorative Airforce – Lunch Speaker – First Quarter
- PDK Good Neighbor Day – Epps Aviation – Second Quarter
- VHPA San Antonio – July 2 – 7 – Third Quarter
- Memorial Day – Third Quarter
- Georgia Veterans Day – Fourth Quarter
- Charities
- Other

We then conducted with elections for officers for 2023, and the following men were elected by the membership:

Doug Lackey-President
Jim Crawford-Vice President
Chuck Bayless-Secretary/Treasurer



*I believe the feeling for 2022 was
 "Not bad and it's still OUR CHAPTER"*

Doug Lackey
President GA Chapter
Georgia8



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter continues activities as we head into the winter months.

The Michigan Chapter met on Oct 12 at Silver Harbor Brewery in St. Joseph. Our guest was Maureen Adams, Director Berrien County Veterans Services. Maureen reviewed changes occurring in VA benefits. We also shared with Maureen our experiences with VA and as pilots.

The Traverse City group is keeping to its monthly lunch gatherings with four attending with Mark Benjamin on October 5th at Hotel Indigo. Ed Canright was the OIC on November 2nd and filed this AAR: Attendance was smaller than normal, but I suspect that it was because of the beautiful weather. The colors are now "drab" up here in Traverse City, but hiking, fishing and bird hunting is going great



L-R Paul Boggs, Denny Klein, Maureen Adams
 Mark Benjamin, Glenn Youngstedt

October 12th St Joseph.



Bart Halliday, Ed Canright, Dennis Klein, Walter Topp

November 2nd Traverse City.

guns. Today Bart Halliday and Dennis Klein travelled more than two hours each from opposite directions to be at the meeting. Both Bart and Dennis did at least 24+ months flying combat missions in Vietnam. Bart's participation included tours as a fixed wing pilot and then as an H-34 pilot with the Marines. Some of his experiences in the H-34 were riveting in that flying an H-34 is something that few of us ever experienced. Den-

nis extended during his first tour, and then was sent back in the early 1970's for an additional tour. He flew gunships in Northwestern II Corps, with a number of missions along the border, and West. Overall, we had a great time reminiscing our experiences.

Looking ahead to 2023, chapter member Ken Hand is wondering if we might try to get a group together to go to the Reno Air Races next year. This Fantastic Event is scheduled for September 13-17, 2023. Ken notes that if we get 15 people we can share box seats almost on the flight line. There are also a few perks that we can get with that. Check out the website at air-race.org. Contact Ken Hand if interested or for more information. vairmech@aol.com 248-613-8586

Additional information can be found on the Michigan Chapter VHPA website at <https://vhpami.wordpress.com>.

Look under "News" for past and recent events.

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

Submitted by Rich Deer, president

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

November 30, 2022

October and November are the busiest months for the North Alabama VHPA, (NAVHPA). This year, 2022, has been no exception.

During the October 11th NAVHPA monthly meeting, Teresa White was presented with the Deceased Vietnam Veteran's Surviving Spouse Certificate of Honor and Pin by Marshall Eubanks. Her husband, Jim White, passed away in July 2022. Jim was one of the founders of NAVHPA and our first President. This certificate and pin are given by the DoD Vietnam War Commemoration to a surviving spouse at time of death of a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975 regardless of location of service. Teresa remains a very active part in our chapter.

On November 4th, a tow team took our UH-1C/M Huey Gunship (BUC-3) to Cullman, AL to participate in the Cullman Veterans Celebration on November 5th. The day turned out to be a little rainy and the event ended a couple of hours early. However, prior to the rain, BUC-3 welcomed many interested veterans and non-veterans. This event took place at the Cullman Airport and there were several other activities and aircraft present – including a Mustang Car Show, free lunch for all veterans and their families, a P-51 Mustang, a T-6 Texan, Huey rides, B-17 rides in the Commemorative Air Force's "Texas Raiders" (Sadly, this is the B-17 that was involved in the midair at the Dallas airshow a week later), and many other activities. As a DoD Vietnam War Commemorative Partner, NAVHPA presented six Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins to Vietnam Era Veterans.

During the week of October 31 to November 4, our chapter provided a large share of the volunteers to prepare wreaths for placing on veteran's graves for the Wreaths for Veterans program. More than 27 members, spouses, and friends gathered to "fluff" the Wreaths. Fluffing involves unpacking, cleaning, fluffing, and replacing ribbons as necessary, and repacking the wreaths. It took four days to prepare about 3610 wreaths. But, as with all NAVHPA activities, we had a good time.

NAVHPA had 18 members and spouses attend the Huntsville-Madison County Veterans Week Dinner and Awards Ceremony at the Von Braun Cen-



ter in Huntsville. Attended by more than 350 people, awards were presented to the Veteran of the Year, Veteran Organization of the Year, and the Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award. Additionally, four veterans were inducted into the Madison County Hall of Heroes. One of the inductees was NAVHPA member BG(R) Robert (Bob) Stewart. Bob was inducted based on the three DFCs he received while flying gunships for the 336 AHC in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. Bob also received a DFC during his time as an astronaut. As the Army's first astronaut, Bob flew two Shuttle missions, one of which, STS 41-B, saw Bob and Bruce McCandless make the first untethered space walks. Bob was also placed on the Madison County Purple Hall Honor Roll for his two Purple Hearts.

Veterans Day, November 11th, dawned with rain and windy cold. We decided we had been wet many times when we were in the military, and it wouldn't harm us to get wet again. So, we took our UH-1C/M helicopter, BUC-3, and a "people" trailer into Huntsville and marched in the 1-hour Veterans Day parade in the parade among over 150 other entrants. Additionally, about 10 members and spouses walked with BUC-3. It was rainy during the preparation for the parade, but then just as the parade began, the rain ended!

We were so pleased that the weather didn't discourage the populace from coming out to watch and honor veterans. The Veterans Day parade is always well attended with thousands



NAVHPA spouse Pam Fluhr(l) and Member Bob Monette(r) were among those marching the 2-mile Veterans Day parade route.



Even on a rainy-day NAVHPA members, spouses and friends turned out in force for the Veterans' Day Parade.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

lining the 2-mile route through downtown Huntsville. Many signs thanking veterans and American flags are carried and waved by both children and adults.

Participating in the Wreaths for Veterans program is an honor for the chapter each year. This year hundreds of volunteers, including 20 "yellow shirt" NAVHPA members/spouses, placed wreaths on veteran's graves. In all, more than 3600 wreaths were solemnly placed. As each was decorated the volunteer took a moment to remember and honor the veteran. On November 15, at Valhalla cemetery Huntsville. NAVHPA helped place 800 wreaths on veteran's graves. On November 16, at Maple Hill cemetery Huntsville, over 2800 wreaths were placed.

Our members and guests are looking forward to the December 13th Christmas meeting. As is customary in the NAVHPA the business part of the meeting will be shortened to allow more time for our guest speaker. Colonel (Ret) Kevin went from a successful military career to owning L'Etoile French Pastry Shop. It promises to be an extremely interesting speech.

The chapter has discontinued our web site. We have a dedicated page on Facebook. You can see it by searching for "North Alabama VHPA" in the search bar in Facebook. Feel free to visit us there.

The North Alabama Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the second Tuesday of most months at 4:30 PM (1630). 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 through Facebook. Come on out!! We know all those war stories need to get out of your system. We need new ones.

Ralph Weber



BG (Ret) Bob Stewart is flanked by his wife Mary and daughter at his Hall of Heroes induction dinner.



Teresa White being presented the Deceased Vietnam Veteran' Surviving Spouse Certificate of Honor by NAVHPA President Marshall Eubanks.



NAVHPA spouses Carol Weand and Diane Weber are literally, "up to their eyeballs" as they fluff wreaths on November 1st, 2022.



Sam Maki rides with boxes of wreaths at Maple Hill Cemetery during wreath placing on November 16th, 2022.



BUC-3 was a hit for many veterans and nonveterans in Cullman on November 5th



NAVHPA spouses Sharon Eubanks and Anne (Ethel) Davis coordinating activities at the fluffing area, while Member Gil Fluhr is watching the sign in desk.



Some of the more than 2800 veteran's, graves decorated with wreaths in place at Maple Hill Cemetery.



Sadly, this was the last stop for the B-17G, "Texas Raiders", before it was destroyed in a mid-air collision a week later.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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

Photographs by Cliff Lawson

Since our last chapter article we've had one in-person meeting and due to weather we held our November meeting via Zoom for a total of 28 members attending.

We were invited to attend The Vietnam Showcase hosted by the Wings Over the Rockies Museum held at the Exploration of Flight (EOF) located at Centennial Airport. It was a three day event October 21, 22, and 23. Terry Olson, our Operation Officer, maintained communication with Wings Over the Rockies to ensure continuity was kept between the Chapter and the Wings over the Rockies Staff, which included Ann Beardoll, event coordinator, Dereck Isaac, ramp coordinator, and Keith, ramp hand, who ensured that we had everything we needed.

Besides our Vietnam Helicopter War Museum, Gary Worthy brought his OH-6 Helicopter. It was a BIG hit once again. The Loach was constantly surrounded by visitors. The Loach came in by trailer and was flown off to make it easier to move around and for visitors to be able to view it. Gary's Pilot, Roddy even gave a few rides the day of arrival before making it ready for static display.

We had over 300 visitors by the Exploration Museums count, but many more attended. It was never overwhelming which gave us time to interact with each guest. Everyone was very engaging. I even had a chance to give BG John Barry, CEO of Wings over the Rockies a personal tour. I also had a very meaningful conversation with Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee was a refugee of the Vietnam War who immigrated to the U.S. at age 15. He and his Father were able to board a C-130 to Clark AFB one week prior to the fall of South Vietnam. He really appreciated the fact that we flew the South Vietnamese Flag. Mr. Lee's Son is stationed at Buckley and was just selected to be a member of the Space Force. Mr. Lee's visit provided us with a very special moment.

The following Docents were present: Bill Bates, Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Eric & Margret Brettschneider, Roddy Dill (pilot), Al & Dottie Harinck, Dale House, Cliff Lawson, (Cliff provided all of the accompanied photographs), Greg Mann, Doug Neil, Terry Olson, and Gary & Mona Worthy.

At the Denver Civic Center Veterans Day event we began early and had the Museum set up and ready to go by 0930. We had a few visitors before the Parade started at 10:00. Then, at 11:45 the winds came up, just about the time the Parade ended. We were scrambling to take down the tent and put away the T-Shirts and other memorabilia when quite a few people from the parade and bystanders came by the trailer who took refuge inside. Rick remarked, "I have not seen that many people inside the Museum at once in a long time".

In the mean time because the wind intensified, the event organizers came by and told us we would have to shut down. We could see many vendor canopies were flying across the park. Despite having a whole lot of visitors still in the trailer, we began taking down the rest of the displays.



Museum setup & Docents @ Denver Civic Center .Park



Visitor learning to fly a helicopter with docents Carl Cavalluzzi & Doug Niel.



Another visitor candidate with docent Al Harinck.



With tears in our eyes Museum leaving Denver.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Our docents were Rick Beaver, Carl and Barbara Cavalluzzi, Phil Lanphier, Mike Poindexter, Terry Olson, Doug Neil, Ben Prieb and I.

Still, we had a whole lot of fun. We taught them how to fly the Huey, put the helmet on them to make them "Real Helicopter Pilots", and passed around the Chicken Plate with AK-47 holes.

I was with a retired Air Force Couple and I responded to the question, "How did you get in the Army?" Of course, I took them on a journey from our "Time Line". The Brochure's and the Draft Notice provided the beginnings. Then, for some unexplained reason, that led us into the first lines from the Fix'n to Die Rag by Country Joe and the Fish. Another visitor joined in and soon we were all singing the first lines to the Song:

*c'mon all you big strong men
Uncle Sam needs your help again
he's got himself in a terrible jam
way down yonder in Vietnam
so put down your books and pick up a gun
we're gonna have a whole lot of fun*

.....

But we had to leave, so with tears in our eyes we packed up the rest and retired the Museum till next year.

Weir Trucking with the assistance of the former owner Dennis Poirier, driving the tractor, transported the Museum to the "Wings Over The Rockies, Exploration of Flight Museum at Centennial Airport", and the Denver Civic Center Park for Veterans Day Events.

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 Healthy.

**Dale House
President**



Getting Loach ready to fly off of Trailer.



Loach on Display.



Terry Olson and Dale House telling war Stories.



Greg Mann in conversation with Keith.



Vietnam Showcase OV-1 Bird Dog.



The HWM in front of the EOF for Vietnam Showcase.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The November/December Aviator had an incorrect caption. The below photo is republished with a corrected caption. The chapter has nothing more for the January/February issue. *The staff of the Aviator regrets this mistake.*

Don Abrams, Chapter President

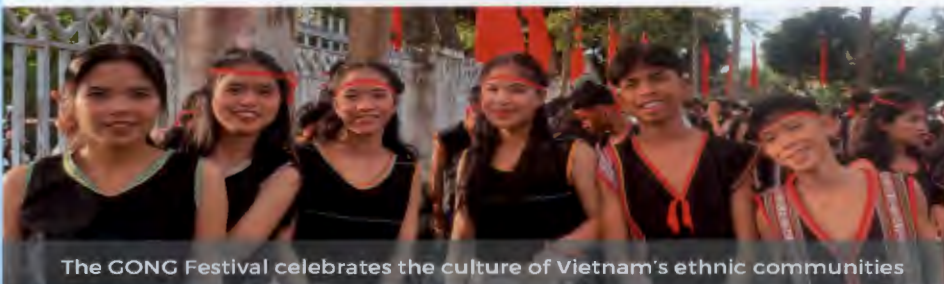


Left to right Jim Bankston, Mrs Bankston, Neil Lee, Orv Smidt, Mrs Huemoller, Steve Huemoller, Rick Koehnen, Don Abrams, Bill Geyer, Mrs Geyer, Tom Swanson, Mrs Swanson, Mrs Ryan, Dennis Ryan (Old Dominion Chapter), Keith Aakre.



FRIENDS OF VINH SON ORPHANAGE (FVSO), KONTUM, VIETNAM 100% of all donations go to the kids!

Friends of Vinh Son is a non-profit organization, providing support for over 700 Montagnard children who live in 7 orphanage sites in the Kontum/Pleiku area of Vietnam. For over 20 years, FVSO donations have delivered food and medicine, dental care, education, clean water, and so much more.



The GONG Festival celebrates the culture of Vietnam's ethnic communities

Held in Kontum at the end of October, the Gong Festival was a wonderful opportunity for ethnic minority students to share their music, dancing and tribal costumes. Children from 16 public schools were organized into teams, creating a light hearted competition. 100 kids from Vinh Son joined the festivities. It was truly a special day, providing a chance for older kids to teach the youngsters about their heritage.

ENDORSED BY

PATRICK LEARY

VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOT ASSOCIATION
LIFE MEMBER

FVSO PRESIDENT

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501(c)(3) charity non-profit organization

bay as night approached. Fortunately, all of our pilots were Vietnam veterans with more than a thousand flying hours, so we pressed on despite extremely poor visibility and occasional hurricane force winds. We hated to see patients go by ambulance bus, so we established low level flight paths such as passing over a large recreation center when leaving Yokota, taking up a heading to a red topped school, next to a railroad station, and then on and on to our intended destination.

As mentioned earlier, Rankin Airfield was on a hill overlooking main post, but lower ranking officers lived about five miles away, so the issue of lunch came up. We could bring lunch, drive home through heavy traffic, or slip down the hill to the Officer's Club less than a mile away. The latter seemed to be our best choice, so we checked with the Club NCO to see whether flight suits could be worn in the club. He told us it wouldn't be a problem, but the Chief of Staff vetoed it.

Shortly thereafter, Major Howard (Howie) Dean arrived to command the USARJ Flight Detachment. Howie was a character and quickly became a friend. He was a combat arms officer who knew medics well because part of one foot had been shot off in Vietnam and he spent several months recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Because of his injury, he couldn't fly his U-8 airplane alone because he couldn't depress the brake pedal hard enough to stop on the short runway at Camp Zama. Three of us medevac pilots were fixed wing qualified too, so we flew with him when needed. We asked him to raise the flight suit issue and he got the policy changed.

I'll be the first to admit that we brought a lot of grief on ourselves while there. In my mind, aviators are like paratroopers. They may be okay as individuals, but as a group, they can be unbearable. After the flight suit policy was changed, Howie and his two pilots began joining us for lunch, so eight or ten pilots would pile into several cars and the jokes and war stories would begin as we headed for the Club. It didn't take long before we laid claim to a large table in the center of the dining room and the waitresses began saving it for us.

When we would walk in, the sedate atmosphere of the Zama Officer's Club changed. We were loud and boisterous but kept it in good taste most of the time and the other officers and civilians seemed to like us. They understood we were having harmless fun and I believe some envied our way of reducing stress. They knew we had been to Vietnam; were flying our butts off there in Japan; and all would be going back to Vietnam soon while most of them had not been "Down South" as we called Vietnam. No one seemed offended, except for the

Chief of Staff.

As they were entering or leaving, many Club patrons stopped by our table to listen to our jokes or pass along words of good cheer, but the Chief of Staff sat in the far corner of the dining room with his select group of friends and spent much of his time glaring at us. One day, we were having a loud discussion about something and didn't see him coming. As he walked past our table, he snorted, "Aviators, huh!" and walked out.

We paid him back for that comment! All of you know the loud "wop, wop, wop" sound a Huey's rotor blades make and how you can increase its intensity by bottoming pitch and turning sharply to the right. The Chief of Staff's house was located just off the south end of the runway, so after his "Aviators, huh!" remark, we would often fly down the runway at night, headed towards his house. Just before reaching the end of the runway, we'd bottom the pitch and suck the aircraft around in a tight, right-hand turn. I'm sure his dishes rattled wildly each time we did that, and I can only imagine how annoying it was at 2 AM. He would complain about the noise, and we'd lighten up for a while, but then a Navy carrier had a terrible accident in the South China Sea when an ammunition bunker caught fire and several sailors were burned badly.

As I recall, 40 sailors were treated in the Philippines and flown to Japan on a Special Air Mission (SAM) flight. They arrived about 10 PM and we launched three helicopters to transport them from Yokota to Kishine Barracks. After they had been delivered, we fell into a loose trail formation and headed home about midnight. Along the way, Si Simmons suggested waking up the Chief of Staff, so all of us went screaming down the runway and made really tight turns.

By now, Colonel Orr had been promoted to brigadier general and lived next to the airfield, so I wasn't surprised when he called early the next morning and asked, "What were you guys doing out so late last night?" I replied, "Sir, we were transporting the burn patients from the carrier." General Orr said, "Okay." I then asked, "Why sir? Is something wrong?" He replied, "Nothing is wrong. The Chief of Staff is upset about the noise again, but I'll take care of him." We didn't hear any more during his remaining time in Japan, but we continued to rattle the Chief's dishes occasionally. We shouldn't have done that. It was childish, but a lot of fun.

About a year later, a combat arms major general arrived to command USARJ. He had a clear understanding of our mission and praised the work we did. His house was located next to the airfield and we'd often

find him sitting in our operations shack talking with the radio operator or walking along the flight line when we returned from missions at night and on weekends, so we believed we could do no wrong from that time on.

Our workload increased significantly in 1967 and 1968 as the build-up in Vietnam entered its final stages. The TET Offensive of 1968 kept us hopping and stretched our capability to its limit. The TET attacks began on the night of 30 January and hospitals across Vietnam quickly filled with casualties. We felt the surge on 7 February when C-141s began arriving, nose to tail, at Yokota. We transported 7057 patients during February and almost that many in March. Many were Marines from those awful battles around Hue and the northern border. Some were wearing dirty fatigues and had nasty combat dressings covering their wounds. They were being sent out of Vietnam on anything moving and wound up in our laps in Japan.

After two short years in Japan, Vietnam called and the initial group of us was sent "Down South" again. In retrospect, those two years were among my finest.

We had a great group of officers and men who worked extremely hard to support a solid mission. It was one of those rare assignments where everyone felt good about their work. Rather than subjecting seriously wounded or burned patients to a ride of several hours in an ambulance bus through horrendous Japanese traffic, we moved them quickly and comfortably.

I was reviewing workload reports not long ago and saw that our tiny unit transported 62,525 patients during that two-year period. Quite a few told us they were either Army helicopter pilots or crewmen, so we felt a special kinship with them.

By Doug Moore

If any reader of this article was transported by us during the period summer of 1966 to summer of 1968, I would appreciate an email telling me how you are doing all these years later. Please contact me at: Dmoore78@Comcast.net.



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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.

I apologize to Mr. Bobbie Spencer, and his friends and colleagues, whose name was accidentally associated with the details for Robert N. Spencer. The correct entry is printed below. Bobbie is still with us. ~Tom Kirk

***Spencer, Robert N. USA; Flight Class: 69-14; RVN: 69-71 238 AWC, 71 HHC/268 CAB; Callsigns: Gunrunner 16/Lightning 8.**



Robert N. Spencer, age 74 of Plymouth, passed away September 1, 2021. Bob was born in Sioux City IA and moved to Minnesota in 1962. He graduated from Robbinsdale High School. He was a veteran of three Vietnam tours.

Bassett, Larry S. USA; Flight Classes: 67-25/67-23.



Larry S Bassett, age 74, of San Antonio TX passed away on November 3, 2021. Larry was born August 10, 1947. No other information provided.

Beasley, William A. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 61-1; RVN: 66-67 146 AVN, 69-70 214 CAB 135 AHC; DFC, BS; Callsigns: Lonely Ringer/Cougar 5/Emu 6.



On March 3, 2021, LTC (Ret) William Allen (Bill) Beasley, of Copperas Cove TX flew his Huey high in the sky through the Gates of Heaven to his landing zone of eternal peace. He was born in Petersburg VA, Bill was a graduate of Texas A&M University, Class of 1958, and a member of the Corps of Cadets. Upon graduation, he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army where he immediately enrolled in Flight School.

Following his retirement, he continued

his public work with the US Postal Service, where he retired as the Postmaster of Copperas Cove.

He is survived by his loving wife, Ann.

Beatty, Gordon J. USA; Flight Classes: 71-1/70-49; RVN: 71-72 3/17 CAV; BS; Callsign: War Wagon 18.



Gordon Beatty was born on January 2, 1948. He died on September 30, 2022. He grew up in Van Nuys CA.

After a tour in Hawaii, he moved to Colorado to fly helicopters for Ptarmigan doing wildlife surveys. His next position was with the public service company of Colorado, flying long range helicopters transporting employees to various locations. Several years later, he was reassigned to flying Lear jets when they eliminated the helicopter program.

After he retired, he spent a lot of time working on computers, and cooking and was fascinated by new technology.

Brown, Aaron P. USA; Flight Class: 71-8; RVN: 71 C/158 AVN 101 ABN; SS, BS; Callsign: Phoenix 33.



Aaron P. Brown passed away after a fall in his residence at Eagle Mountain Lake on December 28, 2021 at the age of 76. Aaron was born and raised in Fort Worth TX. After graduating in 1964 from Eastern Hills High School, he immediately joined the Army at the start of the Vietnam War. He rose from the rank of private to retire as a Major after 22 years of service.

While in the military, Aaron earned a Bachelor's degree from Emory University and a Master's degree from USC. Following his retirement, Aaron served as Program Manager and Manager of Business Devel-

opment for several defense and aerospace contracting firms, travelling all over the world.

***Bryan, Thomas F. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 58-12FW; RVN: 65 173 AHC, 66 229 AHB 1 CAV, 71-72 VNAF; SS, DFC, LM, PH (2); Callsigns: Robin-hood/Yankee Clipper 6.**

Thomas Francis Bryan passed away on 26 May 2022 at age 91.

After 25 years in the Army, Tom retired in 1977 and began a career in real estate. He was also involved in several civic groups including Rotary International, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Knights of Columbus, and Military Officers Association of America.

***Clergy, Paul H. USA; Flight Class: 70-27; RVN: 70-71 A/3/17 CAV, 70-71 334 AHC; PH; Callsigns: Silver Spur 13/Gremlin 38.**



Paul Henry Clergy, 80, of West Des Moines IA passed away on November 12, 2022 at Iowa Methodist Medical Center. It was his 80th birthday. Paul was born in Des Moines IA and grew up on the Southside. On November 30, 1963 he married Joan Lair and to this union Kelly Rae was born.

Paul was a very talented bowler and spent a lot of his time throughout the years bowling in leagues and tournaments. He was eventually inducted into the prestigious Greater Des Moines Bowling Hall of Fame in 2008 of which he was so proud. Paul was a member of several clubs including: The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and Good Guys Car Club. He was very proud of the beautiful flowers he grew.

***Duvall, Joseph E. USA; Flight Classes: 68-13/68-21; RVN: 68-69 116 AHC; PH, ACM; Callsigns: Hornet 31/Stinger 91.**



Joseph "Joe" Ephraim Duvall of Orlando FL, passed away on October 7, 2016. Joseph was born January 16, 1942 in Jacksonville FL. He graduated from Dan McCarty High and received a Bachelor's degree of Design from the University of Florida.

Joe was employed as an Account Executive at Creative Printing and Publishing. He enjoyed work and only retired a few years prior to his passing.

***Ewing, Gerald H. USA; Flight Classes: 66-23/66-17; RVN: 67-68 240 AHC; DFC; Callsign: Greyhound 25.**



Gerald H. (Jerry) Ewing, a distinguished Vietnam combat pilot and information technologist, died October 10, 2022, at the Lake Nona VA Medical Center in Orlando FL after a lengthy illness. He was born on October 29, 1946, in Savannah GA. Due to his father's military career, he attended and played football for Berlin American High School, Fairfax VA., Silver Spring MD., and Orlando FL.

After his military service, Jerry began a career in information technology and systems management with Perot Systems and progressed to management and executive positions with other companies in the field.

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Suzanne.

***Frady, Edwin N. USA; Flight Class: 69-48; RVN: 69-70 A/7/1 CAV; SS, BS, PH (6 OLC); Callsigns: Apache 3/AAE 326.**



Edwin Niolon Frady (Ed) of Cocoa Beach FL, passed away on November 13, 2022. He was born December 27, 1945, in Denton TX, where he grew up. Ed attended North Texas University.

After returning from Vietnam, he completed a computer science degree at Stanford University and a law degree at Universi-

ty of San Francisco. As a civilian, Ed practiced law as an Assistant US District Attorney in California before being appointed to the White House staff serving under Jimmy Carter - this appointment was followed by 16 years with IBM in various roles.

Upon retirement from corporate life, Ed owned and ran a Texas Longhorn ranch with multiple world champions produced from that operation and later did the same with cutting horses. Ever the entrepreneur and businessman, Ed also founded and ran an Internet based streaming service for Western shows and Cowboy Church programming. After selling the ranch and related business(es), Ed and his wife, Marsha, moved to Florida.

Ed was a long-time member of Iredell Masonic Lodge #405 and was also a Shriner.

He is survived by his wife, Marsha.

***Gabrielson, John E. USA; Flight Classes: 67-501/67-23; RVN: 68 2 BDE 25 INF, 68-69 D/3/4 CAV 25 INF; Callsign: CENTAUR.**



John E Gabrielson of Port Orchard WA was born May 29, 1944 and died on October 11, 2021. No other information provided

***Giese, William USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 61-6Q/57-2; RVN: 66-67 162 AHC, 67 11 CAB, 68 238 AVN, 71 1 AVN BDE, 72 EAGLE CAB; DSSM, LM, DFC, BS, MSM, ACM; Callsigns: Copperhead 16/Red Dog 1/Eagle 6.**



William (Bill) Giese II died September 2, 2022 in West Palm Beach FL. He was 88 years old. Bill grew up in Racine WI where he began his lifelong passion for the game of golf.

Bill, knowing that one needed a degree to advance in rank, earned his Bachelor's Degree at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1962. Upon returning from Korea, Bill earned his Master's Degree from American University in Ft. Benning GA in 1963. He attended Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth KS. In

addition, he was selected for the Army War College of Carlisle Barracks PA where he attended with Colin Powell.

Bill Giese completed 30 years, 8 months of active military service; moved or re-assigned 24 times and traveled extensively while getting a college (Masters) degree. He is also honored in the US Army Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame.

After retirement, Bill moved back to Hawaii to become the Executive Director of the Aloha Division of the PGA. It was a dream job that he loved passionately, and the perks were amazing!

He is survived by his former-spouse, Elizabeth.

Hague, James M. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-17/68-29; RVN: 68-69 114 AHC; BS, PH (OLC).



James "Jim" Michael Hague passed away on October 28, 2022 in his hometown of San Antonio TX. He was born in Corpus Christi TX in May of 1944.

After High School, Jim lived a long and eventful life and had the rare distinction of serving in two branches of the armed forces. He served with distinction on the Navy diesel submarine Halfbeak where Jim was the lead Sonar Technician and was involved with many Cold War missions off the coast of the USSR during the early to mid-1960s. After his enlistment in the Navy was complete, and after earning his private pilot's license, Jim decided to join the Army.

After Vietnam, in 1975 Jim took a two-year break from the military, moving back to his hometown of San Antonio where he drove VIA buses for the city of San Antonio. In 1977, Jim rejoined the Army.

After his service, Jim still loved learning and felt like he had to complete his education. He returned to college to finish his bachelor's degree in computer science, a skill that interested him since the time he worked with computers in the Army. He persevered in earning his degree while battling PTSD.

He is survived by his wife, Lumpun "Nitnoy" Miyabe.

***Harris, Jon N. USA; Flight Classes: 69-13/69-11; RVN: 69-70 1 BDE 1 CAV; BS; Callsign: Little Luke.**



Jon Harris of Columbus GA, passed away on November 18, 2022. He was born July 16, 1948 in Cincinnati OH. He was a graduate of Hardaway High School (1967) and Columbus College.

Jon worked for Burnham Service Corporation and the W.C. Bradley Company of Columbus, GA.

He is survived by his loving wife, Lynn.

***Holm, Kenneth L. USMC; Flight Class: 65; RVN: 65-66 HMM-362, 69-70 HMM-265.**



Kenneth LeRoy Holm died in his sleep on January 15, 2020, in his home at West Hills Village. He was born at home on June 15, 1938 in Aberdeen SD. He graduated from Ipswich High School in 1956 and was recruited and offered a full scholarship to play football at SDSU. He graduated with a degree in Wildlife Conservation in 1960.

Ken joined the Marine Corps in 1961 and served for 21 years. Ken was a Command Pilot with HMX1 Presidential Marine Helicopter Squadron, flying Presidents Nixon and Ford. He was inducted into the South Dakota Aviators Hall of Fame in 2001. After retirement from the Marine Corps, Ken started his second career serving the state of South Dakota Job Service for 20 years.

Honea, John USA; Flight Classes: 68-14/68-22; RVN: 68-69 B/1 AVN 1 INF; Callsign: Rebel 21.



John Edward Honea, of College Station, passed away in his home on March 5, 2017. He was born on July 24, 1943. He was a native of Kerrville TX, and came to College Station to attend Texas A&M University, class of 1965, graduating with a degree in Wildlife and Fishery Sciences.

After military service, John began working

for Texas A&M University as an employee benefits representative and, over the course of his 27-year career, rose to become the Executive Director of Risk Management for the Texas A&M University System. He relocated to Colorado where he served as Administrator for the University of Colorado Insurance pool, as well as the Chief Executive Officer for the University of Colorado Risk and Insurance Management Fund. John retired in July 2007, later returning to College Station to be closer to family and friends.

***Ingraham, James M. USA; Flight Class: 67-20; RVN: 66-67 A/1/9 CAV, 68 B/3/17 CAV; Callsign: Stogie 16.**

James Ingraham was born on September 12, 1935. He died on January 12, 2018. No other information provided.

***Isenmann, Lester G. USA; Flight Class: 55; RVN: 66-67 205 ASHC; Callsign: Geronimo.**

Lester Isenmann of Riverside CA, died on June 5, 2018. He was born on January 15, 1934. No other information provided.

Jackson, Milton R. USMC; Flight Class: 68; RVN: 69 HMM-265, 69 HMM-16, 69 H&MS-36; Callsign: High-boy.



Milton Reed Jackson, local fashion icon, chocolate connoisseur, and accomplished collector of "things," died on December 26, 2020 at the age of 78.

After his years in the military, Reed was tired of taking orders. He decided to enter law school so he could finally be the boss. (naturally). Reed's love of family extended to Fairfield's community, which he called home for the better part of 45 years. He served wherever possible, from the Fairfield City Council to various committees at the First United Methodist Church. He viewed his community and the people in it as an extension of his own family and made every effort to take care of his friends and neighbors as such.

Reed was a longtime Master Mason; it

was a very important part of his life. He held many offices in both the Fairfield Lodge #103 A.F. & A.M. but also Robert E. Lee Lodge #431 A.F. & A.M. in Henderson TX. He twice served as Worshipful Master of Fairfield Lodge. He also served in many offices in the Grand Lodge of Texas including District Instructor twice, District Education Officer, Grand Representative, District Communications Officer and District Deputy Grand Master for Masonic District 22. His Masonic service also extended to various committees of the Grand Lodge of Texas including member of the Masonic Jurisprudence Committee for eight years and Vice Chairman of the Mediation Committee (#1 West) for four years and a member of the Mediation Committee (#2 East) for an additional three years.

His greatest passion in life was music. Beginning with the Mexia Blackcat Band, continuing into college with the SMU Mustang Band. Throughout his life, Reed played in multiple orchestras and jazz ensembles and sang in the church choir. Music was always present in his life to the end. He even had plans to learn the bagpipes, much to his family's protest.

***Jones, Harold L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 58-16; RVN: 63-64 611 TC CO, 64 114 AVN, 67 HHC 223 CAB, 67-68 HHC 17 CAG, 71 HHC 1 AVN BDE, 71-72 USARVHSG.**

Harold Jones was born on June 13, 1937. He died on January 12, 2022. No other information provided.

***Kubas, Michael J. USA; Flight Class: 59-1; RVN: 60 4 AVN 4 INF, 64 25 AVN 25 INF, 65 1 BDE 25 INF, 68 USARV-SUPCMD.**

Michael Kubas of San Jose CA, died on February 11, 2018. He was born in Los Angeles CA on August 3, 1933. No other information provided.



TAPS

***Lease, Jack A. Sr. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 69-7; RVN: 65-66 117 AHC, 69-70 361 AWC; ACM; Callsign: Panther 32.**



We said our final farewell to beloved husband, father, and grandfather, Jack Alan Lease Sr., on August 11, 2022. Jack passed in the comfort of his home of 28 years, surrounded by his closest loved ones, after what he would call "a life well lived." Jack was born on May 21, 1946 in Fort Ashby WV.

After his decades of service to the United States Army, Jack settled with his family in Arizona where he worked at The Boeing Company until his retirement in 2010.

He is survived by his loving wife, Betty.

Luhrsen, David A. USMC; Flight Class: 4-65; RVN: 65-66 HMM-362.



David Alden "Dave" Luhrsen passed away on September 19, 2022, in Tampa. David was born on September 23, 1941. He was a National Merit Scholar in High School before accepting a Naval ROTC Scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania, from which he graduated and entered the United States Marine Corps in early May 1963.

He left the Marine Corps in 1969 and later graduated from Jacksonville University, the University of Tampa and the University of South Florida with two Ph.D. degrees. He worked as a real estate executive, college Professor and Dean, and, finally, as a private coach and mentor for senior business leaders.

He was a church elder, proud Rotarian and lifelong Chicago Cubs fan. His career achievements, recognitions, and charitable works are too numerous to list.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 60 years, Jill.



***Lyssy, Fred E. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 63-6; RVN: 65-66 D/1/4 CAV 1 INF, 69 HHC/11 CAB, 69 IIFV, 69-70 C/3/17 CAV; Callsigns: Clown 2/Charley Horse 6.**



Fred Edward Lyssy passed away peacefully on October 10, 2022, surrounded by his wife of 60 years, Cathy, his four children, their families, and his brother Walter with his wife Kathie.

He was a proud Graduate of the Army War College. Many have described Fred as a true American patriot and hero.

After his military retirement, he spent another entire career with Lockheed Martin and retired as a Vice President of Information Systems. From a small South Texas farming community, to earning his college degree and eventually his master's degree from Texas Tech University to the many commendations and awards throughout his military career, Fred was always humble about his accomplishments.

His charitable activities included serving with the Knights of Columbus, serving with the St. Pius X Arboreans taking care of the church grounds, volunteered doing taxes for under-resourced families, and just giving time to whoever might need help. He was also active in the local chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

He is survived by his wife, Kathie.

Papin, Edward W. USA; Flight Class: 69-15; RVN: 69-70 1/11 ACR, 70-71 C/2/17 CAV 101 ABN, 71-72 D/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; Callsigns: Thunder Horse 11/Condor 11.

Edward W Papin of San Antonio TX passed away on October 25, 2022. He was born on May 2, 1948. No other information provided.

Pode, Dean A. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 70-3/70-1; RVN: 70-71 11 ACR; Callsigns: Red 17/Air Cav Troop.



Dean Allen Pode passed away November 22, 2022. He was born on December 18, 1949, in Mount Clemens MI.

Dean started the U of M Survival Flight program in 1983 and was also a flight instructor for the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. All-told, Dean flew more than 25,000 flight hours in multiple aircraft. Most recently, he became a member of the Lansing Hangar of Ye Ancient & Secret Order of Quiet Birdmen. Dean was honored to take the Talon Honor Flight to Washington D.C. to visit the Vietnam Memorial just one month before he passed away.

He is survived by his wife, Mary.

Randall, Gaylen N. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 65-15W/65-13W; RVN: 66 D/3/4 CAV, 69-70 B/159 ASHB 101 AB, 70 HHC 158 AVN 101 ABN; Callsigns: Centaur 32/Varsity 32/Lighting 32.



Gaylen Neil Randall, 78, passed away on October 21, 2022 with his family surrounding him. He was born and raised in Saint Joseph MO.

He found his passion for flying through the United States Army when he enlisted in 1965 and attended flight school. One of his greatest honors was flying Army One for President Nixon from 1970-1974. He retired from the Army in 1993 and made his home in Savannah GA. Even though he retired from the Army and made a new life outside of it, Gaylen's heart never left the love he had for his country, flying, and friends behind. This could be found in his active participation in attending reunions and keeping in touch with those he flew with throughout his years.

He is survived by his wife, Bernadec.

Rev. Schmidt, Steven J. USA; Flight Class: 69-9; RVN: 69-70 1 INF DIV, 70 B/3/17 CAV; SS, DFC (2 OLC), BS, PH (4 OLC); Callsigns: Ghost Rider Serria/Stoggie 13.



On November 2, 2022, Rev. Dr. Steven James Schmidt succumbed to complications of a heart attack. Steven was born June 6, 1947, in Grand Rapids MI. He graduated

ed from Sparta High School in 1965 and attended Northern Michigan University on a wrestling scholarship. He then enlisted in the United States Army.

After a successful business career, Steven answered the call to full-time vocational ministry in 1980. He attended seminary, and eventually earned a Masters in Theology and Doctorate in Divinity. Pastor Steve first served as the Minister of Evangelism at North Parkersburg Baptist Church in West Virginia, and then as the Senior Pastor at Porterfield Baptist Church in Little Hocking, Ohio. In 1990, he became the Senior Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Chillicothe, OH, where he faithfully served for the next two decades until his retirement. Not one to stay completely retired, he soon agreed to serve on a part-time basis at Laurel Valley Baptist Church. Pastor Steve went on numerous mission trips, to Jamaica, Russia, and Ukraine. He served on the Ohio Baptist Convention Board of Trustees; as President of the Ohio Ministers Council; as a board member of American Baptist Churches USA and International Ministries USA; and as Chaplain for the Ross County Sheriff's Office.

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

***Smith, Charles H. USA, CW4 Ret.;** Flight Class: 63-2WT; RVN: 65-66 1 INF DIV, 67 7/1 CAV, 67-68 AH-1G NETT; DFC. MSM, ACM; Callsigns: Night Hawk Charlie/Sandpiper 26.

Charles H. (Sonny) Smith, 79, of Enterprise AL, died on April 11, 2018, after a lengthy illness. Smith was a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Sonny was also recognized as the 2008 Man of the Year. He was a member of the Enterprise Lions Club and was awarded the 2008 Lion of the Year and the recipient of the prestigious Melvin Jones award.

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

Smith, Stanley H. USA; Flight Class: 68-2; RVN: 68-69 A/3/17 CAV, 69 187 AHC; Callsign: Rat Pack 35.



Stanley (Stan) Smith of Flowery Branch GA, began his eternal journey on August 13, 2022. Stan was born November 8, 1935 in Washington DC.

He is survived by his wife, Paulina.

***Sperling, Richard A. USA, COL Ret.;** Flight Class: 66-14; RVN: 66-67 155 AHC, 67 188 AHC; DSC, LM, MSM (OLC); Callsigns: Stagecoach 2/Black Widow 13.



Richard A. Sperling passed away at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek on October 6, 2022 after a short and unexpected illness. His devoted wife Marilyn and their son Crosby were by his side. He was 80 years old.

After graduating from Seaholm High School, Richard majored in Business and Psychology at Western Michigan University, minored in Military Science, completed the ROTC program, and earned a Bachelor's degree along with Distinguished Military Graduate honors in 1965.

As a civilian, Col. Sperling was a commercial pilot with United Airlines, flying the Douglas DC-8, Boeing 727, 737, 757, 767, and finished that career on trans-pacific routes in the B747-400. Between his military and civilian careers, he had logged over 16,000 flying hours.

Richard was an active member of the Legion of Valor, founded in 1890, for which he served as National Commander from 1986-87 and as Historian for many years. He was also a member of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley, Delta Chi Fraternity, Quiet Birdmen, and honoree on the Fort Knox ROTC Hall of Fame.

In retirement, Richard volunteered as Assistant Scoutmaster and Aviation Merit Badge Counselor for BSA Troop 221, as well as Young Eagles flight coordinator through EAA (Experimental Aircraft

Association) Chapter 393 where he was also a member.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 35 years, Marilyn.

Squires, Myron E. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 58-7; RVN: 66-67 D/3/4 CAV 25 INF, 68-69 1 SIG BDE.DFC (OLC), BS (2 OLC), ACM (2 OLC).



Myron "Mike" Edward Squires of Big Canoe GA, passed away on October 16, 2022. After several months of declining health, Mike died peacefully with his beloved wife, Dale, and daughter, Sally, by his side. Mike was born in Muskegon MI, on September 6, 1933. Mike lived in several places growing up as his father served 29 years in the U.S. Coast Guard. While his father served as the Command Officer of a Coast Guard ship homeported in St. Petersburg FL, where Mike went to high school. In 1956, he graduated from the University of Florida in Gainesville FL.

In November 2021, Mike was officially inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame (for Valor) having been nominated by several of the men whose lives he had saved in Vietnam. However, you would never hear Mike speak a word of his service, combat tours, or heroic gallantry – he was a quiet and humble hero.

Following his retirement from the Army, Mike held a second dedicated career as the Clinic Administrator for the Family Medical Group of Cleveland MS.

He is survived by his wife, Linda "Dale" Ayers.

Taylor, Samuel Sr. USA; Flight Class: 67-13; RVN: 68 147 ASHC, 68-69 205 ASHC; PH; Callsigns: Hill-climber/Geronimo.



Samuel Taylor, Sr. was born in Bessemer AL on July 29, 1936. Samuel Hill was later adopted by the late Andy E. Taylor and his name was changed to Samuel Taylor.

At the tender age of 14 years old,

Samuel enlisted in the United States Army, until being discovered he was under-aged, he was discharged. Once Samuel reached the appropriate age, he re-enlisted in the United States Army.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah.

Walker, Robert M. USA; Flight Class: 71-22; RVN: 71 173 AHC; Callsign: Robinhood.

Robert Walker died on September 28, 2021. No other information provided.

***Watson, Wayne M. USA; Flight Class: 67-3; RVN: 67 48 AHC, 67-68 192 AHC; Callsigns: Blue Star/Tiger Shark/Joker.**

Wayne Watson of St. Louis MO, died on July 14, 2022. He was born in north-east Philadelphia on June 21, 1947. Wayne was an active member of the St. Louis Woodworker's Guild serving as president, vice-president, and instructor. He also advised and assisted St. Louis area Boy Scouts in Eagle projects which involved woodworking.

After retiring from rehabbing historic homes in the Soulard area, Wayne led a team of fellow woodworkers in rebuilding a wooden vinegar rail car at the National Museum of Transportation in St. Louis County.

He is survived by his wife, Linda.

***Welch, Arthur J. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 70-44; RVN: 71-72 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV, 72 H/16 CAV, 72 F/9 CAV; Callsign: Swamp Fox.**



Arthur J. Welch passed away on October 5, 2022. He began his career in the United States Army in 1967 after graduation from the University of South Carolina. Upon graduation from Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning GA, in August 1968, he attended the Armor Officer Basic and Organizational Maintenance Officer Courses at Fort Knox KY.

Following his active duty, Arthur continued his military career in the Reserve

Components serving in assignment of increasing responsibility in both the National Guard and the Army Reserve, with a career spanning thirty-eight years.

Upon retirement from his career with General Motors and the military, Colonel Welch worked as a Site Leader for a military contractor in Hohenfels, Germany, providing validation scenarios for units deploying to Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Arthur held a Bachelor's Degree in Military History from the University of South Carolina, and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin.

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

***Wood, John L. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 61-7FW/63-3QC; RVN: 66-67 335 AHC, 70 HHC USARV, 70-71 271 ASHC; DFC (2 OLC).**



John Leonard Wood was born in 1937, in Baltimore MD. He died on January 1, 2020, in Towson, MD. He was 82. He graduated from the former St. Charles High School of Baltimore in 1954 and from Loyola University in Baltimore in 1958.

LTC Wood also served two years in Laos as a U.S. Army Attaché from 1974 to 1976. He earned an MBA from Georgia Southern University in 1972. He remained active in Vietnam War associations and publications.

He began a civil airport career in 1981 with the Maryland Aviation Administration, advancing to Associate Administrator – Operations, responsible for managing Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) Airport and oversight of aeronautical activities at 39 other public-use airports in Maryland. In addition, he was also a long-time aviation consultant, designing airport security for 34 airports and three air carriers. He had extensive knowledge of computerized/automated system technical design and construc-

tion/installation, and was principal of Condor Aviation. He served as an appointee for three terms on the aviation security committee of the Federal Transportation Research Board, and contributed to airport industry security issues through other national committees, including AAAE, ACI, and ACC.

He is survived by his loving wife, Mary.

***Woods, Kenneth R. USA; Flight Classes: 68-513/68-23; RVN: 68-69 189 AHC; Callsign: Avenger 5.**



Kenneth Ray "Ken" Woods of Elizabethtown KY, passed away July 31, 2022 at Baptist Health Hardin. He was born in Cloverport KY on June 9, 1946.

Ken was a self-employed computer programmer.

He is survived by his companion, Wanda Lawless.

Zawicki, Paul P. USA; Flight Classes: 68-515/68-27; RVN: 68-69 191 AHC; Callsign: Boomerang 23.

Paul P. Zawicki Jr., passed away on December 15, 2021 He is survived by his wife Concetta S. Zawicki (nee Fabrico). No other information provided.

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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.

Carlson, Ronald L. USA; Flight Class: 68-519/68-35; RVN: 69-70 192 AHC; died on January 3, 2022.

Carpenter, Steve L. USA; Flight Class: 71-11; died on October 28, 2022.

Harmon, Fern W. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-20; died on Oct. 1, 2022.

Linton, William R. USA; Flight Class: 67-15.

Martin, Roderick USCG, LCDR Ret.; RVN: 71 37 ARRS; died on Oct. 1, 2022.

Miller, George R. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 63-8; RVN: 64-65 119 AHC, 67-68 179 ASHC; died on September 30, 2022.

Mitchell, Robert L. USAF, BG Ret.; Flight Class: 70-47; RVN: 67-68 38 ARRS DET1; died on October 27, 2022.

Sails, Dale R. USA; Flight Class: 66-13; DFC; died in 2022.

Vote, Kenneth J. RAN, LCDR Ret.; RVN: 68-69 9 SQDN, 69 135 AHC; died on 22 Oct 2022.

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Selections from Past Newsletters
This issue's column is from March/April 1998
Helicopter forced to do zero, zero approach.
By Glenn Brown

One of our main missions in 2/20 ARA was flying rocket and mortar patrol at night out over the "rocket belt."

One night while flying out there over the foothills watching for flashes, a heavy bank of clouds rolled in from the sea. This was a bit more than your basic fog bank, but it was that, too.

As the clouds pushed in, it was like a wedge and rose to at least 3500 feet.

I had no problem staying above them for my hour and a half watch. The problem began when it was time for me to come down.

No holes in the overcast anywhere. It was very dark and got even darker when I entered the clouds. I had in mind to descend to about 1,000 feet above the ground and, if I had not broken out by then, I would call GCA (Ground Controlled Approach) out of Evans.

So, down we came.

At 1,500 feet, still in the clouds, I began to worry about the altimeter. Had I set it correctly before take-off? Had the barometric pressure changed greatly since then? Hundreds of other questions rattled around in my head.

I pulled in power and started climbing back up on top. In the patchy stuff at the top of the cloud layer, I could see some stars and felt much safer. I called Evans GCA and told him of my predicament.

The GCA controller said, "Turn right for radar identification." A wholly unnecessary request, I was the only idiot up there.

"Roger, turning right," I said. "Quebec One, say altitude?" "Roger, we are at 3,500 feet on top, over"

"Quebec One, this is Evans GCA, we have radar contact. Turn right to 160 degrees and descend to 2,000 feet."

"This is Quebec One, Roger."

And, with that, the commands were executed.

"OK, Quebec One, in just a minute I want you to start a standard rate descent... Start descent now."

"This is Quebec One, Roger."

"Very good, now start a standard rate turn to the right to 250 degrees, continuing your descent."

Quebec One, Roger."

"OK, Quebec One, from here on just listen and do as you are instructed. There is no need for you to acknowledge each transmission. You are slightly above glide slope, adjust your rate of descent... You are drifting slightly left, turn right to 253... You are slightly below glide slope, adjust your rate of descent... Now you are slightly right of approach path, turn left to 251... Slightly below glide slope, adjust your rate of descent... On glide slope and on approach angle, looking good... You are at 100 feet over the end of the runway; take

over visually and land your aircraft."

"Negatory, we do not have a visual on the ground!" I responded quickly.

All I could see was the eerie red glow of the instrument lights reflecting off the inside of the canopy.

Turning on the landing light would have been a disaster, like shining a bright light on a snowbank. It would blind you instead of helping.

"Make missed approach. Climb to and maintain 2000 feet. Continue to your alternate," he said matter-of-factly, and exactly by the book as he was taught back in the world.

"Negatory on that also. We are low on fuel. We may not even have enough fuel to go around. Get us on the ground!" I said with a bit of urgency in my voice.

The 20-minute fuel light may have been on, but I really do not remember with all the other things to watch and take care of. I do know we were too low on fuel to be trying another approach attempt at any other LZ. This shroud of weather was like a blanket covering every LZ in the area, the same as Evans.

"Roger, understand. Your altitude is now about 50 feet. We are starting to lose the contact; you are fading into the background... Continue with what you've got except reduce your rate of descent to 100 feet per minute."

"I'm ahead of you on that," I responded.

"You are off my screen, but you should be only about 10-15 feet off the ground now. Good luck."

He had done all he could do and then some.

All of my senses heightened to the point my body felt like I was about to explode. Seconds later, with the aircraft slowed to the point that I was losing my airspeed indicator (below 20 knots) and virtually zero rate of descent, I felt the heel of the left skid touch.

Immediately I slammed the collective down and planted the aircraft firmly on the ground. When I turned on the landing light, I could see the centerline of the runway in front of the aircraft. We were almost dead center on the runway, about two-thirds of the way down the strip.

I was so glad to be on the ground alive that I just left the aircraft right there in the center of the runway. I told the tower that if it wanted the aircraft moved that night, it could send a tractor and a maintenance crew with ground handling wheels and move it that way, and I shut it down right there.

The adrenaline left me, and I felt so weak I could hardly walk when I got out of the aircraft. For that mission, I should have received a medal of some kind, but I didn't get a reprimand either, so what the heck?

EDITOR'S NOTE: N.G. (Glenn) Brown served with C/2/20 ARA, 1st Cavalry Division, in 1968-69.

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