



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association

H-43 Pedro



Cover story Page 6



H-34

Page 2 - Table of Contents

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IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S CORNER..Pg 3
USAF INTRODUCTION..Pg 6
KAMEN H-43..Pg 8
USAF ADVISORS..Pg 13
REUNION INFORMATION..Pg 19
LOOKING FOR..Pg 32
VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES..Pg 36
TAPS..Pg 49

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PRESIDENT'S



CORNER

One more COVID-related SNAFU

Okay, I know, I know; I said the last President's Corner was going to be my last, but that entry was submitted when we still thought the Charlotte reunion was going to be with the original dates. So, since this issue will be published and distributed at the same time as the new reunion dates, I get to pontificate one more time.

It's been a helluva two years for us with all kinds of disruptions and adjustments. Kansas City seems so long ago. But now we know that the light at the end of the tunnel is not another train, but the daylight of finally putting the pandemic behind us (even though we now operate with a new set of conditions, and, have a new perspective on the world).

I am looking forward to our closing banquet in Charlotte and a routine "change of command" ceremony. We have very talented and dedicated individuals on the Executive Council so I am confident that your new President, Art Price (I'm Art I, he's Art II in our internal communications), will carry on in the same tradition as you've come to expect.

And, since we are in odd times, I think it only appropriate that your new President takes the remaining space in this column to introduce himself. I will close by thanking all of you one more time for electing me to the most prestigious position I have ever held.

Art Jacobs ~ VHPA President

Thoughts from our next President~

It has been my honor to serve the VHPA for the last five years. Three years as a Member at Large and the last two years as Vice President. Following the Change of Command at the conclusion of the Reunion I will join the 34 pilots who have led this great organization. To simply say I will be honored seems inadequate. My association with the pilots that make up this organization is a valuable part of

my life's experiences after Vietnam.

Military service gave me a GI Bill that resulted in graduation with highest/high honors degrees. That translated into a Lockheed Martin career that ended with a stint as a Corporate Officer and a Subcontracts Director on the JSF/F-35 Program, followed by a happy retirement. I will provide more info on how I got here in a future President's Corner article.

I have observed our prior Presidents whom I shall use as a guide to my actions as President. Many still continue to serve the VHPA. It was never about them but rather always about the VHPA. I will let their actions guide me through my Presidency. I pray that this next year will be a good one for the people of the world and especially for the VHPA brotherhood!

Art Price ~ VHPA President Elect

A MEMBERSHIP FOR THOSE HONORED FEW



THE
DISTINGUISHED
FLYING CROSS
SOCIETY

*"...for heroism or extraordinary achievement
while participating in an aerial flight."*

DFCSociety.org/membership

FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

Conditions related to the pandemic continue to improve. The 2021 National Reunion info remains:

The 2021 National Reunion

Westin Hotel, Charlotte, NC

Tuesday, 3 August – Friday, 6 August 2021

Reunion registration opened in early June. Any updates that must be done will be posted on the VHPA website <https://www.vhpa.org/news.htm>, so please continue to monitor items posted there as this is the fastest way to get the most current info to you. The official 2021 reunion schedule can be viewed at:

www.vhpa.org/R2021-schedule.pdf

REMINDERS:

★ Paper Directories purchased beginning September 1, 2020 will be for the 2021 directory that will be delivered in October 2021. The deadline for ordering the 2021 directory will be August 31, 2021.

★ 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 REMAILING 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

THIS COULD BE WHERE YOUR STORY STARTS!

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

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 information and a copy of the newsletter for their review. And of course, we would love for them to become a member!

As always, our goal is to make VHPA the best it can be for you, the members! If there is anything that we can do to make that happen, *PLEASE LET US KNOW!*

Sherry Rodgers
VHPA Office Manager

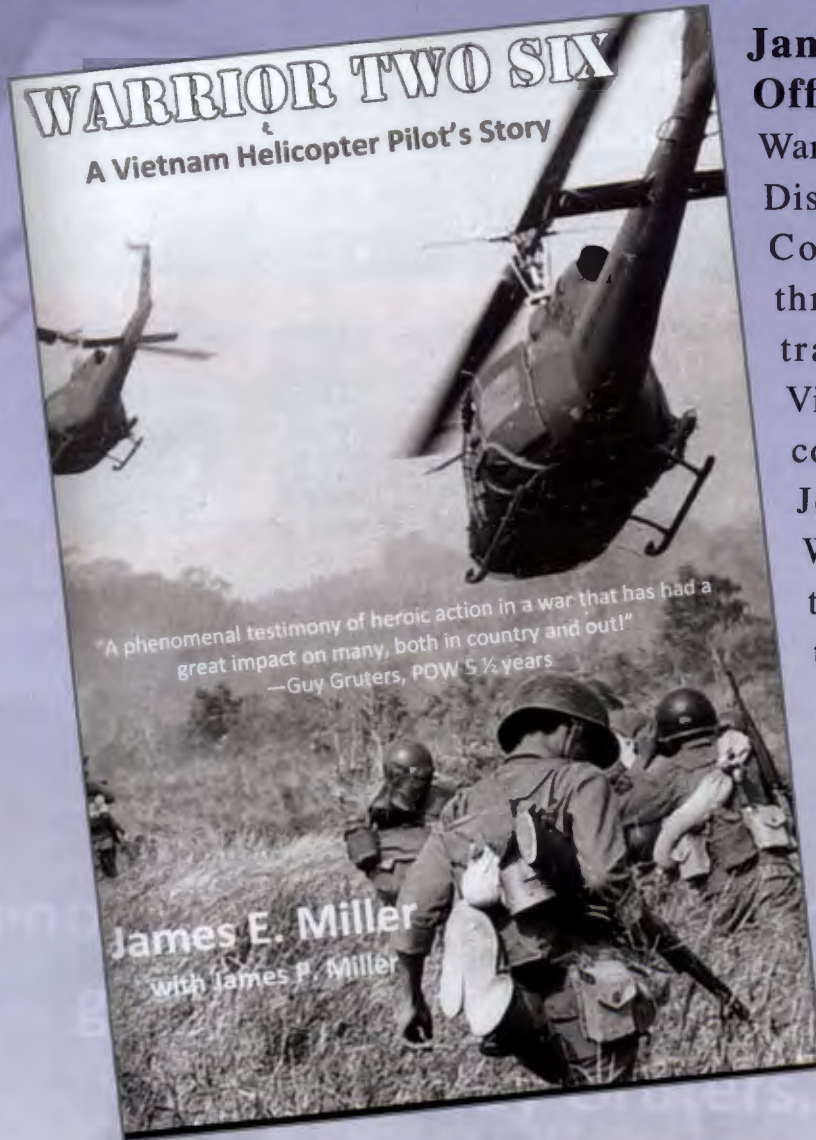
Mekong Rescue has been described as a historical fiction book which provides an insightful look not only of the dustoff mission, but the Navy Seawolf and Black Pony aviation units, the third Surg (M.A.S.H.) hospital, Donut Dollies and so much more...



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

**Search for: "Mekong Rescue"
in books on Amazon.com**

A Vietnam helicopter pilot's story...



James E. Miller, Chief Warrant Officer (CW2), Aircraft Commander of Warrior Two Six, and recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and Army Commendation Medal takes you through his experiences from basic training to the dangerous skies of Vietnam. This story is enhanced with comments from his crew chief Don Johnson and gunner Steve Zanini. While other crews were rotating daily, the crew of Warrior Two Six stayed together for eight of their 12-month tour of duty. Forty-two years later, they had the chance of a lifetime to fly a completely restored Warrior 11, part of the same 336th Assault Helicopter Company they served with in Soc Trang.



"Jim Miller's story is the saga of one man's journey from civilian life through the hell of war. It stands as a tribute to the thousands who flew the dangerous missions of an Army helicopter pilot and crew in Vietnam. As an Air Force and forward air controller (FAC) who lived and flew with Army aviators, I salute and stand in awe of their courage!"

*~ Mike "Scoop" Jackson, Lt. Col, USAF (Ret)
Call sign BILK 12/24*

Available in paperback ~ \$15.00

www.amazon.com/Warrior-Two-Six-Vietnam-Helicopter/dp/B08LNF3X94/



Introduction to the VHPA Aviator issue dedicated to United States Air Force Helicopters Pilots and Units

by Mike Law and team

(VHPA subscribers Jim Burns and Rick Sheets, VHPA members John Flournoy, Tom Garcia, KV Hall, Barry Kamhoot, Tuck Kemper, Joe Panza, Orbie Robertson, and Dale Stout – all USAF veterans)

There are dozens of reasons for having an Aviator issue dedicated to the Southeast Asia (SEA) US Air Force helicopter activities covering the Vietnam Era. Indeed, over the years the VHPA leadership has 'enjoyed' several notes and emails with the message – Need more non-army stuff. True, but we need guys to write/submit them to the Aviator team. Recently VHPA President Art Jacobs told the various committees, "Let's have an entire issue dedicated to the USAF, then the other services! Make it happen!" Good for Art!! Talk is easy – now it is time to make it happen!

The question for a subject of this vast scope is always how do we give everyone (meaning mostly USAF helicopter pilots with a good collection of former enlisted men that served in SEA) some sunshine in a balanced way? After conducting several Oral History interviews, doing Google searches, reading lots of Wikipedia type documents, and consulting with the above named 'team' of USAF veterans; we agreed to have five main subjects that will cover the areas where most USAF helicopter vets served: (1) H-43 Pedro units (2) VNAF helicopter squadron advisors (3) H-3 units (4) H-53 units (5) UH-1F/P/N unit = Green Hornets. Each subject gets its own section in this issue or in a future venue.

Naturally, there have been many fine articles and books written on each of these subjects, so we must reference a few of these. Finally, the focus audience is VHPA members. We will use Vietnam War vocabulary (sans profanity). We won't describe in detail what a chicken plate, or a fast mover, or a 'blue line on your funny paper' is. You might have to translate so your grandchildren can understand.

Now some numbers to put things into prospective.

	Total Pilots	Living Pilot Members	Deceased Pilots	Pilots without any unit or contact info
VHPA	48,848	13,421	14,289	many
USAF	2,186	207	791	1,633

On the whole, the VHPA knows about as many living members as it does deceased pilots. Please know that about 65% of the 'living pilot members' are dues-current. This means about 8,600+ folks will receive this issue. Impressive readership I'm thinking for a bunch of 'older guys!' To mostly Gary Roush's and his 'band of researching brothers' credit, the VHPA knows about 2,186 USAF helicopter pilots. To my pleasant surprise, while doing research for this issue, I came across a roster of five or six pilots in a small two-aircraft Detachment. Usually only one was not in the VHPA database.

Now, I'm not saying that Gary and his band are perfect, but they make the VHPA look pretty darn good! In especially the last decade, the VHPA has been learning about USAF pilots as they pass away [special thanks to Bill Waters, Jim Burns, and our 'internet obituary watchers.'] One of the VHPA's Legacy efforts is not only to name SEA helicopter pilots but also identify the unit(s) they served in and when. Sadly, $1633/2186 = 75\%$ of the time we have no clue where or when he served. Sad! Clearly, we have lots of work to do. Please look for your friends in the VHPA database www.VHPA.org and contact us with updates: hq@vhpa.org or 800-505-8472.

As our research progressed, we learned USAF helicopter veterans have formed several associations as follows:

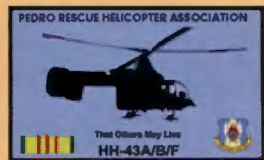


Jolly Green Association (JGA) was perhaps the first USAF helicopter veterans' association to form when they started in 1969. Members consisted of Air Force veterans, retirees, and active-duty members from throughout the USAF CSAR and SOF community. "Members must currently be flying or have flown as a crewmember (officer or enlisted) in a Jolly Green unit or a helicopter unit with a primary or secondary mission of rescue." While most members were Vietnam Era SEA veterans, many served after Vietnam and/or in other areas. They met annually for a reunion in Fort Walton Beach, FL. At the May 2019 Reunion, over 400 attendees learned this was the JGA's last Reunion as the association was closing down. We are not aware of a JGA website.



Please see pages 10-11 of the Mar/Apr 2021 Aviator for details from KV Hall about the USAFHPA.

Established in 1985, membership is open to all USAF helicopter pilots from any Era, aircraft type, base location, etc. Warning: their website <https://usafhpa.org/> has technical issues. Only 75 attended their most recent Reunion in 2019 in Spokane. Their Oct 2020 Reunion planned for Kansas City, MO was 'delayed' due to Covid issues. It is now scheduled for 3-6 Oct 2021. It is best to contact KV Hall at kykat46@gmail.com for details about the USAFHPA.



Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association (PRHA) membership is open to anyone who served in an USAF H-43 unit anywhere in the world. While the information on <http://pedroafrescue.org> is dated; President Rick Sheets said their next reunion will be June 2022 in Dayton to dedicate their final memorial at the USAF Museum. He estimated PRHA has about 250 members including Associates and about 35% were SEA pilots. He was a firefighter with two tours in the 40th ARRS.



VHPA Subscriber Jim Burns provides: I'm the webmaster of the USAF RotorHeads website, where we collect, save and preserve the history of all USAF helicopter crew members (officer or enlisted) and maintainers, their stories and photos. Here is the link to the old website www.rotorheadsrus.us (I can no longer publish or update this old site) and here is the link to our new site which is under construction at the time <https://usafrotorheads.com/>. We have about 700 members. We hope to build an extensive roster of everyone who logged time in an USAF helicopter.



The Air Rescue Association (ARA) is organized, operated, and dedicated to extending and preserving the spirit and camaraderie among persons who have been assigned or associated with the AAF/USAAF/USAF Air Rescue forces in the past, those presently serving, and those who may serve in the future. See <https://www.usafrescue.org/> Many of the photos on their site are from the Vietnam Era in SEA.

We came to the conclusion that there are lots of options, but no one has a complete roster that we can find. Please know the VHPA is not trying to compete with any of these Associations. Rather, we are dedicated to building a database of every helicopter pilot who served in SEA during the Vietnam War Era. It is OK if you don't wish to join the VHPA, but at least make certain we have good information on you. The VHPA's Legacy will be housed in The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Thanks

for being a brother years ago.

Finally, you'll read several personal accounts in each section. We hope the message is clear ~ write down your stories and send them to the VHPA. If you are interested in having an Oral History interview, contact the VHPA. We know that the USAF Museum in Dayton already has a lot of details; but the VHPA stands ready to help you get your collection into The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University.

Kaman H-43 Huskie<<

by Mike Law and Team

(VHPA Subscriber Jim Burns and VHPA Members Leon Fialko, John Flournoy, Thomas 'Tuck' Kemper, and Clyde 'Red' Lemke)

Flying the first USAF rescue helicopter to arrive in Southeast Asia (SEA) [20 Jun 1964] and some of the last to leave [20 Sep 1975], H-43 PEDRO aircrews saved more lives in combat than crews flying any other USAF helicopter. From 1966 to 1970, they performed a total of 888 combat saves (343 aircrew and 545 non-aircrew) rescues!

Charles H. Kaman established the Kaman Aircraft Corporation in 1945 to manufacture a new helicopter of his own design featuring an intermeshing rotor system with servo flap controls. From the late 40s until the late 50s, the Navy, the Marines, and the Air Force experimented with a couple of dozen piston-powered designs. Kaman won an Air Force contract in 1956 for a Crash/Rescue/Fire-Fighting helicopter. The first H-43A Huskies were delivered in 1958. Eighteen piston-powered helicopters were delivered by 1959 when Kaman switched entirely to the Lycoming T53-L-1B turbine engine. These were designated as H-43B and later HH-43B (the armored versions needed in Southeast Asia (SEA)). Huskies with the uprated Lycoming T53-L-11A engine were re-designated HH-43F. The USAF received 263 Huskies (18 H-43As, 203 HH-43Bs and 42 HH-43Fs) between 1958 and 1968.

Luckily for the VHPA, we have members and at least one subscriber, Jim Burns, who were there at the beginning and span the service life of this uniquely designed fire fighter/rescue helicopter. While there are several worthwhile Wikipedia pages and Wikipedia-like sites, Johan Ragay's wonderful website www.RAGAY.nl is the resource for H-43 history!

The beginning of the H-43's service in SEA is well covered in Ragay's website. Quoting from Edward S. Marek; "It is only the period 1960-1963, and you can plainly see the growing importance to the US of tactical air transport and tactical air attack operations in Vietnam and Laos. It's March 1963 and we had three US military aircraft down in Laos and two of them launched from an air base in South Vietnam. SAR (Search & Aerial Rescue) suddenly bubbled to the top of many priority lists. The USAF was unprepared to deal with it and the Navy would only perform such missions along the coastline and over water. So, the US now has a real problem."

"USAF MAJ Alan Saunders, an H-43 helicopter driver, did a study in August 1963 that said the H-43 helicopter, heretofore used for local base firefighting and crash recov-

ery (LBR - Local Base Rescue) operations, should be modified for combat operations and used for the SAR mission. The various USAF commands approved Saunders' ideas and CINCPAC finally approved the introduction of USAF SAR forces over US Army and CIA/Air America plans. The plan was to initially deploy HH-43s to Da Nang, Bien Hoa, and Soc Trang. The USAF SAR deployment began in June 1964. "Yankee Team" reconnaissance operations which were being escorted by USAF and Navy fighter aircraft over Laos were incurring increasing losses; so, at the 11th hour, the Bien Hoa Huskies were diverted to Nakhon Phanom (NKP). The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution became law 10 Aug 1964 and the Air War in SEA expanded significantly. The 33rd ARS helicopters (based in Okinawa) were flown by C-130 into nearby Udon on 17 June 1964, assembled, and then flown to NKP, arriving on the 20th of June."

It is also important to recall the USAF understood how to manage dozens of small two and three H-43 Dets at its larger bases in the Pacific, North America, and Europe. Additionally, it used TDY techniques for personnel, aircraft, and equipment to achieve the flexibility it needed until the PCS resources are built into the system. We will now read some of the lessons learned experiences for the early pioneers.

CPT Leonard Fialko provided: "The 36th ARSq (we were the Air Rescue Service/Squadron in those days) provided two pilots to augment the 33rd ARSq HH-43B unit at Naha, Okinawa. I came from Det 1 at Misawa, Japan and LT Kenneth C. Franzel from Det 4 at Osan, Korea. The medical technicians for the crew were provided by the Base Hospital at Naha. We were the first rescue helicopter sent to SEA and the only Americans at NKP. I arrived at Naha on 15 June. The next two days were spent preparing the two aircraft for air shipment and assembling mobility gear. We arrived at NKP on June 17. Some of us went to Udon to assemble the aircraft. A T-28 unit of American advisors were stationed there and provided quarters and

facilities for us. We flew the aircraft back to NKP in the late afternoon of 20 June after someone brought us fuel. I remember the living and operating conditions best. We had always had support units which provided meals, quarters, and specialized maintenance. NKP was, when we arrived, just a PSP runway. There were three tin-roofed huts and an outhouse, which the Seabees left when they built the runway. Someone had dumped some cases of C-rations, some bunks, and 55 gal drums of JP-4 on the ramp. We were on our own for everything else. Shortly after we arrived, two communications NCs were sent to set up a mobile radio station. This was our only link to the rest of the world. All traffic had to be manually coded and decoded, so we learned to use words sparingly. Operational control was provided by the Command Post at Saigon. Administrative support was provided by Bangkok. No one in the unit had any combat experience from Korea, nor did we receive any briefing on what to expect. We did a lot of guessing and hoped the bad guys were as dumb as we were. Fortunately, we had no rescue missions while I was there. We did, however, make some modifications to the aircraft. Much of the area we were to cover was at the maximum range of the HH-43 and at high altitude. We removed all doors for weight and carried two 55-gal drums of JP-4 in a wood rack in the cabin. I believe we intended to land, then hand pump the fuel into the aircraft tank. We also traded for two BARs which we mounted on ropes firing aft from the cabin. We were replaced by another TDY crew in August."

VHPA Subscriber (then A1C) Jim Burns provides: "I had been in the USAF about six years, had worked on H-19s and H-43s at Suffolk County AFB, New York, and was transferred to the 31st ARS at Clark AB in the Philippines in early February 1964. They still had H-19s and were just getting HH-43s. I was waiting for my pregnant wife's clearance to travel to Clark, so when I saw the TDY announcement; I decided to take it. I've posted stories and photos on Ragay's website. I wrote TDY AT NKP, 1964 ~ an 11-page memoir covering my June to October TDY tour with the 1st group at NKP. The unit was initially designated as Det 3 (Provisional), Pacific Air Rescue Center (PARC), but I believe the designation changed about the time I was ending my TDY. I rode the weekly C-123 "shuttle" into NKP a few days after the three HH-43Bs and some of the people arrived as described by CPT Fialko above. I remember helping the C-123 crew roll off some large fuel bladders, helped load some empty fuel bladders, then she taxied out and was gone. Sitting on the ramp were the HH-43Bs, those fuel bladders, and some 55-gallon drums; that was all. The day-glow orange paint on the nose and the tails of the H-43s and the MATS

patches had been painted over by an Air America painter at Udom while they were there being re-assembled prior to flying to NKP, so they had a motley looking paint job. I walked over to introduce myself to the 'base' all twenty or so of them. After a short time, I was told we had been released from alert for the day and we would be going to town. We all piled into the Air Force blue Dodge six-passenger pickup trucks and headed to our hotel, about 10 miles or so east, leaving the base and helicopters guarded by the two Thai guards who lived in a small shack near the 'front gate' with their families. As CPT Leonard Fialko indicated we were basically on our own if we needed to do anything or wanted anything. As an example of how primitive our facilities were when it came to maintaining our helicopters, all work was performed in the open on the PSP ramp as there were no hangar facilities. Our tools for any heavy maintenance were very limited. I remember doing an engine change on one of the HH-43Bs one day without any kind of hoist. We purchased a Come-A-Long ratchet winch in town and used it, along with some ropes, to change the engine. This was accomplished by pushing the HH-43B under a tree with a large limb, attaching the Come-Along and the ropes to the limb, lifting the engine enough to push the bird out from under it, then lowering the removed engine to the ground. Next rolling (thank goodness we had the spare engine on a trailer) the replacement engine under the tree limb and lifting it up enough to be able to push the bird back under it. Then we had to push the bird back under the limb and lower it back into the bird, drag it out from under the limb and then use the ropes and Come-Along to lift the old engine high enough to lower it back onto the spare engine trailer. Another example of 'life improvement' was when we built a small water tower using a large square aluminum tank from town and using one of the HH-43s to lift it to the top of the wooden tower frame we had built. We flew training missions on a regular basis and practiced doing hoist pickups from a 200-foot hover. Our mounted hoist cable was only 100 feet, so we carried a rope in the cabin, a little over 100 foot long, as a way to make a rescue, if necessary, in the jungle where the trees could be almost 200 feet tall. The procedure was to attach the rope to the hoist hook, lower the rope with a sling attached on the end of it, then use the hoist to lower the sling down low enough to get the survivor, then raise it until the survivor was hanging from the rope 100, or so feet, below the bird, then hover up the 100 feet or so needed to clear him of the tree tops and slowly fly him hanging below until we could get to an LZ where we could land and bring him inside. Primitive, but it worked. Also, we had plans to carry two of the 55-gallon drums of JP-4 in the cabin along with a hand

pump so we could extend our range by landing at one of the secure Lima Sites in Laos and refueling. We were also in the process of making a piping and valve rig where we could refuel in flight from the 55-gallon drums and then just throw the empty drums out the back of the cabin. Both the in-flight refueling rig we were working on, along with the BAR tail gun that CPT Leonard Fialko mentioned were not approved above our detachment level and when we got a visit from higher-ups we had to remove the BARs from the alert birds and hide them until the higher-ups left. After the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, the buildup of the base began and by the time of my departure there were probably close to 200 men stationed at NKP and they were building hooches next to the parking ramp, but when I left the HH-43Bs were still the only birds stationed at NKP. Also, when I got there in May we had Medics from Japan as part of our crews, but sometime around the end of July we had two Pararescuemen arrive to replace them. During my tour we didn't have any across the fence missions. I believe the first across the fence combat rescue mission from NKP occurred on 18-19 November 1964 by two HH-43Bs in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the pilot of an F-100 that had been shot down near Ban Senphan, Laos."

the SEA Dets were forming, I got assigned to Det 5, PARC in 1964 at Da Nang. We had about five new helicopters. Routinely, we had two on alert at Da Nang and two more at Quang Tri, nearer the DMZ. When we first got there, the entire area had experienced severe flooding. We were busy, busy, busy rescuing people, providing food and moving people into boats. I only recall one mission into North Vietnam. We had a Marine -34 escort us. I seem to recall it was the first time the VNAF attack units were allowed to strike North Vietnam. They were an excited and happy bunch. On the way to pickup someone, we were diverted to get a VNAF pilot in the water just above the DMZ. Our 'dumbo' (HU-16) flew ahead of us and kept reporting receiving ground fire. He put out a call and some Navy fighters said, "We'll go with you!" They were wonderful! Even after they expended all their ammo, they made attack runs on the gun positions that distracted the bad guys enough for us to get in. I was flying with Joe Pheland that day. We put our PJ on the ground. He found the man's parachute and some other things, but not the pilot we wanted to rescue. As we were coming out of that place, we took a hit near the tip of one of our rotor blades. It shook the controls like crazy and caused the blade to make an unusu-



HH-43B 62-5978 Det 3 Prov on ramp NKP March 1964.



First Operations building NKP 1964.

VHPA Member Clyde 'Red' Lemke provides: "I went through pilot training in 1955 and became helicopter rated about a year or so later. I flew H-19s but mostly served as the adjutant in various commands. I believe I am one of the very few to have flown the H-43A. The engine took up most of the space behind the cockpit! Everything got a little larger and much more mission friendly starting with the turbine engine B model. When



HH-43B 62-4565 helping build a shower at NKP 1064.

al noise versus the normal, special "swish-swish" sound. I recall we even followed our other ship while he did a pickup, then headed to Quang Tri, very low on fuel. We shut down. The flight engineer hammered the damaged part of the blade back into something of a normal position and applied many wraps of

tape. We started up and headed back to Da Nang. Naturally, the tape came off. When we landed all the guys said, "We could hear you coming for the last 20 minutes!" As 1965 progressed and the 38th ARS was formed to take over all the TDY Dets, we got word that the PCS guys would be coming. We drew straws to see how we were leaving. I got the last one but was one of the first to leave. I loved flying the -43 and stayed in Rescue for many years after that. Served at Scott AFB in the adjutants' office and then in Germany. My fondest memories are of all the good guys I served with all over the place. Rescue was full of good guys!"

H-43 SEA units:

Base / Unit	Start Date	End Date
Don Muang, Thailand		
No H-43 units		
Korat, Thailand		
Det Prov 4, PARC	7 Aug 1964	30 Jun 1965
Det 4, 38 ARS	30 Jun 1965	8 Jul 1972
56 ARRS	8 Jul 1972	Feb 1975
Nakhon Phanom, Thailand		
Det Prov 3, PARC	20 Jun 1964	30 Jun 1965
Det 1, 38 ARRS	30 Jun 1965	
Det 9, 40 ARRS	10 Sep 1971	Feb 1975
LBR-Flight	Feb 1973	Feb 1975
Takhli, Thailand		
Det 2, 38 ARRS	Aug 1964	15 Nov 1970
Det 10, 40 ARRS	May 1972	Jul 1974
U-Tapao, Thailand		
Det 12, 40 ARRS	28 Feb 1969	Aug 1975
Ubon, Thailand		
Det Prov 5, PARC	9 Apr 1965	30 Jun 1965
Det 3, 38 ARRS / 40 ARRS	30 Jun 1965	Aug 1974
Udorn, Thailand		
Det 5, 38 ARRS / 40 ARRS	28 Apr 1965	30 Sep 1975
HQ 40 ARRS	Mar 1968	
Bien Hoa, Vietnam		
Det 4, PARC	8 Aug 1964	30 Jun 1965
Det 6, 38 ARRS	30 Jun 1965	15 Dec 1971
TDY from Tan Son Nhut		
Binh Thuy, Vietnam		
Det 10, 38 ARRS	1 Oct 1965	Dec 1969
Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam		
Det 8, 38 ARRS	Oct 65	15 Sep 1970
Da Nang, Vietnam		
Det 5, PARC	10 Aug 1964	30 Jun 1965
Det 7, 38 ARRS / 40 ARRS	30 Jun 1965	21 Aug 1971
Pedro Division 37 ARRS	21 Aug 1971	29 Nov 1972
Det 7, 40 ARRS	29 Nov 1972	Feb 1973
Nha Trang, Vietnam		
Det 12, 38 ARRS	8 Apr 1966	28 Feb 1969 to U-Tapao
Det 1, 38 ARRS	15 Jan 1966	31 Jan 1972
Phu Cat, Vietnam		
Det 13, 38 ARRS	23 Apr 1967	10 Nov 1971
Pleiku, Vietnam		
Det 9, 38 ARRS	1 Oct 1965	16 Feb 1970 to NKP
Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam		
Det 14, 38 ARRS / 40 ARRS	1 Jul 1965	15 Sep 1972
LBR-Flight	15 Sep 1972	Feb 1973 to NKP
HQ 3 ARRG	Jan 1966	20 Aug 1972
HQ 38 ARS	30 Jun 1965	
HQ 38 ARRG		1 Jul 1971
Tuy Hoa, Vietnam		
Det 11, 38 ARRS	18 Jan 1966	15 Oct 1970

Aircraft statistics, significant operations, losses and KIAs:

The VHPA Helicopter database has 36 records for HH-43s. All are associated with the 38th ARRS. The oldest is dated 9 Oct 1964 and the most recent is 7 Aug 1969, so we know it is hardly complete for this aircraft type. Six records are associated with KIAs, thirteen with aircraft losses. All nine HH-43 incidents mentioned in Wikipedia for the 38th ARRS have records in the VHPA database. For brevity we are printing edited versions of just three of these incidents:

■ 20 Sep 1965, HH-43F #62-4510, callsign Dutchy 41 of Det 1 from Nakhon Phanom was on a CSAR for Essex 04, an F-105D piloted by CPT Willis E. Forby over North Vietnam. The HH-43 was hit by ground fire and crashed. Pilot CPT TJ Curtis, CE SGT WA Robinson, and PJ A Black were captured by the NVA, taken to a POW camp in North Vietnam, and released during **Operation Homecoming**. Co-pilot 1LT DW Martin, was captured by the Pathet Lao and taken to a POW camp in Laos. On 29 June 1966, Martin and LTJG Dieter Dengler and other prisoners overpowered their guards and escaped. Martin was later attacked and killed by a Laotian villager, while Dengler was eventually rescued by a Jolly Green of the 37th ARRS.

■ 11 Apr 1966, an HH-43 of Det 6 from Bien Hoa was called to medevac wounded of the 1st Inf Div USAR near Xa Cam My east of Saigon. PJ A1C WH Pitsenbarger was lowered by winch and spent an hour and a half treating the wounded and evacuating nine soldiers on five HH-43 flights. On the sixth approach, the HH-43 was hit, forcing it to cut the hoist line and pull out for an emergency landing at the nearest strip. Pitsenbarger continued to treat the wounded, collect rifles and ammunition from the dead and distribute them to men still able to fight and return enemy fire before being fatally hit. Pitsenbarger was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross. On 8 Dec 2000, Pitsenbarger was also awarded the Medal of Honor.

■ 19 July 1969, HH-43B #59-1562, callsign Pedro 70, at U-Tapao, was flying SAR over a B-52 which had aborted its takeoff run and crashed with a full load of fuel and bombs. Pedro 70 was looking for the tail gunner who

was believed to be trapped in the B-52 when the B-52 exploded causing Pedro 70 to crash, killing two crewmembers.

Concerning the HH-43 fleet, per Ragay, 42 different HH-43s served in SEA. After arriving in 1964, only a handful would serve the rest of their service life in SEA. In 1972, the USAF started removing HH-43s from the active inventory. Some went to countries within SEA, and some were scrapped in NKP and Clark. In Sep 1975, the last two SEA veterans were scrapped at Udorn.

To the best of our knowledge, there were thirteen (six pilots and seven enlisted) HH-43 KIAs in SEA as follows (presented by DOD in yymmdd format by last name): 650902 1LT DW Martin; 660411 A1C WH Pitsenbarger; 661028 2LT GH Bonnell and A2C FD Rice; 680207 SGT JG Abara; 680927 CPT DH Pittard; 681010 SSG ML Bledsoe, MAJ DR Brooks, CPT VM Liebermecht, TSG A Luna, TSG ES Orr; 690719 TSG H Cohen and MAJ WK Davis.

VHPA Member 'Tuck' Kemper provides: "After college I mentioned to a church friend of mine that 'all I wanted to do in life was to fly' ~ he happened to be an Air Force recruiter. I completed OTS in Oct 1972. Because the Army was training helicopter pilots in those days, I and two other USAF guys joined flight class 73-24 in Nov 1972. I got my wings in June 1973 and promptly went through several Air Force schools at Hill AFB to get H-43 qualified, then to water and jungle survival schools, etc. I thought it was easy to transition from an Army Huey to the -43; I just had to learn the way the Air Force wanted me to fly helicopters. In early Feb 1974, I joined Det 3, 40th ARRS in Ubon. Even though things had 'quieted down' in Vietnam for the US military in 1973, the Air Force still had F4s working the Trail. The Jolly Greens covered any rescues they might need; but Pedro dets still provided local base rescue (LBR). They closed Ubon in Aug 1974. I was transferred to Det 12 at U-Tapao for the rest of my tour. I believe I logged 128 HH-43F hours total; about 60

in schools in the States.”

VHPA Member John Flournoy provides: “I started flying helicopters immediately after completing fixed wing training in 1961. Helicopter training was at Stead AFB followed by an assignment to Germany. I flew H-19s in Europe until they were replaced with H-43s in 1962. I am proud to have been able to fly the H-43 for over a decade, with continuous ARS assignments culminating with over 3,000 hours in Thailand in 1974. I did two ‘times’ in SEA ~ the first was in the late 60s spending numerous TDY days at several Dets in Vietnam as the ARS H-43 standardization pilot. I finally served my year as the Det Commander at Det 12 40th ARS at U-Tapao in 1974. Tuck Kemper was one of my pilots. He and I flew several interesting missions together. I was privileged to be able to fly with ‘Red’ Lemke in his H-43A model while going through fixed wing pilot training at Laredo, TX. Most of my time was in the B model other than the F model SEA time. Pedro did an outstanding job in spite of its size, lack of armament, and short radius of action. It complemented the Jolly Green units once they arrived in country. Two or three H-43s were assigned to detachments at ARS Local Base Rescue (LBR) units worldwide. The PEDRO radio call sign was almost universally used in all H-43 units. It ended up being a real ‘badge of honor’ for those who flew the H-43. The PEDRO call sign is still being used by select USAF helicopter units today. A proud nom-de-guerre!”



Utapao Det 12. John Flournoy in the light shirt in the front row middle and Tuck Kemper on the back row behind my right shoulder.

Another great resource for HH-43 details is <http://www.rotorheadsrus.us/> aka ROTORSHEADS in this VHPA publication. Scan the column on the left until you see Helicopter Time Line, then click on that. Further, click on the 1935-1967 tab. It is organized by date. Scroll down and you'll start seeing H-43 entries in 1961. This Helicopter Time Line is the ‘lightbulb moment’ of Jim Burns. Amazing! What follows is an example of what you'll find:

1966 - June 06; A HH-43F #63-9712 (Call sign "Pedro 74") from Det. 6, 38th ARRS at Bien Hoa AB, RVN crewed by Capt. Harold D. Salem (P), Capt. Dale L. Potter (CP),

TSgt. Richard A. Connon (FM) and A2C Frederick L. Sanger (PJ), was downed by ground fire after hoisting a wounded soldier aboard and preparing for a second hoist pickup. Capt. Salem was able to fly about two miles before he was forced to land in a small clearing. TSgt. Connon was wounded in the calf and thigh during the shoot down. The second HH-43F (Call sign "Pedro 97"), crewed by Capt. Charles P. Nadler (P), Capt. Karl G. King (CP), A1C Gerald C. Hammond, Jr. (FM) and SSgt David E. Milsten (PJ), rescued TSgt. Connon and the wounded soldier, then one of the Army UH-1Bs escort helicopters landed and picked up A2C Sanger and the second Army UH-1B landed and picked up Capt.'s Salem and Potter. Meanwhile, a third HH-43F from Det. 6, crewed by Maj. Maurice G. Kessler (P), 1st Lt. Mark C. Schibler (CP), A1C Alexander Montgomery (FM) and A3C Gordon C. Thayer (PJ) had taken off to assist met the returning HH-43F and escorted it to the hospital. Ground troops moved in and secured the downed HH-43F and SSgt. William D. Cole, SSgt. Larry G. Vance, A1C Richard N. Strobaker and A2C Charles H. Burnett, less than three hours after it was downed, prepared it for airlifting and a U.S. Army CH-47 lifted it from the clearing and returned it to base for repairs. <http://www.h43-huskie.info/framesetrotortips.htm>

As something of a final salute to all the USAF crewmembers, maintainers, and whatever who served in SEA in HH-43 units, we, the VHPA, say thank you for your service. Thank you for helping all of us Americans in the military try to fight that war to the best of our collective abilities! Please submit your photos, stories, and information to the Pedro Rescue Association (PRHA), to the Air Rescue Association (ARA), to the USAF Rotorheads, to Ragay, and to the VHPA. Yes, the USAF Museum in Dayton will gladly take your items, but the VHPA will also help you get it into The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech Univ in Lubbock ~ the VHPA's Legacy Archive.

Udorn Pedro unit last in AF

By Capt. Allan H. Jacobsen
Det. 5, 40th ARRS

Detachment 5, 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS), Udorn RTAFB, became the last Kaman HH-43 Huskie (Pedro) unit in the Air Force Aug. 31, when Detachment 12, 40th ARRS, U-Tapao RTAFB, Thailand, completed its conversion to the Bell UH-1N helicopter.

Udorn's Pedro detachment will deactivate here Sept. 30, ending



the proud Pedro and rescue tradition. For 10 years, the men of Detachment 5 have distinguished themselves while performing their mission. They have lived up to their motto that "Pedro Cared So That Others May Live."

"Our main mission," says Maj. Fredrik M. Bergold, "Last of the Pedros" commander, "is to provide the 432nd Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) with aircrew re-

(Continued on page 7)

Vol. 9 No. 18

Udorn RTAFB, Thailand

September 12, 1975

EASY FLYER

USAF Advisors to VNAF Helicopter Units

by Mike Law and team

(VHPA subscriber Wayne Mutza, VHPA members Tom Hills, Orbie Robertson and Stephen Willett)

Background Information ~

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Vietnam_Air_Force and Flying Dragons by Robert C. Mikesch are good sources for the history of VNAF. As one reviews the VNAF evolution, it is safe to assume that USAF helicopters pilots and technical support EM were involved in much the same way they had been with the French. An edited (focused on helicopters) and much abbreviated version of 'the beginning' follows.

On 1 June 1957, the US assumed full responsibility for training and equipping the VNAF as the French withdrew their training missions. The 1st Helicopter Squadron (HS) was established at Tan Son Nhut without equipment. In April 1958, it inherited 10 H-19 helicopters from the French and used the radio call sign Pedro. In late 1960, to support ARVN Ranger operations, MAGV secured approval for the shipment of 11 US Army H-34As to replace the worn-out H-19s of the 1st HS. Airlifted to Saigon without renovation, most of these aircraft were obsolescent, while the helicopter side of VNAF was short of trained pilots and technically proficient support personnel. In October 1961, the 2nd HS was activated at Da Nang equipped with H-34s. In 1963, the 1st HS was redesignated the 211th HS and the 2nd became the 213rd. The USAF opened an H-19 pilot training facility at Tan Son Nhut and by June the first 15 VNAF helicopter pilots had graduated. The training facility relocated permanently to Nha Trang later in 1963 where the French and Vietnamese had a Flight Training Center for many years. The 215th HS with H-34s was established at Bien Hoa. In May 1964, the 217th HS was established at Da Nang with H-34s. In December 1965, the 217th HS moved from Tan Son Nhut to Binh Thuy. By the end of 1965, there were four helicopter squadrons [according to Wikipedia which left out the 219th HS]. Clearly, there is a lot of USAF helicopter pilot history in this paragraph ~ anyone with first person knowledge is encouraged to contact the VHPA.



VNAF Patch

John L. Plaster's SOG – The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam provides details about the 219th HS at Nha Trang; the fifth VNAF helicopter squadron. Along with the many US military 'build ups' in Vietnam in 1965, was COL Donald D. Blackburn as the new

SOG Chief. On page 32 Plaster states: "Blackburn arranged the transfer to SOG of a VNAF helicopter unit to support cross-border reconnaissance. He obtained the Da Nang-based 219th HS, whose obsolete H-34 helicopters would become a SOG trademark." This would prove to be 'just another interesting chapter' in the USAF Special Operations, Air America, SOG relationships.

The USAF in SEA - The War in South Vietnam - The Years of the Offensive 1965 – 1968 by John Schlight is a 438-page official history prepared by the USAF History Division. Page 236 of Schlight's history outlines the VNAF and USAF Advisory units as of June 1967 as follows:

VNAF	USAF	Location
VNAF HQ	USAF Advisory Group HQ	Tan Son Nhut
41 Tactical Wing 2 H-34 Squadrons (211 & 213)	AFAT-5 supported 5 VNAF squadrons / activities	I Corps Da Nang
63 Tactical Wing 1 H-34 Squadron (219)	AFAT-6 supported 4 VNAF squadrons / unit	II Corps Nha Trang
Air Training Center	AFAT-4 supported just the Training Center	Nha Trang
92 Air Base Group	AFAT-6 Det 2	Pleiku
	AC&W Station	Ban Me Thuot
23 Tactical Wing	AFAT-2 supported 5 VNAF squadrons / units	III Corps Bien Hoa
Air Logistics Wing	AFAT-3	Bien Hoa
33 Tactical Wing 1 H-34 Squadron (215)	AFAT-1 supported 6 VNAF squadrons / units	Tan Son Nhut
74 Tactical Wing 1 H-34 Squadron (217)	AFAT-7 supported 5 VNAF squadrons / units	IV Corps Binh Thuy

The previous paragraphs provide the background information for the VHPA collected first person accounts.

VHPA Member Orbie Robertson provides: "I joined the Air Force in 1953, went through Aviation Cadet Training, and got my wings in 1955. I flew H-13s, H-19s, and H-21s especially in Alaska for several years. To get qualified in the H-34, the USAF contracted with Chicago Helicopter Airways for flight training at Midway field ~ I was there 19 June - 6 July 1967. There were three or four others in my class. Next was Jungle School in Panama. I was a Major when I arrived in Vietnam August 1967. The chief of the Air Force Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command, was BG Donovan Smith based in Saigon. We were organized in Air Force Advisory Teams (AFATs) as shown in the table above with generally one AFAT per VNAF Tactical Wing, in those days there was only one Wing per Corps. I was in AFAT-7 at Binh Thuy. I learned the Air Force had been in this 'advisory business' for a long time, maybe as early as the late 1950s. There were about seven or eight USAF pilots in AFAT-7: four of us served with the 217th VNAF Squadron, two with the VNAF bird dogs, and two with the A-1s. At that time, there were only five helicopter squadrons in VNAF, all H-34 equipped. While both the Marines and Air America were flying H-34s, VNAF's support for its helicopters was not what was needed. Their fixed wing assets always got higher priorities. Most 'looking back' commentaries mention political challenges, pilot shortages, language skills especially at the technical level, leadership issues, the mid-day siesta mentality, local resistance to sending their people away for training, and the 'let the Americans do it' mentality. We experienced all of that! The net result was that the VNAF H-34s were difficult to maintain and our aircraft availability was low. For example, not long after Tet '68 ended, we got VNAF to relocate the 215th Squadron from Tan Son Nhut to Binh Thuy in the hope that between the 215th and 217th we could get ten helicopters operational on a daily basis. Soon after arriving in Vietnam, I observed that males were as likely to be seen holding hands with male friends as were women with women. Even so, when one morning after inviting CPT Dai Uy Tam, Deputy

CO of the 217th, to have a tea with me at the O' Club. I was quite surprised to suddenly feel him grasp my left hand as we walked along. Fortunately, I knew he was signaling friendship, and didn't jerk the hand away. Another thing, VN pilots, who mostly spoke English, demonstrated their good feelings for the U. S. by calling it 'The Land of the Big B. X.'"

"Soon after Tet '68, General Smith paid AFAT-7 a visit. After chatting with my boss, they called me in. General Smith said he wanted me to come to Saigon for a few weeks to work on plans to modernize and expand VNAF's five H-34 helicopter squadrons to 17 UH-1 equipped. I remember working with two US Army pilot LTCs on these plans for about six weeks. That was the first of what would be two major expansion attempts. Later, these LTCs came to Binh Thuy to help when we had Direct Combat Support (DCS) missions. From an operational mission point of view, the VNAF Squadrons only had two types of missions: DCS and medical evacuation of Vietnamese to hospitals (usually after a VC attack on their village, etc.) Briefly, the Army helicopter guys had a long-standing SOP that we AFAT advisors practiced of having an American advisor fly with each 10-slick formation. Typically, the Army provided the Command & Control Aircraft, gunships plus ten U. S. Army slicks (first wave); then VNAF had ten slicks (second wave). The VNAF

34s had only one 30-cal machine gun on one side of the helicopter. On medical evacuation missions, VNAF would typically send two 34s to the area. They stayed up high if they had helicopter gunship escort. The guns would go in low initially to see if they would draw fire or recon for the enemy while talking on the radio with someone on the ground. Then the VNAF ships would land for the evacuation."

"In June 1968, I finished my tour at Binh Thuy with about 280 hours in the H-34. Now, months/years later I was talking with some other AFAT veterans and learned that sometime after I left, the USAF pilots were not even allowed to occupy the pilot seats. They had to ride in the passenger compartment to observe and give advice?"

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This photo shows some of our USAF pilots relaxing with their 217th Squadron friends. The man standing wearing a plaid shirt is the Squadron CO MAJ Hai.



Supporting ARVN troops.

Orbie's biography and memoirs are available in his book *An Ardent Aviator: Vignettes of a Military Pilot's Career*. Additionally, the VHPA published some of his photos in the December 2019 VHPA Calendar.

VHPA member Frank Hills' son Everett responded to our request in the Jan/Feb 2020 *Aviator* for contributions for the USAF issue by providing some items from Frank's scrapbook ~ specifically this photo published in the local newspaper and two letters Frank wrote home during his tour with AFAT-7 at Binh Thuy. Orbie doesn't recall meeting Frank at Binh Thuy, so they must have 'passed in the night.'



With U.S. Combat Air Forces, Vietnam — Captain Frank D. Hills, son of Mr. and Mrs. Everett G. Hill's of 818 N. Main St., Port Allegany, Pa., checks out a flight plan with Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) pilot First Lieutenant Le Van Chau at Binh Thuy AB, Vietnam.

Captain Hills, a helicopter pilot, has been on advisory duty with the VNAF since June, 1966. He has flown 200 combat missions in the

H-34 Choctaw since arriving in Southeast Asia. The captain, a 1951 graduate of Port Allegany High School, received his B.S. degree in 1955 from Pennsylvania State University and was commissioned there upon completion of the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps programs. Captain Hills is a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon. His wife, LaVonne, is the daughter of Mrs. Eleanor Oetjen of Sac City, Iowa. (USC Air Force Photo)

Capt. Frank Hills and VNAF Lieutenant Le Van Chau.



217 SQDN VNAF Maintenance Ramp c 1967.

Everett Hills wrote: "This is the transcript of a letter my father Frank Hills sent to his uncle who was a pilot in WWII. In this letter, my father shares observations and thoughts he never shared with his parents. This letter and others were found in a box. My father is still alive and gave me permission to share this letter." [For brevity, the letter is presented as one paragraph.]

Dear Neil and Betty and kids, dated 11 July 1966. Got your letter today. I'm sure you both remember how one looks forward to mail. We have no TV, radio, stereo, nor many current papers so mail is the brightest part of the day. If you have a detailed enough map of Viet Nam, I will try

and pinpoint for you, my location. I am an USAF pilot advisor to a Vietnamese (VNAF) Helicopter Squadron located on a new landing strips that Americans have just built for them. (Private US companies – gov't contract). The strip is called Binh Thuy Air Base and is about 5 miles west of a small town called Can Tho where most of us live. (4 of us rent a house in a town from a Vietnamese/Chinese! Landlord) Can Tho is located on the Mekong River deep in the Mekong Delta regions – 75 miles southwest of Saigon. This region is commonly known as the "Plain of the High Reeds" cause the grass grows as high as late summer corn – of course now during the monsoon season everything is under water!

We don't venture around on the roads or streets unless we would like to be guests of the VC. There is no deep jungle foliage to conceal large groups from the air, down here the VC work in small regiments and continually fire at planes and harass villages at night. We were shelled at the base night before last by 75mm recoilless cannon. 1 American killed and 4 wounded – two hurt by falling, in a haste to get into a bomb shelter. Lost a couple of airplanes. Only lasted a few minutes, we struck back by air and they retreated and melted back into the marshes!! This is the kind of harassment I am talking about. They could never hope to take the base and I don't think they would try, but they continue to fire at us when we are flying. Luckily, they are still poor shots! If they censor this, you probably have a hole instead of the preceding paragraph!! I guess they are talking about doing such. It's a good idea although I don't think it well worth with the Press coverage we have! I have really got a challenge facing me in this job for the year. Nothing like the good ol' flying at Bolling VIP's air-shows and all! I am impressed with the VNAF pilots but aircraft maintenance is something else. Most of this Squadron's mission is medical evacuation and rescue. They pull out upwards 300 to 400 wounded from this Delta region each month – women and children as well as men – all victims of nightly (mostly) raids by VC. You know that people live in filth and poverty and on top of that, know fear for what it really is. I can only be thankful that we in the States should be never live to witness this on our land. Of course, the villagers eye us American very cautiously too. I look like a cross between a Western cowboy and a Chicago gangster with a .38 cal pistol and ammo strapped to my side and an M-16 automatic rifle in my hands! No wonder they wonder about us! Well enough about me. - Frank PS: My biggest problem is not the VC but tripping and shooting myself with one of my own loaded firearms.

Dear Neil and Betty and family, dated 14 Sep 1966. I had better drop a line to you before you give me up for lost! Activity, at least around me, seems to have surged! For a while I was the only chopper advisor here (normally four) and it kept me running – flying advisory – paperwork – attending spur of the moment meetings – answering the Colonel's questions! But now we are threefold so maybe I can go back to the good ol' flying routine. We, or rather the VNAF helicopter squadron here has supported the elections the past week. Picking up and distributing and collecting ballot boxes and voters throughout the area. We had one chopper go down Monday (VNAF). Pilot struck tail rotor on tree on take-off from one outpost – and

instead of landing and getting help, he continued to next outpost and during his approach the tail rotor pylon, rotor, gearbox, and all separated from the helicopter and he crashed – of course. So the last couple of days I have been busy with recovery operations. We had the Army come in the morning with a big helicopter "Chinook" and airlift ours back to the base. I brought back all the small parts in another H-34. Operation was smooth and successful and believe it or not, with a little luck and elbow grease, we will have the bird flying again. These Vietnamese are determined to give me some gray hairs! My new boss arrived the day we lost the chopper – some welcome!! Tomorrow I have to give him some flight instruction. Always fear to instruct your boss!! You don't know whether or not to say: "sir" to him when you yell at him!! Actually, though most of the boys coming over here are experienced enough that not much instructing is needed. I'm not much of an instructor anyway – I don't always practice what I preach!!

~Frank

On page 31 of H-34 Choctaw in action by Lennart Lundh from squadron/signal publications, there are two photos of VNAF H-34s with the following captions: (1) "VNAF H-34s came from many sources. From left to right: UH-34D 44639 (ex-USAF HH-34D 60-6913, ex-USMC UH-34D 144639), H-34C 43983 (ex-USA H-34A 55-5261. Ex-USMC UH-34D 143983); H-34C 53-4511 and H-34C 53-4498. The ex-Marine aircraft were eventually lost in combat. (USAF via Jim Mesko)" (2) "ARVN troops board their Choctaw for a strike against the Viet Cong on 8 February 1963. The eighteen-seat interior has been fitted, along with all the standard H-34C antennas, 54-496 was the twenty-second Choctaw delivered to the Army, and survived its service with the VNAF (Army, via Jim Mesko)" The booklet also has photos of two -34s with shrapnel damage from a 7 May 1967 mortar attack on Binh Thuy.

The VHPA database has just 35 pilots who told us they were in an AFAT. It is difficult to estimate how many USAF helicopter pilots actually served in an AFAT over the years. Maybe a 100, 150? Of these 35, we believe 12 were USAF pilots and of those five are deceased and all save two of the living served with Orbie in AFAT-7. The point here – we've reached out to all the blue suit AFAT guys we know about. However, 23 of the 35 are Army guys who told us they served in an AFAT!?! To learn what's up with that we need to listen to a few of these veterans.

VHPA member Stephen Willett provides: "I graduated from Warrant Officer class 70-1 ~ the last WO class at Hunter; all the rest were completely VNAF classes. Graduated on 9 March 1970 and was in RVN in April 1970 in the 189th AHC at Camp Holloway. My tour was April to April 1971. Started flying soon after I arrived and flew a lot; even needed days off to stay under the '140 hours in the last 30 days' regulation. Most missions supported the ARVNs or US advisors to ARVNs or the Artillery, maybe one CA with an American unit. I made AC near the end of July or 1 Aug. I only flew with GI pilot pilots about a week and then they were gone – replaced by VNAF pilots right out of flight school from Hunter assigned to the newly forming 229th VNAF Squadron. I even recognized a few from Hunter. So about four months after I arrived, we started flying with VNAF co-pilots. About 9 Nov the 189th stopped flying and started standing down. On 15 Nov 1970, we had a ceremony at Holloway attended by 52nd CAB and 17th CAG leadership and basically closed things out.

Now, on the books the 189th stayed in Vietnam until 15 March 1971; but most of the time those guys were only doing stand-down tasks. Since I was an AC with more than 90 days left on my tour, I loaded my stuff into a truck with the others, we drove to Pleiku AFB and were assigned BOQs there. It was nice ~ like checking into a Best Western hotel ~ hot water, flush toilets, clothes washing machines! This was part of AFAT 2-2 (team 2, detachment 2) headed up by an USAF Major helicopter pilot. Nice guy, but don't recall his name. We took all our maintenance folk, TIs and NCOs that had more than 90 days left on their tours with us. I was at the AC level, so I didn't do any admin or planning. I'd guess we took about 15 to 20 Army ACs to the 229th. Our OIC was CPT Alfred Williams who was a recent flight school graduate himself and had been in Vietnam maybe a month longer than me. He was my platoon leader in the 189th. He and the USAF advisors 'sort of' ran the morning briefings and passed out the assignments. In the morning I'd go to the flight line, get a mission briefing, get an aircraft and a crew and go out to pre-flight. Now the 229th received 31 brand new factory fresh UH-1Hs. They had been assembled at a port someplace and flown to Pleiku with 'some assembly still required.' Now the VNAF co-pilots, we knew ~ they spoke some English. The CEs and Gs – no English at all. The VNAF maintenance guys – no English at all. For the first two weeks, I don't think we flew – we found Red X things on every preflight. Little things, yes, but still valid Red Xs. I'd guess about 1 Dec we started flying most every day but not operational missions yet. We used

VNAF and the last three of the tail number as our call sign. They were always orientation, training missions – take the crew to Dak To or Ben Het, have them do hot refuels, make radio calls, see where the Arty is coming from and going to, etc. While I flew most every day, I don't recall flying with the same VNAF pilots on anything like a regular basis. I recall a liberal supply of contracted Tech Reps. They and the USAF guys did a fine job from my point of view. About 1 Jan we started flying operational VNAF missions. Mostly Ash & Trash missions. One thing stands out in my mind – when landing to a hover hole and around obstacles – when normally a GI CE or G would call out critical clearances, only silence came for the VNAF EM. Or, they would say things that the VNAF pilot would have to translate. I don't remember doing a real CA or even having the VNAF EM fire their weapons. Our AO was rather quiet at that time because LS 719 had everyone's attention up north. Things continued that way until our DEROS dates came up and we left. I don't recall any Army pilots backfilling us. I'm guessing only the USAF AFAT guys stayed on."

VHPA subscriber and famous author Wayne Mutza provides: "I enlisted in the Army about Nov 1969 and finally ended up in Vietnam in June 1971 as a 67N (Huey mechanic). I joined the 'White Flight' of the 240th AHC Greyhounds at Bearcat initially as a gunner and then worked my way into being a UH-1H crew chief. As the large American Infantry units had pretty much stood down, we were flying in support of the Thais, ARVNs, SEALs, and Special Forces. We even did some 'Black Ops' in Cambodia. In Nov 1971, the 240th stood down and we pretty much 'scattered to the winds' ~ some guys DEROSed, some went to other units. About four to six of us crew chiefs were told we'd be going to Bien Hoa to work for the Air Force in a VNAF Huey outfit because we all had several months left on our tours. I said, "OK? What's up with that?" So, we go to Bien Hoa and an Air Force guy, may have been an officer, but I'm not sure, escorts us to an empty two-story barracks. He tells us to pick out whatever we want for quarters and report to the flight line in the morning. The next morning, we go to the Huey flight line. Bien Hoa was pretty much all VNAF by that time. There are only a few, like maybe four, flyable Hueys and a pile of wrecks; but nobody is doing much and there wasn't anyone to tell us what they wanted us to do. It was real loose and to tell the truth it never got any better either! We snooped around and talked to the VNAF guys as best we could. Finally, we were told we were 'maintenance and gunnery advisors' ~ OK? We were sup-

posed to help/teach our VNAF equivalents how to take care of the M-60s and how to do Huey maintenance. OK? But, they didn't even mount M-60s on their Hueys, and the maintenance guys weren't the least bit interested in actually working on their Hueys. It was like this whole Huey thing was far too complicated for us, so we'll just stay home with our wife and kids. One thing I will share with you ~ we set up a nice bar in our barracks and really learned how to drink Bloody Marys!

Like I said, things were real loose. After about a month of this, some Air Force guy came and said, "OK, this isn't working out. They aren't learning anything from you. You are just wasting your time. So, we've released you back to the Army." That was my time in AFAT-2 at Bien Hoa. I looked around and found a job in F/4th Cav at Lai Khe, got into Scouts, and loved it for the rest of my tour!"

As something of a final salute to the USAF helicopter pilots who served as advisors to the VNAF, we, the VHPA, say thank you for your service. Thank you for helping all of us Americans in

the military try to fight that war to the best of our collective abilities! The VHPA is only aware of one USAF AFAT KIA during the Vietnam War Era; however, we are willing to 'stand corrected' if you will just bring the details to our attention. USAF COL Robert Lee Sowers of AFAT-4 died on 27 April 1972 in a VNAF UH-1H. He was trying to lift out a small FAC aircraft via cable when it broke and flew into the Huey's rotors causing the crash.



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GENERAL REUNION INFORMATION

CHARLOTTE ★ NORTH CAROLINA

Last updated 03 JUNE 2021

Who Can Attend the Reunion - As a general rule anyone who is "dues current" in the VHPA can register, order tickets, etc. simply by paying the Reunion Registration Fee. All who served in the Vietnam War as helicopter pilots must not only be a member of the VHPA but also be current with their annual membership dues as of the first day of the Reunion to register. Anyone who was not a pilot is also welcome to attend as long as they are a "dues current" subscriber to the VHPA Aviator magazine. Exceptions are vendors, specifically invited performers/speakers, Gold Star Family guests and Non-Registered Banquet guests; these people do not have to be a subscriber to attend. Anyone wishing to purchase a ticket for any of our events must pay the Reunion Registration Fee. As a general rule, since VHPA Membership and Subscriber dues expire on the last day of the month, someone who is dues current when they register could be non dues current on the 1st day of the Reunion (03 AUGUST 2021). Because of this, the VHPA Reunion Registration software is "forward looking" regarding dues status.

Reunion hotel: The Westin Charlotte, 601 S College St, Charlotte, NC 28202

Reunion hotel reservations: There are at least three ways to make your hotel reservations while insuring that you receive the VHPA Group Rate of **\$129 plus tax per night for single & double, \$149 plus tax per night for triple and \$169 plus tax per night for quad** over the dates of 03 August 2021 thru 06 August 2021 (based on availability). Cutoff date for the hotel rate is 12 July 2021.

Please consider the following:

★ Via the Reunion's personalized website, go to: <https://book.passkey.com/go/VietnamHelicopterPilots>

★ Via www.vhpa.org, then Reunion Information and use the "reserve your hotel room link".

★ By calling the hotel's reservation line at (866) 837-4148. You need to mention "Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association". PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY or MARRIOTT'S CENTRAL RESERVATIONS NUMBERS. You MUST speak to a Passkey Agent.

Transportation to the Queen City:

Airport - The Charlotte Douglas International Airport sees more than 700 flights take off daily and offers more than 160 nonstop flights to international and domestic destinations.

Train - Three Amtrak Train routes serve the Charlotte daily: The Piedmont connects Charlotte and Raleigh; the Carolinian runs to New York; and the Crescent travels from New York to New Orleans. Visit amtrak.com for more information on booking and scheduling.

Transportation from/to the Airport: The hotel does not offer a shuttle to/from the airport. There are several options for going to and from Charlotte Douglas International Airport: Members can take cab and mention the flat fee cab rate of \$25 to and from Uptown and the Airport. Otherwise, average cab fares start at \$2.50 and increase by \$0.50 every ? mile.

Parking: VHPA has negotiated a discounted price of \$20 per day for overnight self-parking with in & out privileges. The adjustment will be made on your final hotel statement.

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

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

★ It is a good idea to wear your Reunion lanyard so other attendees can recognize that you are with VHPA.

★ At the Closing Banquet, many men wear a suit and tie with the ladies wearing a nice dress. You will even see Dress Blues.

Vendor Area: The Vendor Area has been a huge success for the past several years! If you are interested in becoming a Vendor for R2021 please go to www.vhpa.org and download the Vendor/ Book Seller/ Exhibitor Contract, Waiver and Vendor/Book Seller/Exhibitor Policy Rules & Regulations. Complete

the forms and mail, fax or email to VHPA HQ. If you know of anyone that you think would be an asset to the Reunion Vendor Area be sure to let them know or contact VHPA HQ to give us the info and we will be happy to give them a call. Space is limited this year so be sure to send your form in early.

Oral History Interviews: Mike Law will be available to record and collect Oral Histories. As we have done in past years, we will be signing attendees up for 90-minute slots ahead of time. Please contact VHPA HQ or visit www.vhpa.org for details about how to sign up prior to coming to Charlotte so you fit this history preserving events into your Reunion schedule.

Family Friendly Attractions: There are plenty of things to do around Charlotte for everyone to enjoy no matter the age. We recommend bringing the kids and grandkids to all Reunions to see what the VHPA is all about and check out the things to do around the city. Here is a list of some attractions that we recommend visiting with younger guests but are not included in our tours:

U.S. National Whitewater Center - The Whitewater Center is designed and operated as an outdoor center offering over 30 different recreational activities like hiking, rafting, ziplines, ropes courses, and rock climbing. Every element and activity is focused on supporting an all-encompassing experience around the outdoor lifestyle.

Carowinds Amusement Park - Carowinds is where the Carolinas come together for fun for all ages with almost 60 world-class rides in this 407-acre amusement park.

Discovery Place Science - Discovery Place Science brings science to life through hands-on interactive exhibits, thrilling activities and experiments and a larger-than-life IMAX Dome Theatre. Luckily, this museum is on our shuttle route!

Skydive Caroline - VHPA Guests are being offered a reduced rate of \$179 for a tandem skydive. The drop zone is located at the Chester County SC Airport, about 40 miles south of Charlotte. Anyone interested should call Skydive Caroline directly, mention they are with VHPA Reunion for discounted rate, and setup a time for their jump. VHPA will not be providing transportation and this is all handled via Skydive Caroline. Check out their website at: <https://www.skydivecarolina.com/>

Volunteers: The North Carolina Chapter is this reunion's Host Chapter and as such will organize the

volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are organized around stations and then shifts with the number of volunteers needed for that shift. Sounds like a Duty Roster! We've found that 3-hour shifts will not take up much of your time or make you too tired. Additionally, we can guarantee everyone is trained on their duties. Needless to say but WE GREATLY APPRECIATE having volunteers! Not only do we avoid the cost of hiring local convention bureau temps but we get a chance to interact with each other while performing the tasks EXACTLY as a VHPA'er would have it done. As is our tradition, the Host Chapter, North Carolina Chapter, gets "first shot" at the Duty Roster. If you are interested in volunteering you can contact Jerry Phelps of the North Carolina Chapter at 252-257-2544 or s22comet@centurylink.net or contact HQ at 800-505-8472. BTW, husband and wife teams are welcome to volunteer.

Reunion T-Shirts - T-shirts will be offered in only one color this year, royal blue. You are welcome to order as many as you wish with your Reunion Registration until 14 July 2021. All cancellations made prior to 14 July 2021 come with the option to have the T-shirt mailed to you **after the Reunion** or having the amount paid for the T-shirt refunded. There is a \$8 shipping & handling fee per shirt when HQ mails the T-shirts.

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

Cutoff date to order a T-shirt is 14 July 2021
S, M, L & XL - \$19 XXL - \$21 XXXL - \$22

Primary Attendee (Member or Subscriber) Registration - The early registration fee for the member is \$40 through July 31 and \$50 beginning August 1.

Adult Guest Registration - The early registration fee for the guest is \$40 through July 31 and \$50 beginning August 1.

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

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

Cancelling a Reunion Registration - The VHPA Member or Subscriber who made the Reunion Registration is known as the Primary Registrant (PR). A PR may cancel all or portions of his or her registration **any time prior to Friday, 30 July 2021** by contacting HQ via US Mail at 1601 E Lamar Blvd, Suite 117, Arlington, TX 76011, Email to HQ@vhpa.org, Phone at 800-505-8472 or Fax at 817-200-7309. It is important to note that reunion registration cancellations and hotel reservation cancellations are completely separate business processes. The PR is responsible for both processes. PRs cannot assume that when they cancel their hotel reservation that the hotel will notify HQ to cancel the reunion registration or vice versa.

Reunion Refunds - The Executive Council establishes the official cancellation date (OCD) for each reunion. **The OCD for R2021 is Friday, 30 July 2021.** Only cancellations received by HQ by close of business Central Daylight Time (normally 3pm) on the OCD (including those via US Mail) are considered for refunds, unless covered by Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) described below. **It is important to note that the following reunion registration items are non-refundable even with purchase of GRI: registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions plus any event designated as non-refundable. The NASCAR Hall of Fame Private Dinner has a \$20 cancellation fee that is nonrefundable for R2021.** For cancellations after the OCD, the GRI fee is non-refundable. As a general rule, HQ starts processing refunds about two weeks after the reunion ends. No refunds are processed until after the reunion is over. For PRs receiving a refund, there is a two step process. First, the PR receives a letter and/or a statement from HQ outlining the details of the refund including the amount. Normally this correspondence is sent from HQ by US mail but it can be via email. Second, the PR receives a check via US mail from the VHPA's bank. The goal is to complete the entire refund process not later than one calendar month after the reunion ends. Any clerical errors in the details of the refund should be brought to the attention of HQ.

Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) Program - As part of their initial registration transaction a PR may enroll in the Guarantee Refund Insurance (GRI) program by paying a fee calculated at 10% of event ticket purchases. If GRI is purchased with the initial

registration, the GRI fee will be added to any paid events added to member's registration. As mentioned above, registration fees, dues payments, directory orders, donations or voluntary contributions are not included in this calculation. The GRI program allows the PR to receive a refund for himself/herself and/or their guests that have to cancel or have their reunion travel plans interrupted for any of the following reasons:

1. Sickness or injury of PR, a traveling companion or members of immediate families, which is diagnosed and treated by a physician or requires hospitalization during the time of the reunion.
2. Death of PR or immediate family member.
3. PR's involvement in a traffic accident, en route to the reunion that causes you to miss the reunion or a particular event.
4. PR's home is made uninhabitable by a natural disaster such as fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, or volcano prior to or during the time of the reunion.
5. PR is recalled into active duty by the military that causes you to be unavailable to attend the reunion.
6. PR is served a subpoena or called to serve for jury duty during dates of the reunion.
7. PR is quarantined during dates of the reunion.

The GRI program covers only specific VHPA events and fees, and does not cover cancellation costs that might be associated with hotel rooms, airfares, rental cars, and other non-VHPA generated expenses. PR's enrolled in the GRI program and needing to take advantage of the program's features are encouraged to contact VHPA HQ either by email or at the HQ desk at the host reunion hotel as soon as possible in the event of cancellation.

Mini-Reunions: 03 August through 06 August - Keeping in mind that one of the primary reasons for our Reunion is to reconnect with past compatriots from your RVN unit and flight school. The best way to meet up with unit members is to schedule your own Mini-Reunion. If your unit does not have a Mini-Reunion, why not take the initiative to start one up, or you could combine with other sister units you are familiar with if you wish. In addition to specific units and flight classes, we've had Mini-Reunions for such subjects as tandem rotor, Dust-off, Operation Lam Son 719, anyone who was stationed at Soc Trang, VHPA chapters, anyone interested in radio controlled aircraft models. Mini-Reunions are typically scheduled in 4-hour blocks and are available for booking on most days during the Reunion. You can also request a second four-

hour block. However, this second block will be granted on a space available basis with priority for the particular space given to units requesting only one block. Due to decreased usage and increased expenses, the Reunion no longer provides AV equipment for Mini-Reunions. Once your Mini-Reunion is scheduled the details will appear on the webpage. You still should make an effort to get the word out to your buds. Use your directory to contact members (encourage them to re-up with the VHPA if they are not dues current), write a short article for the VHPA Aviator, and schedule early so we can list your unit in articles such as this.

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

*It is easy to schedule a Mini-Reunion or TOC. Complete the Mini-Reunion Request form available at VHPA.ORG and return by: email to Sherry Rodgers at sherry@vhpa.org or mail the completed form to HQ at the address listed on the form. **Space is limited this year so get your request in early!***

KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast Sponsorship - \$25

Use this item to make a contribution to purchase Gold Star Breakfast & Closing Banquet tickets for Gold Star Families. Thank you for your generosity.

O'Club:

03 August – 05 August: 11:00am – 11:00pm

06 August: 12:30pm – 11:00pm

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



TUESDAY, 03 AUGUST 2021

Charlotte Downtown Shuttle:

03 August 12:00pm – 5:00pm

04 August 10:00am – 5:00pm

05 August 10:00am – 5:00pm - \$15

The downtown Charlotte area offers many attractions like museums, shopping and unique restaurants. A daily shuttle service will be provided from the Westin and around downtown Charlotte with scheduled stops at the NASCAR Hall of Fame, Levine Museum of the New South, Discovery Place Science, Mint Museum, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts, 7th Street Public Market, and many more. This ticket does not include any attractions or admissions, it is for the shuttle only to get you around town and can be used as many times as you would like during the reunion.

Note: A VHPA shuttle map with stops plus a list of restaurants and museums will be provided onsite.

Yadkin Valley Winery & Distillery Tour:

03 August – 12:00pm – 4:15pm - \$75

Be whisked away from Charlotte, NC and taken to Yadkin Valley Wine Country, NC, nestled less than one hour away from the Queen City. This tour will be led by an expert tour guide that can answer any questions for our guests and give an overview of the art of wine-making. VHPA guests will visit one winery, Shallow Ford Wine Trail, and one distillery, Seven Jars, to enjoy tasting up to 18 wines, 6 spirits, and 5 beers, all crafted in Carolina. Be enticed by the rolling hills and winding drive that lead to breathtaking views and multiple award-winning wines at one of the oldest vineyards located within the famous Yadkin Valley! Seven Jars Winery & Distillery is a charming tasting room that houses a winery, distillery, and craft brewery! Known for its unique "Seven Jars" family story, dating back to the Prohibition Era, this family operated destination is truly something special. Souvenir wine glasses and souvenir shot cup included.

Note: Lunch is not provided on this tour.

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.

Billy Graham Library Tour #1:

03 August – 12:30pm – 5:00pm - \$35

Hop on the bus and be greeted by your tour guide that will escort guests to the library while giving fun facts and information regarding Billy Graham and the city. VHPA guests will then journey through history, exploring one of the most influential voices of the 20th century, Billy Graham. The Billy Graham Library is 40,000-square-feet including state-of-the-art multimedia-

exhibits, films and memorabilia, where VHPA guests can relive the historic moments in his and wife, Ruth's life. Enjoy touring his restored family home and spend a time of reflection in the Memorial Prayer Garden. Our members will be divided into groups to enjoy the 90 minute guided tour. When not on the guided tour, guests will spend time touring the gardens, shop and home of Billy Graham on their own. On the trip home, the bus will make a quick stop at the Mecklenburg County Vietnam Veteran's Memorial for photo opportunities.

Note: Lunch would need to be eaten prior to tour as lunch is not provided. There is a food shop at the museum for quick bites.

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.

Funny Bus City Tour #1:

03 August – 1:00pm – 2:30pm - \$35

Board this private VHPA funny bus to explore Charlotte's most interesting neighborhoods, historic places, and landmarks on a comedy tour with hilarious live commentary that is rated PG-13. Enjoy BYO beer and wine as you ride through town, and get a funny, local perspective on life in the city. This is a comedy club on wheels with bits of sights and history and voted one of the top things to do in Charlotte that our guests don't want to miss.

Note: The school bus is not equipped with seatbelts so anyone under the Age of 10 is not permitted on this tour.

Capacity: This event is limited to 74 participants.

Funny Bus City Tour #2:

03 August – 3:00pm – 4:30pm - \$35

Board this private VHPA funny bus to explore Charlotte's most interesting neighborhoods, historic places, and landmarks on a comedy tour with hilarious live commentary that is rated PG-13. Enjoy BYO beer and wine as you ride through town, and get a funny, local perspective on life in the city. This is a comedy club on wheels with bits of sights and history and voted one of the top things to do in Charlotte that our guests don't want to miss.

Note: The school bus is not equipped with seatbelts so anyone under the Age of 10 is not permitted on this tour.

Capacity: This event is limited to 74 participants.

Movie – American Medevac:

03 August – 5:30pm – 6:30pm - NC

A veteran's story that needs to be heard...an extraordinary story about valor, selflessness and the unbreakable bond of brotherhood created among soldiers in wartime.

Early Bird Gathering: 03 August – 7:00pm – 9:00pm – NC

This social gathering continues the long standing tradition of having an appointed place and time for everyone who comes "early" to the Reunion to meet and greet others.

Note: No food is provided at this gathering.

WEDNESDAY, 04 AUGUST 2021

Golf Outing at Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation: 04 August – 7:30am – 4:00pm - \$125

This year we will play at Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation at Charlotte, NC. Your golf ticket includes bus transportation, green fees, carts, score cards, complimentary range balls, one Power Pack, and **LUNCH**. Rental clubs are available for \$60/round with advance notice (Only 7 sets are available). This year we will be playing a best ball scramble.

The Power Pack rules are carried forward from previous VHPA events. Additional Power Pack tickets (\$20 each) and can be purchased at the HQ Registration Desk in the hotel with cash or credit card. Cash is required to purchase an individual team member Power Pack at the golf course. Included in the Power Pack Bonuses are the following:

Σ Two each Mulligan's (from the tee only) per side (total of 4 per team member). Mulligans are for each player and cannot be used by another team member.

Σ One "Get-Out of Hazard Free" per side (total of 2) per 18 holes. Place ball where it last traveled before entering the hazard or OB, no penalty. Used for sand traps, water, and Out of Bounds with no penalty.

Visit for details <https://www.oldsycamoregolf.com> about the course.

Capacity: This event is limited to 55 participants.

Breakfast w/Speaker:

04 August – 7:30am – 9:00am – \$25

This is the first of three breakfasts offered at this Reunion.

Enjoy the Westin's Breakfast Buffet including applewood smoked bacon, cage free scrambled eggs, aged Vermont cheddar, skillet breakfast potatoes w/snipped chives, buttermilk pancakes, maple syrup, candied walnuts, citrus whipped cream, seasonal fruit & berries, assorted muffins, breakfast pastry, buttery croissants & new York style bagels, whipped cream cheeses, all-natural preserves, selection of cereals, whole & skim milk, low-fat fruit yogurts, freshly brewed regular & decaffeinated coffee, an assortment of herbal teas and a selection of juices.. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.

Funny Bus City Tour #3:

04 August - 9:15am – 10:45am - \$35

Board this private VHPA funny bus to explore Charlotte's most interesting neighborhoods, historic places, and landmarks on a comedy tour with hilarious live commentary that is rated PG-13. Enjoy BYO beer and wine as you ride through town, and get a funny, local perspective on life in the city. This is a comedy club on wheels with bits of sights and history and voted one of the top things to do in Charlotte that our guests don't want to miss.

Note: The school bus is not equipped with seatbelts so anyone under the Age of 10 is not permitted on this tour.

Capacity: This event is limited to 74 participants.

Charlotte Motor Speedway Tour #1 with Lunch:

04 August – 11:00am – 2:30pm - \$45

VHPA fans looking for a little high-octane fun need look no further than Charlotte Motor Speedway's innovative tour. An experienced guide will hop on the bus for a first-of-its-kind tour that gives fans a contactless experience of the property, including a chance to drive around the 24-degree banking of the legendary 1.5-mile superspeedway. Guests will learn the 60-year history of America's Home for Racing and hear fun facts as a tour guide leads them around the sprawling 2,000-acre property. The tour includes a drive through the NASCAR garage and around the high banks of the iconic Charlotte Motor Speedway. Guests will visit the Speedway, Dirt Track and zMax Dragway. VHPA guests will even have the opportunity for a photo op in Victory Lane. After the tour, head up to the Speedway Club for amazing views of the Track and lunch. Available lunch choices on site will be Turkey Sandwich, Southwest Chicken Wrap or Veggie Wrap with Tea.

Capacity: This event is limited to 55 participants.

Carolina Winery Tour #1 with Lunch:

04 August – 11:00am – 4:15pm - \$95

Be whisked away from Charlotte, NC and head east of the Queen City to the Uwharrie Mountains Wine Trail. VHPA guests will visit the countryside wineries Morgan Ridge Vineyards and Brewery and Uwharrie Vineyards and Winery to enjoy tasting up to 13 Carolina wines and 5 craft beers. This tour will include a catered buffet for lunch which will include 2 meats, 2 vegetables, dessert and non-alcoholic beverage. The tour will be led by an expert tour guide that can answer any questions for our guests and give an overview of the art of wine-making. Morgan

Ridge Vineyards and Brewery sits on seven sprawling acres, grows more than seven different grape varieties, and produces its own wine and craft beer right on the premises of its award-winning estate winery and brewery! Uwharrie Vineyards and Winery is nestled within the scenic Uwharrie Mountains and National Forest, which is named after an Indian tribe from the area. You'll enjoy the drive through the countryside and acres of beautiful vineyards that serve as the backdrop to a variety of delicious wines, from dry to sweet. Souvenir wine glass is included.

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.

Billy Graham Library Tour #2:

04 August – 12:30pm – 5:00pm - \$35

Hop on the bus and be greeted by your tour guide that will escort guests to the library while giving fun facts and information regarding Billy Graham and the city. VHPA guests will then journey through history, exploring one of the most influential voices of the 20th century, Billy Graham. The Billy Graham Library is 40,000-square-feet including state-of-the-art multimedia exhibits, films and memorabilia, where VHPA guests can relive the historic moments in his and wife, Ruth's life. Enjoy touring his restored family home and spend a time of reflection in the Memorial Prayer Garden. Our members will be divided into groups to enjoy the 90 minute guided tour. When not on the guided tour, guests will spend time touring the gardens, shop and home of Billy Graham on their own. On the trip home, the bus will make a quick stop at the Mecklenburg County Vietnam Veteran's Memorial for photo opportunities.

Note: Lunch would need to be eaten prior to tour as lunch is not provided. There is a food shop at the museum for quick bites.

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.

Symposium of Speakers:

04 August – 2:00pm – 4:00pm - NC

There will be several guest speakers this year along with the VHPA/Texas Tech Legacy Presentation. We will add more details as they become available.

Funny Bus City Tour #4:

04 August – 2:30pm – 4:00pm - \$35

Board this private VHPA funny bus to explore Charlotte's most interesting neighborhoods, historic places, and landmarks on a comedy tour with hilarious live commentary that is rated PG-13. Enjoy BYO beer and wine as you ride through town, and get a funny, local perspective on life in the city. This is a

a comedy club on wheels with bits of sights and history and voted one of the top things to do in Charlotte that our guests don't want to miss.

Note: The school bus is not equipped with seatbelts so anyone under the Age of 10 is not permitted on this tour.

Capacity: This event is limited to 74 participants.

Movie – American Medevac:

04 August – 4:30pm – 5:30pm - NC

A veteran's story that needs to be heard...an extraordinary story about valor, selflessness and the unbreakable bond of brotherhood created among soldiers in wartime.

Welcome / First Time Attendee Reception:

04 August – 7:00pm – 9:00pm – NC

Traditionally this reception was the first official event for everyone to get together FOR SURE at a Reunion. Now it is just a "get together" at an appointed place and time for everyone who attends the Reunion. We'll position cash bars to make certain no one has to stand in a long line.

THURSDAY 05, AUGUST 2021

KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast:

05 August - 7:30am – 9:00am - \$25

Gold Star Family Breakfast is a traditional VHPA reunion event organized by Julie Kink. This is an opportunity to recognize our Gold Star families. All are welcome to attend. These families are extremely appreciative of the fact that their loved ones did not die alone and that we care about them and remember them like a brother.

If you would like to sponsor guests for the breakfast you can use the Event Sponsorship section under Voluntary Contributions in **Step 2** of the online registration.

If you would like to invite KIA/MIA Gold Star family members who will not be registering for the Reunion, please call VHPA HQ to provide their names and contact information so we can have Name Badges prepared for them.

Have you been emailing back and forth with Bob's brother for years, but just never got a chance to shake his hand? This is the opportunity to do that. Invite them to attend the reunion and bring them to the Gold Star Family Breakfast. I'm happy to answer questions about the breakfast, as details get confirmed, or about how to connect with a buddy's family. Little sister, Julie Kink sister of WO David Kink

C Troop 1/9th CAV KIA 8-3-1969. I am also a member of VHFCN Family Contacts Committee. Visit www.VirtualWall.org/contacts or email me at: Kink100@att.net.

Enjoy the Westin's Breakfast Buffet including applewood smoked bacon, cage free scrambled eggs, aged Vermont cheddar, skillet breakfast potatoes w/snipped chives, buttermilk pancakes, maple syrup, candied walnuts, citrus whipped cream, seasonal fruit & berries, assorted muffins, breakfast pastry, buttery croissants & new York style bagels, whipped cream cheeses, all-natural preserves, selection of cereals, whole & skim milk, low-fat fruit yogurts, freshly brewed regular & decaffeinated coffee, an assortment of herbal teas and a selection of juices.. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.

Billy Graham Library Tour #3 With Lunch:

05 August – 9:15am – 2:15pm - \$45

Hop on the bus and be greeted by your tour guide that will escort guests to the library while giving fun facts and information regarding Billy Graham and the city. VHPA guests will then journey through history, exploring one of the most influential voices of the 20th century, Billy Graham. The Billy Graham Library is 40,000-square-feet including state-of-the-art multimedia exhibits, films and memorabilia, where VHPA guests can relive the historic moments in his and wife, Ruth's life. Enjoy touring his restored family home and spend a time of reflection in the Memorial Prayer Garden. Our members will be divided into groups to enjoy the 90 minute guided tour. When not on the guided tour, guests will spend time touring the gardens, shop and home of Billy Graham on their own. On the trip home, the bus will make a quick stop at the Mecklenburg County Vietnam Veteran's Memorial for photo opportunities.

Note: Lunch vouchers for the museum café are included with this tour.

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.

Funny Bus City Tour #5:

05 August – 10:00am – 11:30am - \$35

Board this private VHPA funny bus to explore Charlotte's most interesting neighborhoods, historic places, and landmarks on a comedy tour with hilarious live commentary that is rated PG-13. Enjoy BYO beer and wine as you ride through town, and get a funny, local perspective on life in the city. This is a comedy club on wheels with bits of sights and history and voted one of the top things to do in Charlotte

that our guests don't want to miss.

Note: *The school bus is not equipped with seatbelts so anyone under the Age of 10 is not permitted on this tour.*

Capacity: *This event is limited to 74 participants.*

Carolina Winery Tour #2 with Lunch:

05 August – 10:15am – 3:45pm - \$95

Be whisked away from Charlotte, NC and head east of the Queen City to the Uwharrie Mountains Wine Trail. VHPA Guests will visit the countryside wineries Morgan Ridge Vineyards and Brewery and Uwharrie Vineyards and Winery to enjoy tasting up to 13 Carolina wines and 5 craft beers. This tour will include a catered buffet for lunch which will include 2 meats, 2 vegetables, dessert and non-alcoholic beverage. The tour will be led by an expert tour guide that can answer any questions for our guests and give an overview of the art of wine-making. Morgan Ridge Vineyards and Brewery sits on seven sprawling acres, grows more than seven different grape varieties, and produces its own wine and craft beer right on the premises of its award-winning estate winery and brewery! Uwharrie Vineyards and Winery is nestled within the scenic Uwharrie Mountains and National Forest, which is named after an Indian tribe from the area. You'll enjoy the drive through the countryside and acres of beautiful vineyards that serve as the backdrop to a variety of delicious wines, from dry to sweet. Souvenir wine glass is included.

Capacity: *This event is limited to 100 participants.*

Charlotte Motor Speedway Tour #2:

05 August – 11:00am – 2:30pm - \$45

VHPA fans looking for a little high-octane fun need look no further than Charlotte Motor Speedway's innovative tour. An experienced guide will hop on the bus for a first-of-its-kind tour that gives fans a contactless experience of the property, including a chance to drive around the 24-degree banking of the legendary 1.5-mile superspeedway. Guests will learn the 60-year history of America's Home for Racing and hear fun facts as a tour guide leads them around the sprawling 2,000-acre property. The tour includes a drive through the NASCAR garage and around the high banks of the iconic Charlotte Motor Speedway. Guests will visit the Speedway, Dirt Track and zMax Dragway. VHPA guests will even have the opportunity for a photo op in Victory Lane. After the tour, head up to the Speedway Club for amazing views of the Track and lunch. Available lunch choices on site will be Turkey Sandwich, Southwest Chicken Wrap or Veggie Wrap with Tea.

Capacity: *This event is limited to 100 participants.*

Quilter's Show & Tell:

05 August – 2:00pm – 4:00pm – NC

This special meeting continues the tradition started at least eight years ago to present wonderful hand-made, American flag themed quilts to VHPA'ers and possibly local area veterans.

Funny Bus City Tour #6:

05 August – 3:00pm – 4:30pm - \$35*

Board this private VHPA funny bus to explore Charlotte's most interesting neighborhoods, historic places, and landmarks on a comedy tour with hilarious live commentary that is rated PG-13. Enjoy BYO beer and wine as you ride through town, and get a funny, local perspective on life in the city. This is a comedy club on wheels with bits of sights and history and voted one of the top things to do in Charlotte that our guests don't want to miss.

Note: *The school bus is not equipped with seatbelts so anyone under the Age of 10 is not permitted on this tour.*

Capacity: *This event is limited to 74 participants.*

NASCAR Hall of Fame Private Dinner:

05 August – 6:00pm – 10:00pm – \$75

NASCAR Hall of Fame will be closed to the public and open to only VHPA guests to enjoy a delightful buffet dinner and access to all the NASCAR Hall of Fame has to offer. Buffet dinner will include salad, barbecue chicken and pork, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, muffins, and rolls. Of course, some hot peach cobbler with vanilla ice cream to top it off. Tea and water are included with dinner and open bars will be available for purchase of alcoholic beverages. NASCAR Hall of Fame honors drivers who have shown exceptional skill at NASCAR driving, all-time great crew chiefs and owners, broadcasters and other major contributors to competition within the sanctioning body. The high-tech venue, designed to educate and entertain race fans and non-fans alike. This is a place where fans can uncover new stories and get in on the action at every turn with more than 50 interactive experiences. Get behind the wheel of an iRacing simulator on your favorite track or see if you have what it takes to make the team in our Pit Crew Challenge. Take part in events that set the stage for the future of the industry and hear intimate, never-before-told stories of the past. This will be a night you won't want to miss. This event is great for all age levels.

Note: *Transportation is not included and NASCAR is a 1 block walk from the Westin.*

The NASCAR Hall of Fame Private Dinner has a \$20 cancellation fee that is nonrefundable.
Capacity: This event is limited to 350 participants.

FRIDAY 06, AUGUST 2021

Pre-Memorial Service Breakfast:

06 August – 7:30am – 8:45am – \$25

This is the third and final breakfast offered at this Reunion. The Memorial Service, scheduled to begin at 9am is primarily a time to honor the several hundred VHPA members and potential members who passed away since the 2019 Reunion in Kansas City.

Enjoy the Westin's Breakfast Buffet including applewood smoked bacon, cage free scrambled eggs, aged Vermont cheddar, skillet breakfast potatoes w/snipped chives, buttermilk pancakes, maple syrup, candied walnuts, citrus whipped cream, seasonal fruit & berries, assorted muffins, breakfast pastry, buttery croissants & new York style bagels, whipped cream cheeses, all-natural preserves, selection of cereals, whole & skim milk, low-fat fruit yogurts, freshly brewed regular & decaffeinated coffee, an assortment of herbal teas and a selection of juices.. We've scheduled each breakfast to conclude prior to most other Reunion tours or events for the day.

Memorial Service:

06 August – 9:00am – 9:30am – NC

The Memorial Service has been part of the "Reunion's Fabric" for at least fifteen years. It has evolved into the perfect setting / opportunity to reflect and remember our fallen brothers and friends. Since the KIA/MIA Gold Star Family Breakfast is dedicated to our KIA/MIA brothers, this Memorial Service is dedicated to those who passed away after their service in Southeast Asia with SPECIAL EMPHASIS on those who have passed SINCE THE LAST VHPA REUNION. The VHPA often uses the term DAT (Died After Tour) to refer to those who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War era, survived the War, and then passed away.

It is important to note that no financial donations or contributions are requested or accepted during the Memorial Service.

Questions concerning this event should be directed to VHPA Executive Council Member John Powell or by contacting VHPA HQ.

Spouse/Guest Event – Crowned Sparrow Craft Event: 06 August – 10:00am – 12:00pm – \$55

Our ladies and guest will get crafty while enjoying girl talk with top ranked Crowned Sparrow Craft Company. Each guest can add a new look to their

front door with a personalized wooden round "Welcome" sign! Let Crowned Sparrow teach you the techniques for staining & painting your piece, then add a welcome message with a custom stencil! It's the perfect way to welcome guests into your home.

Capacity: This event is limited to 100 participants.

Annual Business Meeting:

06 August – 10:00am – 12:30pm – NC

The Annual Business Meeting (ABM) is when we conduct the official business of the association. On Friday morning you will hear committee chairmen give reports on their activities over the past year and you will have the opportunity to vote on administrative issues plus elect our next two Executive Council members. This is a good time to learn about the workings of the VHPA behind the scenes and to influence the future direction of our association.

Only VHPA Members in good standing (meaning the former pilot is dues current and HQ has a valid mailing address for him in the database) may attend. You must present your ticket at the door. VHPA Members in good standing who are not attending the Reunion can also attend the ABM but must obtain a ticket from the HQ Registration Desk.

Escape Tactic Room with Lunch:

06 August – 12:45pm – 4:00pm – \$55

VHPA guests will head to the South End of Charlotte AKA "The Craft District" and grab lunch at 401 Yancey Brewery with a selection of either a Brewerhouse Burger or Smoked Turkey Club with house made chips and a chocolate cookie. Guests can grab their own beverage or flight of beer and try some of the latest and greatest craft beers. After lunch, head over to Escape Tactic Room that is rated #1 in Charlotte and enjoy a customized game for all VHPA guests. Escape rooms are immersive live adventure games that challenge players to think creatively, decipher clues, and work together to solve a diverse series of puzzles. Each room is themed, and players must use the elements found in the game to "escape the room" within the given time limit. With this event, we will avoid using scary themes which make it perfect for all VHPA guest and ages – though our rooms are meant to get your heart racing – and challenge you with cleverly-crafted clues, messages, hints, and puzzles to see if you have what it takes to escape our professionally designed rooms.

Note: Lunch is included but not beverages. Please choose the item with the meal selection you prefer.

Capacity: This event is limited to 75 participants.

Closing Banquet:

Registered Adults – 06 August – 5:30pm – 10:30pm - \$75

This ticket is for an adult banquet meal (beef, chicken or fish) for someone who has also paid the adult reunion registration fee.

The highlight for most reunion attendees is our closing banquet. This is the only "dress up" occasion of the reunion. It is a celebration of our time together opening with a tribute to our missing men and closing with the change of command from our current president, Art Jacobs to the new one, Art Price after the meal.

For those who just want to visit after the closing remarks, please know you can stay at your table until 11 pm. Cash bars remain open until they are no longer needed.

Closing Banquet:

Registered Child <12 – 06 August – 5:30pm – 10:30pm - \$35

This ticket is for a "kid's meal" for the closing banquet. A word of warning is appropriate here. This meal is designed for children under the age of 12

years old. Trust us when we say that this meal will NOT MAKE a teenager happy at all!

Closing Banquet:

Non-Registered Guest – 06 August – 5:30pm – 10:30pm - \$85

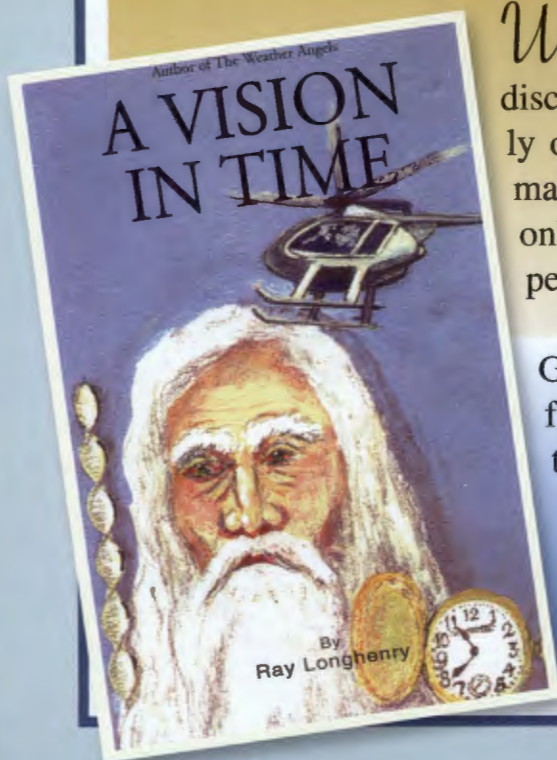
This ticket is for an adult banquet meal (beef, chicken or fish) for someone who has NOT PAID the adult reunion registration fee. Please review the Non-Registered Banquet Guest (NRBG) details in the Reunion Information at www.vhpa.org.

A non-registered guest enjoys all the features/details described in the registered adult narrative above.

THIS COULD BE WHERE YOUR STORY STARTS!

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

Imagine you can travel backwards in time...



When Doctor Spencer Evans, a genetics research scientist discovers hidden strands within human DNA he inadvertently opens the doorway to his ancestors past emotions, traumas and deeds. A finding so rich, his secrets threaten not only his life and that of his daughter Trudy, but the future peace of society as well.

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JPConway@sbcglobal.net

NEW!!! Website: museum.vhpa.org

ARMY ~ NAVY ~ AIR FORCE ~ MARINE CORPS
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References available.



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

Patrick Leary, FVSO President and VHPA Life Member



The caregiver above is Sister Y Phieng. She lives and works at Vinh Son 2, and is in charge of the primary school kids. While the children attend classes, Sister tends to the orphanage gardens, a major source of their vegetable diet. The twin boys are A Khim and A Kham.

FVSO is a 501(c)(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.

To donate or to contact FVSO

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

Web: FriendsofVSO.org

Email: FriendsofVSO@gmail.com

Time

Event

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3

9:00 am - 12:00 pm
9:00 am - 8:00 pm
9:00 am - 8:00 pm
9:00 am - 8:00 pm
9:00 am - 8:00 pm
9:00 am - 10:00 pm
11:00 am - 11:00 pm
12:00 pm - 4:15 pm
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm
12:30 pm - 5:00 pm
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

HQ Registration Desk
Pre-Registered Packet Pickup
Welcome Desk
Pre-Ordered T-shirt Pick Up
Vendor Room Open
Mini Reunions / TOCs
O' Club Open
Yadkin Valley Winery & Distillery Tour
Charlotte Downtown Shuttle
Billy Graham Library Tour #1
Funny Bus City Tour #1
HQ Registration Desk
Funny Bus City Tour #2
Movie - American Medevac
HQ Registration Desk
Early Bird Gathering

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4

7:30 am - 9:00 am
7:30 am - 4:00 pm
8:00 am - 11:30 am
8:00 am - 8:00 pm
8:00 am - 8:00 pm
8:00 am - 8:00 pm
9:00 am - 8:00 pm
9:00 am - 10:00 pm
9:15 am - 10:45 am
10:00am - 5:00 pm
11:00 am - 2:30 PM
11:00 am - 4:15 pm
11:00 am - 11:00 pm
12:30 pm - 5:00 pm
12:30 pm - 5:00 pm
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Breakfast w/speaker
Golf
HQ Registration Desk
Pre-Registered Packet Pickup
Welcome Desk
Pre-Ordered T-shirt Pick Up
Vendor Room Open
Mini Reunions / TOCs
Funny Bus City Tour #3
Charlotte Downtown Shuttle
Charlotte Motor Speedway Tour #1 with Lunch
Carolina Winery Tour #1 with Lunch
O' Club Open
HQ Registration Desk
Billy Graham Library Tour #2
Symposium of Speakers
Funny Bus City Tour #4
Banquet Seating
Movie - American Medevac
HQ Registration Desk
Welcome / First Time Attendee Reception

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

See our Website at: www.VHPA.org
for the latest details and to register for the Reunion
(Updated 6.1.21)

Time	Event
THURSDAY, AUGUST 5	
7:30 am - 9:00 am	KIA/MIA Gold Star Breakfast
8:00 am - 11:00 am	HQ Registration Desk
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Pre-Registered Packet Pickup
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Pre-Ordered T-shirt Pick Up
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 8:00 pm	Vendor Room Open
9:00 am - 10:00 pm	Mini Reunions / TOCs
9:15 am - 2:15 pm	Billy Graham Library Tour #3 with Lunch
10:00 am - 11:30 am	Funny Bus City Tour #5
10:00 am - 5:00 pm	Charlotte Downtown Shuttle
10:15 am - 3:45 pm	Carolina Winery Tour #2 with Lunch
11:00 am - 2:30 pm	Charlotte Motor Speedway Tour #2 with Lunch
11:00 am - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:00 pm - 6:00 pm	HQ Registration Desk
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Quilters Show & Tell
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Funny Bus City Tour #6
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Banquet Seating
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Nascar Hall of Fame Private Dinner
FRIDAY, AUGUST 6	
7:30 am - 8:45 am	Pre-Memorial Breakfast
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Consolidated HQ Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
8:00 am - 1:00 pm	Welcome Desk
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Memorial Service
10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Spouse Event - Crowned Sparrow Craft
10:00 am - 12:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Consolidated Reg, Pre-Reg & T-Shirts
12:30 pm - 11:00 pm	O' Club Open
12:45 pm - 4:00 pm	Escape Tactic Room with Lunch
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Mini-Reunions / TOCs
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Banquet Seating
5:30 pm - 10:30 pm	Closing Banquet w/Entertainment - TBD

LOOKING FOR

Looking For

I've been told by a friend, Jim Garvin, who I served with in Vietnam, that as Editor of The VPHA Aviator, you might be able to help in locating "Arizona".

I was a 1st LT assigned to 2/8th Cav Air Mobile. It was 20-21 April 1971. We were working out of FSB Fontaine when one of our platoons came under heavy fire. There were three KIA and a fourth died of wounds the next day. Several more were medevaced with serious injuries. They needed a resupply of ammo. I needed a Huey and called Arizona. There were many great pilots that we worked with but he was extraordinary. He picked me up and we were able to get our guys resupplied.

We have a mini-reunion this month, 50 years later, in Troy, MI where one of the guys killed in that action is buried. Stan Dillon, the acting platoon leader on that day, was one of the guys medevaced and along with some of the guys involved want to try to bring some closure.

That's the story and hopefully with your help we will find Arizona and complete the story.

If you have any leads, please contact me at frankguidara@gmail.com

Frank

Dear Mr. Kirk,

Reading Dr. Arner's story with interest I noted that we were in the same company at the same time, but in different platoons. I have no recollection of him or the others he mentioned in his article, but was quite familiar with the area he described. So much so that I pulled out an old 1 over 100 thousand scale map which I believe covers the area he described, where North and South Vietnam and Laos come together. In any event he may have known Dwight Thornton and do feel free to pass along to him my contact information.

Jose A. Lopez
CW4 Retired

• **Kingsman 21** vtedconsultants@comcast.net

Hello,

My name is Jaxon Lahner and I was told you could help me find some info. I got an email from John Conway saying that you could put what I am looking for into a "looking for" section. Below is what I wrote to John.

"The way that the crash is explained is that "material failure of a blade retaining pin". I was told differently. I was told their unit was ordered to return to base, but they defied orders in order to save soldiers still on the ground behind enemy lines. He was then shot and killed by a sniper as they were landing. I was wondering if there was anyone still around that could confirm nor deny this story, it'd be an honor to know I was related to someone who sacrificed themselves and defied orders to save others. Or. if there is anyone that possibly served with a Lahner, I would love to talk to them."

My Grandfather is (Steven J. Lahner) and two of his brothers (Michael J. Lahner, and Thomas A. Lahner). Thomas is the one I am talking about in my statement above. Anything helps, and I really appreciate all that you and the others have done with preserving these memories.

Thank you,

Jaxon Lahner jaxon.lahner@yahoo.com

I explained to Jason without a date, unit, location or tail number, the only possible connection would be someone who served with Thomas and is a subscriber.

A communication sent to Carl (Skip) Bell

I was not a Cobra pilot, but I did witness a Cobra Crew from the 101st Airborne Division do an impossible feat. The 223rd Aviation Battalion was charged with withdrawing the remaining elements of the 1st ARVN Division. I was flying in the command and control UH-1H with LTC Gerry Kirklighter that day in March or April of 1971. We initially attempted the pickup in the morning, but ran into stiff NVA resistance along the Ho Chi Minh Trail near the town of Tchepone in Laos. The fire was coming from a slope west of the pickup zone, and Hillsborough, the USAF command and control aircraft that was on station 24

hours a day heard our discussion and said that an Arc Light was inbound, and with all the electronic gadgetry on board that aircraft, Hillsborough pinpointed our location and the hillside where all the fire was coming from. We monitored the radio transmissions between Hillsborough and the B-52 crew, and Hillsborough advised us to remain in orbit east of the site. We heard the B-52 crew state that they were turning on the bomb run, state that bombs were on the way, and in minutes the whole world seemed to explode a half mile from our orbit. We had to return to Khe San to refuel and briefed the lift commander of the mission. Then we were back on station.

A Cobra Crew led by a Captain whose name I do not know, his call sign was Music 16, prepped the PZ and then picked up the inbound lift ships and Music 16 said I will fly over the PZ so you can ID it. He said, I am over it right now, the lead lift ship said I don't see it, I don't see it. Music 16 said, I am hit, I have lost hydraulics but I will try to fly over once again. Music 16 flew over the site and lift lead said I

got it. Music 16 departed to land on the Ho Chi Minh Trail when he stated, that his engine has quit, and we are going in straight ahead. With his hydraulics out, he could not lower the collective for autorotation and I watched the rotor get slower and slower until the Cobra stopped flying and Music 16 said, we are gone, tell our wives we love them, and they hit in an explosion. It was evident that Music 16 and his gunner did not survive the impact and fire.

Several years later, their remains were recovered and returned to the USA. I do not know the names of that crew, but they could have gone to the trail when the hydraulics were shot out rather than go around again, but go around they did and the result was the ARVN troops were withdrawn.

Perhaps someone can fill in the names. I hope so, because these two Cobra drivers should get recognized at Cobra Hall.

Duane "Banjo" Davis
bdavisappraisals@windstream.net

WELCOME HOME

National Vietnam Veterans Day Parade

WAIKIKI, HAWAII

March 29, 2022

VIETNAM WAR 50 YEARS

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 50th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

We invite you to join us for this historic event -
Call 800-626-8590 to book your VIP Travel Package for you and your family.
Visit www.VietnamVeteransParade.org

Vietnam Helo Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return 21 Aug - 3 Sep 2021 &

16 - 29

April
2022

Tour Historian:

Bob
Hesselbein,
C/16 Cav

Tour Leader:

John Powell, 1/9 Cav

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Email: hq@chpa-us.org
Phone: 800-832-5144 messages
Membership assistance:
Loren McAnally (205) 529-4684 cell
(life member VHPA & CHPA)



"Passing the Torch"

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CHPA Life Member
www.joeklineart.com

UPCOMING REUNIONS

WORWAC CLASS 68/31-517

Where: Las Vegas ~ Hotel: TBA

When: Late September

Contact John Kitchens johnhkitchens@aol.com

QUIET BIRDMAN HANGAR MEETING

Charlotte NC, August 2nd.

Some of you may be QB Good Fellows. For the first time in my thirty plus years of VHPA reunions the host city and the hangar meeting date coincide. This year is the 100th year of the first meeting at Marta's Italian restaurant and saloon in lower Manhattan. The Charlotte hangar of the Ancients and Secret Order of Quiet Birdmen will be meeting on the 2nd of August at the American Legion, 107 N Main St Huntersville NC, 5:30 to 6:30 about twenty minutes north of the hotel. Any VHPA members that are QB's are welcome to attend for drinks, lies and dinner, (\$33.00) as usual visiting QB's will need a joke, off color is preferred. Please RSVP to me at: Tom Seybold, 914-282-1934 or tseybold292@gmail.com. I will find transport if we have enough interest.

US ARMY, ALPHA TROOP, 2/17TH CAV, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION REUNION

Where: Clarksville, TN. ~ Hotel TBA

Contact: Glen Veno

gveno36@comcast.net or 810 599 9999

WHEN: SEPT 15-19.

WWW.ALPHATROOPALUMNI.COM

AND FACEBOOK ... "ALPHA TROOP ASSOCIATION"

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

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

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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



ALAMO CHAPTER

Texas is essentially mask free and the Alamo Chapter is meeting in-person.

On April 20th we had a great pilot/ladies' luncheon at the Jim's Restaurant. May 18th will find the ladies meeting at the Saltgrass Steak House for lunch and the men meeting at the China Harbor Restaurant for lunch. This was the scenario we had pre-COVID. We generally had a combined quarterly luncheon. I guess the ladies get tired of hearing the same war stories, most very embellished.

The chapter continues support of the Huey 369 project and the Vietnam Archives Project at Texas Tech. The chapter issued a check in the amount of \$1,350 to Vietnam Archives Project. Every penny was a donation made by our members.

Ray Vaske informed the members of a genuinely nice piece that can be ordered as a keepsake or gift. It's a hand-made box that may be used to secure memorabilia. A picture is attached. If interested, please contact Relic Wood LLC, 1050 Sipe Rd, Taylorville, NC 28681, 828-855-8924, www.relicwood.com.

The chapter is planning on supporting the Wreaths Across America Program, attend funeral and/or memorial services for "unclaimed" vets, and offering local high schools the opportunity for some of our aviators to address students on the Vietnam War and the differences between Memorial Day and Veterans Day and the significance attached to those holidays. The schools have finally opened their doors to visitors, but as they are in the final weeks of school, we will not start working with them until the fall.

The chapter continues looking forward to 2021 and a great year with President Ray Vaske flying left seat. Visit us at our web site: <http://vhpa-alamo.com/> for more information about the Alamo Chapter.

Until next time, stay happy and healthy.



Mike Clark
Chapter Secretary

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

Our 2021 flying season is off to a flying start (pun intended) with the completion of our first two events.

Findley, OH, Flag City, was the location of our first event, their 34th Annual Armed Forces Day Celebration in Mid-May. Included with their celebration at the Hancock County Fairgrounds was a military vehicle swap-meet featuring parts, accessories, and all kinds of paraphernalia for military vehicles and military surplus in general. A huge turnout of vendors attracted people from all over the Country, the State, and the City. Celebration attendees took advantage of our UH-1H slick "Warrior 11" and our B-Model "Gunship 049" to take membership flights, many for the first time as well as our "Frequent Flyers"

Over the Memorial Day Weekend, our namesake Dustoff Huey, "369" as well as our slick "803" ("Warrior 11"), were flown to Fort Wayne, IN, for the Veteran's National Memorial Shrine & Museum Inaugural Wall Debut Event. A major addition to the Memorial is the permanent 80% replica of the Vietnam Wall. We were honored to be a part of the dedication, and again, many attendees got to experience the thrill of flying in a Vietnam Huey with the cargo doors open. New faces and old, everyone had a huge smile on their face as they stepped off the aircraft. Smiles so big, they could eat a banana sideways!

OUR NEXT SCHEDULED EVENTS ARE:

- June 18, 19, and 20 at the Veteran's Park in Harrodsburg, OH, for the Pork Rind Festival.
- July 31, Peru, Indiana Municipal Airport Fly-In/Drive-In.
- August 14 & 15, 15th Annual Gathering of Veterans & Patriots, National American Huey History Museum Site, Peru, IN.
- August 20, 21 & 22 Fort Fest, Fort Jennings Park, Fort Jennings, OH.

All of the above events include Membership flights, weather permitting.

Phil Marshall



Findley 2021



Findley Gunship 049



Ft. Wayne Wall Aerial View

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

ARIZONA CHAPTER

On 22 May 2021 we held our first new VHPA AZ chapter luncheon meeting at Steak and Stone at Falcon Field, Mesa, AZ. We had 22 in attendance and four call-ins. For a first meeting, I felt it was exceptional. Dave Sale began the meeting with a thank you for those attending and also remembering those who could not attend due to distance and/or health -- "we are all getting a bit gray". He also gave a special thanks to Maggie Peterson who took the AZ VHPA listing and sent out some 400 plus emails. She received 72 replies from those wanting to join the new AZ chapter of VHPA. She spent an inordinate amount of time on this, again a special thank you.

Next, Dave Sale gave a short welcome on the AZ chapter and mentioned our way forward and asked those in attendance to state what we ought to do as a chapter. Most, like Dave, thought we should be a social organization and do some visits to interesting places such as the CAF in Mesa and the Bone Yard in Tucson. We also decided to meet every quarter. Also discussed doing some meetings in Tucson. We will work this action. We are meeting to have a good time.

Everyone then did a brief bio of themselves. Dave asked all of us to send a brief bio of ourselves to the



Restoration of an OH6A at Inter-Coastal Electronics (ICE)

Our gathering at Steak & Stone at Falcon Field, Mesa, AZ.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

VHPAAZ@comcast.net email address. Maggie will consolidate responses. We then discussed our chapter organization and stated we will remain with Dave Sale as lead, John Luscher as Deputy and Maggie will remain chief organizer. We do need to get a lead under Dave for Tucson.

The next meeting will be in Tucson Sat 10 July 2021 at the Pima Air & Space Museum. Everyone is invited to attend this meeting and tour. More detailed Information will be sent to the entire VHPA AZ membership shortly.

As mentioned above, the VHPA AZ chapter will continue to meet quarterly so the next meeting will be at the Steak and Stone Restaurant in Mesa in three months. All are invited to attend.

Dave Sale then briefed another organization that he works and that is the Southwest Chapter of Army Aviation Heritage Foundation here at Falcon Field. Should note we had five members of the SW Chapter at our meeting. The chapter has grown to 220 plus members and some nine aircraft. We also work with the SoCal Chapter of VHPA and the N CA Chapter. As a matter of fact, the N CA Chapter gave us our UH1M gunship with trailer. Thus, am proposing we work with SW Chapter of AAHF, SoCal, and N CA VHPA chapters. Many at the meeting asked how to join the SW Chapter of AAHF. Best way is to go on- line to armyav.org and join on their membership page and make sure you check off SW Chapter

At the end of the luncheon meeting many went over to see several of the aircraft under restoration by the SW Chapter at Inter-Coastal Electronics, such as the UH1H, AH1F and several OH6As.

In closing, had a great luncheon meeting and many new friendships started. Had two who were classmates and had not seen each other since flight school, just a couple of years ago.

Dave Sale



Restoration of an AH1F at ICE. Both aircraft being done by SW Chapter of AAHF. A third aircraft was also viewed inside the hangar shop



Restoration of an OH6A at Inter-Coastal Electronics (ICE).

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FLORIDA CHAPTER

We're back! Going and growing strong! Since the pandemic began, along with the new reality of 'Zoom' meetings, our membership has actually increased, to include several new life memberships!

Our amazing 'come-back' began with supporting and participating in two events simultaneously. This was the first time to anyone's recollection that we had to form two teams of volunteers to make it happen. Mission accomplished! Not only did our members show up in sufficient numbers, but we also recruited several new members at both events.

The first event was the SUN n' FUN Aerospace Expo, the famous airshow held annually at Florida's Lakeland-Linder International Airport, which took place over a six-day period, from April 13 to 18, 2021. As the second largest air show in the world, after the EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, this aviation extravaganza is a mixture of general aviation convention, camping, fly-in, spring break for pilots, and yes, an air show.

SUN n' FUN has grown tremendously since its founding in 1975. With last year's cancellation due to COVID, this



A few members of 'Team Melbourne' at the Cobra Static Display.



'Team Melbourne, Gary Spooner, Dr. Joe Ponds, Tom Tomlinson, John Hawm, and Dan Brunger (l-r) at the LOACH Static Display.



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



'Team SUN n' FUN', VHPAF President Randy Woods makes presentation to Gary Clark (Event Coordinator on crutches).



The COBRA (AH-1G) on static display in Melbourne, Florida.



'Team SUN n' FUN' Mini Museum Static Display.



The COBRA (AH-1G) on static display in Melbourne, Florida.



'Team SUN n' FUN' Mini Museum Static Display.

year's show was the 46th and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida's more than 25 years of consecutive participation support. The record number of

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

people that attended (more than 200,000) and aircraft that flew in reflected a pent-up demand not only for air shows but also for people wanting to get out and enjoy life. SUN n' FUN is the busiest airport in the world during the show, with over 2,000 movements (take-offs and landings) a day. Over the course of the week, there are normally 10,000 such movements. Also, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels launched their 75th anniversary season at SUN n' FUN this year!

Our second event was participating in the annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida, April 13-19, 2021. This is one of the largest and longest running veterans' reunions in the country and the largest in Florida. The Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall was

on display and always triggers intense emotional responses. We supported this event with one LOACH on static display, one LOACH that flew in, our Sales Tent, and COBRA (AH-1G) which flew in and landed to the delight of all. As usual, it was a big hit and the 'talk of the town' among the attendees, especially the Vietnam veterans. One of the final ceremonies of the week was a "fly by salute" performed by a CH-46 Sea Night, a Huey, and our Cobra when they departed from the parade field and did passes over the Moving Wall. We received numerous very positive comments and words of gratitude for our service from both veterans and non-veterans.

Submitted by Dr. Joe Ponds, Secretary

GEORGIA CHAPTER

On May 15, 2021, the Georgia Chapter, VHPA, had its bi-monthly breakfast meeting at the Come-N-Get-It Family Restaurant in Marietta, GA. As usual, the food and the company were excellent. 21 Vietnam helicopter pilots and one guest (an infantry Vietnam Vet) were in attendance.

We started out the meeting with a moment of silence to remember two of our members who had passed away since our last meeting. One of those was Chuck Stoudt, the GA Chapter President, and the other was Bob Peterson. Both were highly thought of, and both will be missed. We continued the meeting with a breakfast blessing prayer, the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Our guest speaker was Mr. Andy Zimmerman who spoke about what happened in Vietnam after the fall of South Vietnam on April 30, 1975. Andy was a USAF C-130 pilot who was stationed at Clark Air Base after the Vietnam War ended, but who flew all over SE Asia supporting countries like Thailand and Singapore that were still dealing with Vietnamese



communist aggression. Mr. Zimmerman got out of the USAF and went to work for a civilian airline and eventually ended up in Vietnam flying for Air Mekong (a 100% privately owned airline that operated for a while in communist Vietnam, but was eventually shut down by the government). He was an eye-witness to what life under the communists was (and is) like for the former South Vietnamese. His presentation painted a vivid picture of what happened after our Nation shamefully reneged on its promise to support the South Vietnamese (the mass incarcerations in "re-education" camps, the tragedy of the boat people, and the vindictiveness of the communists toward those who served in the South Vietnamese Armed Forces or held positions in the government). It was a really interesting presentation and was well-received by those in attendance.

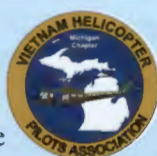
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots living in the Atlanta Area are welcome to join us for our next breakfast meeting, which will be on July 17. For more information on the GA Chapter, please visit our web site (ga-vhpa.org), or email gavhpa@gmail.com.

Skip Bell

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter is increasing social activities as we emerge from the pandemic. Two constants have been gatherings hosted by Mark Benjamin in Traverse City and Glenn Youngstedt in the St. Joseph area. Combined they cover large portions of the northwest and southwest regions of the Lower Peninsula.

April 7th Mark hosted a gathering at the Hotel Indigo in Traverse City and posted this AAR: Great group today!!! Attending were (left front to right front clockwise): Walter Topp Pole Cat 354, Mark Benjamin Tomahawk 23, Paul



Fitzsimons LRRP, Pat Mullen Stogie 17, Bob Keller White Knight 867, Barry Witt Lucky Star 24, Ed Canright Lucky Star 17 then Star Blazer 21.

We talked about life after Vietnam. All these guys have been so successful! 30 plus years Pharmacist and Chief Pharmacist at Munson Medical Center, 30-year military then FEDEX pilot, Architect designed Huey 369 buildings, business and Michigan Guard, business and Bell 47 and airplane owner, business and airplane owner, Engineer and Michigan Guard. Great group!

April 27th Glenn held a lunch gathering at Papa Vinos in St.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Joseph. Those attending were (L to R) Roger Blaha, Mark Benjamin, Denny Klein, Paul Boggs, Jim Hunt, Jim Heyn, and Glenn Youngstedt. Everyone traded some of their favorite stories from Vietnam.

May 5th Mark hosted another monthly gathering at the Hotel Indigo again in Traverse City and filed a short and sweet AAR. Attending were Barry Witt, Walter Topp, Bob Keller, Bart Halliday, Joe Meredith, Paul Fitzsimons, and Mark.

Discussion centered around fishing records in West Grand Traverse Bay, certain VA benefits and other things. Mark hopes attendance will pick up as he continues to host these gatherings on the 1st Wednesday of each month.

May 25th Glenn held his gathering at the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo. His AAR: Everyone found the Air Zoo interesting and worth the trip. We did find an OH-23 there. Many of us soloed in a 23 at Wolters. We did bring to the Air Zoo personnel attention there was no Huey. Upcoming activities include a tour of the Whirlpool Corporation Aviation Department and trip to American Huey 369 at Grissom AFB in Peru, IN. Standing in front of the OH-23 were (L to R) Dave James, Bob Rich, Terry Hunt, Paul Boggs, Glenn Youngstedt, Bob Keller, Roger Blaha, and Bob Gallant.

Mark had several Memorial Day related activities. He wrote: "Special thanks to VHPA Chapter member Scott Schwander. Last Friday, Scott, once again, cleaned and refurbished the stone at the Welcome Home Vietnam Vets monument. Well done, Scott. We thank you!!

"The Traverse City Parks department should be planting the gardens at the VN Monument ahead of Memorial Day. In the not too distant future I'll be looking for assistance in maintaining and caring for the garden and grounds around that area."

May 28th Mark recruited volunteers to distribute flags on Veterans graves at Oakwood Cemetery.

He also announced a Memorial Day program at Veterans Park on the old State Hospital grounds off of Division with the featured speaker being Captain Chuck Webb, Commanding Officer USCG Air Station Traverse City. Also on Memorial Day a special Memorial Day broadcast on local station WTCM AM featuring Vicki Hayes, a Gold Star Mother.



April 7th Traverse City



April 27th St Joseph



May 25th Air Zoo in Kalamazoo

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

The NAVHPA held its first post-COVID meeting during a picnic at the Redstone Arsenal Outdoor recreation area on April 17th. We met for a short business meeting, picnic lunches with adult beverages, and corn hole afterward. This meeting was all about getting together after more than a year in isolation.

May 11th marked the NAVHPA's first, formal, in-person meeting since March 2020. Attendance was good, given the time that



had elapsed. There were 59 members, spouses and guests who came to the Huntsville Country Club for the celebration, cocktails, and camaraderie at 1700 (5 PM) with the meeting at 1800 (6PM) followed by a buffet dinner. We approved several new members and were told that several long-time members are leaving town over the summer to be closer to grandkids, fishing, camping, or warmer weather. We bid them adieu and we will miss them.

On May 14th, a group of less than qualified, hand selected, NAVHPA members volunteered to wash BUC-3 for the first

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

time in many months. This great day of brotherhood was to prepare for the annual Armed Forces Day celebrations that were held at the U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum, Huntsville on the May 15th. Supporting on the 14th were Bob Monette, Jim White, Bob Stewart, Stan Souvenir, Les Haas, Sandy Weand, and Gil Fluhr.

The following day the Chapter towed the now spiffy BUC-3 to the Veterans Museum to help celebrate Armed Forces Day. BUC-3 is always a draw for young folks. They can pretend to fly under the tutelage of an actual Vietnam aviator. They can also handle a replica M-60 door gun. Our members love to see the youngsters. It gives them a chance to show them something of our time in history. We believe that we must remember that Vietnam is to children today as Chateau Thierry and Meuse Argonne were to us. When we were 10, 50 years ago was ancient history! So, it is for these young people. All 15 members and spouses had a great time.

Here is one more remembrance of Vietnam from NAVHPA member Ben Bentley:

"Almost everybody who has ever heard of Vietnam has heard of 'Puff, The Magic Dragon.' Puff was the name for old Air Force C-47 twin engine cargo planes of World War II vintage that were re-purposed for use in Vietnam. In WWII, they hauled unbelievable amounts of cargo to support ground soldiers and quite famously parachuted hundreds, more likely thousands of soldiers, onto battlefields like Normandy as part of D-Day activities. An extremely reliable aircraft, it was still in service and destined for another vital role so many years later in Vietnam. Somebody came up with the idea of opening three window ports thru one side of the airplane, installing a mini-gun and mount at each port, and connecting each gun to an almost unlimited supply of ammunition. The operational concept was that the aircraft would be flown in a large, circular orbit, at an altitude higher than the accurate range of enemy small arms fire above a target. One, two, or all three guns could bring an unbelievable amount of firepower on a target (typically, a mini-gun was able to fire at



Chapter President Marshall Eubanks and Secretary Sam Maki conduct the meeting on April 17th.



Still practicing Social Distancing, Rick Davis, Anne Davis and Sharon Eubanks watch the meeting April 17th.



L to R: Bob Monette, Jim White, Bob Stewart, Stan Souvenir, Les Haas, Sandy Weand and Gil Fluhr after cleaning up Buc-3.



Member Jim White explains the collective control to an attentive audience.



NAVHPA member John McDaniel briefs at the Armed Forces Day display of Buc-3.



To no one's surprise, Aviators line up at the bar.



For the first time in more than a year, members and spouses get reacquainted.



Enjoying the camaraderie at the first post-COVID meeting.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

either 2,000 or 4,000 rounds per minute). Additionally, Puff could carry a large load of parachute flares to illuminate a nighttime battle scene and with its fuel load, it could stay overhead for hours. Puff truly earned its "Magic Dragon" title and it was a pleasant reminder of the folk-singing group 'Peter, Paul & Mary'. However, down in the Delta region of Vietnam, we had another 'Magic Dragon', the 'Grey Ghost'. These were exactly the same aircraft and capabilities as Puff, but were flown by VNAF pilots with an American advisor on board."

"Enough of the background—this is where it gets personal! I got called out on a light fire team mission one night about 2200 (10pm). No C&C Hueys, no Scouts, just 2 Cobras to support a couple of Green Beret advisors and their platoon-sized element of Vietnamese soldiers. No problem...there was a Grey Ghost overhead to provide illumination flares and the 'good guys' were in a fairly defensible position. However, the VC had a couple of heavy machinegun emplacements that had them pinned down. The Grey Ghost's mini-guns weren't going to be of much help with these targets. They needed the Cobras to pound the bunkered emplacements with rockets. The 'good guys' marked the positions they needed destroyed with their M-60 machinegun tracers. With the location of the friendly troops, the target and wind conditions all taken into consideration, the Grey Ghost was holding a tight orbit perpendicular to my firing run path. This would put his flares in a good position to illuminate the target area, but yet allow me and my wingman to dive on the target and still keep an eye on the descending flares to avoid getting them tangled in our rotor blades. I had twice confirmed with the 'Ghost' that he was only dropping flares and would not be shooting."

"Everything was set—what could possibly go wrong?? I rolled the Cobra over into its dive, radioing 'Inbound Hot, 2 pairs with a left break'. As I aligned my rocket sight on the marked

targets, my whole world turned RED!! The Grey Ghost had opened fire with all 3 of his mini-guns. I was in a nose-down attitude, diving at about 100 knots into a solid wall of Grey Ghost tracers. Just for reference if you've never seen a mini-gun fire, especially at night, the tracers look like a solid red line spraying from a water hose. Now think about the fact that only every seventh round has a tracer element—there are six others in between that you can't see—and the stream of bullets looks like a solid line. That's the closest I've ever come to rolling a Cobra upside down, breaking so hard to the left to keep from flying thru that hail of bullets. Obviously, I'm still here, so things did work out and my Cobra got me back without being ventilated hundreds of times. Again, stain and moisture checks were in order. Unfortunately, I didn't get to expend any rockets on that pass (although I did have some very 'non-comrade-in-arms' thoughts and visions of my rocket reticle superimposed on the cockpit of that C-47). I climbed back to altitude, had a lengthy radio discussion regarding the roles we were each playing, and the consequences of any further variance from our assigned tasks. Then, we both went back to work, destroyed the targets as requested by the ground element, and to the best of my knowledge, everybody went on their way, safe for another day. Just another night in the pitch-black darkness of Vietnam."

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. Our web site is <http://www.navhpa.org>. Come on out!! We know all those war stories we need to get out of our system. We have each heard all of ours. We need new ones.

Ralph Weber

OLD DOMINION CHAPTER



Because of a misunderstanding, Old Dominion's May/June published report did not include photos.

Frosty Price and Bill Baker set up this event for us to try to pull in more members from outside the Richmond Metro Area.

We met with a group of 35 at the Shannon Air Museum in Fredericksburg, VA on 27 February for a tour of this spectacular facility. Tom Doran and



At Shannon Air Museum.

Bob Cash (a hook crew chief in Nam) were among the tour guides.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Sidney Shannon Jr, as part of his love for aviation and to honor his father, Sidney Shannon Sr. founded the Shannon Airport in the 1950's. Sidney Shannon Sr. was one of the founders of Eastern Airlines with Ace Eddie Rickenbacker. Luke and Kim Curtas purchased the airport in 2014 and the Museum is now open and houses one of the rarest collections of vintage aircraft in the world. Check it out at www.shannonairmuseum.com

Don Agren
President, Old Dominion (Virginia) Chapter VHPA



At Shannon Air Museum.

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

On May 18, 2021, we had our first "In Person" meeting since March of last year. We established our protocols and had a mask removal ceremony. We Zoomed the meeting as well and had four participants via the internet who were maskless, plus the 11 present who became that way by the end of the meeting, 15 in all. That's us on the stage and a capture of the Zoom screen. Lunch was served by Chef Michael and his staff after the meeting. Chicken Fried Steak, mashed potatoes, and carrots. It was delicious. So that "Light at the end of the Tunnel" was not another train. It was the overhead lighting at the American Legion Post #1 in Denver. It was like we never left.



Chapter 'In Person' Members.

We did have a few highlights during the month now that the Covid protocols are lifting. Jim McNamee and Walt Winters participated in a Q&A by students of Legend High School hosted by member Don Rice's granddaughter who is a student at the High school. Dale House participated in a Zoom class hosted by Professor Chapman of Williams College History Department from Williamstown, MA, at the Invitation of Student Gabi Medvene-Cirigliano. The course subject was Vietnam's 20th Century Wars. I participated in the Q&A with old friend and Combat Veteran Rick Throckmorton of California during the Zoom History class.

We are getting numerous requests to attend activities in 2021



Some of the meeting 'Zoomers'.

with our mobile Helicopter War Museum. Our first show is scheduled for August 7th by the Colorado Car Council at Rocky Mountain Metro Airport in Broomfield, CO. We will have to determine how to meter the visitors and come up with other protocols, but we are being hopeful that this event will occur as scheduled and that other events will follow.

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. We have starting once again to meet in person with the added dimension of video conferencing which we conduct at same time. Visit our Web site at www.RMCVHPA.com for any updates. We continue to look for artifacts for the Museum. Please contact our Chapter President and Museum Curator, Dale House with anything you'd like to donate or loan to the museum. We can be contacted through our mailbox at: RMC.mailbox@yahoo.com

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

Dale House ~ President

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Hello Survivors: Vietnam, Life and COVID!!!

We at Celebrate Freedom Foundation had the privilege of working on an iconic static aircraft; HU-1A serial number 25. This aircraft is believed to be the oldest surviving of the original

batch of 183 aircraft. It was given tail number of 58-2084 and went to 57th Med on their first deployment to Vietnam in 1961. Major Charles Kelly call sign "Dustoff 1" was Commander, and this was his bird.

In 1964, "084" was converted to HU-1BF by Bell and signed over
Page 46 The VHPA Aviator

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

to Air America as XA-005 and operated that way 'till July 1971.

This historical aircraft is owned by a VHPA member who served with 134th.

Even though not historically correct, I gave the Medevac some F model gun cover.

Here at Celebrate Freedom Foundation we are getting ready to get our "STEM" program going with the young people in SC and NC to show them available career paths in aviation.

On a side note, we are looking for ground handling wheels for OH-58A/C and TH-13 (bell 47J).

*Stay Happy and Healthy.
(Not easy at our age)*

*See you in Charlotte.
Roger Lone*



UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Upper Midwest Chapter held their March meeting virtually. We had a good turnout with 17 members participating. The election of officers was held, although a bit later than our usual January election. Our newest chapter member, Terry Branham, was elected as Vice President. Thank you, Terry, for stepping up. Don Abrams agreed to assume the duties of President to fill in for a member that needed to step away from his position.

The May meeting was held at the Highground Veterans Memorial in Neillsville, WI on May 22nd. We had a good turnout with ten members present. It was very good to see the members face to face after nearly a year of virtual meetings. The meeting was held in conjunction with a gathering for the laying of legacy stones at the memorial. This is a wonderful memorial site on 250 acres in the heart of the rolling terrain of Wisconsin's Moraine area. The site is approximately 30 miles ESE of Eau Claire. If you are ever in the area, you should make a point of visiting the site which is open 365

days a year. It is a very inspiring place.

Dave Schmitz flew his Huey in, and a static display Huey was also there. There were reenactors there, complete with all the correct period gear. The on-site museum was remarkably interesting and the volunteer committee that runs the site is in the process of fund raising to build a more permanent building.

The business part of the meeting revolved around several upcoming events. There will be a "Field of Flags" event in Mazeppa, MN at the American Legion Park July 8th through the 11th. The "Moving Wall" will be in Rice, MN August 19th, and 20th. The annual "China Beach" picnic will be August 14th in Trimble, WI. Some of the members are planning to attend the VHPA National Reunion in Charlotte.

Our July meeting will be held at a restaurant in the Twin Cities area now that pandemic restrictions have eased. The meeting date will be July 15th. Watch for details in your e-mail or on our Facebook page.

Dave Larson, Secretary

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



UTAH CHAPTER

The Utah Chapter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association held its first post-covid chapter meeting at the Golden Coral in Midvale, UT, 24 April 2021. Ten members attended.

After a good meal, a few war stories and some visiting, the meeting was called to order and attendees saluted the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chapter President Steve Jackson informed the group that we are a dying breed like the WWII and Korean War veterans and handed out a fact sheet with statistics on our numbers and status.

He related a story about his deceased father-in-law whose B-17 bomber and crew went down over Poland near the end of WW II, and mentioned Tom Melville's father-in-law who was a Pearl Harbor survivor. Both of their post-war organizations have gone out of existence because most of their members have died. We were encouraged to write down our stories and experiences, so the history is not lost. 2.7 million military service members served in Vietnam and today fewer than 850,000 are still alive. At last reckoning, we Vietnam Veterans are dying at the rate of about 390 per day.

An executive session is planned to map out our chapter direction, including presentations at Civil Air Patrol meetings, Commemorative Air Force gatherings, middle and high schools, colleges, and universities which we intend to start up again late summer and fall 2021.

Pictures of a variety of helicopters were shown and handouts provided as statistics were presented on numbers of helicopters lost or destroyed during the Vietnam war.

Members brought pictures and items of interest for attendees to



Members present: Front L-R: Dan Lindberg, Tom Melville, Steve Jackson and Doug Drury. Seated L-R: Jim Beson, Lew Olson, George Sumner and Dick Lund. Standing L-R: Lloyd Blackburn and Paul Callaway.

view/handle including a Bell-product cyclic grip, AH-1G break out tool (knife), NVA helmet, Cav hat, "blood chit" survival map, etc. George Sumner had pictures of his fatigue uniform shirt on display in a Washington DC History Museum and a book showing pictures of things left at the memorial wall. Members related stories of their experiences in Vietnam and at "The Wall".

Members were encouraged to apply to participate in the Honor Flight Program where Veterans can be flown to Washington, DC to visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall along with other war memorial sites including Korea and World War II and provided a point of contact for members interested in participating.

The chapter financial report was presented, and the meeting was adjourned at 1500 hours.

Steve Jackson

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

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.

***Bevans, Bruce T. USA; Flight Class: 67-15; RVN: 67-68 161 AHC; BS, PH; Callsign: Pelican.**



Bruce passed away peacefully April 13, 2021, following a long battle with cancer. He was born July 7, 1944 in Fresno, CA. Shortly after his birth, the family moved back to Tenaflly NJ, where he grew up and graduated from high school. After high school, Bruce attended Steven's Institute of Technology. He then joined the U.S. Army.

After his discharge, Bruce moved to California and worked for 20 years as an engineer in the plastics industry. Bruce then made a career change. Earning his B.S. and a Master's degree in Education, he became a high school physics teacher.

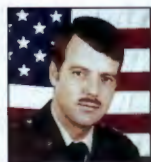
He is survived by his wife, Kaye Rasband.

***Brownlee, Robert J. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 67-14; RVN: 67-68 C/227 AVN 1 CAV; SS, DFC, BS, PH; Callsign: Viper 26.**

Robert Joseph Brownlee, of Country Lakes in Browns Mills, NJ., passed away April 24, 2014 at the Samaritan Hospice Inpatient Unit in Mount Holly of natural causes April 24, 2014 at the Samaritan Hospice Inpatient Unit in Mount Holly. He was born in Hammonton, NJ on February 19, 1944. Mr. Brownlee was retired from the State of New Jersey Department of Health.

He is survived by his wife, Lynn.

***Campbell, Gary A. USA, Ret. (unk); Flight Class: 71-24; RVN: 71-72 48 AHC; DFC, PH (OLC); Callsign: Blue Star.**



Gary Alva Campbell passed away May 24, 2021 in Provo, UT of complications from Agent Orange. He was born October 7, 1947 in Salt Lake City.

After graduation from Utah State University in June of 1970, Gary was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Army. Gary returned from Vietnam and was assigned to the 9th Aviation Battalion where he served in staff and command positions. Gary received a Regular Army Commission in 1975 and went on to make the Army a career. Retiring from an Inspector General assignment in 1992, Gary went on to become a contractor.

He is survived by wife, Georgia.

***Collins, Clive H. USA; Flight Classes: 70-25/70-21; RVN: 70 B/3/17 CAV, 70-71 135 AHC; DFC, BS, PH; Callsigns: Stogie/EMU 22/Taipan 33.**

Clive Herbert Collins of Stuart, FL passed on Tuesday, April 27, 2021. He was born in Southgate London, England on August 22, 1936. Clive was raised in England, completed primary school, graduated from Mincheden High School, and attended London University in the UK. He joined the British Army from 1955 to 1957, where he served his country honorably earning the British General Service Medal and Suez Medal.

Clive then traveled the world from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean, Thailand, and Australia working various aviation-related jobs. He arrived in the United States in 1967 as an Operations Officer for Braniff International Airlines in Miami and worked there until he began his military career with the United States Army.

After eleven years with the Army, Clive then followed his love of the ocean becoming a First Mate on a commercial fishing boat and private yacht before purchasing his own 30' commercial fishing boat. Clive's love of flying and his experience in both the British and United States Military led him to a successful civilian career as a helicopter pilot for Air Logistics, LA until 1991 when his cancer diagnosis and laryngectomy forced his retirement.

Conde, James R. USA; Flight Class: 66-17; RVN: 62-63 1 SF GRP, 64 1 SF GRP, 67-68 187 AHC; Callsign: Comanche 1/Sog.

James Conde died on May 15, 1997. No other information available.

***Coss, Stanley Q. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 65-1W; RVN: 65-66 A/1 AVN 1 INF, 69-70 336 AHC; DFC, BS; Callsigns: Rebel 32/Warrior 6.**

Stanley Q. Coss, was born in St. Petersburg, FL on April 2, 1938. Stan entered the United States Army in 1958, retiring in 1980.

During and after his military career, Stan attended college and graduated with a master's degree in aeronautical science from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, FL.

After retiring from the Army, Stan became a partner with his brother, Jack, and his sister, Pat, in Franklin, NC, as co-owners of Realty World-Mountain Homes. In 1987, he returned to a flying job as a civilian flight instructor for the US Army. He also flew for Petroleum Helicopters, Inc., from Louisiana to platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. He began his final flying career in 1991 as a pilot and manager in the air ambulance industry, retiring again in 2010. Stan returned to Franklin in 2016 where he operated Battle Group Quartermaster, a retail sales business. Stan died on April 9, 2021.

He is survived by his former wife, Sallee.

***Christensen, Leo D. USA; Flight Class: 67-24; RVN: 68-69 11 GS 1 CAV; BS; Callsign: Jaguar 10.**



Leo Drew Christensen passed away on July 24, 2018 at home of pancreatic cancer. He was born August 23, 1944 in Provo, UT. He grew up in Murray, UT and graduated from Murray High. Drew attended Snow College and

graduating from Utah State University with a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in accounting.

He worked for 30 years for the State of Utah as an auditor for Work Force Services.

***Crockett, Robert D.** USA, CW5 Ret.; Flight Classes: 71-27/71-23; RVN: 71-72 HHT/2/17 CAV 101 ABN, 72 F/4 CAV; MSM, ACM, Callsigns: Spade/Centaur.



An icon in Army Aviation and well known and respected throughout the Army Aviation enterprise, Davy Crockett closed out his final celestial flight plan and passed away peacefully on April 5, 2021. Davy was born December 5, 1947 and raised in a town called "Davy", nestled deep in the mountains of West Virginia. After graduating from Welch High School in 1965, Davy made his living by working the coal mines. After a few years, Davy made the decision to serve his Country and joined the U.S. Army Reserve.

Davy returned to the United States and ventured into the private corporate aviation world, flying Bell helicopters out of Baltimore, MD. His passion for flying increased as well as his zeal to remain in the military so he joined the West Virginia Army National Guard Aviation program and served out of Parkersburg, WV until 1981 where he realized his final, true calling into his new aviation home and family; the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF), Virginia Army National Guard in Sandston, VA.

Davy continued to answer the call to duty and was deployed for a year to Fort Rucker, AL in support of Desert Storm whereby he trained students to become aviators to continue into the war fight. After promotion to Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CW4), Davy continued his military studies.

Following his deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) from 2005-2007 he attended and graduated from the Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course which qualified him for the highest rank in the Warrant Officer Corp. He was subsequently promoted to Chief Warrant Officer 5. In

2009, Davy retired from the military with 35 years and 10 months of service and at the same time, retired from the Civilian Technician Program as a GS-13 with over 27 years of service.

Cunningham, Ernest C. USMC, COL Ret.; RVN: 68-69 HMM-364; LM, DFC (3 OLC); Callsign: Swift.

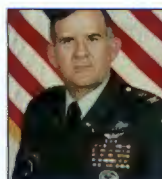


Ernest Clair Cunningham of Pensacola, FL died Tuesday, March 23, 2021. He was born on August 24, 1932 in Mt. Jewett, PA.

He left Pennsylvania at the age of 18 to join the Marine Corps. He served as a jet and helicopter pilot in his time in the Corps.

After retiring from the military he established an accounting business specializing in tax preparation in Pensacola and was a tour guide at the Naval Aviation Museum.

***Floyd, Robert L.** USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 70-8; RVN: 65-66 1/503 ABN 173, 70 C/158 AVN 101 ABN, 71 D/158 AVN 101 ABN; DFC, BS (2); Callsigns: Redskin 26/Phoenix 5.



Robert L. Floyd III, 79, of Newton, AL passed away April 27, 2021.

After retiring from the Army, Bob worked for Sikorsky Helicopter as Vice President of Operations in the Middle East and in the United States, and as a Project Manager for Blackwater Security in the Middle East.

***George, Samuel L.** USA; Flight Classes: 68-7/68-5; RVN: 68-69 A/159 AVN 101 ABN, 69 B/159 AVN 101 ABN; DFC (OLC); Callsigns: Pachyderm/Varsity.

Samuel L. George, 75, took his last flight out in the early morning hours of March 23, 2021 at his home in Four Oaks, NC. His love for aviation started at a young age as he would gaze at the sky and tell everyone "I'm gonna fly one day". He realized that dream and became a licensed private pilot as a young man, flying as often as work and school schedules would permit. The Vietnam War interrupted his time at UNC-Chapel Hill, and he enlisted in the

U.S. Army.

After leaving the military, he graduated with a BS degree in Pharmacy in 1974 and worked in retail pharmacy until his retirement.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Jonnie.

Hatfield, Charles F. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 61-1; RVN: 67 162 AHC, 68 11 CAB; LM, DFC; Callsign: Red Dog 3.



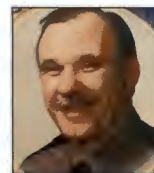
Charles F. Hatfield, 85, of Dublin, OH, passed away January 19, 2021 at Dublin Retirement Village. Chuck was from South Bend, IN.

He was a graduate of James Whitcomb Riley High School and St. Benedictine College and attended grad school at Wright State University at the School of Business.

He was a member of the Flight 9 Order of the Daedalian's and Distinguished Flying Cross of Dayton. After retiring from the military in 1976, he started a second career at Dayton Power and Light as a Business Development Trainer until he retired in 1997.

He is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Francie.

***Hingston, Wilford E.** USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-7/66-5; RVN: 66 A/501 AVN, 66-67 71 ASHC; Callsign: Firebird 98.



Will Hingston of Jefferson, OR passed away at home, May 5, 2021, after a six-year battle with cancer. Will was born in Wichita Falls, TX on August 27, 1942 at Shepherd Air Force Base. In 1949, the family moved to Oregon and settled in Garden Home near Beaverton, OR. Will attended Garden Home Elementary School and Beaverton High School. He attended Portland State before deciding to enlist in the Army on May 7, 1965.

In July 1970 Will and Pam moved to Salem, OR and Will began his law enforcement career on August 1, 1970 with the Marion County Sheriff's Office. He started out as a patrolman, was promoted to Patrol Sergeant, and then to

Patrol Lieutenant. After his patrol assignments, Will was a detective for many years. During that time, he was promoted to Detective Sergeant and then Chief of Detectives. He went on to become Captain of the Enforcement Division and ended his career as Captain of the Support Division. Will retired from the Sheriff's Office in October of 1997. He started Hingston and Associates, his private investigative business, in 1998 and worked for the Department of Justice as a Financial Fraud and Family Services Investigator. In addition, he conducted investigations for both Nike and Oakley. Will closed his private investigative business in 2005.

He is survived by his wife, Pam.

***Hines, Timmy L. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 70-26; RVN: 70-71 B/7/1 CAV; Callsigns: Dutchmaster Honeybear/Dutchmaster 16.**

Timmy L. Hines, 76, of Austin, TX, went to his Heavenly Father on April 3, 2021, after four battles with lung cancer over the past nine years. Timmy was born in Eagle Pass, TX. At the age of two, his family moved to Abilene, TX. While in Abilene High School he sang and played Bass Guitar with a band of friends. He enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard in June of 1965, graduated from Field Artillery OCS in 1968, and shortly afterward, volunteered for active duty to go to Vietnam as a Helicopter Pilot.

After his tour, he attended and graduated from Tarleton University and attended Texas A&M for Graduate work. After three years on active duty, he returned to the National Guard and meritoriously served another 26 years.

In his civilian career, Timmy was a machinist in Abilene, TX, a machine shop and welding teacher at Temple TX High School, and then simultaneously served 20 years in numerous positions as a Civil Service Military Technician with the TX National Guard.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 32 years, Elizabeth "Lisa".

Holcomb, Charles D. USA; Flight Class: 70-12; RVN: 70-71 B/123 AVN 23 INF, 71 A/2/17 CAV 101 ABN; Callsign: Warlord 18.

Charles Holcomb died on January 17, 2021. No other information provided.

***James, Robert E. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-37/69-41; RVN: 70-71 C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV; Callsign: Blue Max 68W.**



Robert Ernest James died on May 4, 2021, in Bakersfield, CA. Robert was loved and will be missed deeply.

He was born in San Fernando, CA on March 14, 1943, and was raised in Bakersfield until he was drafted into the US Army.

He had an accomplished military career. Robert was in the Special Forces. After 25 years of service, he became a Chief Test Pilot for civilian defense industry. Robert then became a history teacher and taught at Thompson Junior High School in Bakersfield. He enjoyed organizing student trips to Washington, DC. Being a Vietnam War Veteran, he was involved with the Kern Veteran Memorial Foundation, including as a board member.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Ricki.

Kleiber, Donald G. USA; Flight Class: 61-10; RVN: 65-66 A/501 AVN, 68 478 HHC, 68-69 228 ASHB 1 CAV; PH; Callsign: Rattler.



Don Kleiber of Sky Valley, GA, passed away peacefully on May 23 with his wife Helen and son Klaus Baer by his side. He was born November 1, 1938 in Hastings, NE. He graduated from Hastings High School in 1956 and from the University of Nebraska in 1960.

After college graduation, Don served in the U.S. Army achieving the rank of Major. He was also involved with the development of the Black Hawk helicopter in Combat Developments while at Ft. Benning.

After serving 16 1/2 years in the Army, Don went to work with Tom's Foods, a Columbus, GA company with which he

spent 26 1/2 years in various administrative positions, including the Atlanta area, Portland, ME as well as Columbus. After retirement, Don became involved with various local activities such as the Chapel of Sky Valley, Habitat for Humanity, the Sid Weber Memorial Cancer Fund, and the Rabun Gap Presbyterian Church monthly food distributions.

He is survived by his wife, Helen.

***McDaniel, James I. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 67-3; RVN: 67-68 174 AHC, 71 116 AHC; Callsigns: Dolphin/Shark 4/Hornet 20.**



James McDaniel, "Jim", passed away on April 15, 2021 from IPF. He was born on May 30, 1944 in Ft. Myers, FL. He attended Florida State University and George Washington University.

He served in the Army for about 25 years. After retiring from the Army, Jim continued in the aviation field with the Federal Aviation Administration for 20 years. Jim's personal life focused on family, including Char, his wife of 52 years, and their two sons. He had a wide variety of interests. He created a web site for the 174th AHC and was also involved with the 174th Association. His interest in genealogy led to his love for Scottish culture, and he joined Clan Donald USA and took up the great highland bagpipes. A member of the Masons and Shriners, Jim joined the Kena Highlanders Pipes and Drums band, eventually becoming Pipe Major. Additionally, he served as the president of two different neighborhood associations for many years.

He is survived by his wife, Charlotte.

***Millirons, James H. USA; Flight Class: 56-2; RVN: 66-67 1 TC BN, 68-69 D/229 AVN 1 CAV; Callsigns: Charlie Charlie Bravo/Tiger 6.**



James H. Millirons, Sr., of Morrow, GA passed away on April 7, 2021. He was born on January 21, 1931 in Fyffe, AL.

***Mills, Freddie J. USA, COL Ret.; RVN: 65-66 498 MED CO, 68-69 57 MED DET; Callsign: Dustoff 56.**

Freddie Jim Mills, 91, of Lawrenceville, GA passed away February 27, 2021.

A Hot Springs, AR native, he served his country for 38 years as an Army Medevac Helicopter pilot. His tour of duty took him to many foreign countries delivering humanitarian and medical aid, in times of crises, to those in need.

***Morris, Terryl R. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-501/67-25; RVN: 68-69 240 AHC, 71-72 D/101 AVN 101 ABN; SS, DFC (3 OLC), BS, PH (4), ACM (V); Callsigns: Mad Dog 39/Hawk 33.**



Terryl R. Morris passed away May 11, 2021. He entered the US Army after graduating from high school in 1963 and served as an enlisted man with the 82nd Airborne Division and 10th Special Forces Group, attaining the rank of SSG. He attended the Warrant Officer Flight program. He was a qualified paratrooper in both the US Army and the German Army.

He retired in 1988 after 25 years of service, and went into Law Enforcement, retiring after 20 years as the Assistant Chief of Police in Phenix City, AL.

***Nole, Charles J. USA, LTC, Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-509/68-13; RVN: 68-70 D/3/5 CAV, 72-73 C/16 CAV; DFC, BS (V), BS (2), MSM, ACM (V) (2); Callsigns: War Wagon 12/Crusader 34/Dark Horse 37.**



Charles Jordan Nole (Chuck), 76, passed away on April 3, 2021, at his home in Roseburg, OR. He was a career Army officer and participated in numerous search and rescue operations, was a flight instructor and safety officer, and he led Jimmy Carter and Marine One to view the destruction wrought by the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980. He was a stunt pilot in the movie Blue Thunder and flew in several air shows, demonstrating the tactics and maneuverability of the Cobra gunship.

When he retired from the Army and

Washington Air National Guard after 20 years of service, he had accumulated a significant number of flying hours.

***Peneguy, Robert O. USA; Flight Classes: 67-3/67-6; RVN: 67-68 571 MED DET; Callsign: Dustoff 504.**



Robert Peneguy died on 25 May 2021 at the age of 78. No other information provided.

***Peterson, Robert D. USA; Flight Classes: 68-8/68-10; RVN: 68-69 A/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; BS; Callsigns: Blue/Apache 33.**



Robert Peterson died April 6th after losing his battle with cancer. He was 78 years old. Robert hailed from Tribune, KS. He attended Greeley County High School graduating in 1960.

After college, Robert joined the US Army and served in combat operations in Vietnam as an Infantry Platoon Leader and Huey helicopter pilot.

Robert also policed in the Atlanta metro area and retired as a Patrol Sergeant from the DeKalb County Police Department with 22 years of service.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Sandra.

Putnam, Geoffrey L. USA; Flight Class: 69; RVN: 70-71 117 AHC.

Geoffrey Lothar Putnam went to the Lord on March 15, 2021. He was born at the Glen Cove Hospital, Glen Cove, NY on October 25, 1950.

He lived in Old Brookville, NY for most of his childhood. After starting college at Albert Lee College, he enlisted in the Army.

Shortly after leaving the army, he moved to Daytona Beach, FL where he eventually went to work at "Shade and Light" where he was a valued member of the staff before retiring.



***Quattlebaum, Harold D. USA, CW5 Ret.; Flight Classes: 64-6W/64-6; RVN: 65-66 A/502 AVN, 68-69 B/159 ASHB 101 ABN; SS, BS; Callsign: Outlaw 12.**



Harold D. Quattlebaum, 86, a resident of the Rocky Head Community, near Arizon, died on May 8, 2021 at his home.

Harold was born in Bonifay, FL and moved to Central Florida while still a child. He attended Lakeland High School in Lakeland, FL. Mr. Quattlebaum graduated from Enterprise State Junior College in Enterprise, AL, Valencia College in Orlando, FL and Florida Technological University in Orlando, FL. After high school, Mr. Quattlebaum enlisted in the United States Air Force and later transferred to the United States Army, where he retired after serving for 32 years.

Rogers, John W. USA; Flight Classes: 68-11/68-17; RVN: 68-69 A/9 AVN 9 INF; Callsign: Jayhawk 32.



John Wayne Rogers of Valdosta, GA passed away on June 18, 2020 at his residence after a lengthy illness. John was born on August 9, 1947 in Hahira, GA. John was a graduate of Valdosta High School.

After the Army, he held several positions in the banking industry including commercial lender, senior commercial lender, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President, and Chief Executive Officer.

He is survived by his wife, Diane.

Schmit, Robert D. USA; Flight Classes: 69-5/69-3; RVN: 69-70 135 AHC; DFC, PH.



Robert 'Bob' Dean Schmit passed away unexpectedly the morning of May 1, 2021.

Bob was born in Pierre, SD on March 26th, 1948. He graduated from Riggs High School, Class of 1967. Shortly after graduating high school, he enlisted in the Army.

Bring your child to work day meant his children got to sit on his lap while crop dusting. He co-owned and operated Schmit Aviation with his brother, Doug,

and spent many years crop dusting across the region. Bob then started Wings, Inc., a private charter flight service, and spent his days flying lucky individuals to the neighboring states in between golf trips with buddies.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Lynett.

Sparks, Edward N. Jr. USA; Flight Classes: 67-1/66-21.



Edward Newell Sparks Jr passed away at his home in Bothell, WA on March 22, 2021. He had been battling with Parkinson's disease the last few years and left this world peacefully surrounded by his loving family and friends. Ed (Eddie) was born August 18, 1943 in Butte, MT. After graduating high school in 1961, Ed left Butte to attend the University of Montana.

Ed relocated to the Seattle area in 1986 where he worked in commercial property management. Over the years, Ed had enjoyed woodworking, boating in the Puget Sound.

He is survived by his loving wife, Janice.

***Stoudt, Charles F. USA; Flight Class: 65-13W; RVN: 65-66 A/82 AVN, 66 335 AHC; DFC.**



Chuck Stoudt of Suwanee, GA, passed away on March 26, 2021 at home with family. Chuck was born in Battle Creek, MI on April 12, 1943. He had a passion for flying and earned his fixed wing license prior to enlisting in the Army. After leaving the Army, he continued a career in aviation spanning from helicopter flying on oil rigs in the Gulf, crop-dusting, flight instruction, just-in-time manufacturing delivery, charter, and private jet flights.

He participated in veteran's and aviation organizations including Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Experimental Aircraft Association, Civil Air Patrol, Silver Wings and American Legion. He recently served as the president of the GA chapter of VHPA.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Lynn.

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

Douglas Stowe died on March 30, 2021. That is all of the information available from Dove Creek VFW post 5181 of which Doug was a longtime member.

***Thomson, John D. USA; Flight Class: 62-1W; RVN: 63-64 UTT, 67-68 COBRA NETT.**

John Thomson died on March 10, 2021. No other information provided.

***Troyer, Dean A. USMC.**



Dean A. Troyer a retired Topeka Endodontist, died on March 22, 2021. He was born in Aurora, NE on July 30, 1943. He graduated from Aurora High School in 1961. An accomplished high school athlete, Dean furthered his athletic career on the football field at Wheaton College where he graduated in 1965 with a Bachelor's in Zoology.

Following graduation, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Upon completing his service to his country, he attended the Nebraska School of Dentistry, earning his Doctor of Dental Surgery in 1975. Following graduation, he opened his first practice in Sutton, NE. In 1982, he then moved to Topeka, KS opening a highly successful and longstanding dental practice, specializing in endodontics, which he maintained until his retirement in January of 2020.

Simultaneous to his dental career, Dean began training bird dogs and much like his measurable successes in athletics, education, dentistry, and service to his country, he achieved the pinnacle - training a U.S. National Champion.

***Wells, Ronald M. USA; Flight Class: 65-11; RVN: 65-66 A/101 AVN 101 ABN; Callsign: Thunderbird 3.**



Ronald Michael Wells (Mike) passed away on April 8, 2021. He was involved in a serious auto accident and suffered a fatal stroke event caused by the accident. He left a note to his children (of whom I am one) to "please notify the Vietnam Heli-

copter Association that I have passed." Below you can find an excerpt from his obituary that has not yet been published in local papers around the Mineral Wells, TX area.

Mike was born March 17, 1942 in Mineral Wells.

He attended the University of North Texas and graduated with a degree in Industrial Arts in 1964.

In 2000, Mike pursued his dreams and established his own business in metal fabrication and artwork. His passion was creating beautiful artistic pieces of mixed metals with chemical patinas and painting.

West, Joe T. USA, LTC, Ret.; Flight Classes: 63-4TQ/60-8; RVN: 66-67 A/1 AVN 1 INF; Callsign: Rebel 21.



Joe T. West was born April 10, 1936 in Memphis, TN. He departed this life on June 17, 2018 at Mercy Hospital, Springfield, MO.

He attended Arkansas State University on a football scholarship. As a former army pilot, he was a member of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Smokejumpers. Following his retirement and honorable discharge from the United States Army, he worked as Director of Emergency Management for the Department of Civil Defense in Greene County, MO for six years.

***Williams, Benjamin L. USMC; Flight Class: 68-36; RVN: 69-70 HMM-364; Callsign: Arcangel.**

Benjamin Lawrence Williams died on June 16, 2020. No other information provided.

Williams, Howard M. USA; Flight Class: 65-9W; RVN: 67-68 178 ASHC; Callsign: Boxcar 43.

Howard Williams died on December 15, 2020. No other information provided.



CORRECTIONS...

MARCH/APRIL 2021:

RICHARD A. LESTER incorrectly reported; Richard W. Leister was reported in an earlier issue.

MAY/JUNE 2021:

BRUCE L SIBLEY was incorrectly reported as Bruce W. Sibely.

RICHARD SEBASTIAN'S wife's name was Mary (Jones), and she predeceased him in 2018.

Creagan, Wayne - should be **Creagan, James C.** A&D section revised and obituary reprinted to the right.

CREAGAN, JAMES C. USA; Flight Class: 66-19; RVN: 67-68 336 AHC, 68-69 235 AHC; DFC (OLC), SM, BS, ACM (V); Callsigns: Dealer 23/T Bird 4.

Jim Creagan passed away on January 29, 2021 from heart and lung complications. His first combat mission on February 15, 1967 was noteworthy enough to warrant an article in Stars and Stripes.

After his retirement from the appliance repair business, Jim kept current on veterans' issues. He was deeply committed to creating a veteran's drug court in his county, and was helpful in its planning stages through research, consulting with other veterans' courts, and lobbying in Albany. He was protective of his fellow veterans and was quick to point out when persons or organizations used "the plight of veterans" - individually or collectively - to advance their own aims.

OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

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

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

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

Bassett, Tommy J. USA; Flight Classes: 63-4W/63-4; RVN: 68-69 132 ASHC; died December 4, 2020.

Browne, Edward M. USA, MG Ret.; died on April 28, 2021.

Bushyhead, Edward R. USA, COL Ret.; died on October 30, 1989.

Casciano, Carmine A. USMC; DFC, PH; died on May 17, 2021.

Fernandez, Joseph A. USMC, USN, USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67-68 HMM-361, HMM-362; died on March 30, 2021.

Gardner, Jim USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 67 37 ARRS DET 2; BS; died on April 21, 2021.

Haskins, Lyle K. USA, MAJ Ret.; died on April 10, 2021.

Johnson, Wayne E. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-19/66-17; RVN: 66-67 B/229 AHB 1 CAV, 67-68 155 AHC, 68-69 201 AVN; DFC (OLC); Callsign: Falcon 8; died on April 14, 2021.

Kendall, Stuart O. USMC, LTC Ret.; RVN: 64-65 HMM-361; died on May 8, 2021.

Mock, Newell A. USA, LTC Ret.; died on November 12, 2019.

Morris, Hubert USA, LTC Ret.; SS, BS, LM (2); died on March 20, 2021.

Niemczyk, Robert R. USN, CDR Ret.; died on April 9, 2021.

(Rev.) **Norton, William A.** USA; Flight Class: 69-32; DFC, BS (1 OLC), ACM (V); died on April 7, 2021.

Owens, Theodore D. USMC, LTC Ret.; died on April 12, 2021.

Purtell, Joseph M. USN, CPT Ret.; RVN: 69 HS-2; died on May 3, 2021.

Schildgen, Paul R. USAF, LTC Ret.; died March 21, 2021.

Schwem, Marvin W. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 64-65 A/501 AVN; died on April 24, 2021.

Scudder, Keith S. USA; Flight Class: 68-41; RVN: 121 AHC in 68-69; SS, BS, PH; died on May 5, 2021.

Sexton, William A. USA, CW2 Ret.; died on April 17, 2021.

Smith, Wilton J. Jr. USN; RVN: 66 HS-6, 71 HC-7; Callsign: Big Mother; died on April 24, 2021.

Stambaugh, James P. Sr. USAF; died on April 25, 2021.

Stamps, Stanley W. USAF, LTC Ret.; died on April 1, 2021.

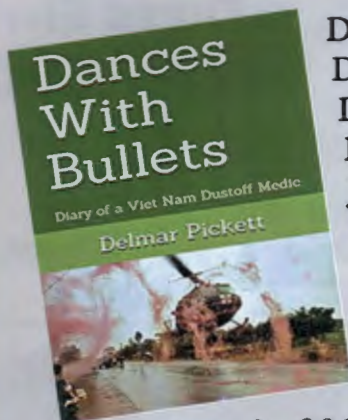
Tollefsen, Albert E. USAF, COL Ret.; RVN: 67-68 38 ARRS DET 10; died on April 3, 2021.

Watts, Robert P. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 68-6; LM, BS; died on January 13, 2020.

~ BOOK REVIEWS ~



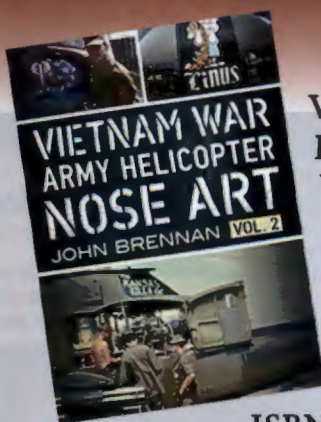
Marc Liebman, a VHPA Life Member, is a retired Navy Captain and Naval Aviator who flew combat search and rescue missions during the Vietnam War. He is also the author of five published novels with more coming.



Dances With Bullets – Diary of a Vietnam Dustoff Medic by Delmar Pickett, Junior, self-published, 2020, ISBN 979-8-557232-23-4, 429 pages, \$19.95.

Before he passed away in 2018, Delmar Pickett asked his wife and friends to turn his Vietnam diary into a book. This is it. For those who don't know, Delmar Pickett was a combat medic who flew with the 236th Medical Detachment. Pickett's diary covers three years, from September 1968 to

August 1971. Ms. Lauren Evans who did the transcription and then Richard Claywell who did the editing did a wonderful job letting Pickett's personality and often terse diction shine. To be honest, the book is sometimes hard to read, not because of the writing but the rawness of his experience. In publishing Pickett's diary, the group kept the emotion, excitement and humor he put on paper. For those who knew Delmar Pickett and for those who served in Vietnam, this book will bring back memories, some good, some bad. For those who weren't in Vietnam, you should read this to deepen your understanding of the war through the words of a man who was.



Vietnam War Army Helicopter Nose Art, Volume 2 by John Brennan, Fonhill Media, Millview, Toadsmoor Road, Stroud, GL5 2TB, United Kingdom,

ISBN: 978-1-78155-780-8, 128 pages, \$32.00.

I love these books because they show the warmth, humor even if it is a bit off color, satiric, or self-deprecating, and imagination of American fighting men. The best part of the book are the vignettes from the men who flew the helicopters which tell the

story of the machine as well as the art. The book is incredibly well organized. There are chapters by type of helicopter as well 10 more chapters that cover where one can find more information such as which organizations offer rides in Vietnam era helicopters and a list of 500 newly found helicopter names along with a list of serial numbers for each type Army helicopter produced during the Vietnam War. Many of the readers of this publication will find, as they did in Volume 1, helicopters they flew or were in their unit or remembered seeing on a ramp. This is a wonderful work for vets and non-vets as well as nerdy historians who can use the book as a future reference. *Well done John Brennan!*



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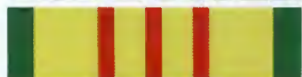
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