



# The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



*Cover story Page 24...*

*U.S. Navy CDR (Ret.) Mike Stock at a staging field.*

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

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

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

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# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I believe we had a great reunion. It was certainly great seeing and chatting (re-telling the same war stories) with life-long friends in the 1/9 Cav. You never know what you are going to get at a VHPA Reunion, but it is always great when it happens. They say America needs more heroes to inspire us. While that may be true for others, it's not true in the VHPA. You look around at a reunion and your mind takes you back to the Nam and you remember the Slick Pilot who would fly into hell on earth if you needed him . . . he could do things with a Huey that nobody taught you in Flight School. The Scout pilot (H-13 or Loach), yup - I am that old, he was better at finding targets than a Blue Tic Hound. Fellow Gun Pilots B&C models as well as Cobras that could make impossible shots in defense of their charge and were proficient Killers doing their job. Sometimes you get to meet again a CO, XO, Ops Officer or Platoon Leader you respected. You are 19 or 20 again, despite the gray/no hair and you are instantly ready to do it all again. Turns out they are not really just friends, they are and always will be your brothers!

Last time I promised you a little more about me and how I got here. I will do it quickly. Unlike one of my Brothers who claims to have been born in Brooklyn but raised in the Cav, I was born on Staten Island and raised in the NYC Projects. I was skilled in urban hostilities and offer as proof the fact I am here today. I saw it all, had some close calls but figured a way out. I enlisted in the Army to be a helicopter pilot. Flight School was great, I spent all my time there, weekends doing Taxi Time and other assignments to burn off my near-record gigs. The Tac cut me some slack after I allowed a Candidate on Restriction to go to Lunch with his visiting Grandmother without even checking with him first. Candidate Westmoreland was a good guy, and I liked his Grandmother, the General's Wife, almost instantly.

On to Ft. Rucker, and Slick Training. Slotted for the 90th Replacement Depot. Came back from Tac X and was told to check the assignments board as there had been some changes. Sure enough, I was now going to Savannah, GA. for Cobra school enroute to the 1st Cav. Here I am 19 years old and getting Cobras right



out of Flight School. A dream come true. Had a blast at Cobra School and found out I was a natural shot with rockets. I never missed, which not only surprised me but also surprised/amazed my Instructor. It was a talent that would serve me well in the then not so distant future. All good things end, time to go to Vietnam.

Assigned to the 1st of the 9th Cav in B Troop, I reported in at our rear HQ in the shadow of Monkey Mountain. I met Red, the Weapons Platoon Leader and he was surprised I was assigned to him as he was at full strength, 21 pilots. I told him I was Cobra qualified and he said that must be it, he was getting Cobras soon. He said he needed to get back up North as all hell was breaking loose up at Camp Evans. He said we will talk more when I got up to Evans. I never saw him again. So much for day one of the '68 TET Offensive. We got mortared that night and I would have died if it had not been for the Maintenance Officer who convinced me to go see the round-eye Australian Girls performing at the O club. Five minutes after our arrival, the Cobra I was admiring and supposed to fly North the next morning took a direct hit and minutes later was a small pile of ashes.

We dropped the Cobras at Red Beach to be armed and took an H model to Evans. As I got off, Bobby Zahn got on to go home. He asked if I was assigned to B Troop. I replied yes. He said Good Luck. In the early 1980s I met him again. His first words were - Glad you made it. I drank from the water hose during the aftermath of TET, learning everything I could from the ACs. Before you knew it, I too was an AC. Probably because we had six Cobras and three Cobra ACs. I became a competent AC and before I knew it it was time to go home. I had met all the heroes I would ever need and left my mark on the Troop.

All good things that happened after that were because of my service as a helicopter pilot in the Helicopter War. I ran for office to give back to the Greatest Veterans Association that has ever existed. If I could spell or type I would be a best-selling author. I guess being your President will have to do. Believe me, it is my Life's Great Honor.

~ Art Price

# FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

*R2021 has come and gone. The deadline for this article was before the reunion began so we sincerely hope everyone enjoyed themselves. Due to circumstances beyond everyone's control, this was a very difficult reunion for our staff to plan and we appreciate your patience & understanding while we worked thru items. Hopefully things will improve and R2022 in Tampa will be much easier for everyone!*

*Be sure to mark your calendar for May 26 – May 29, 2022,  
Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel.*

## REMINDERS:

■ THE DEADLINE HAS PASSED TO PRE-ORDER A 2021 DIRECTORY - Paper Directories purchased beginning September 1, 2021 will be for the 2022 directory that will be delivered in October 2022. The deadline for ordering the 2022 directory will be August 31, 2022.

■ The price for a pre-ordered copy of the paper directory is \$25.

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

■ Dues can be paid and a directory can be ordered on line via the On Line Directory at <https://directory.vhpa.org>!

PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF REMAINING ITEMS! If you move, PLEASE go on line to <https://directory.vhpa.org> and log in with your member number, then set up a password. Then on the left side will be a box with red lettering that says "Other Services". Under "Other Services" will be a box that says "Update My Information". Click on this button and you can make updates directly to your information. You can also call HQ with an update to your contact information!

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 informa-

tion 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 Office Manager



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# A RANDALL Knife ~

This is a personal story that spans 29 years. In 1970 while in primary training at Ft Wolters, a couple of Captains had returned from tours in 'Nam with two Randall knives whose previous owners didn't make it home.

Randal knives were prized combat knives since WWII. I had a strong chance of going over and believed I should have the "Attack Survivor" and not the "Attack" model. I had to, of course, check this out with my fairly-new bride Sarah and that delay caused me to have to very disappointedly settle for the "Attack" model. It was very formidable, but not the one I coveted.

I carried the knife to the 176th Assault Helicopter Company at Chu Lai in I Corps and over the course of time the knife became sort of a mascot for our unit. (guess it's a guy thing)

One very hot afternoon while on standby at Tien Phuc with five other slicks carrying ARVN troops, I had the knife and my pistol hanging on my armored chair. The radios crackled and the engines started whining because we were dispatched to land our troops to secure a downed CH 47 near the Laotian border. We inserted near the bird in a cold LZ. We departed the LZ and while climbing out of the landing zone I noticed my knife was missing. I was really pissed-off, and radioed the mission commander with my complaint. He cut me off by saying "wait one". He then called back and said it didn't matter they were all dead.

Later, while on R and R with Sarah I bought a hunting knife as a replacement, an OK knife but not a Randall. My last two months flying were as the personal pilot for Col. Smith the commander of the 196th Brigade. He was a great leader and an aviator. I regularly picked up the Col. and his staff at his helicopter pad on the beach. Sometimes there would be additional officers. One morning a Captain emerged to board. He was very different as he wore very

faded fatigues and properly carried, handle down on his combat harness was an "Attack" Randall. He also had a sad empty stare. We warmed up to each other in a few days. I told him my knife story and the next day when they came out, he walked around the nose of the bird and stood at my window. He then handed me an "Attack" Randall in the sheath. I was stunned and fumbled around to follow tradition and pay someone when they gift you a knife. He simply said, "this belonged to a good friend, and he can't use it anymore."

The knife returned home with me. I acquired a few Ran-

dall hunting knives, but was not willing to pay the exorbitant current price for an "Attack Survivor" model until in the early 90s when I found a dealer at a gun show with many models for sale. He said he might trade with me due to the history of my knife, so without hesitation and choosing to forget its

meaningful history the trade was made, and an "Attack Survivor" was finally mine.

In 1999, our daughter Liz and Jud Freeman were engaged for a year and getting married. Liz is a remarkable person and distinguished herself in every endeavor. Jud was an outdoorsman and knew my admiration for Randalls. One day he showed me a Chinese copy he purchased, and I outwardly complimented it, but chuckled smugly when he left. Not long after at their wedding rehearsal dinner I planned my toast.

I had the Randall gift-wrapped and at the proper time offered my toast. It certainly is an emotional experience, and I could barely speak as I talked about Liz and what she meant to us and then handed him the Randall and said, "now you have my Liz and this, they are both the real thing."

## MODEL 18 – ATTACK SURVIVAL



**Tom Damson  
Minuteman 11 '71**

# Four Days and a Recollection

*By Jim Miller*

In August 1966, the C-141 touched down in Pleiku after the two-day flight from Travis Air Force base in California. The flight crew shut down the right two engines, leaving the left two running (I would later learn those were engines 1 & 2). A fork-lift removed the pallets with our duffel bags. We deplaned and the transport was immediately refilled with soldiers returning to the states. The C-141 started the other two engines then took off before we were able to recover our duffel bags.

We boarded an Army C-7A Caribou for the quick flight to First Cavalry Division Headquarters at An Khe where I was driven to meet the Division G-1. He acknowledged receiving my courtesy letter asking to be assigned to fly Division's fixed wing O-1A Bird Dogs. He said the Division was short helicopter pilots and assigned me to Delta Company, 227th Aviation Battalion. An M-151 took me to the Battalion Headquarters where I learned Delta Company was the battalion Attack Company flying 12 UH-1Bs with the M-16 weapons system while Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies flew UH-1D "Slicks" with only two door gunners. I told them I was qualified only in the UH-1D. The Operations Officer said they'd qualify me the next day when I went to the forward area. He gave me a copy of the First Cavalry Division Aviation SOP and told me to read it that night. I was instructed to be at Delta Company Operations early the next morning prepared to live in the field indefinitely. A soldier took me to the Company Headquarters. I was assigned a bunk, went to supply, then was shown the mess hall location. Dinner in the mess hall, read the SOP and no trouble sleeping that night. That was day one in country.

As ordered, I rose early, ate breakfast, packed, then reported to company Operations. We briefed a transition flight to the Turkey Farm, a forward operating base just South of Pleiku. My instructor compared the empty UH-1Ds I'd flown during qualification at Ft. Benning with the maximum gross weight of Delta Company's UH-1B gunships: they always carried thousands of 7.62 rounds for the four M-60 machine guns of the M-16 system, ammunition for the two door gunners and 14 2.5-inch rockets with 10-pound warheads. Control finesse was required. My first impression was the UH-1B had a different sight picture than the D model. He showed me how the Golf Course was laid out. Roads, aircraft parking, grass, aircraft parking, and road. I was cautioned to never cross a road in

the Golf Course and take off and land on the grass between parking. We flew west, stopping at an area for slope landing refresher...again a different sight picture. He talked me through arming the weapons system and engaging targets. At the Turkey Farm I met my Platoon Leader and reported to the Company Commander, both of whom rotated home within the month. We were to take part in a significant operation the next day, so I went out with my Platoon Leader for a brief flight to a free fire area where I got to arm and fire the weapons system. Dinner at the mess tent, sleeping bag in a tent where, again, I had no trouble sleeping. Day two in country.

Early next morning we ate a hurried breakfast, went to the briefing, then to our aircraft. My platoon, four UH-1Bs, were lead escorts for the first flight of four UH-1Ds loaded with troops. Behind us were multiple flights of four slicks. Our objective was a landing zone at the base of Chupong Mountain, in the Ia Drang Valley, where the Cav's first major battle was fought the previous year. This battle was later chronicled in the book, *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*.

Airborne, we assembled the flight. We entered the valley, turned left, and saw the distant LZ. The Air Force was bombing the area, then long-range artillery explosions, then, on short final, Aerial Rocket Artillery covered the landing zone with 10-pound warhead 2.5-inch rockets. Under the instruction of my Aircraft Commander, I armed the M-16 system and gave suppressive fire around the LZ. The assault was uncontested. We rearmed at a newly created, close by, staging field and waited for further instructions. Later, we were released and flew back to the Turkey Farm. Day three in country.

I have a vivid recollection of thinking that night it had been only five days since I said good-by to my wife, my parents and my sister and her husband who had driven in from Dallas. In that short time, I'd become a combat helicopter pilot.

After those exciting first three days, our combat routine settled into daily missions (sometimes very exciting) in support of division airmobile operations.

Later that fall, my platoon was sent to an area near the South China Sea, south of what would later become LZ English. We had a daily mission to escort an air assault inserting an Infantry Platoon every morning for area ground patrols then escort their late afternoon recovery. The second day there, I was lead ship of the fire team

recovering the patrolling platoon. We briefed, went through the aircraft preflight, took off and rendezvoused with the six D model slicks. We flew northeast to the South China Sea then turned west, along an east/west road. The troops popped smoke in a dry rice paddy east of a north/south line of trees. The lead D Model Aircraft Commander correctly identified the smoke color. We could see the waiting troops spread across several dry rice paddies. We were with the slicks as they began their descent then slowed to landing speed. Following First Cav SOP, we descended with the slicks, passed then as they touched down, all the while visually scouring the area for troops of the People's Army of Vietnam (Sometimes called North Vietnamese Army).

I was flying and made the right turn eastbound, about 200 feet above ground, then turned back west just as the then-loaded slicks pulled pitch to take off. I looked right out my window and saw a man in black pants and white shirt step out of a house on the north side of the road, holding what appeared to be a World War II Browning Automatic Rifle. As he raised the weapon, I shouted at the crew chief to engage him. The first burst hit the right weapons pylon and I could see a fan shaped stream of hydraulic fluid coming out of the pylon. Luckily, we were flying a new UH-1B (540) which had two hydraulic systems. The right pylon was powered by only one system. Again, I yelled at the Crew Chief to engage the guy on the ground. The second burst went through the turbine section of the engine. My wingman later told me he saw a 30-foot flame come out the exhaust as he watched us descend. He thought we were buying the farm. The aural low RPM warning came on over the intercom (and the red light I guess...but I don't remember looking inside.) I bottomed the collective, we dropped like a falling rock as I looked ahead at the last dry rice paddy before the line of trees. We were descending rapidly with lots of forward airspeed as we neared the ground. I flared, leveled the skids, pulled initial pitch, and set the very heavy gunship down onto the dike at the edge of the last rice paddy. We were on the ground.

The sense of relief I felt was brief. The windshield filled with brown ground as we slid nose down off the dike and onto the dry paddy. The curved front ends of the skids caught the ground, the nose came up and we slid halfway across the paddy as I pulled all the pitch there was. We stopped abruptly. I rolled off the throttle, then turned off the fuel, told the gunner and crew chief to each take one corner of the paddy behind us and we pilots would take the two corners ahead then turned off the battery. I

unbuckled then climbed across the radio panel, grabbed the crew chief's M-16 hung on my seat back, and exited out the back door. I ran to the far corner, hit the dirt and waited. My wingman fired multiple rockets and M-16 rounds into the house.

After what seemed like an eternity, the slicks returned, the soldiers dismounted to secure the aircraft and my crew and I jumped aboard. My crew got out of the slicks at the refuel/rearm site and walked to the platoon area. I found an empty tent, dropped to my knees, and thanked God for being alive.

Later that evening a CH-47A Chinook from 15th Transportation Battalion recovered my UH-1 and sling loaded her back to An Khe. Just 48 hours later our Maintenance Platoon Leader flew her back, with a new engine and new pylon. Maintenance didn't repair the bullet holes as they were in a non-structural screen area beside the new engine. Other than the bullet holes, the bird looked as if nothing had happened.

*I completed my Vietnam combat tour in August 1967, then left active-duty February, 1968. To keep flying, I joined the Army Reserve. In April 1968 I was hired by Northwest Airlines as a pilot.*

*Fall of 1969 I was flying a Northwest Boeing 707 cargo aircraft out of Yakota Air Force Base, near Tokyo, Japan, with a load of mail for Vietnam. That day we were to fly from Yakota to Da Nang then Cam Ranh Bay and back to Yakota. The flight to Da Nang was long and uneventful. There we unloaded half the mail, refueled, took off, flying south along the coast to Cam Ranh at 10,000 feet. Out the right cockpit window, I saw LZ English and knew where I was. Sure enough, there was the East/West Road and the tree line. And there was the dry rice paddy I'd landed in just three years earlier. It looked so benign. There was nothing there to indicate a skirmish had taken place. Only by its recognition did I experience a flashback of what had happened there. Now I was looking down from the cockpit, drinking an icy Coke, the air conditioning at max cold, in a starched, white, uniform shirt. I sighed and said a short prayer as the rice paddy disappeared beneath the right wing.*

*Only a few of us will ever see Vietnam again. Seeing that area, I again felt fortunate to be alive after that nerve-wracking day.*

# SCHOLARSHIPS 2021



1. Elizabeth H. Woodward



2. Catherine R Finley



3. Jackson P Galvan



4. Benicio T Beatty



5. Dylan Z Richardson



6. Dylan T Mallon



7. Elena C Carlsson



9. Kori E Calvert



9. Martha D Beasley



10. Lauren A Banks

*Congratulations!*

1. \$2500 - \$2500 for 1 year, Elizabeth H. Woodward, Grandchild of COL James Holden, Richmond VA – University of Virginia.

2. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Catherine R Finley, Trenton TX – West Texas A&M University.

3. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Jackson P Galvan, Grandchild of CW3 Jackson Rainwater, Weslaco TX – Texas Tech University.

4. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Benicio T Beatty, Grandchild of CW5 Donald Beatty, Lebanon PA, Brown University.

5. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Dylan Z Richardson, Santa Barbara CA, Whitworth University

6. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Dylan T Mallon, Grandchild of COL Danny Cox, Peachtree City GA, University of Georgia.

7. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Elena C Carlsson, Grandchild of LTC Lance Hiltbrand, Edmond OK, Princeton University.

8. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Kori E Calvert, Grandchild of CW2 Robert Calvert, Palestine IL, Spalding University.

9. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Martha D Beasley, Grandchild of CPT William Beasley, Ponte Vedra Beach FL, College of Charleston.

10. \$2500- \$2500 for 1 year, Lauren A Banks, Germantown, TN, The Ohio State University.

# SCHOLARSHIPS

All participants in the AAAA Scholarship Foundation must be aware of the letter below that MOVES the dates for Applications to Sept 1 and the closing of Applications to be Dec 15, of this year. This will be for all scholarships NEXT YEAR (2022). In the past, these dates were about mid-year, no longer.

If you have any questions, go to the [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org) web site, then click on and follow to Scholarships. All VHPA scholarship applicants are included in this date change.

**Tom Payne**  
Scholarships Chairman  
VHPA Scholarships

## **Exciting Scholarship 2022 Program Change!** **Applications Open September 1 and CLOSE December 15, 2021**

Dear Members,

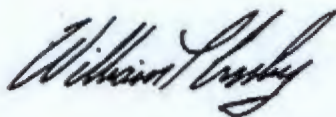
As you all know, in my tenure, I have been trying to focus on our diverse chapters, seeking their counsel and ideas. In response to their direct feedback, I have relayed to and asked our Scholarship Foundation to consider realigning the scholarship selection timeline to facilitate student, family and AAAA recognition at the graduation events. President, BG Mike Flowers, Ret., aggressively supported this request, and the AAAASFI board voted yesterday to change their fiscal year to accommodate presenting the awards during the Spring high school graduation period. I would like to personally thank Mike and his team for their incredibly quick and decisive action on this request. Frankly, without his leadership, it would not have happened.

Please spread the word to all our brother and sister AAAA Members that their family members must adjust to the new application window in order to make this a success and answer the mail from our chapters and donors.

Applications open September 1, 2021  
Applications close December 15, 2021

The AAAA website [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org) will have more information up shortly.

Above the Best!



MG Tim Crosby, U.S. Army, Retired  
35th President of AAAA



# “My 48 Feet of Airspace”

‘A’ Troop 7/17 Cav is in An Khe now (1969). We occupied the 1st Cav Hooches on the hill overlooking the “Golf Course”. It’s not really a golf course. It’s where the revetments and Camp Radcliff Army Airfield are located. All in the shadow of Hon Cong Mountain, An Khe. A lot is going to happen in my tour yet to come: The story below, upset training in a OH-6, the tragic loss of one of our own, lots of AO operations, a move back to Pleiku to Camp Holloway. All before I board the “Freedom Bird” in Cam Ranh Bay back to the US of A on April 21, 1970.

Danny Rackoff and I volunteered to extract a wounded LRRP member who was located southeast of An Khe. Crew Chief Sp4 Jerry Trembath and Gunner Sp/4 Ron Aaberg made up the remainder of the crew. We used 66-16017, which was Richard Turnley's ship, my ship, 66-16016 (“The Sopwith Camel”) was not available. The official ‘A’ Troop 7/17 history has Richard Turnley listed as the Aircraft Commander for this mission. Richard Turnley doesn’t remember this mission, because he didn’t fly it. I was flying it in his aircraft. We had received an abbreviated briefing that a LRRP patrol had an injured member and had requested a Medevac. Medevac was not immediately available, so the mission was deferred to our unit. We headed out with a gunship escort from the 119th, a Lat and Long, and an FM frequency. I’m not sure why we ended up with a gun ship from another unit. It could have been because the 7/17 was active in the AO that day and did not have any assets available except for a spare H Model, I say again, the one I flew, not Richard Turnley.

I found out later that it may have been Peter Daly flying the “Mike” model gun ship. It was coincidence that I ran into Pete at the ‘O’ club at Camp Holloway, Pleiku several months later. I didn’t know Pete before that. We just happened to be in the ‘O’ club at the same time that evening. While we were talking, I noticed a zippo lighter on the bar next to him with the 119th engraved on it; that’s when we discovered that he may have been my gun cover that day. We would later become good friends. (We ended up being stationed together in Germany).

We got to the grid coordinates, at least

in the ballpark. Radio contact was made with the LRRPs on the ground, and they got us to the LZ. No smoke because they said they had been in contact and did not want the extra company. The LRRP member had fallen into a bungee pit and was badly injured. The location was on the top of a ridge line. The LRRP team had cut an LZ for us, but the bush was still too high and we couldn’t land. In fact, we couldn’t get any lower than about eight to 10 feet. The rotors were already cutting some bamboo. The LRRP was in a poncho liner stretcher with bamboo poles. The LRRP team wrapped rope around both ends of the stretcher and threw the rope ends up to Jerry and Ron. That took several tries because the rotor wash kept blowing the rope back before it reached the ship. Jerry and Ron finally got ahold of the rope and began hoisting the makeshift stretcher up. When the stretcher reached the doorway of the ship, Jerry and Ron couldn’t get the stretcher turned to get it in the aircraft. They said as much over the intercom. I asked if they could rest the stretcher on the skid and hold on until we could find a place to set down on the ground. They said they could, so off we went... Danny transmitted that we were coming out. Jerry and Ron tied the ropes to D rings in the floor to assist, but still had to hold on to the ropes so the stretcher wouldn’t bounce around in the slip stream.

During the time we were at a hover trying to recover the stretcher, we began receiving fire from another location on the ridge. I still remember the zing and popping sound of



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rounds that went through the cabin. Danny transmitted that we were receiving fire. I think the gun ship rolled in with suppressive fire. My attention was on getting the LRRP on board and getting the hell out of there. I was focused on "my 48 feet of airspace". (The rotor diameter of a UH1 is 48 feet, right?). When we got back to An Khe we looked the ship over and found one hit in the skid. My incredible luck held. That was the only hit during my entire tour. Other s\*\*t happened but that was the only hit. Okay, back to the "War Story".

We took off east-south east from the ridge and as soon as we cleared the ridgeline, I noticed a small sand bar in a river about one thousand feet below. That became my target LZ, and we basically autorotated down to that sand bar. Jerry transmitted over the intercom, saying that he and Ron were having trouble hanging on to the stretcher. I remember saying "Hold on, we're almost there." We landed on the sandbar which was attached to the river bank by a small strand. There were footprints in the sand, which concerned me. I think I said to myself, "Oh, s\*\*t." After we touched down, Jerry and Ron relaxed their grip on the ropes and lowered the stretcher to the ground and then jumped out of the aircraft so they could lift and turn the stretcher to get the that poor LRRP member in the aircraft. After they got the wounded LRRP into the cabin, Jerry and Ron jumped back in the aircraft and they both yelled "Clear" at the same time

into the mike. They must have noticed the footprints too. It took us all but 20 seconds to get the LRRP on board, but it seemed longer. I can't imagine what this poor guy was thinking the whole time this was going on. What a ride he must have had. It took us about 15 to 20 minutes to get back to An Khe. We landed near the base of the tower because the Hospital pad was occupied. An ambulance crew came out to meet the aircraft and Jerry and Ron assisted off-loading the LRRP. As the LRRP was being carried off toward the front of the aircraft past the left side, where I was sitting, the LRRP looked up and saw me. He said, "Thank you". Of course, I couldn't hear him with the rotors turning, engine running, and helmets on, but he mouthed it. And in that moment, I understood why I was here. That simple "Thank you" made the entire tour worth everything I had experienced.

Danny later collaborated the story adding, "that was the worst f\*\*\*ing mission that he had ever been on." I met up with Jerry in 2016 at a 7/17th reunion in Branson, MO. He stated that, "I remember my fingers were really hurting trying to hold on." Over a beer, I was able to thank him for a job well done.

*And..... This "Ain't No S\*\*t"!*

**Dale E House**

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**COLIN P. CAHOON**

# QUILTERS AT THE REUNION

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## QUILTERS SHOW AND TELL

With the VHPA Reunion in Charlotte behind us, I'd like to thank the Executive Committee and Headquarters, especially Sherry Rodgers for supporting the quilters. I would like to thank everyone that stopped by the quilter's table in the vendors room, and those who attended the quilters presentation at the Quilters Show and Tell. Special thanks to Deanna Epley, an RVN nurse, who spoke of her experience in receiving a quilt from the Quilts of Valor.

The quilters are looking forward to our reunion in Tampa. We still



RVN nurse, Deanna Epley

need blocks, quilt tops and/or quilts for next year. If anyone has any questions, please contact me.

**Kathleen Sherfey**  
klskms@aol.com



The recipients this year are (left to right) LTC John Campbell, CW5 Martin Dillingham, CW4 Albert Smith, CW4 James Allen, CW5 Grady Wilson, CPT Don Bullard, and CW4 Andrew Siegner and CW2 Carl Zipperer (front). Those not able to attend are COL Robert Blankenship and CW3 Richard Michael

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# Easter Sunday, Vietnam 1970 ~

I want to share this story that took place 51 years ago on March 29, 1970, which was Easter Sunday. I was a pilot assigned to the 101st Airborne Division based in I-CORP, C Co/101, assault helicopter company, call sign BLACK WIDOW, located at Phu-Bai. On Easter Sunday, a cease fire was in place and the Division Commander had issued an order that each soldier in the 101st would be fed a hot Easter meal at a special mess hall located at Camp Eagle. The soldiers who were out in the jungle would be picked up by helicopter and flown to Camp Eagle; once they ate, they would be flown back to their original location. This was a busy day for all helicopter crews; we flew from first light until near dark.

My story starts early afternoon on this beautiful Easter Sunday. I was given a mission to fly single ship to pick up a seven-man LRP team in the A Shau Valley. I was very concerned about flying single ship as it was against Division regulations of the 101st. I made a radio call to division operations to verify the location and the mission, and I wanted the officer in charge to give me his name and that this was a direct order. A Colonel came on the radio and verified the mission, gave me his name, and instructed me to go get the team. I responded, – “YES SIR!” I was the aircraft commander of the UH-1H helicopter I was flying, I do not remember who the rest of the crew was this day. We left Camp Eagle flying west toward the A Shau.

The weather was clear and provided excellent flying conditions. As I approached the area the LRP team was located in, I made radio contact on the assigned frequency, and they verified their location by popping a smoke grenade. The team informed me everything was quiet; they had not seen any enemy activity. I thought that was strange because the A Shau valley was controlled by the NVA, and I was sure they were watching me flying out there by myself. The team had a small clearing which I landed in and the seven-man LRP team got on board. These soldiers were so excited that they were getting the hell out of there. They slapped all of us and gave us thumbs up signs and big smiles. The team leader leaned up into the cockpit and thanked me for picking them up –

they were so looking forward to eating the hot meal.

After landing at the mess hall, I told the LRP team good-bye and wished them good luck. A couple of hours after letting the team off, and after having picked up and dropped off more teams, I was back at the mess hall where the seven-man LRP team saw me. The team leader ran over to me and asked me to fly them back to their original location in the A Shau. I called operations to verify I should fly this team back and again the Colonel instructed me to do so.

I was very apprehensive about flying back out to the A Shau Valley. The flight back out to the valley was tense and put the entire crew in a bad mood as we felt like this could be a suicide mission. I flew back to that same small clearing – this time no one was on the ground to guide us in – the team got out and I wished them good luck and got the hell out. I had done my job.

The next morning, I was in operations to assess mission requirements for that day. I looked at the mission board and there was a requirement for a pick-up of two KIA. I noticed

the coordinates were the same as the seven-man LRP team I had flown the day before. I took the mission since I was familiar with the location and, I arranged for a second helicopter to fly chase in case we got into trouble. We took off just after sunup and flew to the A Shau. I made radio contact with the team, and they informed me to land in the same clearing as the previous day and pick up two KIA. They said there was a firefight during the night but had seen nothing since sunup. I asked the team leader if the rest of the team were going to get in and fly back to Camp Eagle. They responded that I was only picking up the two killed, and that they were under orders to stay. I landed and the two KIA were placed in my helicopter. I wished the team leader good luck and again I got the hell out of there. I took the dead soldiers to the morgue pad at Camp Eagle.

*I think about these  
dead soldiers often, and always  
on Easter Sunday.*

Richard V Holland

Black Widow 36 (1969-70)

Page 13 The VHPA Aviator

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# The Fog of War

The fog of war is an all-encompassing term that attempts to explain, for lack of a better term, “unintended consequences”. It is at once accurate as well as vague. Battles, small or large are conducted by usually experienced and trained combatants. Even for these participants, however, management of every detail is often elusive, because combat is by its very nature chaotic (as I, and those of us who served, are well aware). This is less a reminder than a preamble to a recollection of long ago.

My memory of a particular mission was refreshed while reading a book recommended by a colleague. “Stolen Valor” by B. G. Burkett and Glenna Whitley examines and debunks, among other accounts of the Vietnam War, confessions of atrocities by various soldiers/marines. Naturally, as in all wars, there were instances of such conduct, most notable My Lai. The authors point out in almost all cases, the “confessions” were elicited from individuals who never set foot in Vietnam or were in support or clerical roles well away from combat. There have been plenty cases of manufactured combat actions, resulting in bogus decorations. These, however, are not as harmful to the veteran population as the fabricated “war crimes”.

In the book and in my recall, US servicemen were aware of the need to separate civilians from combatants to the extent possible during any number of scenarios.

On a night gunship mission in the Delta, sometime in 1970, I was a copilot in the lead ship of a fire team. The enemy activity was concentrated in a village, which was under attack. The C&C was coordinating the insertion of an ARVN reaction force and of course direct fire by the gunships. To complicate matters, all of the information was delivered to us after having been translated from Vietnamese. The fact that confusion resulted is a mild description.

At one point, the fire team was directed to place ordnance in a field near the edge of the village. It was actually an area consisting of two fields separated by a fence. We were cleared to fire into the right or eastern plot (I forget the terminology employed). With that, the A/C

maneuvered for a rocket run on the identified point. I saw some movement, but could not recognize individuals. Something “seemed” wrong. Did the C&C transpose our right from his? As we rolled out on the attack heading, I continued to scan the ground and finally distinguished the shapes as people. These people were clad in white! Some of them looked quite small. A few women were leading about 20 children away from the fighting in the village and crossing that field. Just a few moments before reaching the firing point, I shouted “Hold fire!” to Roger. I may not have even used the intercom. Thankfully, Roger aborted the run and at my urging scanned the target area without the rocket sight in front of him. We advised the brain trust of the aborted run and the reason why.

The incident was not “debriefed”. It was simply a case of a flight crew, trusted with some potent weapons, exercising prudence in their use particularly in situation ripe for “fog”.

**Tom Kirk**

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*This Story is from November/December 1999*

# Who Could Scouts Possibly Look Up To?

I was an FNG sitting in the club, quaffing Black Label from a rusty can, asking a grizzled veteran (read baby-faced, blond, 20-years old) with a bushy mustache, "Who do Scouts look up to?"

I mean, after all, we knew we were the guys with the brass ones flying low and slow. He then relayed the following tale:

I cannot vouch for this incident, but I don't see how it can't have happened.

It seemed that prior to my arrival, the unit had been flying cover for a ground unit out of Dong Tam. They must have had a pre-dawn battle plan they wouldn't deviate from, because they ignored the scout warnings of an ambush ahead. They apparently walked into a horseshoe ambush and were taking many casualties.

They called in Dustoff from somewhere around

Saigon. This is the telling radio discourse:

From the air: "This is Dustoff, over."

From the ground: "Roger, Dustoff, we have wounded, over."

From the air: "Roger, we are one mile, pop smoke."

From the ground: "Negative, if we pop smoke, we'll draw fire."

From the air: "You wait 'till I set this freakin' helicopter down next to you. You'll know what drawing fire really is."

From the ground: "Roger, smoke's out."

Well, I knew who his hero was. In the next year, I would come to understand.

**CW2 Paul Patry  
C/7/1 Comanche 18  
Vinh Long 69-70**

## VHPA 2022 CALENDAR



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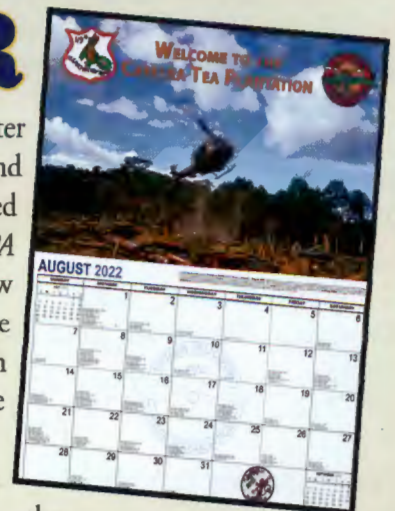
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Each month features photographs depicting the machines and people that flew over Vietnam, plus detailed captions about what is pictured. The *VHPA Calendar* also commemorates the 2,167 helicopter pilots who died or whose bodies were not returned (BNR) from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Era (1961-1975).

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# 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.

**AVIATOR REPORT completed for 8 New Members and covers the period 04.08.21 to 06.13.21**

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*

**AVIATOR REPORT completed for 10 New Members and covers the period: 06.22.2021 to 07.22.2021**

Barnowsky John J. 'Big John'  
Hesston Pennsylvania  
Army  
69-24  
335 AHC in 70-71

Blanchfield Michael F.  
Franklin Lakes New Jersey  
Army  
71-12 71-10  
HHT/7/1 CAV in 71-72

Briggs Kenneth G 'Gary' \*\*  
Chesterfield Virginia  
Army  
70-4  
191 AHC in 70-71

Cameron Robert 'Bob'  
Davidson North Carolina  
Navy  
HC-7 DET 110 in 69-71

Gregg James D. 'Jamie' \*\*  
Martinsburg Pennsylvania  
Army  
66-7  
335 AHC in 66-67

Hamilton David L. \*\*  
Newton Alabama  
Army  
70-1  
HHC 3 BDE 101 ABN in 70-71

Harris Don L. \*\*  
Amarillo Texas  
Army  
68-1  
17 AHC in 68; 163 AVN 101 ABN  
in 68-69; 1 AVN BDE in 71-72; 16  
CAG in 72

Herzig Wade A. \*\*  
West Bloomfield Michigan  
Army  
69-7  
240 AHC in 69-70

Jones Evander S. 'Van'  
Savannah Georgia  
Army  
70-36  
92 AHC in 71

Jurczenia Thomas M.  
Springdale Arkansas  
Army  
67-19

Panza Joseph  
Montgomery Alabama  
Air Force  
37 ARRS DET 2 in 67-68

Ridpath James A.  
Lubbock Texas  
Army  
68-513 68-23  
C/2/20 ARA in 68-69

Ropes David G. \*\*  
Taylors South Carolina  
Army  
69-46  
176 AHC in 70; 71 AHC in 70-71

Rosen Robert D.  
Pensacola Florida  
Army  
71-17  
C/7/17 CAV in 72

Swenson Wesley N. \*\*  
Lynn Haven Florida  
Army  
68-34

Thielke Donald G. \*\*  
Greenville South Carolina  
Army  
68-20 68-34  
336 AHC in 69-70

Vaughn William E. 'Bill' \*\*  
Tierra Verde Florida  
Army  
69-40  
D/229 AHB 1 CAV in 70-71

Westmoreland Allen R \*\*  
Sugar Land Texas  
Army  
68-1 67-25  
HHC 15 MED 1 CAV in 68-69;  
571 MED DET in 71-72

# Letters to the Editor

**Dear Editor,**

I enjoyed reading Bob Lanzotti's article in the May-June edition reference the 228th Battalion. Following my RIF in January 1973, I reverted to enlisted status and although I spent over 18 years before returning to flight duty for Desert Storm, I was able to rise through the ranks to Master Sergeant, Senior Cavalry Scout. I requested an assignment as a First Sergeant but the only slot in the 1st Cav was an Attack Helicopter Company. The Division CSM agreed that although I was a scout by MOS, my experience as an Army aviator would qualify me for the job.

So, in September 1984, I took charge of C Company, 228th Attack Bn, 1st Cavalry Division. We were known as the Coyotes, and the next two years were probably the highlight of my 28-year career, outside of flying. I don't know when the 228th reorganized as an Attack Battalion, but it is my understanding that C Company was the Guns a-go-go in Nam.

When I volunteered for flight duty for Desert Storm, I was qualified in Hooks, and finished my career flying for the Innkeepers, Company B, 2-501st Avn Regt, and Company B, 2-158 Avn Regt.

**Jim Cooney**  
**174th AHC, 67-68**

.....  
**Fellow Vietnam Helicopter Pilots-**

*Thought this might be of interest to those of you planning vacation trips this summer.*

To All,

Please disseminate to all your veteran organizations in your states and territories that the National Park Service is granting Free Entrance to National Parks for all active-duty military, Veterans, and Gold Star Families.

Since Veterans Day 2020, Gold Star Families and US military veterans are eligible to receive free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. The free access program is a way to thank America's veterans and Gold Star Families for their support of our country and to encourage them to explore recreational opportunities on their public lands and waters.

Please visit these links for more information on how to obtain the passes.

- ❖ **Free Entrance to National Parks for Veterans and Gold Star Families** (U.S. National Park Service) ([nps.gov](http://nps.gov))
- ❖ **American Military** (U.S. National Park Service) ([nps.gov](http://nps.gov))

For purposes of this program, a veteran is identified as an individual who has served in the US Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, and is able to present one of the following forms of identification or the Interagency Military Pass when entering a national park:

- ✓ Department of Defense Identification Card (CAC Card), Retired Military ID Card
- ✓ Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)
- ✓ Veteran ID Card
- ✓ A Veteran designation on a state-issued U.S. driver's license or identification card

I met with Peggi Brooks from NPS and confirmed the above forms of ID are acceptable, however, they will not accept DD form 214, nor a VA Disability Letter because they do not have a photo ID.

**VHPA Life member, Carl Bell, GA VHPA**

.....  
I thoroughly enjoyed the subject article in the May/June VHPA Aviator Cobra 202 but was confused as it started out referencing Lam Son 719, which I was deeply involved in, but then went on to Cambodia. The two places mentioned seem to have been well south of the Lam Son Area of Operations: like 150 miles or so.

Lam Son, as you well know, was an attempt to the block supply routes in Laos and was nowhere near Cambodia.

It is confusing but maybe the reference to Lam Son was just a time reference and had very little to do with the "202" operation.

**Ralph Elliott (Butch) Witch Doctor 05, 174th AHC**

*Ralph, It appears the author was simply establishing a time frame as his memory provided. ~ Ed*

**To the Editor:**

During a recent move I found a copy of the July - August 2016 VHPA Aviator issue 35-04. An article written by Tony Spletstoser with Bob Anders caught my eye. What caught my eye was the mention of flying Charlie models. I flew Charlie models for a short while in I Corp with 1st Cav, not as a gun but as a slick. Talk about a handful, running take-off with low rotor RMP and approaches to the ground. But once in the air it was a pleasure to fly. But enough about that. The part of the story that I noticed especially was the mention of Steve Martin.

Let me digress here for a moment. I went through flight school with WORWAC 67-13 and directly to Nam after. I returned in September 68. The usual IP assignment at Wolters, putting dozens through primary helicopter. Taking a direct commission later, eventually winding up as the Chief of the Book Store at Wolters. Along with the mandate to make money for the Commandant's Fund, I was told, "Get rid of the unsalable accumulation of junk odds and ends, etc."

One of the items was a beer stein that had not been picked up by the person who had ordered it. It was personalized as it had a name and date on it. I finally bought it to use as desk art. I have often looked at the name and wondered who and where this young man was. I tried several times over the years to find him.

Well to my surprise and heartfelt grief, the name on the mug, Steve Martin, May 21, 1968, jumped out at me in the article. On May 31, 1969, WO1 Steve Martin died in a fiery crash.

I don't know for certain if the two are the same. I believe that the date on the stein, May 21, 1968, would be the date Martin's class finished Primary Helicopter at Fort Wolters. If they are the same and if anyone is still in touch with the family, I would very much like them to have the beer stein. My name is Charles Richardson, VHPA Life member.

Continued by surviving spouse Susan Richardson, VHPA subscriber S16719:

I came across this article in my husband's papers during the past year. Chuck passed in April 2020. I still have the beer stein and would be happy to send it along as my husband wished.

I can be reached at  
[charles.susan.richardson@gmail.com](mailto:charles.susan.richardson@gmail.com)

.....

**Mekong Rescue** has been described as a historical fiction book which provides an insightful look not only of the dustoff mission, but the Navy Seawolf and Black Pony aviation units, the third Surg (M.A.S.H.) hospital, Donut Dollies and so much more...



Written by:  
David Freeman  
Dustoff  
57th Med Det (HA)  
1971-1972

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# LOOKING FOR

*Hello,*

I am friends with a combat veteran named Mark Slama, Recon, 5/60th 9 Infantry Division, who is currently living in Janesville, MN. He served aboard an armored personnel carrier in the Mekong Delta in 1967. His commanding officer was Lee Alley, who Mark believes was a 1st Lieutenant at the time and was present on the day Mark was wounded. His "home base" was Fire Support Base Cudgel at Dong Tam.

Mark, along with four other individuals, was wounded on November 8th, 1967 by a booby trapped M26 frag grenade. It was tripped when these five soldiers crossed out of an open area, possibly rice patties. All five soldiers were flown out shortly thereafter. There were three stretcher cases, Mark being the second loaded aboard. All were taken to the 3rd SURGICAL FIELD HOSPITAL. Possibly in Tan An (not sure about the spelling), or Ben Phuc/Binh Phouc.

He has mentioned wanting to locate the pilot of the chopper that day. He described him as being short, "kind of" dark complected and with a mustache. He said the chopper pilot also came through the hospital the next day to see how the wounded were doing. The chopper he was piloting was a Regular Army helicopter.

I would like to assist him in finding that chopper pilot and am asking for any and all help possible to try and locate this individual. I understand this is very little info.

*Thank you so much,*

*Clayton A. Russell  
onlyvets56@gmail.com  
(507) 848-5216*

*Hello!*

I am reaching out for two reasons. The first, is my father, SGT Steuber, served with the 1st Cavalry, 2/20 from Nov 1970 to roughly April 1971 at the Headquarters as a Radio Operator in the Tactical Operations Center. He worked closely with Major Matocha and LTC Toepel.

Any chance any of your members remember him? He passed away and I am putting together a book to honor his memory and time he served in Vietnam. I am his youngest daughter of five children. Here is a photo of him in 1971:



One additional note: I believe LTC Toepel, who was involved in a fatal crash with UH-1H, tail# 68-16360 on February 13 1971, is trying to track down this passenger, which he believes last name is MORGAN, (not CE E4 MOTGAN TM that is listed on your website) as he believes he deserves a Purple Heart due to the parameters changing - please see attached excerpt from an ARA newsletter

"While we're at it, I have one more personal item. On 2/13/1971 I was involved in a serious CS gas incident that resulted in burns of both hands of the crew chief, Sp-4 Morgan. I would like to get his current address and confirm that he is the one who was given an impact purple heart and had it retrieved the next day because the burns were not caused by an armed enemy; however, we were making a dispersal run against an armed enemy when it happened. I recently read the criteria, and I'm convinced he now qualifies and I would like to make it happen. Unfortunately, I have no idea where or how to contact Sp-4 Morgan. Can you help me on this one also??"

*Thank you very much for your time  
and help with any of the above.*

**Thank you for your service,  
Victoria Chester (Stueber)  
303.578.0221**

My name is Mark Pinson and my father Lyle S. Pinson served in the 17 AHC in 67-68. I randomly met one of your members today (William Tolar) in an airport today who shared your site. I saw my father's crash summary but it had no date associated. His crash occurred on March 17, 1976. I was only 22 months old and have no recollection of him. However, my dear deceased mother made certain we knew our father as much as possible. I followed my father as a pilot and now fly for Southwest Airlines. I would very much like to inquire as to if any of your members served with my father in Vietnam and would be willing to share any information or stories, they have of him as I do not know very much of his service. Thank you in advance and I look forward to hearing back.

**Sincerely,  
Mark L Pinson  
marklpinson@gmail.com**

# Raunchy Redskins - Shining Brass

Tom Phillips

Seawolf 98 (70-71)

October 9th, 1966, a Phantom from VF-154 off USS Coral Sea was shot down about 30 miles south of Hanoi, 50 miles deep inside North Vietnam. A section of A-1 Skyraiders of VA-176, off USS Intrepid, located the scene of the downed pilots, and the HS-6 "Raunchy Redskins" Big Mother on the SAR station got the green light to attempt a rescue. It would be escorted to the scene by two more VA-176 Spads. All the aircraft of the SAR task force, the searching Spads, the helicopter and its escorting Spads, began to attract the attention of AAA. HS-6 pilot Lieutenant Bob Burnand, and his copilot, Lieutenant Junior Grade Ross Mordhorst and crew coasted in at 8,000 to avoid the worst of the AAA and the Skyraiders dove to strafe the AAA and distract it from the passing helicopter.

Not satisfied with opposing the rescue with the heavy flak, the North Vietnamese scrambled MiG-17s to the scene, and Lieutenant Commander Leo Cook and Lieutenant Junior Grade Jim Wiley found themselves in a dogfight: jets versus round-engine props. The A-1s dove for the deck, commenced frantic, tight scissors on the treetops, turning into the speedy MiGs and forcing the MiGs into overshoots, spoiling their gunnery solutions. Slower than the Mig-17, running for home was not an option, the A-1s could only keep turning, dodging the MiG gun runs, and scream for help.

Help took the form of the two Navy Skyraiders from VA-176, pilots Lieutenant Pete Russell and Lieutenant Junior Grade Tom Patton, escorting Burnand's H-3 to the search scene. The expected fighter CAP had had to return to the carriers when the refueling tanker had malfunctioned and could not pass gas. Two Spads coming to the rescue of two Spads under attack by MiGs was not exactly the War College solution, but no other help was nearby or close enough to get there in time to matter.

Tom Patton recounted his eventful afternoon. His group of aircraft was escorting an Air Force rescue helicopter to the scene of the SAR when the MiGs struck. In reply to the RESCAP's desperate cries for help, he radioed: "Hang on! We're coming! Two Spads and a helo! (That must have eased their minds a lot, he said). Arriving on scene, Patton and Russell slid in right behind a MiG who was too preoccupied trying to shoot down the Spad in front of him to see them coming, and was down low and slow,

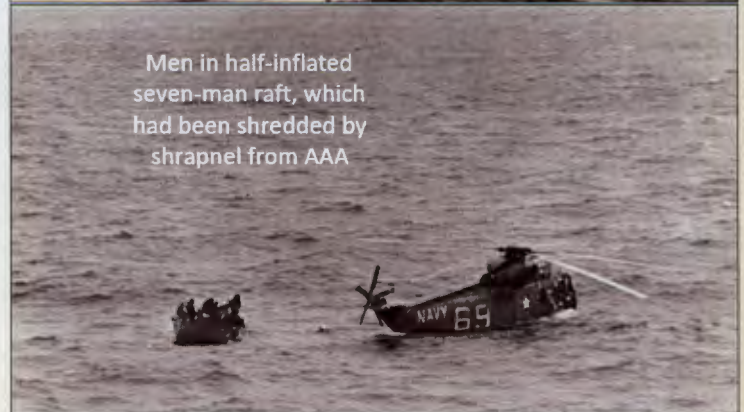


Indian Gal 69  
approaching USS Henly  
with HC-1 Det 17  
rescue helicopter in trail.

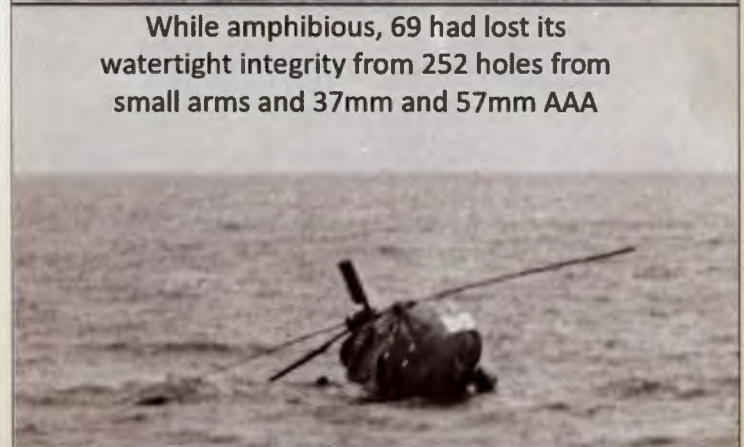
Ditching following tail rotor control  
cable loss due to battle damage



Men in half-inflated  
seven-man raft, which  
had been shredded by  
shrapnel from AAA



While amphibious, 69 had lost its  
watertight integrity from 252 holes from  
small arms and 37mm and 57mm AAA



having lost much of its energy trying to turn with the slower, more maneuverable Skyraiders. Patton opened fire on the MiG, but was unable to hit his writhing target. He said the MiG zigged when he should have zagged, climbed when he should have dived, banked when he should have simply run away, generally made every move wrong, and could not shake off the tenacious Skyraider.

Patton used up all his 20mm ammo trying without success to hit the MiG. Finally, his guns empty, he must have felt like the woman "Riding the Tiger." All the ordnance he had left was air-to-ground 5-inch Zuni unguided rockets. Patton, certain he would never have another chance like this to shoot down a jet MiG with his prop Skyraider, decided he might as well take a shot with the unguided Zuni. When the supersonic Zuni streaked close over the MiG canopy, still without hitting the jet, the pilot, with a very close look at the enormous trail of flame from the supersonic rocket motor, must have had enough, because he immediately ejected. Patton could not attest that he had scored a single hit confirmed hit on the MiG while emptying all his 20mm ammunition, and contends that he frightened the MiG pilot into abandoning his jet with the Zuni.

Ross Mordhorst, copilot of the rescue helicopter and a very interested observer of the dogfight going on below them, saw the zuni fired through a break in the overcast, saw it hit the ground in front of the MiG before the planes went under the clouds.

Patton joined an exclusive Vietnam War club, an all-Jaygee-all SPAD-all Navy-three man club, with Clint Johnson and Charles Hartman of VA-25 (they shared a kill 20 June 1965) as the only prop pilots to have downed jet MiGs in combat.

At low fuel state, the Big Mother reluctantly returned to feet wet. No sign of the two airmen had been found, and after the war it was learned they had been captured very soon after reaching the ground and the search had been, in retrospect, futile. Lieutenant Commander Charles Tanner and Lieutenant Ross Terry were POWs for the next seven years. But it was not entirely in vain, Patton the underdog, not only bared his teeth, he sank them into his tormentor and gained a victory for CSAR everywhere.

Three days after Burnand's futile effort, he and his crew got another chance at the beginning of what was to become a complex and frustrating SAR. An A-1H from VA-25 was hit by AAA as it flew along a highway and made for the sea. Fire in the wing became unmanageable and Lieutenant Robert Deane Woods bailed out before the plane could reach the sea. Arriving in the area quickly, Burnand's copilot,

Lieutenant Junior Grade Doug Heggie, established radio contact with Woods but could not spot him.

Neither could Woods glimpse Burnand's helicopter. They worked for an hour and a half trying to come together, with Big Mother enduring ground fire several times as the localization continued. Woods coached them in by their sound, having to compete on the radio with needless radio chatter from other searchers trying to help out.

Forced to hover to see under dense foliage as they got closer and closer to Woods, they were taken under automatic weapons fire from point blank range, riddling the helicopter and wounding crewman AX1 Kenneth W. White. Ken White remained at his gun station adding his volume of his return fire to that of AX3 Rodger Sitko to suppress the ambush, allowing Burnand to break away and then escape the exposed hover. Their suppressive fire probably saved the fixated helicopter from being shot down on the spot.

Despite his wound, White encouraged Burnand to keep searching, knowing they were close, that Woods was in danger of being captured, and convinced that the rescue was still feasible. They had seen the pen flare Woods fired through the jungle canopy just as the hostile militia opened up on them. But the process of localizing him had to start again because Woods had been forced to run for it after giving his position away with the pen flare. Big Mother was feeling the strain of all the hovering and its main transmission high temperature caution light illuminated, and the temperature gauge confirmed the high temperature. Burnand, low on fuel, and losing daylight, faced with the very dangerous main transmission seizure emergency situation, and with a wounded crewman on board, reluctantly withdrew.

Next morning, Bob Burnand, with a different crew, again copilot Lieutenant Junior Grade Ross Mordhorst, and petty officers AX3 Roy W. Powell and AMH2 Royce L. Roberts, returned to the area to resume the search with no success. They returned the following day, alternating with Lieutenant Commander David Murphy's crew, again with no luck finding Woods, who was no longer on the radio.

While hope was waning that they could rescue Lieutenant Robert Woods, a new command involved with combat rescue got into the act. The Joint Personnel Recovery Center, named Bright Light, mounted one of its first rescue efforts. A ground rescue team, made up of two U.S. Special Forces NCOs (one of them the legendary Dick Meadows) and twelve Nung Chinese mercenary commandos, with the code name Shining Brass, was flown out to Intrepid, and

after a day of delay waiting for National Command Authority permission to go into North Vietnam, the Shining Brass team was inserted into the search area on the morning of October 16, 1966. The men were hoisted down by two HS-6 helicopters about 800 yards from the last best guess of Woods' position. The team had been on the ground only about a half an hour when they encountered a North Vietnamese patrol they could not avoid. The Nungs had to open fire when the patrol approached within ten meters of the Shining Brass team. All four North Vietnamese were killed without Nung casualties, but the North Vietnamese troops in the area were alerted, the mission was compromised, and the team leader called for extraction.

Dave Murphy's crew in one HS-6 bird, and Bob Burnand's in the other, returned quickly and began to hoist the men back aboard. In the middle of this process, with two-each Nungs aboard each helo and another each on the hoist coming up, Murphy's helicopter came under fire, intense and accurate fire, with numerous rounds audibly smacking the helicopter, Murphy's copilot, Ensign Ed Marsyla suddenly



A rather disheveled SH-3 behind Dave Murpgy and Ed Marsla

noticed the strong odor of fuel and called a warning to Murphy. Faced with the complications accompanying a serious fuel leak, including an engine failure, Marsyla advanced both engine speed selectors to the stops, calling for full power from the engines.

Murphy immediately decided to break the hover, dumping the nose of the SH-3A over, using all his skill to quickly wrestle the helicopter into forward flight. Ten seconds after Marsyla smelled the fuel, an engine began to back off, losing power steadily and quickly flaming out, starved of fuel by a serious nick of a fuel supply line. Murphy's decisive reaction got them enough airspeed to keep flying as the engine fell off the line. Marsyla's uncommanded selection of maximum power on the remaining engine, was a second vital action which, perhaps critically, enabled this escape maneuver. Meanwhile Murphy's crewmen, ADJ1 Vince Vicari and AX3 William S. Caple, sprayed machine gun fire at the enemy from both door positions, forcing them to take cover and providing the momentary respite from the

gunfire to allow the escape.

Burnand, realizing that Murphy was unable to continue to hoist the men, steadfastly held his hover and worked the hoist from the cockpit while both his gunners, AX3 Roy Powell and AMH2 Royce Roberts provided supporting fire to the dwindling circle of surrounded mercenaries as they were all hoisted aboard one by one. With the last man aboard, they cleared the area and followed Murphy toward the sea, seven miles away.

Murphy successfully cleared the area and climbed for the overcast as quickly as the remaining engine would allow, leveling off in the safety of the clouds at 3000 feet. As the four Navy men and three Nungs approached the heavily guarded coastline, whose garrisons were alerted to the pres-

ence of the Navy helicopters, the overcast ended, and they burst into clear air right over the beach area. Marsyla was looking down at a quaint white schoolhouse with a red roof when the helicopter was buffeted by three explosions close aboard in quick succession.

"Descend! Descend! Descend!" shouted Vicari as he looked out the cargo

door at 37mm and 57mm AAA shellbursts right at their altitude. A round exploded right against the tail cone and the concussion injured everyone in the cabin, the three Nungs, seated farthest aft getting the worst of it, their eyes, ears, and noses bleeding from the overpressure. Marsyla smelled the overwhelming stink of cordite forward in the cockpit. The helicopter fell away as Murphy entered an autorotation to rapidly change altitude. Succeeding bursts bloomed at the 3000-foot altitude as the helicopter descended out over the ocean; Vicari's descent call and Murphy's instant reaction had saved them.

Caple was down and out bleeding profusely from a face wound across the bridge of his nose. When Vicari revived the unconscious Caple and stopped his bleeding, he inspected the helicopter for damage. He identified damage to one of the tail rotor control cables in the tail cone, which was partially severed, and was popping strands one by one. Unable to repair the cable, he snapped photos of the interior of the helo, which later enabled them to count 252 shrapnel

or gunfire holes in the helicopter. Marsyla smelled fuel again, and looked down at the fuel gauges. The aft tank quantity needle was visibly moving down toward zero: the self-sealing tank had been unable to stem the fuel any longer.

Murphy headed for the destroyer at South SAR about fifteen miles out to sea, but they didn't make it. The tail rotor control cable finally parted as they were making their final approach to the flight deck of the destroyer. Murphy and Marsyla fought the helicopter as it began to spin. Murphy lowered the collective control to reduce torque on the main rotors, which would reduce the spinning, while Marsyla pulled off the power to the one remaining engine to reduce torque drive to the rotors, and down they went, headed irretrievably to the water. Murphy ditched the helicopter neatly, keeping it from rolling over by excellent airmanship, facilitated by obligatory practice for this extreme emergency situation, and a measure of great good luck. Had the helicopter rolled over, no doubt some of the wounded passengers and crewmen would have been caught in the cabin and drowned.

Vicari and Caple, despite being wounded themselves, calmly followed their training to clear the wounded passengers from the cabin. They deployed the seven-man life raft, which only partially inflated, having been riddled by shrapnel. Seven men huddled in the semi-submerged blob as the choppy seas carried it under the tail cone, which rose up on a wave, and fell down on the side of the raft, capsizing it. They treaded water only a few moments before the Henly's motor whaleboat hove up and rescued them. Vicari and Caple floated separately in one-man rafts from the big raft and were picked up by Halsey's HC-1 Det 9 helo. In the other Big Mother, Raunchy Redskin Bob Burnand, overloaded with an amazing eight passengers plus his crew of four was unable to hover to assist. The normally amphibious SH-3A swamped, its boat hull sieved by numerous shrapnel holes, including three in the tail cone which were big enough to thrust a fist through. It went to the bottom of the Tonkin Gulf, the only combat loss suffered by HS-6 on this cruise.

Final note: It is interesting to read the Navy Cross citations for Burnand and Murphy today. Written during the war, of course neither make mention of the, then highly secret, commando insertion or extraction. Instead they talk about search and rescue operations and specifically searching. Burnand's says: "An accompanying helicopter was



Butch Verich was rescued from North Vietnam. Had he not been rescued, it is likely the only people in this photo of 31 would be his widow Mary and the four young men who married his four daughters.

forced to retire. Observing this action, and realizing that it was absolutely mandatory that the operation continue in the same location, Lieutenant Burnand and his crew decided to take a calculated risk and expose themselves to enemy fire in a valiant attempt to thwart the North Vietnamese and complete their mission." The inserting of the Shining Brass team was delayed a day while the State Department debated permission, the hesitation was a worry that it could be interpreted as an invasion of North Vietnam..... Fatal delay? He was captured and spent six and a half years as a POW, being released 4 March 1973.

HELICOPTER  
COMBAT ACTION

PILOT AND  
CREW STORIES

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AFTER VIETNAM

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# ACCIDENTAL INCURSION INTO CAMBODIA

By Mike Stock

Since this story involves a Navy pilot (me) flying a U.S. Army helicopter with an Army pilot-in-command and two Army door gunners, I should probably provide a little background on how this inter-service combat crew came to be. It all began at Fort Benning, Georgia in March 1967.

The year before, the U.S. Navy decided to stand-up a new type of aircraft squadron involving helicopter gunships to better protect and serve the so-called Brown Water Navy operating in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. The basic mission of the Brown Water Navy, which was composed of U.S. and South Vietnamese naval forces, was to intercept and destroy NVA and Vietcong forces and supplies plying the navigable waters of the Delta. On the U.S. side, the principal weapon used was a fast, shallow-draft, thirty-one-foot boat called a Patrol Boat River (PBR). Armed to the teeth, manned by a crew of four, and operat-

ing in pairs, these fearless marauders, like their World War II counterparts in PT boats, were highly successful in slowing the amount of enemy supplies that reached the Delta via the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

No matter how well-armed, courageous, and bold these intrepid sailors on PBRs were, they were vulnerable to Vietcong ambushes, often with devastating results. To mitigate the threat, Commander Naval Forces Vietnam (COMNAVFORV) requested dedicated air support in the form of helicopter gunships. Initially, U.S. Army Aviation units were tasked, and, although they did a great job, it was not feasible for the long haul because these gunships were desperately needed to support Army combat operations, and it was felt that gunships flown by U.S. naval flight crews would result in better coordination.

In November 1966, the Navy sent a message to all naval units requesting volunteers for this new gunslinger outfit:

Staging field during combat assault mission.



Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron Three (HAL-3) to be established in Vietnam on 1 April 1967. Heeding the siren call, I raised my hand and off to Fort Benning I went.

What was a Navy guy like me doing on an Army base? The Navy did not have any helicopter gunships or pilots trained to fly them, but the Army did. So, all ninety-two volunteers, like myself, who were selected in the Navy dragnet, were sent to the 181st Aviation Company in groups of about twenty for a ten-flight-hour transition course to learn to fly the Bell H-1 "Huey" helicopter, followed by five flight hours on the gun range learning to fire rockets and machine guns.

At 0800 Monday morning, we were seated in a classroom at Lawson Army Airfield, anxious to begin our transition to the Huey. A stocky Army Major stood behind the lectern. "Good morning, gentlemen. I'm Major Joe Berry, the Operations Officer. I would like to be the first to welcome you to the 181st Aviation Company." He glanced around the room as he paused to take measure of the assembled group dressed in short-sleeve khaki uniforms—a sharp contrast to his highly starched and pressed green utility uniform and spit-shined black boots. "We don't have much water around here, but we will do our best to make you feel comfortable. I suppose we could set up a lawn sprinkler and let you guys run through it during class breaks," he said, obviously pleased with his attempt to provide a little levity. But we weren't buying it—too early in the day for Navy jokes.

"I am confident that when you leave here in three weeks, you will be competent Huey pilots and feel fairly comfortable in the machine. However, with only five hours allotted for the gun range, you certainly won't be proficient in firing rockets, machine guns, and tactics. In-country on-the-job-training will provide the finishing touches to your gunship-pilot résumé. But, I can assure you, our instructors will do their very best to provide a quality training experience. The Vietnam conflict requires a team effort to defeat a determined and resourceful enemy, and we welcome our

Navy brothers to the fray.

"Speaking of our instructor pilots, most of them have already completed one combat tour in Vietnam, and a few have two tours under their belt. So, I encourage you to pick their brains. Your mission may be slightly different from the Army's, but gunship tactics should be similar."

After lunch, the instructor-student assignments were posted on the bulletin board outside of the classroom. I was paired with another lieutenant junior grade by the name of Mike Louy; the two of us were assigned to fly with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Wade Kern, who happened to be somewhat of a celebrity in the company. When John Wayne and a movie production company came to Fort Benning several months earlier to film *The Green Berets*, Wade had a three-word speaking part as he sat in the cock-

U.S. Army airfield at Vinh Long ~ June 1967.



pit of his helicopter.

Mike Louy, whom I had just met the day before, was from a Helicopter Anti-Submarine Warfare squadron based in Quonset Point, RI. He had been in the fleet about the same length of time as I; maybe that's why we were paired together. At any rate, he seemed like a good guy to fly with—always smiling, laughing, and cracking jokes.

The next morning, Mike and I reported to the flight briefing room at the airfield at 0630 to meet our new instructor and to plan the morning's flight activities. Wade Kern was a country boy from the deep South, with an accent and demeanor to match. He had a swagger that matched his two combat tours in Vietnam. He was direct

and a bit gruff—a no-nonsense, take-no-prisoners sort of a fellow. Mike looked at me with a half-smile and I thought, This could be a rather interesting few days.

After the conclusion of the flight brief, the three of us strolled out to the flight line and to our assigned UH-1D helicopter. Mike and I flipped a coin to see who would fly first and I won the toss. After a detailed pre-flight inspection, Wade climbed into the left front seat, I strapped into the right front seat, and Mike sat in a forward-facing jump-seat in the cabin.

Ever since day one at Pensacola, as a brand-new flight student, it was drilled into me and every aspiring naval aviator to always use a checklist. You used a checklist to start the engine, one before takeoff, after takeoff, cruise, one before landing—even emergency procedures had checklists. A pilot didn't do anything without a checklist, and you didn't dare memorize one because you couldn't trust your memory. In naval aviation, it was the equivalent of the Holy Grail. So, after fastening my seat belt and shoulder harness, I dutifully reached into a leg pocket of my flight suit and pulled out a UH-1D checklist.

Wade bellowed, "What's that?"

"Uhhh, it's the checklist," I replied confidently.

"I can see that, son! Do you suppose during a mortar attack on the airfield you will have time to read that damn thing?" Not waiting for an answer, he dropped a bombshell, "Put that away. I want you to memorize it."

Whoa! That's as close to blasphemy as it gets in naval aviation, I thought.

Then, Wade really outdid himself. He reached into his flight suit and pulled out a big Cuban cigar, lit it, and growled, "Now, let's get this damn thing cranked up. Daylight's a wastin'."

Wait, wait, I protested silently. What about the other cardinal rule about no smoking within fifty feet of an aircraft? I glanced back at Mike. He wore the same half smile he had back in the briefing room.

Reluctantly, I put the official checklist back into my flight suit and, with Wade's coaching, somehow managed to start the machine and bring the rotors up to flying RPM. My mind was still reeling from being deprived of my checklist, like a child whose binky is taken away. I was jerked back to reality by Wade's gruff voice. "Well, son. What are you waiting for? Lift this thing into a hover and move it over there," pointing with his cigar toward the runway as smoke from the tip curled toward the top of the cockpit. Will I ever be able to please this guy? I wondered.

After the awkward beginning, life did get better. Flying the Huey was pure joy. It was sweet, nimble, graceful, and

easy to fly—the best helicopter I had ever flown! Mike and I both came to appreciate, trust, and, even love our instructor. Despite his rough edges and crusty demeanor, Wade was a fabulous instructor who taught us many things that would not only save our lives later in Vietnam, but made us better pilots throughout our flying careers. By the luck of the draw, we got the best flight instructor at Fort Benning.

Little did I know as I shut down the helicopter for the final time at Fort Benning that Army pilots would continue to hone my combat skills during my first two months in-country.

After arriving in Vietnam in May 1967, all of us newbie pilots reported to Seawolf (squadron nickname) headquarters in Vung Tau eager to become gunship pilots. Our morale immediately took a nosedive when we were told there were many more pilots than aircraft to fly. The U.S. Army had been tasked to transfer UH-1B model gunships from their in-country assets to the Navy, but deliveries were running well behind schedule. In fact, of seven planned operational detachments, the squadron only had three up and running with two gunships per detachment.

Fortunately, several of us new pilots were assigned to Seawolf Detachment 3 at Vinh Long, an Army airfield and home to the Army's 114th Assault Helicopter Company. While the Navy was overstaffed with pilots, the Army had a shortage of aviators forcing them to fly seven days a week, oftentimes logging eight to ten flight hours per day—they were exhausted. So, when some of us new pilots started asking around if we could bag some flight time, the operations officer of the 114th was only too happy to oblige. During the twenty-one days I was assigned to Vinh Long, I logged 47 combat flight hours in the UH-1D as a co-pilot with the Army flying CA (Combat Assault) and DCS (Direct Combat Support) missions and only five hours in a Navy UH-1B gunship.

And then my fortunes got even better when five of us Navy pilots were transferred to Soc Trang, another airfield in the Delta, where we were directly assigned to the Army's 121st Assault Helicopter Company. No more having to beg flight time. Mostly, I flew with the Tigers, the slick platoon, but did manage to fly a few flights with the Viking gun platoon.

Eventually, I was reclaimed by the Navy and transferred to Seawolf Detachment 6 at Dong Tam. In seven weeks at Soc Trang I flew 197 hours while perfecting my flying skills in the Huey, learning how navigate around the Delta, and, most importantly, knowing where the bad guys were and how to survive in a hostile environment. Thanks to the U.S. Army pilots I flew with in the early days of my

Vietnam tour, I was a fairly seasoned combat aviator by the time I returned to my Navy roots. I will be forever grateful.

As Paul Harvey would say, "And now for the rest of the story." Now that the reader knows how a Navy guy came to be flying with an all-Army flight crew, let me describe one mission that nearly cost us our lives.

One day we were flying a mission to re-supply several combat outposts along the northern border with Cambodia called the Seven Mountains area. The so-called "mountains" were really large hills, the tallest being just over 2000 feet high. But because these scattered terrain features jutted abruptly from the surrounding sea level rice paddies, to the locals they seemed like mountains.

Flying at normal cruising altitudes of 1,200 feet in the Seven Mountains area meant that the VC and NVA soldiers who occupied the mountain sides could fire directly into the helicopter at eye level or use plunging fire from above. To minimize the chances of getting hit while resupplying sea-level outposts in the area, slicks would fly low-level, ten feet above the ground and as fast as the Huey could go. Not only was it safer, but it was a blast as well. As we zipped along, dangerously close to the ground, we had to momentarily climb over tree lines, rice paddy dikes, water buffalo, and peasants riding bicycles.

Occasionally we scattered a herd of cattle, much to the dismay of the herdsman. I am sure we did not make friends among the local populace with these low-level escapades, but we were young and immature as statesmen. We had the reins of a marvelous steed in our grip, so we dug in our spurs and enjoyed the hell out of it.

Cambodia, like Laos, was officially a neutral country, but openly harbored NVA and Viet Cong forces directly across the border from Vietnam. Destruction of these sanctuaries was the objective of a series of large-scale military operations by U.S. forces into Cambodia in 1970, authorized by President Nixon. In the summer of 1967, flying

into Cambodian airspace was strictly prohibited-and very dangerous.

One day, while conducting DCS missions in the Seven Mountains area, we were blithely low-leveling near the border of Cambodia. We knew from experience that the canal marking the border was fairly wide and unmistakable, so when we crossed a narrow canal, we were not concerned in the least. All of sudden, we came upon a military bivouac with neat rows of tents! It was not until we saw many uniformed soldiers carrying rifles scattering in every direction that we realized we had inadvertently strayed across the border. It was truly one of those "Oh,



ARVN infantry troops enroute to combat LZ.

s\*\*t!" moments. Chief Warrant Officer Bill Raney was flying at the time; he realized our dire predicament at the same moment I did, and immediately began a hard-right climbing turn, heading back to the safety of South Vietnam.

As we turned away, the enemy soldiers quickly recovered from our

surprise intrusion and began to fire with everything they had. Loud hits began to register on our fleeing machine. As we made our right turn, the left-door gunner had a perfect angle at close range to engage the confused enemy troops. I am certain if he had opened up with his M-60 machine gun, he could have taken out lots of the enemy. He did not fire one shot! After we had safely crossed the border, I turned in my seat to administer a good, old-fashioned ass chewing to the gunner for not shooting. But, when I saw him, I realized there was no point in chastising him—he was frozen to his gun, unable to move or talk.

We were incredibly lucky that day. Later, a U.S. Green Beret Captain told us that we had stumbled into an enemy encampment numbering over three hundred NVA soldiers. Had we been shot down in their midst and survived the crash, we most likely would have been tortured and then executed. It was one of my closest calls in Vietnam.

**Mike Stock**  
**CDR USN (Ret.)**

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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

We are back ... well at least to a reasonable degree.

What a special Day of Remembrance on 30 May 2021 at Byers Lake to start our return to gatherings. We had a nice group who made the trip on a beautiful day. Even the Great one (Denali) was out overlooking the Memorial!

The day started with a breakfast with about 20 folks before heading to the Memorial. Then, we enjoyed inspiring presentations and the posting of our wreath for our fallen members.

A very special announcement was presented by our fellow member and State Representative, Laddie Shaw. Our legislative bill to establish a memorial site for Vietnam Helicopter Pilots passed completely through the legislature and is awaiting Governor's signature. He has confirmed he will sign. Tentative date for signature will be at our August 25th picnic gathering.

The Matanuska River Bridge, overlooking Gold Star Peak and heavily traveled, was selected as the memorial site and will be named the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Memorial Bridge, both lanes of travel!

We sure wish more of you could have been there. Pic-



David Buirge and Roger Pfeifer setting our wreath.



State representative Laddie Shaw announcing that the Memorial Bridge Bill had passed.



Group shot of some of us! Hard to get everyone in one place at one time!

nic after the ceremony was a nice reflection of the day as well.

Shortly after this article we will be heading to our annual Halibut fishing trip ..... Fish ON!

*There is pride in knowing WE FLEW!*

Lynn Kile



## AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

By the time you read this, the ground will have been officially broken by MANY yellow shovel toting Veterans and Patriots at the National American Huey History Museum (NAHHM) near Peru, IN, a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization!

This long-anticipated ceremony for the Museum is only the first step in creating the only Museum in the world dedicated solely to the UH-1 Iroquois helicopter...the Huey! With three flying examples of the

iconic Huey in our inventory, one more in the wings and another on tap for restoration, our flying Museum will continue to grow and prosper. The Huey has been in continuous production for 60 years and counting; the honor of having its own Museum is long overdue. We are filling that gap. In fact, the Marines still fly them in active duty today. OORAH, Marines! And thank you for helping us keep its legacy alive and well.

Among other events that we will be attending for the remainder of our flying season, the last ever Knob Creek Machine Gun Shoot will be held October 8th through

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

the 10th. It's located about 30 minutes south of Louisville, KY in Bullitt County. How appropriate, right? Sadly, the Sumner family has decided to end the run of the world-famous Shoot, a must attend event for enthusiasts for many years. The Saturday night Shoot will light up the skies for the last time on October 9, 2021. If you have never attended Knob Creek, you should consider it. Absolutely a most memorable event, and afterward, come to the campground and hang out with us around the campfire. Bring your chair, your adult beverages, your War Stories and above all, your sense of humor. If you don't get thrown under the bus at least once, it's because we don't like you!

Hopefully, Covid will be well behind us soon and we can get back to our full schedule in 2022. Our 13 events this year have kept us busy, but with a "normal" schedule of 16 to 18 events per flying season, we anticipate more and more exposure of our Hueys next year, especially once the Museum is under roof and fully exposed to the heavy traffic of Indiana's Route 31, across the highway from Grissom Aeroplex, formerly Grissom AFB. It's



Flyover 2021.

where the Air Force Reservists currently maintain an Air Wing of KC 135 tankers.

Veteran's and Patriots keeping the Huey alive, that's us, the American Huey Chapter. Please consider joining us, either in person or financially. As for me, it has been "way more" than worth it in time, money, and involvement. In my retirement, it's been something to show for sacrificing my youth in a country far, far away. Besides, it sure beats sitting around watching Oprah, drinking beer and eating bon-bons!

Phil Marshall

## ARIZONA CHAPTER

We have already had two meetings and our big meeting with some 20 helicopters will be on 20

November 2021 at Falcon Field.

Dave Sale



## CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

April 2021 - May 2021

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and physical distancing mandates, 16 months passed with no new chapter events. Finally, after most of our members are now fully vaccinated, we were able to meet once again! Sixteen chapter members and nine spouses met for a great hamburger BBQ at LZ Fritz. Ken and Marcia Fritz graciously hosted the event at their six-acre farm, just north of Sacramento. It was great to meet up with old friends after a very long quarantine period. A big THANK YOU to Ken and Marcia!



The Members.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

*June 2021 - July 2021*

Eleven members and four spouses got together at the Aerospace Museum of California on 22 July 2021. The museum is located on the grounds of the old McClellan Air Force base, near Sacramento, CA. Covering four acres, there are lots of interesting displays inside and about 34 aircraft outside to view. The day was not too hot and of course the wives were ready to go to lunch shortly after arriving at the museum! The collection is mostly airplanes, but we did find two helicopters in the museum. They also had one modern flight simulator on display and several older simulators; even an old Link Trainer. That brought back many old memories from a long time ago!

I recall that a flight school classmate of mine (Tom Baker – Air Force) flew with a group of CH-3 helicopters from the Philippines to Vietnam during the Easter Offensive in 1972. They flew with a C-130 refueling tanker and refueled several times over the ocean.

The CH-21 is for member, Al Doucette, who first was a crew chief on the CH-21 in Vietnam, and later a maintenance Warrant Office pilot, Minuteman 42, in the 176th AHC at Chu Lai.

The A-1E reminded me of a VNAF A1-E strafing the Lai Khe perimeter with .50 cal, while our UH-1 and crew were waiting for a communication specialist to finish fixing the site radios. Lai Khe was under rocket and ground attack that day in August 1972.

After about one and a half hours of museum time, we all drove about a mile away to “The Officers Club” for lunch. This is really the old McClellan Air Force base officer club, but is now in private hands.



Lunch at LZ Fritz.

Ken held a short business meeting at which we agreed to retain our current chapter officers. We also discussed our healthy chapter finances and agreed to **donate \$1,000 to the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, TX and we urge other chapters to consider doing the same.** We sold \$195 worth of shirts and hats to members present. Ed Morris and Ken Fritz planned to transport the remaining chapter gear that is stored at Ken's house back to the MOC in early June. The MOC roof and windows were sealed from the weather several years ago and it is currently stored for free in West Sacramento. Ken Fritz reported that he and Marcia, Jim Stein, and Mike Nord all plan to attend the VHPA Reunion in August.

Lastly, we discussed a few ideas for our next meeting. Suggestions for future events included the Haggin Museum in Stockton, The Nut Tree Airport at Vacaville, and the Castle Air museum in Atwater, CA. We are all looking forward to the Christmas party and it's not even June yet!

Ross McCoy and Curt Knapp were too ill to make it to the BBQ. Mike Nord had a last minute business meeting. Mike Whitten and Rich Buzen moved to Texas, Greg Hutson moved to Oklahoma, and George Larson moved to Oregon. We missed them all.

**MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR COVID VACCINATION!!**



CH-3L

CH-21D

A1-E

Lunch

A few of our members plan to go to the VHPA reunion in August and we hope to get the local group together again in September for another fun event, maybe at the Nut Tree in Vacaville, CA.

For more pictures, take a look at our website: [www.vhpaccn.org](http://www.vhpaccn.org)

**Dave Anderson**  
Secretary, VHPA-CCN

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## FLORIDA CHAPTER



VHPAF member John Hawn (facing camera wearing Cav hat) answers questions of visitors at our LOACH static display.



The wonderment of the crowds that observed our LOACH static display along with the vintage aircraft in the background was priceless.



Vintage aircraft on display with inflight COBRA (center of picture) over runway.



On July 3, 2021 the Florida Chapter was back in action for the second time this year. After a covid-imposed hiatus last year, Freedom Fest soared again on wings of pride and memory as it returned to the Flagler County Executive Airport on Independence Day weekend. This was an all-day event from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and showcased a variety of historic and modern aircraft. It featured vintage aircraft like the B-25 Mitchell World War II bomber and the Tico Belle C-47 World War II cargo lift. Other exhibits included the Florida Army National Guard's CH-47 Chinook heavy-lift helicopter, the CJ-6 Nanchang Chinese trainer and many other warbirds. There were also opportunities for visitors to fly above the county in a "HUEY" or a variety of fixed-wing aircraft.



The Florida Chapter supported the event with our LOACH static display, Sales Store, and COBRA (AH-1G) aerial demonstration to include simulated "gun-runs." Many of the visitors didn't know a lot about the role of the helicopter in the Vietnam War, so we had a wonderful opportunity to share our mission with the large crowds who attended and help bring aviation to life to people who weren't familiar with it. Among all the parents who brought their kids with them, hopefully we were able to inspire the next generation of pilots. By the way, we also recruited four new VHPAF members! Image that!



"Members" of the "Vintage Fleet" of aircraft taxiing for takeoff prior to demonstration.

The Florida Chapter's 28th Annual Reunion is scheduled from September 23-26, 2021 in Tampa, FL. We invite you to join us for this magnificent event which will be held at the DOUBLETREE HILTON TAMPA AIRPORT-WEST SHORE, 4500 W. CYPRESS STREET, TAMPA, FL 33607. Registration forms can be downloaded from our website, [www.vhpaf.org](http://www.vhpaf.org).

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, VHPAF Secretary



Vintage aircraft on display preparing to line up for aerial flight formation and demonstrations.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter continues to increase social activities as the pandemic lessens. Hot spots continue to be the Traverse City and St. Joseph areas.

June 2nd, Ed Canright hosted the Traverse City gathering and wrote up this AAR:

Had a great meeting today!! When we got to the Indigo Hotel, the receptionist told us we'd be on the roof. Joe Meredith and I went up there and sat until about noon. Then, LLRP, Paul Fitzsimmons showed up. We gabbed for about 25 minutes and thought, "this is it" for today. Suddenly, up came Walter Topp, Clay and Linda Maxwell, and Sandy McLeod. They had arrived on time, but the person at the desk wasn't aware they were on the roof, and seated them downstairs. Finally, some-



At AH369 Veteran Crew Chief Jim Heyn and Huey Pilot Glenn Youngstedt.

one informed them where we were and they came up. Thusly, we were on the roof where the group talked war stories until 2pm. A big plus for today's meeting was getting Paul Fitzsimmons to talk about his LLRP activities (Co E, 9th ID on the III Corps/IV Corps border). Since Joe, Clay and Sandy had flown Cobras and Loachs in that area, the guys on the ground, and we fly-boys had a great mutual discussion. Memories of "close fire" missions were re-lived by both pilots and LLRP's. This may have been one of the more emotional meetings that I've ever attended! Poor Linda Maxwell, she had to sit through all the real-life experiences that were re-lived. Anyway, it was a great get together. I promised Clay and Linda that I'd bring my wife (Commander) to the August meeting since we'll be in Florida over the 4th of July time frame. Clay can't predict that he can be available each month because his farming responsibilities take precedent. A great time was had by all.

Also in June, Mark Benjamin, representing our Michigan Chapter, teamed up with 22 2 None at a car show in Kalkas-



June 2nd Traverse City - Clockwise Joe Meredith, Ed Canright, Clay & Linda Maxwell, Sandy McLeod, Paul Fitzsimons, Walter Topp.



July 7th in Traverse City, from the left clockwise: Pixie Matlis, Bob Matlis, Bob Kutulis, President, NW MI MOAA, Clay Maxwell, Linda Maxwell, Kate Potvin, wife of the late Bob Potvin, Paul Fitzsimons, Barry Witt, Walter Topp. Not pictured, Mark Benjamin.



July 27th in St Joseph Roger Blaha, Glenn Youngstedt, Jim Hunt.



July 27th in St Joseph Roger Blaha, Glenn Youngstedt, Jim Hunt.

ka. 22 2 None is a non-profit organization that works to raise awareness and provide support to end veteran suicide by helping veterans continue Fighting the Fight Within. The car show had over 100 entries with the proceeds going to 22 2 None. An unused grade school building, called Belay My Last Barracks was recently purchased by 22 2 None, provides transitional housing for veterans and a place for new beginnings. This facility provides support and assistance to veterans making a sometimes difficult transition from war to peace

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

in civilian life. The Barracks offers Peer Support Meetings, a lounge/game room, movie theater area as well as a workout room. In the future, it will be adding more programs designed to assist veterans with various aspects of life, work and leisure. With plenty of connections in the military and veteran communities, Mark was joined by several distinguished veterans at his Michigan VHPA display.

Glenn Youngstedt reported on an out of state trip: On July 1st four of us (John Geary, Paul Boggs, Jim Heyn and Glenn) flew down to Grissom Air Force Base near Peru, IN to visit American Huey 369. John Walker, one of the founders of American Huey, provided a great tour of their hangar and small museum. John also shared with us plans for their new museum and hangar facility across US 31 and Grissom. Pictured in front of 369 are L to R former crew chief Jim Heyn and former Huey pilot Glenn Youngstedt, Tomahawk 29. Jim and Glenn highly recommend visiting American Huey 369.

On July 7th in Traverse City photo, Bob Kutulis briefed everyone on the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). Also discussed Don Riggs, a friend of Bob Potvin's, whose brother was a POW and died in captivity.

On July 27th Glenn Youngstedt hosted a lunch gathering in St. Joseph. We had a beautiful day in St. Joe, MI for Roger Blaha, Glenn Youngstedt and Jim Hunt to meet for lunch. We all shared stories of our experiences in Vietnam. Roger flew "hunter-killer" missions, Glenn was a slick driver, and Jim flew for the Marines. Future meet-

ings planned will be to tour the B-17 museum in Willow Run, MI and touring the Whirlpool Corporation aviation operations in Benton Harbor, MI.

Mark Benjamin continues to watch out for the formerly neglected Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Traverse City. He filed this report on some of the activity involved: Due to Covid 19 and various budget issues, the city is down six employees who would normally perform summer maintenance at the monument. Local Veterans groups have picked up the slack.

In the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial photo, No. 1 shows Kim and John Lefler. John is a Vietnam vet, engineer, and President of the Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition. The Coalition members represent over 8000 vets in the NW MI area. No. 2 shows Kim Lefler with Tom Haase, CDR, USCG (Ret), as weeding wonders. Here they spread Miracle Grow on just some of the many flowers. Each Thursday morning at 0730 a group of veterans gather to water, weed, and mow the area around the monument.

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 11 non-Michigan residents on our roster so don't let that stop you from joining us.

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

Submitted by Rich Deer, President

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

July 31, 2021

Despite 90°+ temps, members of the North Alabama Chapter VHPA (NAVHPA) turned out on May 22 to cheer on a 15,500-mile nationwide relay honoring our country's heroes. Jim White (176 AHC & 144 AVN), wife Teresa and granddaughter Keira, Jim McDaniel (61 AHC & 227 AHB) and Bob Monette (358 AVN DET & F/9 CAV) welcomed Carry The Load as the relay team stopped at the Huntsville-Madison County Veterans Memorial for a welcome ceremony led by VHPA Honorary Member Julie Kink. Demonstrating an aviator's "can do" attitude, Monette even joined the walkers for a 4.5-mile leg of the journey. Partnering with the Woody Williams Foundation, Carry The Load stopped at Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments across the country during May. The goal: to raise awareness of the true meaning of Memorial Day and assist with the many challenges facing our military, veterans, first responders and their families.



The "Carry The Load," bus in front of the Veterans Memorial.

On Memorial Day, the NAVHPA recognized the sacrifices of those who were lost in Vietnam as well as those who have died since then. We laid a wreath at the Madison County Huntsville Veterans Memorial. One of over 30 wreaths laid that day, ours was presented by two NAVHPA spouses. Teresa White and Claire Parr. Teresa is the wife of chapter President Emeritus Jim White. Claire is the widow

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

of the late Bernie Parr who was a charter member of the NAVHPA and Maintenance Officer until his death in 2017.

The NAVHPA was invited to display our UH-1C/M known as Buc-3 as a part of the US Army Recruiting Display at the multi-day Hydrofest Boat Races at Lake Gunter, AL on 25 Jun. Different classes of boats race side by side over an oval course at speeds up to 200 mph! The winner captures the Southern Cup Title and Trophy, a tradition that began in 1939. All agreed that 200 mph was OK in the air but too darn fast on the water! While we were watching the qualifying, we met a Native American fellow who we found out was a Vietnam Vet. So, Chapter President Marshall Eubanks presented him with a 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin.

It was a very warm 93 degrees with humidity so thick you could cut it with a knife on June 28th. But five great NAVHPA members endured the harsh weather conditions to put Buc-3 on display at the Huntsville, Alabama Concert in the Park for our local veterans. Even with all the construction going on in the downtown area, the convoy showed up. Bob Monette, lead, Les Haas towing Buc-3, and Ernie Megli flying trail.

Even at the Hydrofest Grandpa time is a treasure. Don Bisson with a grandchild.



Julie Kink and Bob Monette at the Veterans Memorial in front of the Vietnam War area.



Teresa White and Claire Parr presenting the NAVHPA memorial wreath.



Chapter president Marshall Eubanks presents a commemorative coin.



The NAVHPA wreath was one of more than 30 presented on Memorial Day in Huntsville.



One of the qualifiers at the Hydrofest - clocked approaching 200 MPH!



Buc-3 displayed at Concert in the Park.



Youngsters love the replica M-60.



The NAVHPA crew enduring a HOT day at the Concert in the Park display.

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

As they approached the LZ, our brave President Marshall Eubanks and Secretary Sam Maki, (well, along with the Huntsville police) guided them into the parking spot for Buc-3. As this crew of five sweated, we got Buc-3 set up for display. Whew! We are glad we had a tree to sit under for some relief from the sun. We could swear we were in the Mojave Desert. We were set up by 3:30pm and waiting for the hordes of people to show up. Only a few arrived at the beginning. But, as the afternoon went on, people began arriving for the music which started at about 5:00pm. Finally, more parents and kids showed up. If there is one item that all the young people like, it is our M-60 machine gun replica. All the kids like to have their picture taken with it. For some, it's the first time they ever held a weapon. For some, they tell us how their dad has taken them shooting. What's great is all the questions the kids have. And that, folks, is what it is all

about. These five fabulous chapter members did a wonderful job as always. As our evening came to end, the tow crew had to get Buc-3 back to its hangar before dark. They lined up, and with the great Huntsville police stopping the vehicles, the team rolled out. Another great day for the North Alabama Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. Note: please no more hot summer days. We're too old!!

The North Alabama Chapter meets in Huntsville, on the second Tuesday of most months at 6:00 PM (1800). 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](mailto:navhpa@gmail.com). Our web site is <http://www.na-vhpa.org>. Come on out!! We know all those war stories need to get out of your system. We have each heard all of ours. We need new ones.

Ralph Weber

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



Fred Lyssy, Jim McNamee, Bill Robie, with Shadow Box.

We had a good turnout for our July meeting: 15 members were there in person, plus we had eight in the waiting room on Zoom. We had technical difficulties and couldn't open the door to let them in. Sorry about that. We held annual officer elections: Dale House is still President, Bill Bates is Vice President, Jim McNamee is Treasurer, and Doug Neil is Secretary. Terry Olson continues to be our Museum Operations Officer. Many had lunch following the meeting.



Army Supervision.

Several members met with Fred Lyssy in June to reconnect and to return Fred's captured NVA SKS Rifle that was on loan to the Museum. To the right of Fred is Jim McNamee and Bill Robie, standing in front of our museum. We thank Fred for the many years this artifact has been on display.

We had a "Work Party" in preparation for the upcoming museum show. We have been on hiatus since the pandemic shut us down for the 2020 season. So, the museum has been sitting idle, gathering dust. We had the assigned four supervisors to fill a jug of water, while others were inside cleaning. That's us after a hard couple of hours of work. Mike Poindexter, Bill Robie, Rick Beaver, and Al Harinck on the landing: Doug Neil, Jim McGrevey on the stairs, Carl Cavalluzzi and Bill Bates supervising from the ground, and that's me, Dale House, supervising from behind the camera.



Museum Work Party.

We added a couple of artifacts to our Museum. Mike Silva loaned a Captured Viet Cong Type 53 Chinese Carbine provided by the late LTC Louis (Lou) Jacquay (RET); And an unknown donor provided us with a captured "repurposed" replica of a Colt 1911. More on those in a future article.

Our first show of the season to be held on August 7, 2021 is sponsored by the Collector Car Council of Colorado with over 300 vintage automobiles, a swap meet, and an airshow at The Rocky Mountain Metro Airport in Broomfield, CO. As the face of the

# VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Pandemic changed, we continue making adjustments. We are requiring masks to be worn for all while in the museum, and we will have to keep the visitor count down to just a few at a time. We are hoping for the best.

## Meeting Schedule and other Information:

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](http://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](mailto:RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com)

*In the meantime, Stay Safe, and above all, Stay Healthy.*

**Dale House, President**

## UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter held their July meeting in-person! We had a good turnout with 18 members participating. Our new Vice President Terry Branham chaired this meeting at Joseph's Grill in St. Paul. It was good to see several members who haven't been to a meeting in a while. We hope the Virus gets under control so we can make the in-person meetings a regular occurrence.

By the time this article is published, the China Beach get-together hosted by the local Vietnam Veterans will have happened in Trimbelle, WI on August 14th. It should be a great picnic, including Huey rides and a chance to mingle with other Vietnam Veterans. This will be an "unofficial" meeting for the Chapter.

The next event, which will also have happened by the time you read this, is the Moving Wall's appearance at Rice, MN on August 19 and 20. We are hoping for a good showing by the

Chapter at this event located about 50 miles north of the Twin Cities.

Our September meeting will be at the Helicopter Conservancy hangar at the New Richmond Wisconsin Airport September 16th at 11:30. The Helicopter Conservancy is restoring several Hueys and putting together a cockpit simulator and are looking for volunteers to assist in their efforts. Even if you have no experience, they can use your help and will find meaningful things for you to do to help their efforts.

We are in the process of planning our November dinner meeting, which will be an evening meeting with our significant others. Details will follow, so watch your e-mail for further information. If you are not a registered member of the chapter, we would be happy to have you join us, just contact Don Abrams at [dbabrams@comcast.net](mailto:dbabrams@comcast.net). We expect that it will be around November 18th.

**Article Provided by Don Abrams**



Standing: Jim Bankston, Tim Callister, Ed Luck, Wendell Pieper, Bill Geyer, Rick Koehnen, Bruce Hunter, Dean Lind, Mike Rynerson, Neil Powell, Ron Smith, and Dick Anderson.

Sitting: Rick Erlandson, Mitch Madison, Dave Larson, Terry Branham, Lloyd Enos, and Dan Weiberg.

## Want to start a Chapter of the VHPA in your area?

*Contact: Tom Payne for full details  
and lots of help!*

**(918) 813-5132 (or) [ka5hzd@att.net](mailto:ka5hzd@att.net)**

# Lancer Legacy

By Gary Bowman

1969 was a turbulent, exciting, worrisome, anguishing year for America. Richard Nixon became the 37th President of the United States. At Yasgur's Farm in Bethel, New York, a small impromptu rock concert happened: Woodstock. Some 250,000 people marched on Washington, D.C. to protest the war in Vietnam. Sesame Street debuted. The Beatles recorded Abbey Road. And on July 20, America became the first nation on earth to put human beings on the moon with Apollo 11.

And in February of that year, a small unit of men and supplies departed from Fort Carson, CO, headed for an obscure army enclave in northern South Vietnam known as Camp Evans. They were a helicopter assault company, part of the 158th Aviation Battalion, supporting the 101st Airborne Division. They were B Company of that battalion and were called The Lancers. Along with three other assault helicopter companies, known as Ghostriders, Phoenix, and Redskins, they would participate in some of the most violent combat air assaults in the history of army aviation, with names like Hamburger Hill, Lam Son 719, landing zones (LZ) with names of Lolo, Liz, Sophia and Hope. And places that have names which to this day cause soldiers to go silent in reflection: Khe Sahn, A Shau Valley, The Rockpile. Firebases Ripcord, O'Reilly, Razor, and Eagle's Nest.

Also, in 1969 a young infantryman starting his second tour of Vietnam joined The Lancers to become a door gunner. Little did he know at the time that he would be the "father", if you will, of a proud legacy: the Lancer patch.

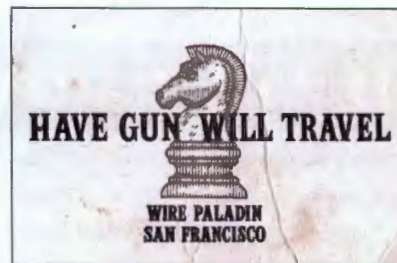
Richard "Berk" Bergquist, who claims he is "not an artist", but liked to draw and sketch, imagined a design that would soon become a symbol of The Lancers: the patch that would be proudly worn by pilots and crew alike on their flight suits and jackets.



Richard Berquist's drawing.

Little is known or remembered of how Berk's drawing morphed into the round Lancer patch worn on the flight suits, but Berk says, "My idea for the Lancers was simply the "Knight" chess piece and the Lances used in tournaments by Knights. This original art was drawn on the inside card of a common "sticky page" photo album purchased at a PX at Camp Evans. I can't recall the details of its gaining popularity enough to become our unauthor-

ized unit patch, but mama-sans who worked on large bases were the fabricators of these individually stitched patches, one patch at a time, on a simple manual sewing machine."



Berk says the inspiration for the patch was based on the business card of the fictional character Paladin, from the old TV western Have Gun – Will Travel. As a side note, Paladin was played by Richard Boone, who, as an interesting tidbit, was the voice of the dragon Smaug in The Hobbit movie trilogy.



Berk.

Today, the Reverend Richard Bergquist (RevRick), is a police chaplain, a VFW chaplain (<http://emergencychaplains.org/>) and a hospice volunteer. He is also heavily involved in the Southern California Patriot Guard Riders (<http://socalpgr.org/>).

Here are a couple of iterations of the patch as worn and displayed proudly to this day by all the original Vietnam Lancers.



Patch blocked.



Patch scripted.

All units have a patch, and all are rightfully proud of their patch, what it stands for and means to them – as they should be. But to the Lancers, this patch is something special. It is steeped in history and legacy, from Vietnam and into the desert wars that we unfortunately see continuing to this day. It is a symbol of bravery, camaraderie, selflessness, humility, discipline, respect, sacrifice and heroism.

Heroism such as the story of a young pilot named Gary Whitty, Lancer 28, Aircraft Commander (A/C) of one of 120 Hueys involved in a chaotic and deadly operation in March 1971 called Lam Son 719. While flying lead of a second sortie into LZ Liz to drop off combat infantry troops, one of the crews behind him took heavy fire and had to go down into a clearing. No small feat considering that there were tree stumps all over that were, "as tall as a man."

A/C Whitty saw them go down and exit the damaged chopper. The NVA began running toward the downed helicopter and crew. After he dropped off his troops, he went back to try to help the downed crew. As he tried to hover over the crew, he inadvertently flew directly over the enemy

and took fire so intense that the tracers underneath them, "looked like you could walk on them." He placed his chopper directly between the charging NVA and the downed fliers knowing that they would turn their wrath on the helicopter instead of the downed crew. The crew chief and door gunner fired on the charging enemy until they, themselves were wounded. The door gunner lost consciousness, but his hand and trigger finger were still on his M-60, firing in a circular pattern. But they were successful in holding back the charging horde long enough to ensure the downed crew was rescued.

The aircraft took heavy damage that included a carpet of bullet holes under the aircraft. The copilot's (Peter Pilot, PP) armor seat plate took several hits, but he remained uninjured. Through all this A/C Whitty maintained his position until he could see that the downed crew could make it to the safety of another aircraft that had just deposited its troops. Only then did he leave to get medical aid for his crew and avoid becoming yet another downed helicopter.

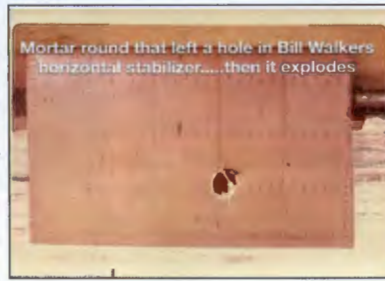
For this, Gary Whitty received the Silver Star. To this day he refuses the title of hero, damns himself for leaving the downed crew behind and does not believe that what he did deserves a medal because, "I got my crew shot up and left people behind." Such is the humility of the brave young flyers. But his story represents what is best about the Lancer patch legacy. And it is just one of many.

Sometimes, just wearing the Lancer patch can bring a sort of supernatural protection and luck to those who wear it. If you will, consider this.

Flying "trail" in a five-ship insertion near Fire-base O'Reilly to drop off ARVN troops, A/C Bill Walker, Lancer 17, had an excellent view of what was happening on the pinnacles and ridges surrounding them, as well as the LZ. Each chopper was separated by 30 seconds on the approach, meaning that because A/C Walker was flying "trail", his turn at the insertion wouldn't happen until about 2-1/2 minutes after the "lead" deposited their troops. This gave him plenty of time to watch as a mortar emplacement some 300 meters away on an adjacent hilltop, began zeroing in on the LZ.

Each helicopter in the flight had a designation called "Chalk". The lead helicopter was Chalk 1, the next, Chalk 2, and so on, making A/C Walker's chopper Chalk 5. The first mortar impact occurred near the bottom of the hill that the LZ was on just as Chalk 1 was landing. As Chalk 2 landed another impact occurred about 50 meters closer to the LZ. This also happened as Chalks 3 and 4 landed. The mortar impacts getting closer with each insertion.

As A/C Walker approached, he knew it was "going to be close." As he got within spitting distance of the LZ, another mortar was fired by the NVA. This one came down through



Stabilizer.

Huey, its crew, or passengers.

A/C Walker may have blinked, but otherwise retained control and operation of the chopper. Determined to complete the mission, he landed on the LZ. The ARVN troops refused to get off, so after what was only a few seconds, but probably seemed like hours, he decided to leave the LZ. When they were about a chopper's length from the LZ, another mortar exploded right where they had been sitting.

Consider the odds of that mortar passing cleanly between the two helicopter blades, which are spinning at 324 RPM, then hitting and passing through the horizontal stabilizer without exploding. Then consider that A/C Walker decided to leave the LZ with the ARVN still on board just seconds before that other mortar hit the LZ. Also consider that it took the NVA five tries to hit the LZ, exactly matching the five ships in the sortie. Luck? Divine intervention? Or perhaps just the charisma of the patch?

Since Vietnam, The Lancers have been inactivated, reactivated, and have had several unit designations. The most recent reincarnation is B Company, 5th Battalion, 101st Airborne Aviation Regiment, stationed at Fort Campbell, KY. They have adopted the history of the Vietnam Lancers full tilt, even going so far as to reimagine the original Lancer patch as their own. Flying UH-60s, they have participated in Operation Desert Storm, Desert Shield and Operation Iraqi Freedom. They are proud to carry on the traditions and legacy built and honed by B Company, 158th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter), 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), I Corps, Camp Evans, Vietnam, 1969-1972.



Modern Day "Lancers"  
A Vietnam Legacy!



Museum photo provided by Mike Jacobi.

About the author. Gary Bowman served with The Lancers as a helicopter crew chief and door gunner in 1971. Today he is retired after 43-1/2 years as a mechanical designer with a company that makes fuel controls and fuel control systems and lives in Loveland, CO, with his bride of 48 years. During his tour with The Lancers, he flew primarily in a UH-1H helicopter, tail number 69-15140. Today, that helicopter is displayed at The Museum of Flight in Seattle, WA.



## UPCOMING REUNIONS

### WORWAC CLASS 68/31-517

Where: Las Vegas ~ Hotel: TBA ~ When: Late September  
Contact John Kitchens at: [johnhkitchens@aol.com](mailto:johnhkitchens@aol.com)

### THE 2021 REUNION OF THE 132ND "HERCULES" AND THE 178TH "BOXCARS"

Where: Hampton Inn and Suites, 20 Johnston Street, Savannah, GA 31405 ~ When: 18-22 October 2021  
Contact: (912) 721-3700 (Call by 15 Sept)  
Room Rate: \$ 124.00 + taxes

### 187TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

Where: The Orleans Hotel Las Vegas, NV  
When: 9 - 13 November 2021

Information: <http://www.187thahc.net/reunion/next/index.htm>  
POC Craig Bond 703 727 2826 (cell)

### 173RD ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY REUNION (Robin Hoods and Crossbows all years)

Where: Hilton Palacio Del Rio on the River Walk, San Antonio, TX ~ When: November 10-13, 2021

Contact: Cliff Hyatt at: [uh1hac1971@charter.net](mailto:uh1hac1971@charter.net) or  
Rich Johnson at: [rich.johnson9837@gmail.com](mailto:rich.johnson9837@gmail.com) for details  
on agenda and link to hotel

### POPASMOKE REUNION SQUADRONS 263, 364 & 262

Where: The Beach House ~ 1S Forest Beach Dr., Hilton Head, SC 29928. Phone #: 877-935-1725

Mention the Swift/Peachbush Reunion when calling for reservations.

When: Nov 11-14, 2021

Information: [www.hmm-364.org](http://www.hmm-364.org)

Note: Featured speaker will be Navy Cross Recipient  
Col (Ret) Walt Ledbetter

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References available.

## 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

*Due to limitations of space, most of the obituaries in Taps have been reduced in size; some slightly, some considerably. Often there are extensive details of more interest to a neighbor or other acquaintance. If you wish to obtain more information it is available on [vhpa.org](http://vhpa.org).*

**\*Allen, David W. USA, CW3 Ret.;**  
**Flight Class: 66-13; RVN: 67-68 189**  
**AHC, 70-71 144 RR CO; Callsigns:**  
**Caretaker/Vanguard.**

David Allen died on July 12, 2021. No other information provided.

**Auten, William H. USA;**  
**Flight Classes: 67-25/67-503;**  
**RVN: 67-68 2 BDE 1 CAV,**  
**71-72 1 AVN BDE; DFC,**  
**BS, PH; Callsign: Silver 11.**



William Harold Leslie Auten of Baton Rouge, LA, native of Buffalo, NY passed away peacefully in the comfort of his home surrounded by family on June 6, 2021.

William was a helicopter pilot for 45 years. He flew 35 years for Petroleum Helicopters in Lafayette, LA; 18 of those years were spent flying EMS medical emergency flights. He protected many lives and saved many others throughout his career. His family is proud of the work he did.

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

**\*Butler, Douthard R. USA,**  
**COL Ret.; Flight Class: 56-**  
**12; RVN: 65-66 229 AHB**  
**1 CAV.**



Dr. Douthard Butler died on July 10, 2021 in Washington, DC.

He is survived by his wife, Jo.

**\*Caron, Robert P. USA;**  
**Flight Class: 57-3; RVN:**  
**65-66 147 ASHC, 66-67**  
**MACV FLT DET, 67-68**  
**AIR AMERICA SAIGON,**  
**68-73 AIR AMERICA THAILAND,**  
**73-75 AIR AMERICA SAIGON; Call-**  
**sign: Hillclimber.**



Bob Caron, died in a traffic accident. He was 88 years old.

Bob was the pilot the of the Air America helicopter featured in an iconic news photograph of the fall of Saigon at the end of the

Vietnam War. A New York native and a 1956 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he served initially in Vietnam as an Army pilot who, while the war was still going on, became part of Air America.

Air America closed its doors in 1976 and Caron returned to the Army after eight years with the company to complete 20 years of military service. He returned to the United States in 1985 to serve as director of contract administration for an aviation company. He subsequently went to Indonesia to work for another aviation services firm, and closed out his long career in the air by flying aircraft for the government of Lee County, FL.

**Chapman, Richard G. USA,**  
**COL Ret.; Flight Class: 60-**  
**7; RVN: 66-67 129 AHC,**  
**69-70 D/229 AHB 1 CAV;**  
**LM, DFC (OLC), BS (OLC),**  
**MSM; Callsign: King Cobra/Smiling**  
**Tiger 6.**



Richard G. Chapman, Jr. Ret., formerly of Ware Shoals, SC, died January 18, 2020, in Tucson, AZ. He was born in Greer, SC, on October 25, 1937.

He was a 1955 graduate of Ware Shoals High School and received a B.S. from the University of South Carolina, B.S\*\*, in Engineering from the University of Nebraska, and M.S. Geo-Environmental Studies from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania.

After entering service in the U.S. Army in 1966 his military education included the Engineer Officer Basic Course, Engineer Officer Advanced Course, Rotary Wing Aviator Course, Armed Forces Staff College, and Army War College.

His civilian career included: Coleman and Towns, Architects and Engineers, Greenwood, SC six years; University of New Mexico, Research Engineer, seven years; General Manager, O&M Contract, Fort Carson, CO, two years; and Profes-

sional Services Consultant (intermittent).

He is survived by his wife, Georgia.

**\*Cook Lewis R. USA,**  
**CW3 Ret.; Flight Class:**  
**68-23; RVN: 69-70 48**  
**AHC, 72-73 201 CAC;**  
**Callsigns: Blue Star**  
**238/Red Baron.**



Lewis R Cook "slipped the surly bonds of Earth" on May 9, 2021. Mr. Cook was born on October 21, 1940 and served in the Army from 1956 until 1978. He was a tank driver, drill sergeant, and helicopter pilot.

After retirement, he worked for the State of Texas as Data Base Administrator.

He is survived by his wife, Christa.

**\*Davanay, David H. USA,**  
**CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes:**  
**68-21/68-37; RVN: 65-66**  
**MACV, 69-70 114 AHC;**  
**DFC, SM; Callsign: Road Service.**



David Hugh Davanay, lost his battle to congestive heart failure on July 14, 2021. David was born on July 17, 1940 in Baytown, TX. David joined the US Air Force in 1959, first as a B-52D tail gunner and then transitioned to the AC-47 "Puff the Magic Dragon" gunship.

Wanting to fly, David was accepted into the US Army's Warrant Officer Candidate program and helicopter pilot training. David graduated from William Carey College through the Military's "boot strap" program and he received his M.S. from Florida Institute of Technology.

David was a Master Mason of the Grand Lodge of Texas, and in Japan, David became a 32nd Degree Mason of The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Lodge of the Pacific. David was a trustee of the Virginia War Museum; a range officer at Lafayette Gun Club; a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association.

He is survived by his wife, Carol.

**Donohue, Frederick M. USAF, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 57-F; RVN: 67-68 37 ARRS DET 2, 70 ARRTC; AFC; Callsign: Jolly Green.**



Frederic Martin "Marty" Donohue went to be with the Lord on July 9, 2021. Marty was born on October 4, 1931 in Petaluma, CA. He graduated from Grossmont High School in California in 1949.

After graduating from San Diego State College, Marty was commissioned in the Air Force and began active duty on August 28, 1954.

He commanded the rescue support unit for Apollo missions 7 through 16 and was the first pilot to complete a hover pickup of an Apollo capsule. On August 15, 1970, Marty made the first trans-Pacific helicopter flight from Eglin AFB to Da Nang AB, South Vietnam. The flight shortened the delivery time of the helicopters to Vietnam by about 75% and demonstrated the long-range capability of helicopters refueled in the air.

Marty attended Air War College and also earned his Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling.

After retiring from the Air Force, Marty began a second career with FLIR in Portland, OR. He worked for FLIR until he fully retired in 2012. He remained quite active in his retirement years and attended reunions for the Son Tay Raiders, Jolly Green Association, USAF Helicopter Pilots Association, and Legion of Valor.

**Duggan, Gerald F. USA; Flight Class: 66-10; RVN: 66-67 15 MED 1 CAV; Callsign: Mercy 24.**



Gerald F. Duggan, age 77 of Naples, FL, passed away peacefully on June 3, 2021 at his home with his loving family around him. Gerry was born and raised in Newburyport, MA. He graduated from Newburyport High School and the University of New Hampshire with a BA in Microbiology. While in college, he joined the Army ROTC cadet program and earned a fixed wing pilots license. After graduation, he went on to proudly serve his country in the Army.

Gerry spent the rest of his career in the Medical Divisions of the Plastics Industry,

primarily as VP of worldwide Marketing and Sales. Gerry volunteered at Naples FL Community Hospital for many years and was very active in the Naples Veterans Association and helped create dog training classes so that other veterans could have greater access to service dogs.

**\*Echols, Samuel G. USA; Flight Classes: 69-21/69-23; RVN: 69-70 114 AHC, 70 135 AHC PH (2); Callsign: Taipan 20.**



Sam Echols passed away after a valiant fight against heart disease on June 6, 2021. He was born August 31, 1948 in Okmulgee, OK. He grew up in Sapulpa, OK and graduated from Sapulpa High School and attended Northeastern Oklahoma State College, where he earned his pilot's license.

After his tour, he moved to Tulsa, OK, married and relocated to Shreveport LA. He spent 32 years flying for or managing in various helicopter companies.

He was a Life Member of the Shreveport Lodge #122 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and served as the Exalted Ruler, Past District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, Past State President and Past Grand Squire.

**\*Garber, Stephen USA; Flight Class: 67-13; RVN: 67-68 174 AHC, 71 162 AHC.**



Steve Garber passed away on April 20, 2021 after a long illness when he fell and sustained bleeding in his brain. He was born in October 1945 in Yakima, WA where he lived until joining the Army. He became a helicopter pilot and served two tours in Vietnam. He then lived in Tacoma, WA. where he worked for the US Army Audit Agency. More recently Steve was involved in real estate and local politics. Steve served in the National Guard and continued to fly helicopters.

He is survived by his wife, Gail.

**Holloman, Ronnie H. USA; Flight Classes: 67-1/66-23; RVN: 67-68 A/3/17 CAV, 68 118 AHC; DFC, PH; Callsign: Silver Spur 34.**



Ronnie Haydon Holloman passed away unexpectedly of natural causes on March 6, 2021 at his home in Jacksonville Beach, FL. Ron was born July 14, 1945 in Micro, NC.

He attended Old Dominion College, in Norfolk, VA. When he received his draft notice, he enlisted in the Army.

He was badly injured in South Vietnam in a crash and was evacuated to the U.S. After recovering from his injuries, he concluded his military service as an instructor pilot at the Army flight school in Savannah, GA.

After leaving active duty, he traveled around Europe with fellow Vietnam aviator Mike Lemmon (Ambassador (ret)). He returned home and received his bachelor's degree from Old Dominion University.

Ron had a long and successful career in the shipping industry with a memorable assignment as the U.S. Lines senior executive in Panama during the reign of Manuel Noriega. He retired from the shipping industry in Atlanta.

**Kellar, Robert S. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 60-1FW; RVN: 65-66 229 AHB 1 CAV, 72-73 MAAG; BS, PH (3).**



Robert S. Kellar, 98, of Cocoa Beach, FL died on June 20, 2021. He attended Watertown High, entered the College of Forestry at Syracuse University. In 1944, he received his ROTC commission and began his Army career at Camp Hale, CO, with the 10th Mountain Division. He deployed to Italy in WWII, earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts. After occupation duty in Italy, he returned home, joined the Reserves. He was activated in 1950 and saw combat with the 40th Infantry Division in Korea, then taught three years at The Citadel, attended the Command and General Staff College and decided to change his career path from infantry to aviation. After flight training, he joined the 3rd Aviation Battalion in Germany flying helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

He returned from Vietnam to serve a year at the Pentagon as an expert on the airmobile concept, then graduated from

the Army War College, commanded the 3rd Advanced Infantry Training Brigade at Fort Jackson, SC and served as the Director of Aviation Tactics and Director of Instruction at the Army Aviation Flight Training Center at Hunter Army Airfield, GA. He returned from a second Vietnam tour in 1972 and was then assigned to the prestigious position of President of the Army Aviation Test Board.

After retirement in 1976, the family moved to Cocoa Beach where Bob became a licensed realtor working at Heritage Realty, then broker and co-owner with his wife and son of Cocoa Beach Realty, later a Coldwell Banker franchise. He served terms as Commodore of the Cocoa Beach Boating Club, Deacon at Riverside Presbyterian Church, on the Board at Emerald Seas Condominium.

**\*Krienke, Albert F. USA; Flight Class: 57-3; RVN: 65-66 119 AHC; DFC, PH.**



Albert Krienke, a resident of Dothan, AL passed away on July 19, 2021 in a local hospital.

Albert was born in Muskegon, MI on January 23, 1930. The family moved to Owatonna, MN when Al was young. He spent his childhood in Owatonna then moved to Port Orchard, WA at the age of 14. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the Army. The first 10 years he worked in the motor pool. The last 11 years, he was a fixed-wing pilot, helicopter pilot, instructor pilot, and test pilot.

After retiring from the Army, he settled in Dothan. He received a Bachelor in Arts degree in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting from the University of Alabama. His second retirement was with the Revenue Department of the State of Alabama as a Tax Examiner.

**\*LeBlanc, Raoul J. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 56-9FW/57-7; RVN: 65-66 HHC 13 CAB, 68-69 58 AVN BN (FFM); Callsign: Blackhawk.**



Raoul J. LeBlanc, Jr., a long-time resident of Newport News, VA, passed away peacefully on May 25, 2021. He was born in New Orleans, LA in 1933.

Raoul was a graduate of Warren Easton High School and began his distinguished US military career while a student at Tulane University. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Management with dual majors in Accounting and Economics in 1955. Within his first fourteen years of military service, Raoul propelled to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 1973, he achieved a Master of Science Degree in Personnel with concentrations in Human Behavior and Labor Relations Administration from George Washington University.

After twenty years of dedicated military service, Raoul retired from active duty in 1975. Finding so much leisure not to his liking, Raoul accepted an administrative position at Fort Eustis in Newport News, VA, and dedicated the next twenty-five years of his career to improving the quality of life for soldiers and their families. Raoul was also a 32nd Degree Mason of the Scottish Rite, serving his community alongside his fraternal order since the age of 21.

**Leddy, Michael R. MD, USA; Flight Class: 68-6; RVN: 68 162 AHC, 68-69 334 AWC; Callsign: Dragon 36.**



Dr. Michael R. Leddy of Port Orange, FL died peacefully while surrounded by his family on June 16, 2021 following a brief battle with cancer. He was born in Philadelphia, PA in 1945.

Drafted into service shortly after high school graduation, he entered the United States Army where his keen intellect propelled him through a swift advancement up the ranks. He was sent to flight school and Officer Candidate School before deployment to Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Living in Georgia after his discharge from the Army, he completed his undergraduate degree in Chemistry at Armstrong State College before enrolling in the Medical College of Georgia. After medical school, he pursued a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology and enjoyed a fulfilling career bringing countless babies into the world over a decades-long career. He built a practice with the help of his associates into a highly successful opera-

tion before his retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Kay.

**McAdoo, Dennis A. USA; Flight Classes: 67-501/67-21; RVN: 68-69 129 AHC, 71 B/159 ASHB 101 ABN; LM, BS, MSM; Callsign: Varsity 16.**



Dennis McAdoo passed away on June 6, 2021 at his home in Lawton, OK. Mac was born on June 9, 1947 in Erie, PA. He graduated from North East High School in 1965 and joined the United States Army in 1966.

He graduated from the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University with a degree in Professional Aeronautics, from Webster University with a Master's Degree in Business Management, and Bachelor of Accounting Degree from Cameron University. He was also a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

After serving over 22 years in the Army, Mac retired and he and his family moved to Oklahoma where they built a home east of Lawton. Mac raised cattle, was a small business owner in Lawton, and was an adjunct professor at Cameron University.

He is survived by his wife, Sharel Sue.

**\*McFadden, Louis P. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 57-3FW; RVN: 65-66 121 AHC, 68-69 388 TC CO; BS, (OLC). ACM (V); Callsign: Tiger.**



Louis McFadden, of Phoenix, AZ, passed away peacefully on June 7, 2021. Lou was born in Philadelphia on November 17, 1933 and spent his summers at the Jersey Shore. Lou graduated from LaSalle College High School ('51) and received a B.A. degree from Temple University ('55). Lou was a member of R.O.T.C. and the Temple Owl Swim Team. Upon graduation, Lou entered the U.S. Army as a 2nd Lieut. He spent 22 years in service to his country.

While in the military, Lou received his MBA from American University. Lou's last tour of duty was as Professor of Mili-

tary Science at Washington and Lee University. Upon retirement, Lou stayed on at W&L and earned a J.D., proudly graduating beside his oldest son, Lou, Jr.

**\*Myers Forrest E. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 57-11; RVN: 65-66 B/15 TC 1 CAV, 68-69 478 HHC, 68-69 382 TC DET; Callsign: Up Tight.**



Forrest Edward Myers of Dover, passed away June 18, 2021 at Allisonville Meadows in Fishers, IN. Forrest was born April 7, 1926 in Leavenworth, IN.

**Putek, James R. USA; Flight Class: 66-17; RVN: 66-67 173 AHC, 68 COMMAND AVN CO, 71-72 1 SIG BDE; BS (OLC); Callsign: Robinhood.**

James Ronald Putek, age 75 of Alpharetta, died January 25, 2021. Captain Putek was born in Chicago, IL and was a retired airline pilot from Piedmont Airlines and US Airways.

He is survived by his wife, Tricia.

**\*Rice, Charles E. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 64-4W; RVN: 64-65 120 AHC, 67-68 235 AWC; PH; Callsigns: Razorback/Death Deal.**



Charles E. Rice of Lenoir City, born May 28, 1941, he passed away June 10, 2021 at Ben Atchley Tennessee State Veterans Home with his wife Kris by his side.

In 1968 on his second tour he was shot down resulting in devastating injuries that he dealt with for the remainder of his life. He was an honors graduate of Embry Riddle and Stetson Universities. He continued to fly for many years until his health eventually prohibited it. He then had a career as a civil service employee in various government agencies that spanned 20 years until his retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Kris.

**Seals, Larry D. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 69-44; RVN: 70-71 361 AWC; DFC (3OLC), BS; Callsign: Panther 16.**



Larry D. Seals, 75, died in his home on

July 8, 2021 after a long battle with Agent Orange-related cancers. Born March 18, 1946, he was reared in Big Spring, TX.

A career Army man since 1966, he served in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as a helicopter pilot and military policeman. Upon his return, he received a Bachelor's degree from University of Nebraska, and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Wichita State University. He also completed post-graduate work at American University at Washington D.C. and the University of Oklahoma.

After 22 years in the military, Seals retired and became the Senior Army Instructor of the Sheridan High School Junior ROTC program, where he taught citizenship skills for 21 years. During that time, Seals sat on the National JROTC Curriculum Review Committee and was the creator of the Leadership Education Aptitude Drill (L.E.A.D) game, in use in 1300 high school JROTC programs across America and abroad.

Seals was also active in Grant County Rotary as a Paul Harris Fellow; he sat on the Grant County Industrial Development Board where he was instrumental in expanding the Grant County Airport and served as Commissioner; he was a former Parish Council President of Holy Cross Church; and he was a founding member of the Grant County United Way. Additionally, he was a nominee to the Aviation Hall of Fame and a member of the Little Rock Chapter of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society.

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Sharon.

**\*Sebastian, Richard J. USA; Flight Class: 68-22; RVN: 69 F/8 CAV 23 INF; Callsign: Blue Ghost.**



Richard J. Sebastian passed away from complications of an experimental heart procedure on February 14, 2021 in Nashville, TN.

Rich was born in East Chicago, IN on February 20, 1944. Rich's career in the flooring industry spanned over 45 years until his retirement in 2017.

He was a proud and active member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and the VFW.

*Reprinted with full obituary and photo*

**Stowe, Douglas R. Flight Classes: 68-13/68-21; RVN: 68-69 281 AHC; Callsign: Intruder 11.**



Douglas Stowe passed away on April 29, 2021. He was born November 10, 1947, in Clovis, NM. The following spring his parents took him to their farm in Colorado, and the family settled in nearby Dove Creek in 1955. After graduating high school and attending a year of college, Doug volunteered to serve his country and joined the Army to become a helicopter pilot in 1967.

After his service, he operated the town of Dove Creek water/waste water treatment plants for over 30 years. He next ran for county commissioner, in which he would win and serve two terms.

Over the years he enjoyed volunteering his time with the VFW, Fire District, and Southwest Water District.

**\*Wegner, Robert J. USA; Flight Classes: 69-41/69-39; RVN: 70-71 175 AVN; DFC, ACM; Callsign: Outlaw 13.**

Robert J. Wegner, has died at the age of 71. He was born on October 7th, 1949 in Queens, NY, where he matriculated until leaving for active duty at 19.

Bob was a man of the world, travelling to almost every continent during his storied career as a jet pilot for Time Magazine and The Rockefeller Family's Wayfayer Ketch Company. He flew Gulfstream jets for decades and later became one of the Net-Jets company's pilots.

For almost thirty years he led a life of sobriety, and shepherded many others to do the same in the meeting spaces of Alcoholics Anonymous. Some of the local men in recovery are said to have never missed a meeting helmed by "Bob the Pilot."



# TAPS

## OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

Individuals wishing to supply a notice of death and/or information such as online link(s) may do so by email to [aviator@vhpa.org](mailto:aviator@vhpa.org). Those wishing to write their own obituaries may submit same to that email address as well. Space constraints may limit the amount of text allowed. For self-produced versions, any edited narrative will be provided to its author for review as soon as feasible.

Pilots meeting VHPA membership criteria, but have never been a member, will have a one line entry. Regardless of whether or not an obituary is abridged, an unedited version (full text) of all submitted obituaries will be posted on our web site at <https://www.vhpa.org>.

Records of the recent deaths of the following potential members of the VHPA were gleaned from internet searches within the last two months. All the information VHPA has for these pilots may be found at [VHPA.org](http://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](mailto:HQ@VHPA.org) or call 1-800-505-VHPA (8472) so it can be added to our database.

Aberle, Robert W. USA; Flight Classes: 68-17/68-29; died on May 27, 2021.

Adams, Barry H. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-14; RVN: 67-68 11 GS 1 CAV, 71-72 218 AHC DET TC; DFC; Call-signs: Ears 3/Black Robe 69; died on June 28, 2021.

Badder, Frank W. USA, CW4 Ret.; RVN: 67-68 189 AHC; died on March 16, 2019.

Baskett, William F. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 71-1/70-49; died on June 20, 2021.

Bertrand, Paul U. USA, MAJ Ret.; BS; died on July 5, 2021.

Bodeen, Jerrie W. USA; Flight Class: 64-1; PH; died on June 26, 2021.

Chapman, Terence R. USMC; died on October 13, 2019.

Colburn, Edward A. USA, COL Ret.; RVN: 1 CAV (2 tours); SS, DFC, BS (2 OLC); died on July 6, 2021.

Enloe, Edmond J. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-20; RVN:68-69 I CAV; DFC, BS, MSM; died on or about July 28, 2021.

Ewing, David R. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-18; DFC (OLC); BS, PH; died on June 6, 2021.

Greyhosky, August USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 58; RVN: 66-67 119 AHC, 71-72 1 AVN BDE; died on July 15, 2021.

Heape, Artie A. USA, CW4 Ret.; RVN: 1 CAV; died on June 18, 2021.

Hill, Ollis D. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-516/68-28; RVN: 68-69 92 AHC; died on January 4, 2021.

Hogg, Charles M. USA, Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-521/68-39; RVN:69-70 116 AHC; died on June 10, 2021.

Kilgore, James A. USA, COL Ret.; RVN: 63-64 118 AHC; SS, LM, BS, MSM; died on June 15, 2021.

Ledwidge, Augustine T. USA, COL Ret.; DFC, LM, BS, MSM, ACM; died on June 9, 2021.

Madich, Robert M USA, CPT Ret.; RVN: 69-70 189 AHC, 71-72 57 AHC; died on June 13, 2021.

McDowell, Walter O. Jr. USMC, MAJ Ret.; RVN: HMMH-463; died on September 11, 2020.

McIntyre, Stephen III USA, LTC Ret.; DFC (OLC), BS (3 OLC); died on June 28, 2021.

Otto, James W. USMC; RVN: HMM 261; died on June 21, 2021.

Raysik, Richard R. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 72-13; RVN: 72; LM, DFC, BS (OLC), MSM, ACM (2); died on February 2, 2021.

Shoemaker, John B. USA; BS (3 OLC), MSM, PH, ACM; died on December 6, 2020.

Thompson, Mitchell G. USA, LTC Ret.; died on July 7, 2021.

Ward, Charles E. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67 282 AHC; DFC, BS; Callsign; Black Cat 6; died July 12, 2021.

Williams, John R. USN, LCDR Ret.; RVN: 69 HS-6; died on January 23, 2021.

Youngpeter, Donald E. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 66-67 545 TC 119 AHC, 66-67 119 AHC; died on June 25, 2021

# VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit					
3 <sup>rd</sup> Unit					
4 <sup>th</sup> Unit					

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

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

# ~ BOOK REVIEWS ~

*Aviator Staff Book Review – By Tom Kirk*



**Mended Wings: The Vietnam War Experience Through the Eyes of Ten American Purple Heart Helicopter Pilots** by Colin P. Cahoon, Valor Publishers, ISBN 978-1733170727. Paperback \$17.95, Kindle \$9.99 available on Amazon.com

There are understandably, scores of historical treatments of Army aviator's individual or unit experiences in Vietnam. It is no surprise many became available in the last several years as groups of authors reached the 50th anniversary of their tours. Given different time frames, missions, aircraft types, and the widely differing geography of the country, they are each unique. At the same time the format is somewhat similar as it applies to the narrative.

Colin P. Cahoon, a post-Vietnam trained Army Aviator, has taken a different approach in his book. He focuses on

pilots who were wounded and the circumstances of the actions resulting in those casualties. The reader is given an introduction to these men prior to their service, as well as the rest of their lives following the events leading to the award of the Purple Heart. Some wounds were life-threatening, some life altering – some both.

The descriptions of the combat leading to the injuries are a product of personal interviews as well as eye-witnesses. Maybe it's the passage of time or more likely the type of men who flew helicopters in Vietnam, but the accounts are quite matter of fact and absent of hyperbole.

These accounts provided by ten men have many supporting characters, who are properly acknowledged.

There is, however, one common thread in the experiences of these individuals and it is reaffirming; all describe the willingness of fellow aviators to accept great risk to aid their wounded brothers.

Colin Cahoon has done a great job of collecting and sharing these stories. Whether you had a similar experience or survived your tour without harm, this is an informative work.

## Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage (FVSO), Kontum, Vietnam

Patrick Leary, FVSO President and VHPA Life Member



**Yesterday and Today**

FVSO is a 501©(3) non-profit group that provides support for the six Vinh Son Montagnard orphanages in the Kontum region of Vietnam and the Sao Mai orphanage in Pleiku. These facilities are home to over 700 Montagnard children who are cared for by dedicated Catholic Nuns. For 20 years, FVSO has been a major contributor to the well being of these very special children. Through tax deductible donations, we provide food, medicine, dental care, education, shelter and emergency relief.

**“My name is Y Thuy, and I am 17 years old, live at Vinh Son-4 orphanage for many years. I feel very lucky to live there because I have enough food for my daily life. I have three meals every day thanks to FVSO supporter's funds for food. Thank-You!”**

### To donate or to contact FVSO

**Mail:** FVSO, P.O. Box 9322-B  
Auburn, Calif. 95604-9322

**Web:** [FriendsofVSO.org](http://FriendsofVSO.org)

**Email:** [FriendsofVSO@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofVSO@gmail.com)



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