



The VHPA AVIATOR

The Newsletter of The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association



Photo by Carolyn Kirk



Cover Story: Page 13, Gold Star Family

999

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

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

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

My fellow VHPA Members, I find myself still cleaning up from the last reunion. I was reminded that I failed to thank our founder, Larry Clark, and that I also failed to recognize those members who had attended all of our prior unions. Guilty! My apologies. Please consider this your recognition, however late it may be. I was complimented for recognizing the past Presidents of the VHPA. Score – two bad and one good. One final comment from the reunion. I believe you will enjoy this one as much as I did. Be advised that the following is second-hand info which I do not usually pass on but I made an exception for this one. My source said he overheard John Boyer say, “you look around the room and you see all the silver haired, grandfatherly, types engaged in animated conversations with each other. Then you realize, where they have been and what they have done, they are in reality Red Blooded, All American Bad Asses, without exception.”

Got that out of the way and I will move on to the balance of this article. Your Executive Council works hard throughout the year and endeavors to constantly make the VHPA the best it can be. We follow 38 years of prior ECs who attempted to do the exact same thing. We find the organization in great shape, and also find we are working the edges and the small areas where tweaking can pay benefits. How do we do it? One man, one vote! We have a tie breaker vote that rests with the Secretary/Treasurer (it's in very good hands) We hold discussions followed by a vote which is complicated when a member has more than the one opinion that is freely expressed. I would like to tell you we are free to express our opinion and that the opinion is always respected by others, but the truth is we are humans operating in the real world, not a fairytale land. In the end we work it out. Most of the current topics relate directly to EC operating rules and guidelines. That said, we are watching your money very closely and we are not going broke on my watch! More administration adventures to come and for that we will be ready. If you want to join the exchanges run for office. New blood is always welcome.

My brothers, we were truly blessed to have grown up in the USA, a Land of Plenty. It all started when our forefathers took a chance and sought something better than what they had. They wanted freedom. They gave thanks for what this New World gave them and celebrated the First Thanks-



giving Feast with the Indians who had helped them. Later, when a European power tried to reclaim some of those rights they fought for that freedom. America's ingenious founding fathers designed for us a government where the people had the power, and the State got its power from them. Citizens asked

Ben Franklin what type of government have you designed for us? He said a Republic if you are willing to fight to keep it. We have been blessed with soldiers willing to fight to keep it up to and including today. We then included our soldiers in our thanks. We remain truly blessed and for that I thank each of you, my brothers, Happy Thanksgiving!

Christmas is just around the corner. At one time it was about all the toys I got. Then it became more about being together as a family and celebrating the gift of the Christ. Now I like the latter better. When I say Merry Christmas, I mean it. For my Jewish brothers, I wish you a Happy Festival of Lights. For the others, I wish you well. In closing, I pray 2022 is a better year for all of us! Happy New Year!

~ Art Price



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FROM THE STAFF AT HQ!

We are looking forward to planning new tours & events for R2022 in Tampa. The wheels are in motion but it will be sometime after the first of the year before passkey & on line registration is open. An email blast will be sent out to members before opening passkey & registration and the reunion page at vhpa.org will be updated with anticipated opening dates. Check the website for the most up to date info!

**Mark your calendar for May 26 – May 29, 2022
(closing banquet on May 29)
Tampa Marriott Water Street Hotel
Hope to see you there!**

*Thank you to all members & spouses that volunteered in Charlotte. We could not do it without you! Be sure to sign up to volunteer in Tampa also!
It's a great way to see who is attending.*

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!

REMINDERS:

- Paper Directories purchased beginning September 1, 2021 will be for the 2022 directory that will be delivered in October 2022. The deadline for ordering the 2022 directory will be August 31, 2022.
- The price for a pre-ordered copy of the paper directory is \$25.
- The on line directory is free at: <https://directory.vhpa.org>.
- Dues can be paid and a directory can be ordered on line via the On Line Directory at: <https://directory.vhpa.org>!

PLEASE HELP US REDUCE THE COSTS OF 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 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!

Sherry Rodgers ~ VHPA Business Manager

CHARLOTTE REUNION LOST & FOUND

Karen Scott
black XL knit jacket
with angel pin.



Rayban
Sunglasses.



to claim, contact:

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
1601 E Lamar Blvd
Suite 117
Arlington, TX 76011
800-505-8472 ■ 817-200-7309 (Fax)
www.vhpa.org

UPCOMING REUNIONS

187TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

Where: The Orleans Hotel Las Vegas, NV

When: 9 - 13 November 2021

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

173RD ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY REUNION

(Robin Hoods and Crossbows all years)

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

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

POPASMOKE REUNION SQUADRONS 263, 364 & 262

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

Mention the Swift/Peachbush Reunion when calling for reservations.

When: Nov 11-14, 2021

Information: www.hmm-364.org

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

A Troop, 3/17th Air Cavalry Reunion "Silver Spurs"

Where: Hotel Elegante in Colorado Springs, CO
When May 24 - 28, 2022

Contact: Bill McCalister silvertip_trading@yahoo.com

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



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

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

From the Managing Editor

Dear members,

My first order of business is to acknowledge an error in attributing a recent article. Four Days and a Recollection ran in our September/October issue. This excellent work was incorrectly credited to Jim Palmer (who had recently placed a book ad). The actual author was Retired Major General William F. Allen. The online version has been corrected and a replacement file has been provided to Texas Tech, where the magazine's pages are photocopied for archiving and we have sent a new insert for General Allen's copy.

Those who prepare the VHPA Chapter reports are requested to send them to Tom Hirschler tah44@msn.com. I would appreciate a copy as well sent to aviator@vhpa.org. Due to our limited time (prepping the magazine while engaging in the rest of our lives), there is always a possibility of a missed or overlooked email. Duplicate recipients make such an oversight much less likely to occur. I thank you in advance for making this adjustment.

In years past, our photo coverage of the reunion provided an inconsistent outcome. It was at that point, I asked my wife, Carolyn, to become a "roving" photographer. She has a 35mm camera if she prefers, but today's smart phones are quite capable in any situation. I publicly thank her for providing ample content for the last several years. In addition Ashley Byrd, from HQ, contributed an additional selection for this year's photo layout.

This is also an appropriate opportunity to commend the various chapters of the VHPA. The events they report reflect well on all of us as veterans. Their ever-expanding outreach, reported in the Aviator, has likely led to other chapters expanding their own activities. Many provide aircraft for static display; some operate flyable aircraft. This fact as well as the many other functions attended requires a considerable dedication of time and energy of folks who are not so young in body, but remain so at heart. I'm sure I speak for all, when I say "well done".

Tom Kirk

REUNION RECAP

CHARLOTTE ★ NORTH CAROLINA



2021 VHPA Reunion in Charlotte NC

The two-year reunion interval ended this August at the Westin Hotel in Charlotte NC. The eleventh-hour relocation and arrangements were successfully and satisfactorily completed by Art Jacobs and Donald LeMaster. The venue was well suited for the activities in and out of the hotel. It was my first in-depth exposure to the shortage of workers in the surrounding restaurants (although most had delivery) due to the Covid impact. There were, however, sufficient dine-in options available. An additional bonus was the warm and fairly dry weather for the duration. North Carolina can provide some fairly hot days with the compounding effect of high humidity in August – but not this time!

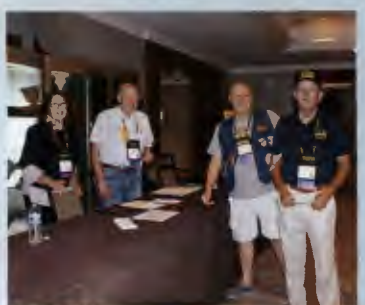
The transition of Art Price to the presidency went smoothly and did not involve any rioting or court battles. Jim Crigler was elected to the EC as Junior Member. The outgoing Art Jacobs and the EC awarded plaques recognizing a number of individuals for their work on behalf of the VHPA. Bill Cohen (see article in this issue) was honored for his gift of \$20,000 to the Scholarship Fund; Julie

Kink for her efforts in initiating and expanding our association's Gold Star outreach; Sherry Rodgers and Ashley Bird for their management of our HQ functions as well as their crucial involvement leading up to and at the reunion; lastly the staff of the Aviator (Tom Hirschler, Kay Taylor and I) were also recognized.

As usual, the various processes and admin functions were managed by a staff of volunteers under the direction of Gary Jones. In order not to overlook anyone, I typically do not list the individuals to avoid overlooking someone. You'll recognize several of the same faces in the photos from every year's recap. It is, however, appropriate to note that as usual, Mike Sheuerman drove the truck from HQ to the reunion site containing all of the items needed for the reunion. Only a few months after a quadruple bypass, he was involved with the loading and unloading as well.

Other than a few notes as above, I prefer to let the pictures tell the story of the attendees. We can thank Ashley Bird and Carolyn Kirk for their contribution to the photo collection.

~Tom Kirk



SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

In the last issue of the best Veteran's Magazine being published today, THE AVIATOR, there was an article about the ten VHPA descendants who received the ten coveted \$2,500 VHPA Scholarships. What a great article! But, my fellow Rotor Wing Heroes, that's just the tip of the story.

As you know, Quad-A administers the VHPA scholarships for us. We have a Corpus with that organization in excess of \$400,000.00 that provides VHPA with a spending interest rate of .035% every year. We actually earn more than that in most years but we can only spend .035% annually. This ensures our Corpus continues to grow every year.

Now, only VHPA descendants are eligible for the VHPA Scholarships. But, because Quad-A

administers our scholarships each year, our applicants (descendants) are also eligible for all of their scholarships and awards. GET READY FOR IT!

This year not only did ten of our descendants receive \$25,000.00 in VHPA awards, another forty-eight of our descendants received an additional \$99,500 in Quad-A scholarships and awards. YES, fifty-eight of our descendants, 18.2 % of those getting awards, received \$124,500.00, 23% of the \$547,000.00, given out in awards and scholarships.

Our young people are to be congratulated.

Mike Sheurman

Scholarship Committee Fundraising

HELP PRESERVE YOUR HISTORY!

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

WANTED

Helicopter Memorabilia from the Vietnam War

Contact: John Conway

NEW!!! 816-813-3488

JPConway@sbcglobal.net

NEW!!! Website: museum.vhpa.org

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

Fair Prices Paid. Not for profit.
References available.

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NATIONAL AMERICAN HUEY HISTORY MUSEUM

by Robert Fureigh, Musket 39, 176th AHC with American Huey 369, Inc.

www.americanhuey369.com

Facebook: American Huey 369

CONSTRUCTION has BEGUN! ~ HALLELUJAH!



2016: Rendering by Architect Paul Fitzsimons ~ August 2021



In 2005, brothers John and Alan Walker bought Huey 70-16369 on eBay for \$40K, to fix up for static display. Restoring it to flight, acquiring two more Hueys and restoring them to flight, and acquisition of 12 more Vietnam helicopters were not in their plans. Nor was the acquisition of 34 beautiful acres, nor the construction of a 60' x 140' Equipment & Aircraft Storage Building. The website does a good job documenting the amazing 16-year story that has led to construction of a 34,000 SF Restoration Hangar and Museum.

The Huey, with its unique magical soul, not only serves as the icon of our war, but its graceful lines and sound has a magnetic ability to grab our heartstrings – unlike any other combat helicopter. While we all have a strong, loving connection to it, forged in combat, the Huey is also much appreciated by non-veterans. The Huey is its own phenomenon.

Like Larry Clark's reunion became the foundation of the VHPA, Huey 369 has steadily grown into a Living Huey History Museum. The evolution of both entities has been phenomenal. American Huey 369 has grown

through its army of volunteers and fundraising, without any assistance from taxpayers, grants, or major benefactors.

Saturday, August 14, was a milestone date for American Huey 369 as many of us showed up at our Annual Gathering with our own shovels, painted yellow, with many decorated, to ceremoniously break ground to commemorate the beginning of construction of the museum.

Fundraising for the \$4 million museum project began 5 years ago but was expedited last fall upon learning the Air Force had determined that our temporary museum/hangar is too close to the runway at Grissom Aeroplex and must be demolished. This ad is the 4th one in the Aviator since that time. Many of you have responded with \$1,000 Museum Founder donations, as well as six \$1,000 founder donations from VHPA chapters. Thank you all for helping preserve your history and the history of our beloved Hueys. To date, slightly more than \$2 million has been donated, so ...

~ YOUR HELP IS NEEDED ~

... to assure construction can continue. More founders are needed! As the TAPS section reminds us of comrades gone west, that will not have the opportunity to enjoy the only Flying Huey Museum, if you BELIEVE and can help, **BECOME A FOUNDER.**

You may use the form on the next page or find it at www.americanhuey369.com.

"HUEY" IROQUOIS



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INVENTOR BELL HELICOPTERS
1902 - 1974



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EARLY 1950'S



UH-1D
FIRST FULLY OPERATIONAL FLIGHT
OCTOBER 28, 1954



UH-1C HELICOPTER, 1950'S



LAWRENCE D. BELL
DESIGNER OF THE HELICOPTER
1924 - 1950

"SHOW ME A MAN WHO CANNOT BOTHER TO DO LITTLE THINGS AND I WILL SHOW YOU A MAN WHO CANNOT BE TRUSTED TO DO BIG THINGS."
LAWRENCE D. BELL

NATIONAL AMERICAN HUEY HISTORY MUSEUM ESTABLISHED 2016

UNITED STATES
NAVY & MARINE CORP



HT-16 TH-1L



MARINE UH-1E



NAVY SEAWOLFE HAL-3



NAVY HH-1K



NAVY RESCUE UH-1N



MARINE UH-1N



MARINE UH-1Y & AH-1W



USAF UH-1F



USAF HH-1H



USAF UH-1N

UNITED STATES
ARMY AVIATION



UH-40



UH-1B TRAINER FORT RUCKER



HU-1A MEDEVAC DUSTOFF



UH-1B GUNSHIPS



UH-1D "SLICKS"



UH-1C GUNSHIP



UH-1H & AH-1G



HOIST MISSION



ASSAULT HELICOPTER "SLICK"



MAN IN THE DOOR

Help Preserve their History and Yours... Become a Founder

PLEASE, add your name and/or history to the "Final" 3rd Phase Founders Bronze Plaque to be displayed in the Main Entrance of the Museum.

By making a tax deductible donation of at least **\$1,000** or more for each 24 space line you may also Honor a family member, friend, unit, organization or Business. You do not have to be a Veteran.

(Plaque size, over 7 ft. tall x 6 ft. wide and over 1000 lbs.)

Names to be Honored:

24 space's maximum

24 space's maximum

24 space's maximum

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NATIONAL AMERICAN HUEY HISTORY MUSEUM

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34-acre museum site



Main entrance gate



60' x 140' storage building @ NW corner



Shovels at the ready



Groundbreaking ceremony



Robert Fureigh and Chuck Canfield



Grading for the brick sidewalk



Gunship 049 + slicks 803 & 369

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

Patrick Leary, FVSO President and VHPA Life Member



Back-To-School is finally a reality. Originally set for opening on Sept. 5th, the schools in Kontum began in-class instruction on Sept. 20th. After all the delays, the children are motivated and ready to learn!

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

To donate or contact FVSO

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

Web: FriendsofVSO.org

Email: FriendsofVSO@gmail.com

Vietnam Helo Operations-VHPA Rotorheads Return

MERRY CHRISTMAS

16 - 29 Apr VN TOUR ORIGINATORS

& 27

Nov-

8 Dec

2022

Tour

Historian:

Bob

Hesselbein,

C/16 Cav

Tour Leader: John Powell, 1/9 Cav

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& PICK YOUR
OWN DATES**

Gold Star Family Breakfast 2021 Brings Healing

by **Julie Kink**

sister of WO David Kink C/1/9 CAV KIA 8-3-1969

kink100@att.net

I wish I could describe the quiet yearning that brings Gold Star families to the VHPA Reunions - the hesitancy that accompanies the decision to attend... and the depth of emotion that follows them home afterwards.

The Vietnam War changed our lives forever, but when it ended, we had no way to find answers to our questions, no way to connect with our loved ones' fellow soldiers. Reunions help us learn, not only how our loved ones died, but more importantly, how they lived.

This year's Gold Star Family Breakfast brought together 21 Gold Star family members and 236 aviators and their families - a full house.

The heart of this event is passing the microphone, asking each family member to tell us about the brother, father, cousin, or uncle they lost. Often, it's the first time they have ever spoken publicly about their loved one.



COVER STORY

Families who attended this year were:

Daryl & Matison Cargile, brothers of 1LT Claude H. CARGILE, A/123 AVN 23 INF KIA 5-25-1970

Susan Jimison, sister of CWO Mark D. CLOTFELTER, 361 AVN CO 52 AVN KIA 6-16-1969

Frank Platt, cousin of CWO John F. HUMMEL, B/7/1 CAV MIA 3-6-1971

Holly Jones Field & Larry Field, daughter & son-in-law of MAJ Charles C. JONES, 335 AHC KIA 5-1-1967

Anne Swenson, daughter of CAPT Thomas J. KENNEDY Jr., 5 MAR BN ADV TEAM 2 KIA 6-12-1966 (Anne works at VHPA HQ)

Julie Kink, sister of WO David R. KINK, C/1/9 CAV KIA 8-3-1969



Timothy Vreeman, foster brother of LCPL David KNOX, D CO 1 BN 26 MAR KIA 6-8-1968 (*Timothy is a VHPA member*)

Susan Milliner, sister-in-law of CWO William P. MILLINER, B/7/1 CAV MIA 3-6-1971

Kirby Rhash, brother of WO Barry A. RHASH, 175 AHC 214 CAB KIA 3-29-1971

Mary Jane & Jimmie Moczygema, sister & brother-in-law & Dan Stanush, brother of WO Thomas J. STANUSH, HHC 326 MED 101 ABN KIA 10-10-1971

Sarah & Mike Oebser, sister & brother-in-law; Allan & Jean Stinn, brother & sister-in-law of SP4 John R. STINN, C/229 AHB 1 CAV KIA 5-15-1970

Linda Moreau, sister & Sarah Bohlman, niece of CWO Mickey A. WILSON, 62 CAC 11 CAG MIA 1-8-1973

Jeanne Harder, sister of WO James G. ZEIMET, 283 MED DET KIA 9-4-1968

And who could forget this year's "surprise" guest - Robert Dowling Jr., son of CWO Robert M. DOWLING, 197 AHC KIA 1-12-1966, who slipped into the banquet room, made his way to the front and whispered to me that his dad was a KIA helicopter

pilot and he'd just heard that the reunion was in town. He vowed to attend next year for sure - thus our "family" grows!

Each year, I work closely with Sherry Rodgers to email invitations to an ever-growing list of relatives of Vietnam helicopter KIAs and MIAs that I work on year-round. In 2021, emails were sent to 1,783 family members, representing 1,157 of our fallen Vietnam helicopter aviators (Killed in Action or Missing in Action). There is no official roster of Vietnam

Gold Star families, so they must be "found" one by one, by searching online tributes, official web sites, government documents and peoplefinders. When found, often their first response is that through all these years, no one ever contacted them before.

Thanks to Patti Squyres, and Jim and Teresa White for helping me search for families over the years. I hope that seeing these numbers makes you feel as good as I feel about the VHPA's commitment to reaching out to these family members. On average, less than 5% of those invited actually attend - so rest assured, the VHPA reunions will always remain "your party." We families are deeply grateful to you for welcoming us.

Thanks to all the generous sponsors whose contributions make this event possible, and to the follow-

ing:

VHPA President Art Jacobs, Reunion Chairman John Powell and Assistant Co-Chairs Art Jacobs and Don LeMaster; HQ staff, especially Sherry Rodgers; Jim McLaughlin who creates maps for each Gold Star family showing the location of their loved one's loss; Jim Crigler, who provides each Gold Star family member a Gold Star Coin; Gary Rossomme, who has participated since the first Gold Star Family Breakfast in 2005.

After the Breakfast, Don Clarke conducted a ceremony presenting Gold Star families with their In Memory Lapel Pins and Certificates as part of the Defense Department's Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Program. My sincere thanks to Don for

organizing this special recognition.

In closing, a Gold Star daughter wrote these words:

"I still miss my daddy every single day. I felt less 'alone' after reading your heartfelt letter. Your story is what made me decide that I needed to attend the VHPA reunion this year. This journey has been hard at times but mostly it's

been good. So good for my soul and something I've needed for a very long time."

With your continued blessing and help, I hope to bring knowledge and healing to more families in the coming year.






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The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Acclaim Press are pleased to present the new *VHPA 2022 Calendar*, now available for immediate shipment. This is the 29th calendar produced by the VHPA.

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

Printed in full-color, this 17x11-inch (BIG) wall calendar is the perfect gift for all VHPA members and their families. **Only \$14.95!** (plus shipping & Missouri state taxes if applicable)

Order your copies today!



Quilters Show and Tell

The 2022 reunion will be May 26th to May 29th in Tampa. With that said, ATTENTION AVIATORS!!! Do sign up early.

Many recipients have questioned how they were selected to receive a quilt. Quilt recipients are selected from registered aviators on a pre-selected date. This year our cutoff date is tentatively 1 April 2022. Headquarters will provide a random number generated list from registered attendees; therefore, register early to ensure you are eligible for selection. When I receive the list, selected veterans are contacted and notified they will receive a quilt at the reunion if they qualify (aviators that have received a quilt from another source, i.e., local veteran associations or Quilts of Valor are not considered eligible). I will contact tentative

selectees in early to mid-April. So, if you get a phone call from the VHPA Quilt Coordinator, don't think it is a scam phone call. I will provide a follow-up confirmation email with the program details sometime in April. At the Tampa Quilters Show and Tell program the quilters will present at least six quilts.

I'd like to thank those quilters who brought and donated quilt blocks and quilt(s) to the Show and Tell and to those who sent their blocks after the reunion. Any quilts or blocks I received after Sept 20, 2021 shall be reserved for the 2023 reunion.

If there are any questions, please contact me at 912-631-6811 or by e-mail (Subject line type VHPA quilter) klskms@aol.com



CW5 Grady Wilson.



CW4 Andrew Siegner.

Kathleen Sherfey
12420 W. 53rd Terr
Shawnee, KS 66216

The 2022 VHPA Membership Directory History Section Theme Announced



121 AVN Association

The cover photos and history section of the 2022 VHPA Membership Directory will feature the 121st Assault Helicopter Company plus its predecessor and attached/supporting/co-located units in Vietnam from December 1961 to December 1970. Read more about the [121st Assault Helicopter Company](https://www.vhpa.org/pdf/121stassaulthelicoptercodetails.pdf).

Bob Greene, the 121 AVN Association



<https://www.vhpa.org/pdf/121stassaulthelicoptercodetails.pdf>

LOOKING FOR

Several weeks ago I met with Fred Grimm one of the founders of the Dove Fund (Development of Vietnam Endeavors) www.dovefund.org. Fred is also a Vietnam Veteran who was severely wounded. He would very much like to find and thank the pilots and crew that saved him and his buddy. Here are the details of the rescue:

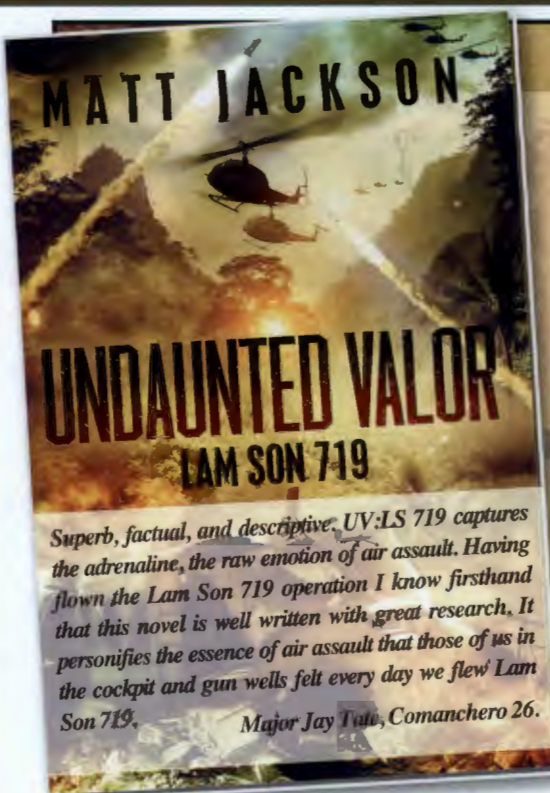
On August 12, 1969 his Americal Engineering unit was stationed at LZ Dottie. They were under heavy attack in the evening by forces of NVA and VC. That night Fred and a buddy, Bob Griffin, were both badly wounded. At 2:00 in the morning, a Huey flew in to medevac the two soldiers. Fred was amazed that the pilots came in because

they were still heavily engaged with the enemy. Fred did not remember any unit markings or medevac red cross markings on the bird but given the circumstances I would say that this was a medevac Huey that did the mission. The two soldiers were flown to Pleiku.

If I were the pilot/pilots that flew that mission I would definitely remember it to this day. I'm hoping that the pilots read this and will get in touch with either me or Fred Grimm. Those pilots deserve the honor of a thank you from a very grateful soldier.

Jim Crigler cell 507-312-0260

Fred Grimm cell 419-509-6710



After the first day of operations in Lam Son 719, almost every aircraft had at least one new hole due to gunfire. Over the course of the next forty-five days, 600 aircraft would be hit with gunfire; 108 would never return to the home base; 1200 crew members were wounded, 108 were killed. 11 are still missing today.

Sophisticated enemy air defense, use of pilots unfamiliar

with the AO and poor high-density altitude performance of older model aircraft certainly compounded this complex operation.

Matt Jackson provides a more in-depth account of these facts and the inevitable outcome.

It is a sobering read of how things can go dramatically wrong.

Available from Amazon in paperback and Kindle formats.

Letters to the Editor

Air Force Helicopters in VN

This is a great article! I served two tours in Vietnam. The first during 1968/1969 as the unit maintenance officer in the 170 AHC located on the "Christmas Tree" at Camp Holloway. The Tree was just across the ravine from the AF base outside of Pleiku. We watched the Pedros fly around the base wondering how the blades kept from hitting each other. And yes, there was that swishing sound.

During my tour, we hosted an AF unit. I think their call sign was Hornets. They flew twin GE engine Hueys. Seems to me I remember their senior NCO was an E-9 and their crew chiefs were E-7s. Some of their pilots were LTCs and MAJs. At first some mumbled about giving up one of our hangar bays. But that ended quickly because the AF people freely shared their incredible expertise and experience. Their presence raised our level of professionalism and maintenance.

Much later in my career the Army assigned me to my first real assignment in my secondary specialty, Procurement. I was assigned to the Defense Logistics Agency, specifically the Defense Contract Management Command, Hartford, CT. As a Major my boss was an AF Colonel. He sent me out to Kaman Aerospace to see what they were doing to fix the problems with the new Cobra composite rotor blades, and later, when the Navy issued a contract to reopen the SH2F production line. It had been closed for eight years. Given the challenges for the contractor and the importance to the Navy, the Colonel assigned me permanently as the Plant Commander. I met Charles Kaman and became familiar with all their helicopters. As a side note, Kaman was one of the bidders on the contract that was won by Bell to build the UH-1.

Danny L Abbott Life member

I just finished reading the article on the H-43 Huskie. Boy, does that bring back memories of 57 years ago, November-December 1964.

Another pilot and I were flying a CH-37B Mojave working for the Air Force. We would sit in the aircraft until we heard a Ryan Fire Bee was on the way back from the North. They would pop a giant parachute out west of DaNang Air Base. We would pick it up and sling it back to DaNang. They would put it under the wing of a

C-130 and go back where it came from.

But, back to the H-43 Huskie, I first saw a Huskie in the summer of 1963. The Marines came to Ft. Bragg, N.C. with maybe two. They must have been A-Models. I know I talked to one of the pilots; he said it barely hovered with two people on board. That was so true with many helicopters back then.

Now, back to Vietnam, I don't remember any of the pilots I talked to at Da Nang. I met them at the Doom. After considerable conversation, one of the pilots invited me to ride in the H-43. He showed me what a good auto rotation aircraft it was. You barely had to pull any pitch at the touchdown. Naturally, I invited him for a ride in the CH-37. He could not believe the size of the aircraft when I put him in the right seat and let him take it around the pattern a couple of times. He really could not believe that it had two R2800 engines that weighed 5,000 pounds each and a gross weight of 32,000 pounds.

Again, I enjoyed the article-just an example of what we had to work with back then. Now the S-92 will climb out at a gross weight of 500 feet per minute on one engine. I wish I wasn't 86 years old and could fly again. I enjoyed my 35 years and 17,000 hours and only one engine failure.

**Jerry (Budda) Meador
CWO U.S. Army (Retired)**

Aviator Staff Recognized at Charlotte Reunion

One of the really important and overdue things which occurred at the Charlotte Reunion was the recognition of the outstanding work of the staff of our magazine by the current Executive Council of the VHPA. Plaques were presented in honor of the Staff; Tom Kirk, Managing Editor, Tom Hirschler, Editor and Kay Taylor, Art Director, at the Final Banquet. It was a tribute long overdue.

Tom took over the publication of the Aviator when David Adams passed away and he and his cohorts raised the bar. Our magazine, The VHPA Aviator, has never been better. If you have the opportunity to thank each and every one of them for their fine work and tireless efforts on behalf of our organization, please don't hesitate to do so.

A proud and indebted VHPA Member

Your issue covering the history of the H-43 Pedro in Vietnam brought me back to January 21, 1969. The 218st AHC had inserted a few RECONDO School patrols in the hills surrounding Nha Trang when one got in a lot of trouble. The first aircraft in was maneuvering into position to lower a McGuire rig when a burst of AK-47 fire fatally wounded the Recovery Sergeant, SSG Marvin Geis. The second aircraft in also shot out of the area and a Pedro arrived on the scene, lowered his hoist from treetop level maybe 150' above the ground and extracted the severely wounded Marine team member. Departing the AO the Pedro pilot said something like "That wasn't so hard," followed by "I'm landing here in this rice paddy; I need a bit of help." It seems he had more bullet holes than he had blades and one of them cost him all of his oil. A few more aircraft later we had the PZ cleared and I never got the chance to shake that pilot's hand, but I did talk to the extracted Marine years later and he asked me pass along his gratitude as well. Those Air Force Pedro pilots were all right.

Jeff Murray Life member
Wolf Pack 33
281st AHC, 1968-69

I just received this month's issue of the VHPA Newsletter. On page five I found Tom Damson's short article about the Randall M-18 Survival Knife that he lost in Vietnam.

It was an interesting story as I also carried a Randall Attack Survival knife in Vietnam, however, rather than hang it from the armored seat (that is where I carried the pouch of magazines for my Thompson - story for a different day), I kept it in one of the large pockets of my flight suit.



That knife also accompanied me when I flew the bush in Alaska and became a good faithful companion. I

have had several offers to buy it, but have promised it to my son. Tom's story brought back several fond memories of friends and missions.

CW2 Stephen Cover Longknife 23 67-68

An Open Letter to the Membership

After the Kansas City reunion, we entered uncharted territory when the pandemic hit. There was no SOP and the Executive Council had to make some challenging decisions regarding contracts, the Denver reunion, and a host of other issues. Uppermost at all times for us was, "What is in the best interests and welfare of our members?" I also faced a personal challenge when I was diagnosed with Medullary Thyroid Cancer last Fall and was operated on in December. The good news is that follow-up scans and blood tests indicate (at least for right now) that the surgeons got it all.

My six years on the Executive Council have been very rewarding, and I want to thank all of you for your support, understanding, flexibility, and forgiveness. All I knew was that I had to put all my heart and soul into the effort with the responsibility you had entrusted to me. I thank you for the honor and the privilege of serving you and the association I love.

Art Jacobs, Past President VHPA

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Some Minimums Apply.

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Tampa Marriott Water Street

May 26th - May 29th



Tampa Marriott Water Street Hotel & Marina

505 Water Street, Tampa, Florida

\$129 + tax over these dates of 26 May – 29 May, 2022 **BASED ON AVAILABILITY**
(VHPA room rate availability limited pre & post reunion dates)

Cutoff date for VHPA hotel rate is 25 April, 2022

Hotel reservation information will be released at a later date.

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

VHPA 2022 PRELIMINARY REUNION SCHEDULE

Thursday 26 May	Friday 27 May	Saturday 28 May	Sunday 29 May
Mini Reunions	Golf	Gold Star Breakfast	Memorial Service
Vendor Room	Vendor Room	Quilters Show & Tell	Business Meeting
Welcome Reception	Dinner Cruise	Vendor Room	Spouse Event
			Closing Banquet

StarShip Dinner Cruise



Set sail on the waterways of Tampa Bay with Yacht StarShip and delight in a different kind of dining experience! Our members can expect unmatched service, exquisite views and a delicious, freshly-prepared dining experience. Enjoy stunning sunsets, bright city lights of Downtown Tampa, breathtaking views, and entertainment as you sip and savor your way through dinner and cocktails.

J.C. Newman Cigar Company Tour

Built in 1910, El Reloj was considered to be the largest and finest cigar factory in the world. VHPA Guests will enjoy a private 75-minute tour of Tampa's last operating cigar factory. Inside the iconic red brick exterior, the Newman family rolls cigars in El Reloj just like they have been doing for more than a century using traditional handcrafted techniques and antique, hand-operated machines that VHPA guests will get to see firsthand. Enjoy the onsite museum and cigars will be available for purchase.



American Victory Ship and Museum



One of the country's most historic icons, AmVic was built in 1945 in only 55 days and is now one of only 4 fully-functioning vessels in the USA having served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Inside the steel, the stories of those who served so bravely are shared, rare photographs, uniforms, medals and precious documents. VHPA Guests can walk the planks and witness three level cargo holds, radio and gyro rooms, hospital, galley, weaponry, steering stations, flying bridge, signaling equipment, wheelhouse, mess halls, crew cabins, lifeboats, cargo equipment and the engine room.

Water Taxi Tampa History Tour

This tour takes our members step by step through the evolution of Tampa, as you cruise along the waters, history unfolds all around you. Guides will have little known facts about Tampa to share on this private VHPA tour. Our members will see waterfront features like museums, shipyards, and million dollar homes. Also, a sight of the Pirate ship, Gabriella, up close and learn about Tampa pirate history, how Tampa became a city, and who made it happen.



Patriotism Is Not Just a Word

By William Cohen

How does one define the word patriot? The Meriam Webster Dictionary defines the word patriot as a person who vigorously supports his/her country and is prepared to defend it against enemies, both foreign and domestic. No person can be more patriotic than the brave men and women who are willing to serve in our armed forces, risking their lives for our flag and our country.

I think many of you would know the Vietnam War ended on the 30th of April in 1975.

**Yes, time does pass.
Memories fade.
What is left is the story.
Words on paper.
Images on film.**

When you are lucky, really really lucky, something more remains. Young men are flying into dangerous skies. Sadly, many did not return. Those lucky enough to return, spent their tour in Vietnam defending America; like so many airmen before, and after Vietnam.

Now why am I writing this? It all starts with my dad, and ends with my wife Anne and our sons Max & Julien.

My father served in WW2 enlisting in the Army the day after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Dad was 24 when he enlisted. After basic training, he was sent to Camden, New Jersey to be trained in the repair and operation of a new technology developed by RCA called ground to air radar. (GTAR and top secret at the time). After completing the 8-week course in Camden dad was sent to Melbourne, Australia on a troop ship with 3,000 soldiers (the 32nd Division) to train there for an invasion of an unknown



Bertram "Ervin" Irving Cohen

island in the Pacific.

When Dad arrived in Australia, he had no practical experience using this new ground to air radar, so he was sent to northern Australia about 220 miles southeast of Darwin. At the time the Japanese were sending submarines to evaluate possible locations for an invasion of Australia.

Well dad did learn how to use his radar, and his team was responsible for tracking several mini subs landing small groups of Japanese sailors to test the depth of certain bays that might be suitable for an invasion. In all, some thirteen Japanese sailors were captured and a few more than that died for the emperor trying to get back to the subs that brought them too close to shore.

No invasion of Australia was ever attempted, and maybe in some small part due to Dad's team of Americans, Australians and aboriginals relying on a technology developed by RCA in Camden, New Jersey.

Some 16 weeks later Dad found out he would be sent to the island of New Guinea to support the Australian 7th Division under the command of Major General George Alan Vasey and the US 32 Division under the command of Major General Edwin F. Harding. Throughout the New Guinea campaign, the Australians did a lot of the heavy lifting, liberating Gona on the 7th of December 1942 while Buna fell to the US 32nd Division on the 9th of January 1943.

Dad often spoke about his time in Australia but never spoke about what he saw and experienced in New Guinea until I was 28. On a fishing trip with a group of close friends, in Manitoba, after we downed a bottle of single malt whiskey Dad told us about Buna and what he experienced in December & January of 1943. To quote my father, the innocence of youth lost forever.

After the conflict, Dad was posted on a cliff along the eastern shore of New Guinea.

His job was to report movement of enemy aircraft and ships in the Bismarck and Solomon seas to the East & the Coral Sea and Torres Strait to the south. Dad spent the rest of the war with twelve men fighting dysentery, malaria, beriberi, dingo fever, poisonous frogs, & poisonous snakes. While they reported the movement of aircraft & ships in the area, unknown to Dad after the Battle of the Coral Sea most of the contacts were ours. He would receive on occasion a report back that his observations were either CC (Combatant Contact) or NCC (Noncombatant Contact)

Thankfully Doctor J. Robert Oppenheimer invented the Atomic Bomb and President Truman had the courage to use it ending the war. 4 Months later Dad returned home one evening unannounced to his parents in Paterson, New Jersey.

Dad married Mom in 1948 and my sister Gail was born in 49, I followed her in 53 and my little sister Diane was born in 56. Every year, for as long as I can remember we always attended the July 4th parade on Market Street in Paterson. Dad would wear the same cover he wore during the war. When the honor guard would pass with the stars and stripes, Dad would jump out of his folding aluminum beach chair, snap to attention with the rest of the veterans attending the parade and salute the flag. All of us together my sisters Gail, Diane and I would also salute, not really aware of the price Dad and our veterans paid so we might remain free.

Now, moving forward to March of 1965 and the start of the Vietnam war. Soldiers in Vietnam served, as all soldiers do, with honor and dignity, with a caring love and respect for each other & for flag and country. Somehow, sadly, many people here at home forgot to give the proper respect to soldiers, sailors and airmen serving in that conflict. When many of you returned there were no parades, no kind words of support, not even a thank you for your service. This bothered me greatly at the time and does even today when I consider you all to be no different than any other veteran from any war prior to or since Vietnam.

What happened? To respect anything, our elders, our parents, teachers, veterans, strangers in the street, our flag. To give respect, you have to learn respect. Somehow, we have to teach and occasionally reteach these values to the next generation.

I am a lucky man. When I go with my sons to a sporting event, when they play our anthem, we snap to attention with our hands over our hearts. No kneeling in this family.

On July 4th when my sons, Max & Julien were young, we would go down to Market Street in Paterson, standing in the same spot I stood with Dad, and when Old Glory passed, we stood there with our hands on our hearts and with a tear in our eyes thankful for the country we live in, a gift to us from my father & US veterans, and yes without the slightest reservation a gift from all of you.

My gift for the VHPA scholarship outreach is a method to thank you all so much for your service to our country. You are American Patriots, heroes, to the last man.



I met Bill Cohen over forty years ago. He wished to learn how to fly a helicopter. He achieved that goal, because he was an excellent student from the start of our association. In addition, we became friends. Our paths diverged over time, but a few years back he came to my house to catch up. Shortly thereafter, he asked about donating to the VHPA. I told him of our scholarship support for descendants of VHPA members. He donated \$10,000 in each of the next two years.

Bill was denied the opportunity to join the military due to a disqualifying medical issue (although he tried twice). It did not, however, keep him from his goal of flying. He has been doing so for over forty accident-free years and is dual rated. He has nearly completed the training for multi-engine rating as well.

Bill was honored at our recent reunion for his generosity. To Bill it is more a demonstration of appreciation of the pilots from the Vietnam war and a reflection of his patriotism. I am privileged to call him a friend.

~ Tom Kirk

A COMBAT EMERGENCY ON LZ NEVILLE

By Frank Buzzard

Our 101st Chinook crew had been flying resupply missions all day in support of the 3rd Marine Division conducting Operation Dewey Canyon in northern I Corps. It is nearly dusk on 28 February 1969 and time to refuel our CH-47B in preparation for the next day's missions. I hover over to the refueling area at Vandergrift Combat Base-Vandy-and our crew starts pumping JP4 into our fuel tanks. I call our company operations on the radio and tell them our status, "Varsity 434 refueling at Vandy POL." An acronym for Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants, and a source of much needed jet fuel for our thirsty Chinooks. Varsity Ops replies, "Varsity 434, we have an immediate Combat Emergency resupply at LZ (Landing Zone) Neville. They are under attack by NVA and require food, water, ammo, and medical evacuation of their wounded. You and Streid

(CW2 Gary "Strange" Streid) meet at the Log (Logistics) pad and take two slings loads to Neville. You will be escorted by two Marine Huey gunships. Do you copy, over?" I reply, "Varsity 434 copies, over."

I look at my fellow pilot, CW3 Frank Bonn, who puts his finger on the map at the far northwest corner of South Vietnam and says, "LZ Neville."

I call Gary Streid on the radio who is also refueling nearby and tell him I will meet him at the Log pad. The weather is low cloud ceiling at Vandy, but we had been flying sling loads of supplies west of the abandoned Khe Sanh airstrip and knew the cloud layer ended near the Laotian border about 25 miles west of Vandy and we could climb above the clouds and turn north to LZ Neville. I contacted the Marine gunships and explained our plan. Our Marine

LZ Neville from the cockpit.



gun team concurred and said he would meet us at the logistics pad.

Frank Bonn and I alternated flying duties and it was my turn to fly this one. A short hop over to the Vandy Log Pad and I hover over a 'water buffalo' trailer holding 400 gallons of water with a second sling of food boxes of C rations attached below the trailer. The ground crew hooks it up and I lift it off the ground, power check, and all good, so I take off to the west. Gary Streid comes in behind me in his Chinook and hooks up a ten-thousand-pound sling load of mostly ammo-Class Five-and medical supplies. We meet the two Marine gunships and climb up just under the base of the clouds as a flight of four head-

burger Hill in the Ashau Valley later in May 1969.

About five miles west of Khe Sanh the low cloud bank ends and our combat emergency flight of four choppers climb together above the cloud deck and turn north to LZ Neville. LZ Neville is a Marine artillery base with 105 mm howitzers to provide fire support to Marines fighting an NVA regiment attacking them from the west. LZ Neville sits one klick (a klick is one kilometer or 1000 meters on our tactical maps) south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating South and North Vietnam and two klicks east of the border with Laos. All of us are well-aware that this is real "Injun Country"! About ten miles south of LZ Neville we contact the Marines and ask

for a situation report and tell them we are an inbound flight of two Army Chinooks. The Marine air controller tells us to approach from the northwest and that they are taking mortar fire and small arms fire from the ridgeline due west of the LZ. He gives the Marine Huey gunships enemy coordinates so they can provide suppressive fire on this ridgeline as we deliver the supplies.

This is my first time to land at LZ Neville.

I now see a very nar-



Varsity Pilots at Vandy.

row ridgeline running south to north with two thirds of the LZ having a 1000 foot vertical cliff on three sides, the west, north, and east side. There are howitzers, bunkers, and fighting holes everywhere we look. The narrow ridge is not large enough to land our Chinook, so we begin our approach to land the food and water trailer on the small logistics pad where the Marines have popped smoke. The Marine Huey gunships have broken off and start their rocket and machine gun strafing run on the suspected enemy positions. I glance at them doing their first run, but now concentrate on my approach and landing. Our Chinook is first in while Gary Streid and crew orbit above the LZ in his Chinook until we clear the LZ. I come to a hover above the smoke and set the food down first, then

ing west along old Highway 9 that runs from the coast at Quang Tri to Khe Sanh, and on west into Laos. We follow the Song Thach Han river and Highway 9 west from Vandy toward Khe Sanh where the river turns south with Khe Sanh and the old air strip sitting on the west side of the river valley high above the river valley floor. We pass over the abandoned Marine base that figured so prominently in the hard-fought siege of Khe Sanh a year earlier and the country-wide Tet Offensive of February 1968. Khe Sanh looks so lonely and desolate as we pass over it at about five hundred feet AGL (Above Ground Level). I think why do we fight so hard for territory and abandon it later? Little did I know then how that thought would come back to me during the 101st costly battle for Ham-

move to the right to set down the water trailer. Our Flight Engineer (FE) is my eyes on the sling load. He lies on the floor looking out the two foot by two foot "hell hole" opening in the floor above the cargo hook located in the center of all Chinooks. I lower the Chinook a little more and the FE releases the sling doughnut from our cargo hook.

I have told the Marine air controller that I would medevac the wounded, so I hover a little farther to the right of the sling load. The LZ is so small that I can only put the rear wheels on the ground with most of the Chinook hanging over the 1000-foot vertical cliff on the west side of the LZ. We have a five-person crew—two pilots, our FE watching the load, a crew chief, and a door gunner, each manning an M-60 machine gun in the port and starboard windows behind the cockpit.

The FE lowers the rear ramp and the entire crew helps the scrambling Marines load the wounded aboard. Suddenly, the FE alerts all of us that we are taking incoming mortar fire. I see one explode on top of a bunker to my left about 30 meters away. I tell the FE over the intercom that all five of us can hear, "Tell me when all the wounded are loaded, and the ramp is up!" I concentrate on flying the Chinook with both aft wheels still on the ground. All of us know that if a mortar hits our rotors or fuselage it is game over as we crash over the side of the 1000-foot cliff into the jungle below.

About 45 seconds later that seemed like a lifetime, and several more mortar round explosions, the FE yells, "RAMP UP!" I add power, drop the nose, and accelerate northwest quickly away from Neville. Climbing north, I ask, "How many wounded are aboard, chief?" He answers about 10-12 wounded and several body bags with dead Marines. I am in a climbing right-hand turn to orbit the LZ while Gary Streid takes in his load of ammo. I call Gary on the radio and tell him to approach from the east to avoid ground fire from the west of the LZ. I tell him, "I have all the wounded. We took mortar fire dropping the load and picking up the wounded. Don't dilly-dally in the LZ!" Gary replies, "Copy." I watch his Chinook approach from the east. He flares slightly, the load swings forward touching down right on the smoke, his FE instantly releases the load, and without a pause the Chinook noses down climbing away from LZ Neville in a climbing right turn. It was a thing of beauty! Streid and his crew had not spent more than five seconds in the LZ.

We climbed about 1500 feet above the LZ. It is a few minutes after sunset and getting dark. The Marine gun-

ships head back to Vandy, and we thank them for their support. The Marines on LZ Neville thank us profusely. They had not had a chopper resupply for five to six days as their LZ had been in the clouds. They had been under constant attack from the NVA. They were low on food, water, ammo, and their wounded needing medevac. Our 101st Army Chinooks were a welcome sight indeed. I tell the Marine air controller that we were glad to help our Marine brothers and would be back tomorrow.

I call Gary in the other ship and ask him to come up on our 101st Varsity radio frequency. I then tell him I need to get our wounded to major medical support, and I needed to head to Quang Tri hospital instead of going back to Vandy. He concurs and we both turn east flying above the clouds for our 20-minute flight to Quang Tri.

Frank Bonn takes over the flying to give me a break. I look back toward our crew in the back and give them a thumbs up—well done. I feel chills down my spine as I look at the body bags on the floor holding our dead Marines and stretchers holding wounded Marines.

We call Quang Tri for a weather report. It is not good. A 500-foot ceiling and light to moderate rain at the airfield. It means a night instrument approach to the airport. I call Quang Tri hospital which is at the north end of the runway and ask for assistance off-loading the wounded immediately after landing. I tell them we will be there in about 20 minutes. Frank Bonn and I exchange a nod and an unspoken well-done thought.

A young Marine holding his IV bottle up in one hand comes into the short hallway into the cockpit. With teary eyes, he looks at both of us and mouths, "Thank You" above the noise of the forward transmission and forward rotor directly above his head. I mouth back with tears in my eyes thinking about dead and wounded Marines in the back, "You are welcome. Glad we could help."

As Frank Bonn heads due east, a 090 heading on our gyrocompass, I realize I no longer see Gary Streid and his Chinook above the clouds. We press on toward Quang Tri flying above the cloud deck at about 5000 feet AGL. I call Quang Tri approach control and request a GCA (Ground Controlled Approach) to Quang Tri. The GCA ground controller has two radar antennae at the end of the runway at Quang Tri. One tells him our vertical flight path and the other tells him our horizontal flight path. He can then relay to us whether we are above or below the vertical flight path and left or right of the horizontal flight path on final approach. We adjust our descent rate and heading to line up on the runway and land when we break out of

the clouds. I tell them I am about 20 miles west of Quang Tri at 5000 feet and VFR (Visual Flight Rules) above the clouds. I request radar contact confirmation.

Quang Tri approach says they don't see us on radar west of them. I take over flying from Frank. Quang Tri approach asks me to turn left for radar identification. I do it. He does not see me yet and requests a right turn for identification. I turn to the right. I am wondering why he doesn't see me when I hear, "Varsity 434 radar contact. Turn to 180 degree heading and expedite!" I do so and increase speed to 150 knots heading due south. I am suspicious of the ground controller's concerned response, so I look up at our backup magnetic compass to compare its reading to our gyrocompass heading.

to South Vietnamese airspace without incident. Whew!

Quang Tri GCA brings us around and I start our instrument approach landing to the north. Frank Bonn handles the radios and monitors my heading and descent rate. I fly the flight instruments and Frank will take over when we break out of the clouds and land. We quickly enter the clouds and rain during descent. GCA does a great job guiding me down. GCA is very calm and patient while telling me that I am well above glide slope about 2/3rds of the way out from the runway. I increase rate of descent and carefully converge back to the glide slope. About 300 feet above the ground Frank sees the runway and says, "I have the aircraft." He takes control,

lands us, and taxis to the hospital area. The hospital team is waiting and offloads our Marines quickly into the hospital.

Gary Streid had landed about 10 minutes ahead of us and we get our Chinooks refueled, find a place to spend the night, and both crews fall exhausted onto Army cots. Next morning, we are all up at daylight, fire up our two Varsity Chi-

Frank Buzzard receives DFC from 101st CG Melvin Zais for LZ Neville CE.



Yikes!! I see the magnetic compass reading 140 degrees while the gyrocompass reads 180. The gyrocompass had drifted during our flight. When the gyrocompass told me I was heading east, I was actually headed 40 degrees farther north than my expected east heading. It happens sometimes. Combat flying in helicopters in Vietnam creates a lot of dust. Dust in the gyrocompass can cause the gyro to precess and give an erroneous heading. That means during our flight from LZ Neville toward Quang Tri, I was flying NE instead of due east and had drifted over the border into North Vietnam! Of course, we did not know this since we could not see the ground because of the clouds. Thankfully, in a few minutes we had returned

nooks, and head back to Vandergrift Combat Base. We spend the next two weeks flying and living with our Marines at Vandy fighting a major offensive battle all over the area. All three of our 101st Chinook companies—A Company "Pachyderms", B Company "Varsity", and C Company "Playtex"—rotated four Chinooks and crews to Vandergrift Combat Base with continuous 101st Army Aviation support to the 3rd Marine Division during operation Dewey Canyon, January 22-March 18, 1969. A fine example of Army and Marine cooperation in Vietnam. We did well and had a real feeling of accomplishment. Tough flying in difficult weather, but rewarding with our well trained Chinook crews excelling.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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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

Despite covid and its multiple variants, the Alamo Chapter in San Antonio, TX is alive and well and going strong. Several members and their wives/significant others had a great time at the Charlotte reunion. Old friendships were renewed, new friendships made, and memories exchanged about some that are no longer with us. It was noted that there are fewer of us each year.

On 10 September, the chapter Executive Council met, conducted a general membership business meeting, and concluded with a fantastic dinner with spouses and guests. Over 50 folks attended the dinner. The Executive Council affirmed 2022 chapter officers. They are: President, Dale Stout; Vice President, Chip Brown; Treasurer, Chic Carter; Secretary, Mike Clark; Senior Member at Large, Tim Worley; Mid-Term Member at Large, Jim Boykin; Junior Member at Large, Ron Spearman; Immediate Past President: Ray Vaske. The council received and approved new Life Member Ron Richtsmeier's application for membership.

The council also began early planning for and will establish coordina-



General Business Meeting Dinner.



VHPA Reunion.

tion with national as the Alamo Chapter will be the host chapter for the 2023 VHPA reunion, which will be held in San Antonio, 2-5 July

2023.

San Antonio is a military town. Almost all restaurants and other commercial enterprises offer a 10-20% discount to military, active or retired. This includes spouses.

There are so many activities that can be scheduled for attendees to choose from that it would take months for you to have the opportunity to enjoy them all. The Alamo Chapter is really looking forward to working with national to make the 2023 reunion an event to remember.

The Chapter will participate in Wreaths Over America in San Antonio, which is scheduled on 18 December this year. Chapter members will volunteer to lay the wreaths and to contribute to the program. The Chapter will attempt to identify graves where VHPA helicopter pilots and Alamo Chapter members could be honored.

On another note, the chapter continues support of the Huey 369 project, and the Vietnam Archives Project at Texas Tech. \$1,000 was donated to the VAP.

The chapter continues to move forward with President Ray Vaske flying left seat. We are looking forward to 2022 under the leadership of President-Elect Dale Stout. Visit us at our web site: <http://vhpa-alamo.com/> for more information about the Alamo Chapter.

Until next time, stay happy and healthy.

Until next time, stay happy and healthy.

Mike Clark, Chapter Secretary

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



ALASKA CHAPTER

Finally, we have a major landmark, a bridge named in honor of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots! A three-year effort initiated by Representative Cathy Tilton, has been signed by the Governor of Alaska, Governor Dunleavy, HB34 naming the Matanuska River Bridge the Vietnam Helicopter Memorial Bridge. It is a highly traveled bridge between two of our larger cities in Alaska and provides an historical legacy to the Helicopter war and all the crews and pilots that served. A thank you goes out to Representative and Chapter member, Laddie Shaw, for his dedication and efforts in moving the bill forward through the political maze.

Our annual picnic was held on the 25th day of August with beautiful blue skies and a comfortable 68 degrees. A big thank you to the Palmer American Legion Post #15 for allowing us the use of their area for the 4th year. With about 60 folks in attendance, including State Representatives who co-sponsored the bill, the picnic was a highlight of our Chapter and a wonderful event. Unknown to us, the signs to be placed for the Memorial were already made and the Governor unveiled them after the signing! The next day they were installed.

Although the word Crew was omitted for ridiculous reasons, as far as our Chapter is concerned, this Memorial is all encompassing and represents Crew Members as well as Pilots. We currently have many Associate Members who were crew, and it is a pleasure to have them participate fully in all we do as a Chapter.



Governor Dunleavy signing.



Sign with most of the group.



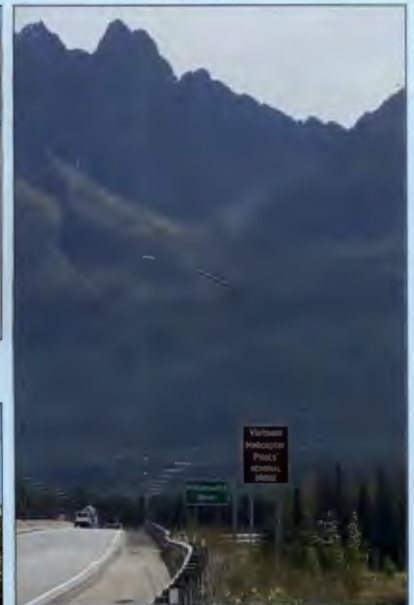
Representatives Laddie Shaw, Cathy Tilton, Lynn Kile and Governor with Co-sponsors.



Halibut fishing crew with catch.



Al Romaszewski and Lynn Kile with sign.



Sign on the Bridge over looking Gold Star Peak.

Since the last edition of the Aviator, we also had our annual Halibut fishing trip. It was held August 2nd and seven members with guests attacked the fish. We have now expanded the event and in the future, it will be a fund raiser for our Chapter. The event will include an evening campfire dinner and a quick breakfast on the way to the boat the next morning. Boat Captain Dan Retzinger (Associate Chapter Member) and J&J Campground provides us with a great experience each year honoring

those who served. This year was no exception as it was a small but fun experience.

There is Pride knowing WE FLEW

Lynn Kile
Alaska Chapter

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

AMERICAN HUEY CHAPTER

Our most recent flying event was held at the Howard County (Indiana) Vietnam Veterans Organization near Kokomo, IN. According to the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Reunion website: "...the officers and members were trying to decide what project the organization could do next." Someone said half-jokingly, "Lets have a hog roast for Vietnam Veterans." Everybody agreed and that was the beginning of the now famous Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion held for the last 39 years. The reunion is the oldest annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion in the country and most say by far the best! The organization owns 37 acres eight miles east of Kokomo, IN on State Road 26. Our nickname for our property is the Healing Fields. Many veterans have found themselves on our property. We are open 12 months a year, and have over 2500 members nationwide, which include Vietnam and Sandbox Veterans. As of 2020 our yearly Reunion was changed from four days to a week-long and is for ALL Veterans.

As part of that Annual reunion, we pitch our Event tents at the neighboring Todd and Claudia Ead Farm to offer membership flights to those veterans and their families who attend the Reunion. Those flights are full of "first-time flying in a Huey since Vietnam" Veterans and their families as well as many "frequent Flyers" who attend the Kokomo event...and take their annual Vietnam Huey Flight.

The American Huey 369 Organization has the mission statement which reads in part "...formed for the specific purpose of Preservation, Education and Paying Tribute to ALL Veterans and Patriots." In that light, several classes of local 5th Grade School children were bussed to the Landing Zone on Friday afternoon for review of the Hueys to include question and answer sessions with the crews who flew the aircraft. This Field Trip for the students has become an annual event for the school during the Kokomo Reunion.

As this is written, only two more flying events remain this year: the world-famous, last ever, Knob Creek Kentucky Machine Gun Shoot and a



Photo by Kae Walker.



Photo Courtesy Howard County Vietnam Veterans Website.

Veteran's event in Lafayette, IN, on Veteran's Day. After that, it's Annual Inspections in early Spring and on to the 2022 flying season. Come to one of our events, they are open to all. You won't regret it.

Phil Marshall



Photo by Kae Walker.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA NORTH CHAPTER

Four members and three spouses got together at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum on 24 SEP. Unfortunately, a number of members had to cancel at the last minute due to various personal issues.



The museum is located on the grounds of Micke Grove County Park, in Lodi, CA. This museum covers 18 acres, with about six historical buildings and eight large display buildings. The museum features the history of San Joaquin County. Caterpillar and Holt tractor companies started here. Also, it was the home of Sharpe Army Depot, which was used to prepare aircraft for shipment to Vietnam. There are lots of farming equipment displays. After an hour and a half, we had seen only about 50% of the museum, but hunger took over and we left for Al Doucette's favorite Mexican Restaurant in Stockton. Al lives in Stockton with his wife Marilyn. Miguel's Mexican Restaurant has been around for over 45 years. Delicious food, very nice staff, with interesting atmosphere!

We got a lot of historical background from Ken Lake's wife, Leslie. Leslie was born in Lodi and her grandfather was the ranch foreman for Mr. Micke. When Micke died, he left his ranch to the county, which turned it into Micke Grove Park. The ranch was mostly grape vineyards, but has a grove of beautiful old redwood trees, hence the name. Leslie pointed out pictures of the Micke home, which she remembers visiting as a child. When we passed a display of tire retreading equipment, she also recalled that her father worked there for many years and often wondered what he really did. Now she knows!

Ed Morris was also interested in the many old tractors on display. He owns a 1955 John Deere Model 40U. Most John Deeres are green and are built for use in agriculture, except for those made for industrial uses which are yellow. His doesn't look too pretty, but he drives it on 25, 35, and 120 mile (two day) tractor rides several times a year. Then he trailers it from a ranch just north of Woodland, CA (where it is stored) to his ranch near Kelseyville in Lake County every spring to disc much of the hills of his 39 acres, for fire protection. Not too bad for a 66-year old tractor, not to mention the age of the driver!

I spotted a picture of Sharpe Army Depot, which was located in San Joaquin County. It opened in 1942 and served as a major supply hub for WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. That picture showed a U6, OH-13, H-19, and CH-21 being prepared for shipment to Vietnam. In 1965, the nation called upon Sharpe during the Southeast Asia conflict. Hundreds of Army aircraft, both fixed-wing and helicopters were arriving at Sharpe to get ready for shipment overseas. Twenty-four hour operations began



Our Group at Lunch.



Ed's Tractor plowing on his ranch.



An undated (circa 1960s?) aerial view looking northeast at Sharpe AAF (courtesy of Rex Ricks, enhanced by Bill Grasha), showing an over flight by 19 UH-1 Huey helicopters.

The hangar at bottom-right had an attached control tower.

Parked around the hangar were five fixed-wing aircraft (including what appears to be a C-47), as well as 16 more helicopters.

and Sharpe became the major pipeline for supplies moving westward to Southeast Asia. I found this picture on-line and thought it might be of interest to our readers.

Ed Morris mentioned that his brother-in-law's father was a pilot and the commander of Sharpe Army Depot, before he retired as an LTC. Small world!

It's been slow going for the chapter since the Covid mess, but we're hoping to get back together again in late October someplace, probably for another BBQ at LZ Fritz.

For more pictures, take a look at our website: www.vhpaccn.org

Dave Anderson, Secretary, VHPA-CCN

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter found different ways to stay active as the summer came to an end. On August 4th, Mark Benjamin hosted another monthly gathering at the Hotel Indigo in Traverse City and filed this AAR: Conversation finally came around to the invasion of Cambodia and attempts to find the elusive COSVAN. Turns out, most were involved in one way or another except Bob Matlis, Bart Halliday, and Ron Hofmeister who were tour complete before any of this happened. Another nice day on the deck.



August 4th Traverse City attendees: : L-R Walter Topp, Bart Halliday, Bob Matlis, Sandy McLeod, Pat Mullen, and Mark Benjamin. Not pictured were Paul Fitzsimons, Don Pond, and Ron Hofmeister.



Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Ever since the neglected Welcome Home Vietnam

Veterans Memorial in Traverse City was restored through efforts of veterans lead by Mark Benjamin representing the Michigan Chapter VHPA, active Coast Guard volunteers, and the Traverse City Parks Department it continues to need constant attention. Each Thursday morning at 0730 a group of veterans gather to water, weed, and mow the area around the monument. The Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Memorial photo shows the results from August 12th.



Maple Grove L-R Bob Rich, Dave James, Jerry Wright.



Dave James & Mark Benjamin at Mason Aviation Day.

On August 21st Vice President Dave James and Mark Benjamin represented our Michigan Chapter in Mason. Dave wrote up the following AAR: Mason Aviation Day was a moderate success, Mark Benjamin and I set up around 8:15 but being an off year, the crowd was light. There were about 50 airplanes that flew in and maybe 1000 people for the whole day. We packed up and went to lunch at 13:00 hrs. I was able to give a chapter application to a crew member who worked and flew in H-37s and H-47s. All things considered it was very enjoyable.

On September 12th the Michigan Chapter was again represented by volunteers at the Maple Grove Airport, Fowlerville. This was the 4th year the chapter participated in the fly-in breakfast. This event has one of the larger helicopter displays in the state. Attending this year were four Robinson R-22 & R-44s from



Eagle Helicycle



Helicopters at Maple Grove Fly-In.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Helicopter Air Specialty of Fowlerville, Bell 47G, 2021 Bell Jet Ranger X, Sikorsky S-61n from Construction Helicopters of Howell Mi. and everyone's favorite, the single-seat Helicycle-Eagle with Solar T62 turbine engine. The Michigan Chapter members attending were Dave James, Jerry Wright, & Bob Rich. We spoke to a number of Vietnam veterans along with other veterans. Dennis Neubacher, long-time Metro Detroit Traffic Reporter, stopped by to talk with us about traffic helicopter adventures. We also spoke with the crew of the S-61N & Helicycle which relived insights of Gulf War and Afghanistan flying. It was a great fly-in & pancake breakfast experience.

On September 14th the southern contingent of the Michigan Chapter toured the Yankee Air Museum located at the Willow Run Airport in Belleville, MI. Willow Run is the Ford Motor Company site where over 8000 B-25 bombers were built during World War II. Ford was able to build one B-25 every 45 minutes. The Yankee Air Museum has a wide array of static display aircraft and a flyable, B-17, C-47, B-25, Ford Trimotor and Huey UH-1H. If you are ever in the Detroit area, we encourage you to visit the museum. Special thanks go to Bob Gal-



Yankee Air Museum flyable B-25



Yankee Air Museum flyable B-25



Yankee Air Museum attendees: Bottom row L to R Randy and Shelia Maltby, Bob and Lee Gallant and Bob Rich, Back row L to R are Bill Andrew, Ken Hand, Glen Veno, Dave James and Glenn Youngstedt.

lant and Glen Veno for making the arrangements for our visit.

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

Submitted by Rich Deer, President

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

It was a hot and steamy last day of July 2021, when NAVHPA Chapter President Marshall Eubanks, member Don Bisson and Chapter Secretary Sam Maki and their wives headed out to attend the VHPA Reunion in Charlotte, NC in their RVs. Being the great navigators that they are, they decided to go through Chattanooga, TN and down to Atlanta, then on to Ft. Mill, SC where they would be camping. The "normal" route, from our Huntsville, AL area, would be to go through Birmingham to Atlanta. "No Sir," they said. "This new route would be simple and easy." Once they got to Chattanooga, life came to a halt. They lost about an hour and half just trying to get to I-75 south to Atlanta. Then, as they got to the I-285 Loop, there was another slow down. The Eubanks' decided to go straight through to the other side of Knoxville and camp. The Bissons and Makis were going to stay in South Carolina come what may. What was supposed to be about a six-hour drive ended up being about eight hours. Their being whooped would be an understatement. They all arrived at Ft. Mill, SC the next day and related their adventures.



Reunions are a great time to renew old friendships. Pictured here (L to R) Richard Ready, Bill Ambrose, Sam Maki all members of class 69-37 at Ft. Wolters, TX.



The Charlotte Motor Speedway excursion was a big hit with the NAVHPA members.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

On Monday, 2 August, they did what a good pilot would do, a recon of how to get to the hotel. Question? Is there a straight street in Charlotte? Once they found the hotel, they explored the city. Lord what a mess. With GPS, maps, wives, total of five other people in Sam's truck telling him how to get from point A to B, they finally got out of the city and got back to their RV park and had a well-deserved beverage.

Once the VHPA reunion started the trio jumped right in. It was great to see old friends and classmates. All the members and spouses, on their different excursions, had a blast. They did find it interesting going to the Charlotte Speedway. The lunch venue was great, and they were expecting a "NASCAR Type" buffet, but due to, you know, COVID, they got a box lunch. All of them thought the "Funny Bus" excursion was a scream. They had a great comedian and got a very good tour of Charlotte along with its history. Several of the NAVHPA members went to the home of Billy Graham.

As always, the Gold Star Breakfast was something no one should miss. Our chapter member, Julie Kink, had an outstanding morning. The room was filled with over 200 people. As always, they had different Gold Star families give their testimony of the loss of their loved ones. The last speaker, Robert Dowling, about the loss of his father, was absolutely phenomenal! We found out that Mr. Dowling was jogging by and found out about the Gold Star breakfast. He decided to just come in and tell his story about losing his father in Vietnam.

His dad had survived a helicopter crash into the ocean but was actually killed by a Hammerhead shark. What a story! After the breakfast, Chapter President, Marshall Eubank, had the privilege of presenting the Vietnam War Commemoration Certificate of Honor and Pin to two Alabama brothers, Daryl and Matt Cargile. They lost their brother, 1LT Claude Cargile, May 1970 in Vietnam.

The next big event was the final evening and the dinner. The Air Force JROTC Color Guard were some great young adults. They did a wonderful job of posting and retiring the Colors. All the members felt that the meal was done very well. After all the formal stuff, they got on the dance floor for a couple of dances and headed back to the RV park.

If there was a negative to the reunion, it was when the hotel said they wouldn't allow booze in the hospitality rooms. Aviators without liquor? Need to check the regulations.

After a day of recouping, they headed out for Anniston, AL to spend the night.

Again, a long drive. It was Sunday and no problem going through Atlanta. They went through like an armed convoy, ready for action. Oh, what a blessing, this RV park had cable TV and we got our Fox News fix. Even had a Camping World next to us. After a very hot evening, we finally headed out for Huntsville and got to unload the RVs. (Bless you Mr. Carrier, the inventor of air conditioning.) All who have RVs in the NAVHPA chapter know there's nothing like clicking your heels (Dorothy) and being home.

In early September, several members met to work on the Buc-3 hangar. After that, they went to lunch at a



The NAVHPA President presenting Certificates of Honor and pins to (L to R) Daryl Cargile, Marshall Eubanks, Matt Cargile.



Robert Dowling talking about his father during the Gold Star breakfast.



The Junior ROTC Color Guard did a fine job opening the banquet.



A moving tribute seen recently in a local Appleby's restaurant.

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

local Appleby's restaurant. As they walked, in they were greeted by a display honoring the 13 military members killed recently in Afghanistan. They believed it was a fitting and moving tribute.

We expect that November will be busy in North Alabama. We will take Buc-3, our UH-1C/M, to Cullman, AL again for a display at the Cullman Veterans Celebrations on November 5th. The Huntsville Veterans Day Parade will be held this year on November 11th. It was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID. The North Alabama chapter will be there in force both marching and riding the trailer.

We are also planning our annual Christmas party meeting at the Huntsville Country Club on the evening of December 14th.

Marshall Eubanks is working on engaging a former Donut Dolly as a guest speaker. We are looking forward to hearing from her.

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 nabhpa@gmail.com. Our web site is <http://www.na-vhpa.org>. Come on out!! We know all those war stories need to get out of your system. We have each heard all of ours. We need new ones.

Ralph Weber

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

Once again, we had a good turnout for our September meeting, 14 members were there in person, plus we had six on Zoom, 20 in all. Many had lunch following the meeting. Following the business part of the meeting Cliff Lawson presented Robert White's Interview that we conducted last month. Cliff arranged a multi-media presentation that was viewed by those present and over Zoom as well. Well done Cliff, and we cannot forget Bob White who shared with us his experiences as a POW during the Vietnam War. It made last meeting and this one a very moving experience.

In the last issue we reported on the "Work Party" in preparation for the upcoming museum show in August, to be held at The Rocky Mountain Regional Airport in Broomfield, CO. The show sponsored by the Collector Car Council of Colorado had well over 400 vintage automobiles, more than they had advertised, plus other exhibits and an airshow. We had nearly 400 guests. The ever-changing pandemic protocols gave us some challenges, but everyone rose to the occasion. We had to limit the number of visitors inside as well as everyone wore a mask. I have to tell you, everyone cooperated willingly. It was a very congenial atmosphere and educational for those who were with us.

A few months ago, we reported that two of our members, Jim



Vintage Cars with our Museum.



Gregg Mann greets a couple of visitors.



A novel use for a panel wagon.



More Cars and our Museum.

Chyanne stated, "This year, we are trying to create a memorable legacy for future generations so they can understand the importance of our veterans. We are hoping to conduct and film interviews to make a short film for veterans and their families to have forever, and for students to be able to watch and hear these meaningful stories." Several members have signed up so far. We will report the results in the next Aviator.

Meeting Schedule and other Information:

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

VHPA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

SOUTH MISSOURI CHAPTER

The third quarterly meeting of the South Missouri Chapter of VHPA was held at the Jack Stack barbecue/Freight House in Kansas City on August 21st. Hugh Mills, author of *Low Level Hell* was our guest speaker. He related several of his experiences as a scout pilot and a scout platoon leader.

At the conclusion of the program, Don Merritt became Chapter President. He can be contacted by email at d7236@fidnet.com or by phone at (573) 301-0036.

The next meeting will be held in the Silver Dollar City Parlor at The Keeter Center on the campus of The College of the Ozarks, November 6th, 2021, and will begin at 11:00 AM. Our guest



speaker will be Bryan Cizek, Director of Patriotic Activities at the college. He is an Army Ranger and a veteran of three deployments to Iraq and one to Afghanistan and will share his thoughts on recent events and update us on campus activities.

In addition to a guest speaker, we will be entertained by the C of O Chapel Choir. Their performance at the national reunion in Kansas City has been described as the best event we've ever had, so you surely will want to attend this meeting!

**John Sorensen, Treasurer for
Don Merritt, President**

UPPER MIDWEST CHAPTER

The Chapter held a Late July meeting and a September meeting with a couple of activities in between. The July meeting was held in St. Paul near the St. Paul airport, which many of our members are familiar with after serving with the Minnesota Army National Guard there. The meeting was chaired by our Vice President Terry Branham and there were 19 members present. A great turnout that shows how much we have missed seeing each other in person. We discussed the upcoming reunion in Charlotte, and we have at least three members attending. We also discussed upcoming events and the plans for the September and November meetings.

Several members participated in the "China Beach" picnic August 14th, sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans of America Wisconsin Chapter at the Gaslight Bar in Trimble, WI. It was a good time, and we thank the VVA for inviting us again this year.

On August 16th, the Stillwater Veterans Memorial Committee held their annual paddleboat dinner cruise on the St. Croix river. It is their annual fundraiser and a fun event with a buffet dinner and an interesting program. We had six members and their wives attend this year. For the program this year they had an Air Force historian who gave an overview of the bombing campaigns and two crewmembers from World War Two bombers. One was a 97 year-old navigator on a B17, and the other was a 101 year-old B17 pilot. They gave a great presentation, and they were both very sharp.

Our September meeting was held at the hangar of the Helicopter Conservancy in New Richmond, WI. The Conservancy is working to restore several aircraft and to preserve as much information as possible about the various models they currently have as well as providing educational exhibits. Several of our members have been assisting them as volunteers. They currently have a Cobra, an OH 58, and five or six Hueys. Their current project is to create a flight simulator out of one of the Hueys, so it can be trailered around to various events. It uses all the controls, seats and coupled with a virtual reality program to pretty much duplicate flying a Huey (minus the seat of the pants feel and the smell of JP4). Three of us got the opportunity to try it out and I must say it was pretty realistic.



Helicopter Conservancy Hangar New Richmond Wisconsin.



Helicopter Conservancy Hangar New Richmond Wisconsin.

We plan on participating in the New Richmond Wisconsin Middle School Veterans Day event. This has been a great opportunity for us to talk to students about what Vietnam was all about. The school does a great job with this event that covers the history of all the wars the U.S. has been involved in. The kids move from room to room on a 30-minute rotation featuring a different war in each room. At some point they get to visit a real Huey and ask questions about the aircraft and our jobs flying them.

For our November meeting we are planning an evening meeting with our significant others at a restaurant in St. Paul. This has traditionally been our social meeting of the year and we are hopeful that the COVID situation will allow us to pull it off. Our January, and possibly March meetings will probably be Zoom meetings. Some of members no longer like the snow and cold of winter and escape south. Zoom will also allow some of our more distant members to participate in the planning of future events without the long drive.

Donald Abrams

ANN MARGARET

By Doug Moore

A recent AVIATOR article on Bob Hope brought back memories. I was assigned to the 57th Medical Detachment (Dust Off) at Tan Son Nhut airfield in December of 1964 when Bob and this troupe came. As they were driving into Saigon, two Viet Cong agents drove a truck into the Brinks Hotel parking lot. The explosion killed two Americans and wounded 60 others. At his show the next day, Bob quipped, "While on our way downtown yesterday, a hotel passed us!"

I was duty pilot that day and about mid-afternoon, I picked up several wounded Vietnamese and took them to the Cong Hoa Military Hospital located just across the fence at the eastern end of Tan Son Nhut. Then I hopped over the fence as we usually did and began hovering down the taxiway toward our parking area at the far western end of the airfield.

We were hovering lazily along about 20 feet off the ground when our medic shouted, "Hey, look to our left!" The Bob Hope show was underway in front of one of the large hangars and as I looked that way, Janet Leigh walked out in a white body sock. I did a quick pedal turn and began hovering sideways until the tower told us to get the heck out of that area.

After that tour in Vietnam, I was assigned to Camp Zama, Japan in a unit that flew patients arriving at Yokota and Tachikawa Air Force Bases out to six US hospitals built in a wide arc around the greater Tokyo area. In December of 1967, the US Army, Japan (USARJ) Public Affairs Officer called to tell me Bob Hope would be stopping off and wanted to visit some of our hospitals. At the time, the USARJ Flight Detachment only had a couple of OH-23s, so our medevac unit with its five UH-1Ds was regularly tasked to fly congressmen, movie stars, and other dignitaries, like Billy Graham, when they visited.

I vividly recall meeting Bob Hope, Ann Margaret, Nancy Sinatra (with her walking boots on), and NFL football player Rosie Grier (humongous fellow), when they arrived at Rankin Army Airfield.

Several months later, I went back to Vietnam to

command a Dustoff unit at Cu Chi and learned Bob Hope would be coming on Christmas Eve of 1968. I got my pilots together and told them I would pull first-up duty that night because I wanted everyone else to see the show. After getting a volunteer to pull duty with me, WO-1 Doug MacNeil spoke up and said in his slow drawl, "Sir, I dated Ann Margaret a few times while we were freshmen at Northwestern University. Do you think I could try to see her while they are here?"

The other pilots began accusing him of combat fatigue, but I could tell he was serious. Doug was an unusual fellow who had almost finished a Master's Degree in Philosophy at Northwestern before becoming fed up with the anti-war sentiment sweeping the Nation and joined the Army. Doug was 30 years old at the time and the oldest pilot in the unit except for me.

I called the 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs Officer who arranged for Doug to fly the group from site to site while they were in the 25th Division's area of operation. He also borrowed my jeep and brought Ann Margaret to our unit for a short visit.

In the spring of 1969, newly promoted CW-2 McNeil asked to extend to complete his military obligation early and get back to finish his master's. I told him, "no" because he had been shot up far too many times and had been wounded. After I left, he apparently talked my replacement into letting him extend and then accepted one of those "post card" appointments to first lieutenant.

In April of 1970, Doug was called to a "Hot LZ" north of Cu Chi to pick-up a wounded American. The mechanized unit said they were still receiving sniper fire but thought they could suppress it long enough for him to evacuate the wounded man. While Doug was landing, a hidden .51 caliber hit him in the chest, killing him instantly.

In the spring of 2004, my wife and I were planning a trip to Branson, MO to attend a high school reunion when a friend reminded me that Andy Williams owned a theater there and that Ann Margaret was a regular star. I found she would be there during our

stay, so I sent pictures taken in Japan and told her we would be in the audience on a certain night. I also told her about Doug MacNeil, because she was married shortly after they were freshmen together and might not be aware that he had been killed.

We had just settled into our seats when someone tapped me on the back. It was the theater manager who told me Ann Margaret wanted us to visit when the show ended and that he would send an escort as soon as she changed out of her show costume.

After the performance, we were led to the “green room” along with several of Ann’s friends and other show people. When she came into the room, one of her handlers took her around to introduce her to the group and my wife and I were last in line.

When introduced, Ann threw her arms around my neck and hugged me tightly. I thought she would never turn loose as she began telling me how much she had appreciated my letter and the pictures. She also told me she had not been aware that Doug had been killed and asked what happened. Tears welled

up in her eyes when I described the circumstances. “That’s the Doug I remember,” she said. “He was such a kind and gentle person.”

From that moment on, Ann hung onto my arm as she walked us around and introduced us to a much larger group that had assembled by that time. She kept telling everyone that visiting the troops in Vietnam was the highlight of her life and she kept introducing me as “one of my good men.”

After about 15 minutes, Barbara and I felt we were intruding and ought to go, but Ann insisted we stay. Although she had another performance scheduled that evening, we spent 40 minutes or more with her before we could gracefully get away.

As an aside, Ann was as beautiful as she was 35 years earlier and in tremendous physical shape. She was as solid as a rock and told me she exercised every day.

There are a few special people in this world, and I think all of us Vietnam Veterans would agree that Ann Margaret is particularly special.



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AWARDS LEGEND

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

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 vbpa.org.

September/October Taps had an incorrect photo for Caron, Robert P.



***Achee, Sidney W. USA; Flight Classes: 50-D/50-L; RVN: 67-68 9 AVN 9 INF, 68 HHC 12 CAG; Callsign: Condor 6.**

Sidney Achee, born on November 20, 1922, died on August 8, 2021. No other information provided.

Albert, Hans J. USA; Flight Class: 66-17; RVN: 66-67 170 AHC, 66-67 189 AHC, 69 187 AHC; PH; Callsigns: Bikini/Ghost Rider.

Hans Joachim Albert, of Mandeville, LA, passed peacefully at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans, LA, August 10, 2021. He was surrounded by his loving family. Hans was born in Quedlinburg, Germany on September 2, 1941. After immigrating to the United States in 1961, he lived in New York City and worked on the Chrysler Building as a welder.

His desire to be an aviator drew him to enlist in the United States Army. Hans became a proud United States citizen in Montgomery, AL in 1969. After his military service, Hans worked as a commercial helicopter pilot flying locally and abroad. In the 1980s, he completed the Penn State Executive Program and began an exciting career as an international corporate executive in the helicopter industry. Hans retired after almost 50 rewarding years in the field.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 29 years, Virginia.

Amundson, Jay D. USA; Flight Class: 69-48; RVN: 70-71 C/227 AHB 1 CAV, 71-72 60 AVN; Callsign: Ghost Rider 3.

Jay Amundson died August 28, 2021 in a hospital in Tyler, TX due to complications from Covid-19. He was 71 years old.

He is survived by his wife, Charlene.

***Ballinger, Joe E. USAF, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 60-C; RVN: 65-67 38 ARRS; SS, BS.**



Joe Edward Ballinger was born May 1, 1933 in Aldine township, Norton County, KS. He passed away at the Andbe Home on September 20, 2021 in Norton, KS.

Joe started school in Aldine Township attending Dry Creek (Dead Man) school until second grade before attending Norton Public Schools and graduating Norton High School in 1950.

In 1973, Joe had finished a successful career in the Air Force and was looking for his next big adventure. He enrolled at Angelo State University ASU in Texas to pursue a degree in history. This time, he was focused on his classes and even made the Dean's List.

He had the opportunity to fly again and left the university to become Chief of Aviation at the USAF Missile Range on Canton Island. Joe was a civilian-contract helicopter pilot in the remote island. His flight path in life took him to: Peru on an oil rig in the jungle; West Africa with the World Health Organization; and then the Bahamas as a Navy contractor. Joe's career had taken him to over 40 countries around the world in his 24 years as a pilot. Joe managed three civilian units and commanded six military units resulting in approximately 20 years of helicopter operational responsibility without one single operator or maintenance error accident.

He retired to Norton to enjoy a quieter life where he could serve his community. During

his life, he served as American Legion Commander for four years on Andros Island in the Caribbean Sea and 12 years in Norton. He was Quartermaster of the Norton Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was active on the Norton County Republican Central Committee advocating for Veteran's Affairs. His community service also included Rotary, the library board and several years at the Norton Historical Society and Museum.

He is survived by his wife, Pamela.

Bryant, Emmett L. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Class: 69-8; RVN: 69-70 116 AHC; Callsign: Hornet 5.

Emmett Lee Bryant passed away on June 21, 2020. Emmet was born August 7, 1941, in Brushy Mills, MO.

He is survived by his wife, Janet.

***Burgess, Ronald E. USA; Flight Classes: 71-43/71-37; RVN: 72-73 F/9 CAV, 73 388 TC CO; Callsign: Saber 82/Helping Hand 82.**



Ronald Burgess, born on September 28, 1950, died on September 1, 2021. No other information provided.

Carolan, Eugene J. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-14/68-22; RVN: 68-69 3/4 CAV 25 INF; SS, DFC, BS, PH.

Eugene 'Gene' Joseph Carolan was born on March 12, 1947, in Scranton, PA. He grew up in Detroit where he graduated from Henry Ford High School in 1965.

Returning from Vietnam in 1969, he married Lisa Marie in 1970. The couple had three children and settled in Lansing, MI after Gene earned his accounting degree in 1972, Magna Cum Laude, from Eastern Michigan University. Gene joined

the Michigan National Guard in 1977 and retired as a Colonel in 1999. He started his own accounting firm, Carolan and Associates, in 1987, and dedicated his professional life to fostering Lansing's small business community. Gene sold his business in 2006 and continued to serve the business community for several years as President of Junior Achievement of Mid Michigan.

Gene enjoyed a healthy and productive life but began to decline several years ago, before it was discovered that he had a rare brain condition caused by his exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. He died July 22, 2021, at home in Lansing, MI.

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

***Chritton, William R. USA; Flight Classes: 54-F/55-F; RVN: 63 18 AVN, 66-67 68 AVN, 67 145 AVN BN; LM, DFC (3 OLC), BS; Callsign: Mustang 6/Old Warrior 3.**



William Roy (Bill) Chritton, Jr. died July 1, 2021, at NHC in West Plains, MO. He was born on May 13, 1933 in Pomona, MO. He attended Bridges School, a one-room schoolhouse, through eighth grade.

Shortly after high school, Bill was drafted into the United States Army. Bill completed his bachelor's degree in business at Benedictine College in Atchison, KS. Later in his military career, he obtained a master's degree in international affairs from George Washington University through the National War College.

In 1985, Bill, Ken, Gary and other investors launched Air Evac, EMS, with one helicopter based in West Plains. Air Evac was the first company to base a helicopter in a rural area, and the first to offer memberships.

Bill eventually became President of the company, and later served as the chairman of the board before selling the company in 2004. By that time, they had changed the name to Air Evac Lifeteam. The company had 41 bases in fourteen states and was the largest independently-owned air ambulance company in the United States. During that 20-year span, Air Evac employed thousands of people and saved countless lives through

out their coverage area.

He is survived by his wife, Wanda.

***Diller, Ronald E. USA; Flight Classes: 68-43/69-1; RVN: 69 B/227 AHB 1 CAV, 69-70 HHC/227 AVN 1 Callsign: Masher 3D/Bolt 3D Cav.**



Ronald Eugene Diller, age 73, passed away peacefully at his home in Seal Beach, CA on August 7, 2021. Ron was born in 1947 in Fort Wayne, IA.

As a young man, Ron began a career with United Airlines at Patrick Henry airport in Newport News, VA. In 1968, Ron enlisted into the United States Army at the height of the Vietnam War to be of service to his country. After returning, Ron served several years in the Army Reserves.

Seal Beach, CA became his home in the 1970s where Ron worked in the travel industry, software industry, and medical legal industry. Owning and operating companies within each field for over 25 years before becoming 100% disabled due to his exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam.

He is survived by his wife, Jody.

***Finnigan, Mike J. USA; Flight Classes: 68-21/68-35; RVN: 69 A/25 AVN 25 INF, 69-70 B/25 AVN 25 INF, 73 AIR AMERICA; SS, DFC, BS; Callsign: Diamond Head 26.**



Michael J. Finnigan passed away suddenly from Lymphoma on June 20, 2021. He was born on September 6, 1947.

Mike enlisted in the Army in 1967 after getting an AA degree at Glendale College at the age of 20.

After returning from Vietnam, Mike obtained a BA from Cal State in Police Science. He joined the Army Reserve at AFRC Los Alamitos, CA and was a member of the 336th Assault Helicopter Company. During that time, he flew for Flour Corp as a Corporate Helicopter Pilot.

He eventually retired after 33 years with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. In all, he flew helicopters for 53 years.

***Fitzgerald, Gordon R. USA, CWO Ret.; Flight Classes: 66-17/66-15; RVN: 66-67 116th AHC.**



Gordon Fitzgerald passed away at an emergency room in Gulfport, MS, three days after Hurricane Ida devastated Houma, LA on August 31, 2021. He was being transported to a hospital in Alabama because Terrebonne General Hospital was damaged by hurricane winds.

Fitz enlisted in the Army in 1965 and was sent to Fort Wolters, TX for his training. Learning to fly helicopters was his dream.

After he finished his tour of duty, he returned to Iowa and used his flying skills spraying crops. He worked briefly in Florida and then came to the Berlin/Coloma, WI area where he worked for Reabe Spraying Services. In 1989, Gordon and his wife Jerrie moved to Houma, LA where he flew the Acadian Air Ambulance for almost 20 years. He was actually a Petroleum Helicopter pilot leased to Acadian.

He didn't retire after being a pilot, he then bought a Kwik Kopy business Center and became a 'copy boy,' printing everything from drafting plans to cook books, year books, and large banners. He successfully grew the business and made lasting friendships with his customers.

He is survived by his wife, Jerrie.

Foster, Loren N. USA, CWO Ret.; Flight Class: 57-7; RVN: 65-66 611 TC CO.

Loren Foster, aged 89, of Pace, FL died on June 6, 2018. No obituary was found, but a colleague provided some details.

Loren served in both and enlisted and Warrant Officer ranks and had at least one Pentagon tour.

He flew with PHI for about twenty years and worked briefly with Lear Sigler at Navy Whiting.

***Giles, Frederick R. USA; Flight Class: 70-19; RVN: 70-71 61 AHC; BS; Callsign: Lucky Star 14.**

On August 7, 2021, Frederick R. Giles met his Savior. He was born in Macon, GA on December 18, 1948. He was a graduate of Lanier High School for Boys. In his second

year at Macon Junior College, Fred volunteered for the Warrant Officer Flight Training Program. After Vietnam, Fred would continue his military career as an Instructor Pilot.

Although Fred was happy with his military service and the adventures and challenges it presented, he felt that God was calling him to the ministry. He served for one year as a civilian assistant pastor in a church outside of Spangdahlem Air Force Base in Germany that was primarily focused on reaching American military and their families. In 1984 he enrolled in Bible college in Crown Point, IN. During his time in Bible college, Fred flew Hueys in the Army Reserves with the 305th Aviation Company out of NAS Glenview just north of Chicago. He spent Saturdays in south Chicago striving to reach those who were released from Cook County Jail, most of whom were gang members. On Sundays, he often preached at the Cook County Jail reaching the lost for Christ. He later directed a military ministry in Fayetteville, NC, serving men and women in the 82nd Airborne Division.

He is survived by his wife, Linda.

***Hamrick, John R. USA;**
Flight Classes: 68-
517/68-31; RVN: 68-69
173 AHC; Callsign:
Robinhood 13.

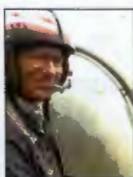


John Ross Hamrick of Barnesville, GA, passed away on August 29, 2021, at Piedmont Atlanta Hospital. John was born December 20, 1946 in Macon, GA.

He was minister of music at several churches including his home church, Antioch Baptist Church where John also served as a Deacon.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Kay.

Harchenko, Jerrol D.
USA, COL Ret.; Flight
Class: 63-5W; RVN: 66-
67 E/82 ART 1 CAV, 68
138 ASA, 68-69 525 MI
GRP; BS (OLC) Callsign: Volun-
teer 3.



Jerrol Duane Harchenko of Salem, OR passed away on July 30, 2021. Jerry was born in Butte, ND on January 29, 1932. He graduated from Sheyenne River Academy in Harvey, ND in May of 1950.

He learned to fly in 1948 at the age of 16, and in 1951 earned an airplane commercial pilot rating and worked as an agricultural pilot. In 1960, Jerry moved his family to Salem, OR, where he worked as an agricultural pilot for Kreitzberg Aviation. He then worked as an aerial applicator for Evergreen Helicopters and was stationed with his family in Puerto Rico.

Jerry was a member of the North Dakota National Guard since 1956. In 1963 he transferred to the US Army and applied for warrant officer rotary wing aviator training.

Jerry was released from active duty in 1969, and returned to Salem as a member of the Oregon National Guard. In 1971, he transferred from the Guard to the Oregon State Defense Force, received a State Commission, and served as the State Aviation Officer. He ended his military career with the rank of Colonel.

In 1970, Jerry and Myra established Industrial Aviation Services, Inc. He and his family operated the business on their own airport north of Brooks, providing fixed wing and rotary wing agricultural support services.

***Hlavaty, Edward L.**
USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN:
69-70 37 ARRS; DFC
(OLC).



Edward L. Hlavaty was born July 19, 1930 in Crete, NE. He took his final flight on August 5, 2017. He was a resident of Lillie, LA.

Ed graduated from Crete High School and played football at Doane College in Nebraska. He graduated from the University of Omaha and spoke three languages: Czech, Russian, and Latin. He began his career as a USAF Pilot in 1951. During his Air Force career, he flew the KC-97, C-47, B-29, C-130 Hercules, and C-124. In 1969, he was transferred and proudly served as a command pilot flying the Sikorsky CH-3 Jolly Green

Giant helicopters (his favorite) on numerous combat rescue missions in Vietnam.

He retired from the Air Force in 1973. After his Air Force career, Ed worked for Wanek Furniture and managed The Shake Shoppe in his hometown of Crete, NE. He also worked as an Auto Parts Manager in Ruston and Bernice, LA. He enjoyed substitute teaching and working at the Junction City High School where he was known as Mr. Ed.

Hood, Herbert P. USA;
Flight Class: 70-26; RVN:
70-71 A/2/17 CAV 101
ABN; Callsign: Assault
22.



Herbert Hood, 59, died Thursday at his home in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. He was born in Norfolk, VA on September 17, 1947. The family moved to Goldsboro in 1957 where he grew up and graduated from Goldsboro High School in 1966.

After leaving the Army in 1974 he developed and owned several businesses including a restaurant in North Carolina, a helicopter touring company in Hawaii and other businesses in Australia and Florida. In 2003, he retired with his wife to Costa Rica where they relaxed and enjoyed life.

He is survived by his wife, Anne.

***Kelley, Jerry D. USA,**
CPT Ret.; Flight Classes:
68-19/68-33; RVN: 68-
69 199 LIB; Callsign:
Fireball 20.



Jerry D Kelley of Nederland, TX, passed away on August 28, 2021, surrounded by his children. He was born on July 18, 1943, in Nacogdoches, TX. At the age of six months his family moved to Port Arthur. His dad was employed in the construction industry in the area and eventually moved to Groves, where he graduated from Port Neches Groves High School, class of 1962.

After a tour of duty in Vietnam and 14 years of service in the US Army, he was released from active duty in August 1975 from the Army Reduction Force because the Government thought they had too many career Soldiers in its ranks. He then

moved his family to Nederland, TX. Jerry served in the Army and National Guard for 29 years and four months.

He was employed by Gulf Oil Refinery and later Chevron Chemicals, retiring after 28 years of service. He was active in the scouting program, serving as Cub Master of Pack 232 and Scout Master of Troop 422, assisting over 30 young men reach the rank of Eagle Scout.

Kreulen, Ray H. USA; Flight Class: 62-11; RVN: 65-66 B/227 AHB 1 CAV, 68 162 AHC, 68-69 11 CAG; DFC, BS; Callsign: Red Dog 3.

Raymond Harry Kreulen passed away peacefully at his home in Enterprise, AL on October 28, 2019.

Ray was born on October 1, 1935 in Cincinnati, OH. Before entering the United States Army, he attended The University of Florida graduating with a degree in Building Science.

Ray served his country proudly for 26 years as a Senior Parachutist and a Master Army Aviator qualified in both fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. Ray was an active member of the Triumphant Cross Lutheran Church in Dothan, AL.

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

***Lineberry, Roy H. USA, Ret.; Flight Class: 69-19; RVN: 69-70 B/1/9 CAV 1 CAV; LM, DFC, BS; Callsign: Saber 35.**



Roy Harber Lineberry, Jr. passed away August 26, 2021, in his home in Dammeron Valley, UT. He was born January 10, 1948, in Frankfurt, Germany.

Roy was a police officer for 24 years in the Riverside, California Police Department. He served in the United States Army and National Guard for 38 years.

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

Luce, Nelson E. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 51; RVN: 67-68 45 MED CO; DFC (2 OLC), BS; Callsign: Dustoff 46.



Nelson Luce died on August 27, 2021. He was born in Portland, ME on November 3, 1928.

He is survived by his loving wife, Vivian.

***Luebbert, Stephen P. USA BG, Ret.; Flight Classes: 69-49/70-1; RVN: 70-71 1 AVN BDE; Callsign: Mustang**



Stephen Paul Luebbert was called home by his Lord quietly in his sleep on September 4, 2021. He was born in Levittown, NY, on November 24, 1946.

He flew in the military for 35 years with service as an Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam and instructor pilot to the South Vietnamese Air Force. Stephen transferred to the US Air Force after the Vietnam conflict as a fighter and bomber pilot.

During his military career, Stephen served as commander of U.S. and allied forces in Europe and the Middle East. He was a veteran of the Cold War, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, and various expeditionary campaigns.

In addition to flying, Stephen played a role negotiating nuclear weapon reduction treaties with the former Soviet Union and led the Air Force response to the Department of Defense Reorganization Act and the newly defined role of the unified commanders in chief. Stephen also developed a missile defense shield for the State of Israel and provided White House military support to the then-President George H.W. Bush. The general also directed the Air Force's conventional cruise missile strikes against key Iraqi targets during the Gulf War.

Upon retirement from the Air Force, Stephen began his third career as the Airport Director of Texarkana Regional Airport, where he worked tirelessly with the two cities to keep the airport open and thriving with many challenges being presented along the way.

Following West Anchorage, Alaska High School, Stephen graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from LSU, Baton Rouge and later earned a Master of Science degree in Public Administration from George Washington University and the National Defense University in Washington DC.

He leaves behind his wife, Marlaina (Mel).

***McLelland, Terry S. USA; Flight Class: 68-23; RVN: 69-70 92 AHC; PH; Callsign: Sidekick 10.**

Terry Sims McLelland, died August 22, 2021. Terry was born on the Fourth of July 1948, in Auburn, AL.

Terry grew up in Auburn and Montgomery, AL, and Atlanta, GA. He graduated from Druid Hills High School and enrolled at Auburn University. He spent several years in the Land Clearing and Pond Construction business.

He is survived by his wife, Tina Simpson.

***Newman, David A. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 69-28; RVN: 70 C/2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 70 HHB/2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 70-71 A/2/20 ARA 1 CAV, 71 B/1/12 CAV; Callsign: Blue Max 69R.**

David Newman passed on May 30, 2020, in Miami, FL. He was born on October 1, 1941. David graduated from Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma City, graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, studied International Relations at the University of Miami, and studied Joint/Combined Operations at the Armed Forces Staff College. He spent his career faithfully serving his country in the US Army.

He was active in his church First Baptist Church at Weston.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara.



***Noblett, James R. USA**
CPT Ret.; Flight Classes:
68-20/68-34; RVN: 69
D/2/1 CAV; Callsign:
Blackhawk.



James Russell Noblett (Russ) died on August 25, 2021. He was born in 1947 in Brooklyn, NY, and raised on Long Island. He graduated from Seaford High School in 1965 and was drafted into the US Army in late 1966. Although he was wounded in Vietnam with injuries that would affect him for the rest of his life, Russ was very proud of the Army and what it did for him, and of his service as a combat engineer and Cobra helicopter gunship pilot in Vietnam in 1969. Russ always said it was about taking care of the "kids on the ground" - Russ was not yet 21 years old. Russ retired from the US Army as a Captain in the Corps of Engineers Branch.

Russ moved to Colorado in 1971 after finding Colorado State University's fluid mechanics program from afar. He earned his civil engineering degree from Colorado State University in Fort Collins in 1974 and MBA from University of Denver in 1975. Russ spent his career pipelining crude oil and natural gas in the western United States. He became an expert in compressible fluid flow and retired from Colorado Interstate Gas as Director of Facility Planning.

Russ joined the YMCA when he arrived in Colorado Springs in 1976 and chaired several of its boards. He enjoyed years of participation in golf and investments in the Syndicate.

He is survived by his wife, Connie King.

Payton, Luther L. USMC,
LTC Ret.; Flight Class:
56-42; RVN: 66-67
HMM-165, 70-71 HMM-
263; DFC (4 OLC), BS
(V).



Luther Lee Payton Jr. "Iggy" died on April 14, 2016.

After the military, Lee worked for St. Johns River Water Management District for 17 years as the Director Administration Department and Employee Relations. Lee

also worked on the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel. He was the Chapel Volunteer of the year from 1975-1976.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth Ann.

***Reeves, Paul A. USA; Flight Classes: 70-**
5/69-49; RVN: 70 119 AHC, 70-71 116
AHC; Callsign: Stinger 99.

Paul A Reeves was born on May 14, 1948, and passed away on January 26, 2021. No other information provided.

***Rosen, Laurence MD**
USA; Flight Class: 69-38;
RVN: 70-71 326 MED 101
ABN; SS, DFC, BS, ACM;
Callsign: Dustoff 91.



Laurence Rosen, MD passed from this life on July 22, 2021, in Helotes, TX. He was born on October 16, 1946, in Brooklyn, NY.

Dr. Rosen graduated from Bayshore High School in 1964. He earned a BA degree from the University of Miami (1968). He completed medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio in 1977, and his Anesthesia residency in 1981, with a specialization in Cardiothoracic Anesthesia. Always an avid learner, Dr. Rosen earned a master's degree in Environmental Sciences (1995) from the University of Texas, San Antonio, TX. He received board certification from the American Academy of Pain Management and the American Academy of Neuro-Muscular Thermography.

Prior to receiving his medical degree, Dr. Rosen entered military service in the U.S. Army. After leaving Viet Nam, he was assigned to the newly developed Department of Defense and civilian authority Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic as an instrument flight instructor. Based upon his valorous actions at Fire Support Base Ripcord, he was nominated for a Medal of Honor.

His survived by his beloved wife of 28 years, Dr. Maria Saenz Rosen.

***Sanders, Larry F. USA,**
LTC Ret.; RVN: 63-64 6
AIRLIFT PLAT, 66-67
190 AHC; Callsign: Drag-
onfly 6/Gladiator 6.



Larry Sanders passed away on July 29, 2021, after a very short illness. Larry was born in Paris, KY on August 29, 1937. In the early 1940s his father moved the family to a working tobacco farm in Winchester, KY.

He graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a degree in Geography. While attending college he joined ROTC and began his career with the U.S. Army. He attended jump school in Ft. Campbell, KY and flight school in Ft. Rucker, AL. He was a graduate from the Command General Staff College in Leavenworth, KS; Commander of the Land southeast Aviation Branch of NATO in Izmir, Turkey; and Airfield Commander of Simmons Army Airfield at Ft. Bragg.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Sandra.

Scott, Orville E. USA; Flight Class:
68-7; RN: 65-66 173 ABN BDE, 69 3
BDE 101 ABN, 69-70 119 AHC;
Callsign: Ranger/Ghost Rider.

Orville Earl Scott of Kingsland, GA, passed away on July 29, 2021, at the age of 79. No other information provided.

***Sibert, George W. USA,**
COL Ret.; Flight Classes:
59-12FW/66-8QC;
RVN: 66-67 A/1 AVN 1
INF, 70 123 AVN 23 INF, 70-71 F/8
CAV 23 INF; Callsign: Blue Ghost 6.



George W. Sibert died July 18, 2021, at the age of 84. He was a fourth generation USMA graduate and commanded the same infantry battalion that his grandfather had in 1930. George as an acolyte, lay reader, lay minister and vestry member at five churches. For the last 30+ years he and his late wife lived in Arlington, VA as active members of St George's Episcopal Church and other community organizations.

He commanded the Watertown Arsenal in Massachusetts and had five tours of duty

duty in the DC area.

George retired from the Army in 1985 and then worked for Rolls-Royce North America in business development for 15 years and completed his MBA at Northeastern, in Boston, MA.

Skulborstad, Mark J. USA, CPT Ret.; Flight Class: 67-11; RVN: 67-68 282 AHC; PH.



Mark Skulborstad who was best known as "Skully" to his friends, died on July 29, 2021. He was born on May 24, 1947, in O'Neill, NE.

Mark attended high school in Salina, KS, graduated from Littleton High School in Littleton, CO and attended Colorado State University for one year before enlisting in the US Army in 1966.

After retirement from the Army, Mark returned to Colorado State University to study forestry and later took on aviation mechanics. He spent most of his career as an aviation mechanic with Frontier, Continen-

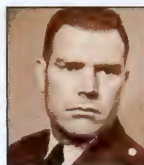
tal, and United Airlines. He also spent some time as an instructor at an A&P aircraft mechanic school and was commonly sought to travel internationally to assist and instruct other mechanics on more technical/complex aircraft issues. He retired from United Airlines after an accident in 2014.

He is survived by his wife, Christal.

Traynham, Jerry G. USA; Flight Classes: 68-13/68-19; RVN: 68-69 2/20 ARA 1 CAV; Callsign: Blue Max 47.

Jerry Glenn Traynham, 75, of Tallahassee, passed away on November 16, 2020. No other information provided.

***Williams, Charles J. Jr. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 55-L; RVN: 64-65 I CORPS AVN CO, 69-70 118 AHC, 69-70 1 AVN BDE.**



Charles 'Bubba' Williams died on September 9, 2021. He was born on October 29, 1931. No other information provided.

***Yetmar, Ronald G. USA; Flight Class: 69-43; RVN: 70-71 C/7/17 CAV; DFC, BS, ACM V (OLC) Callsign: Ruthless Rider/Blue 35.**



Ronald Yetmar, "Ron" of Foley, AL, passed away July 28, 2021, from a bacterial infection caught while on a business trip to South America. He was born in Fort Dodge, IA, on September 23, 1949. He graduated with a degree in aeronautical studies from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, FL.

After returning from Vietnam and finishing his degree, he went into real estate sales in Daytona Beach, FL, and later flew for Petroleum Helicopters in LA to platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. After several years of flying off the coast, he became a well-known businessman in Foley. His many business interests included a resort, storage facilities, pawn shop & many real estate interests.

He is survived by his love, Jane-Lynn.

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OBITUARY SUBMISSIONS

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

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

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

- Belobrajdic, William M. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 70-2; MSM (OLC), BS, PH; died on September 18, 2021.
- Bunton, William E. USA; Flight Class: 66-19; died on March 6, 2019.
- Clemence, Harry F. USMC, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 61-46; RVN: 64-65 HMM-365, 68-69 BMGR-152, 72-73 BMGR-152; NCM (V); died on August 4, 2021.
- Craven, Larry E. USA, COL Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-24/68-42; died on August 15, 2021.
- Cushman, Thomas J. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Class: 69-7; RVN: 69-70 HHT 3/11 ACR, 70 120 AHC; died on August 23, 2021.
- Dubose, Frank H. USMC, COL Ret.; died on July 23, 2021.
- Elftmann, John W. USAF, COL Ret.; LM, DFC, BS; died on July 28, 2021.
- Goold, John R. USA, CW4 Ret.; Flight Classes: 68-13/68-19; died on May 1, 2021.
- Hersant, Charles J. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 69-40; died August 20, 2021.
- Laird, William R. USA, LTC Ret.; LM, DFC, BS (OLC), ACM; died on July 12, 2021.
- Lapato, Leonard F. USA; Flight Classes: 68-501/67-25; died on August 19, 2021.
- Leffler, Samuel A. USA, MG Ret.; died on September 3, 2021.
- Long, Donald E. USA, CW3 Ret.; Flight Class: 71-15; MSM, ACM; died on September 21, 2021.
- Lingle, Charles S. USAF, LTC Ret.; RVN: 70 20 SOS; died on August 1, 2003.
- Mikesell, James G. USA, MAJ Ret.; Flight Class: 69-22; PH (2); died on August 12, 2021.
- Parker, James R. Jr. USA, LTC Ret.; RVN: 65-66 68 AHC; Callsign: Top Tiger; died on July 27, 2021.
- Petke, Jonathon USMC; Flight Class: 70-10; died on August 3, 2021.
- Rawlinson, Michael D. USA; Flight Classes: 70-17/70-15; DFC; died on August 23, 2021.
- Smith, Joe B. USMC; RVN: 66-68 HMM 363; died on September 6, 2021.
- Stefan, Louis B. USMC, COL Ret.; RVN: 68- 69 HMM-362; died on August 15, 2021.
- Stegich, Steve R. III USMC, CPT Ret.; PH; died on August 19, 2021.
- Walsh, Huey C. USMC, Ret.; died on August 19, 2021.
- Wassink, Howard P. USA; Flight Classes: 67-1/66-23; died on November 26, 1987.
- Whale, Raymond K. USA, LTC Ret.; BS, ACM; died on July 21, 2021.
- White, Billy M. USA, LTC Ret.; Flight Class: 68-2; RVN: 68-69 71 AHC; BS, (2 OLC); died on August 29, 2021.

~ 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.



Our Helicopter War, compiled by Garland R. Lively and John H. Hastings, H.V. Chapman & Sons, 802 North Third Street, Abilene, TX 79601, ISBN: 978-1-940850-86-3, 501 pages. Cost - \$60.00.

As a historian, I love these books and wish more units would take the time to create books such as this one. As a reviewer, it is a hard book to review because so many voices tell so many tales. There's no plot, because *Our Helicopter War* is a diary of the 161st Assault Helicopter Company and the units that supported it during the Vietnam War. The story begins in

1965 when the unit was formed based on General Westmoreland's request for 13 new "air mobile" companies and ends in 1968. In between, Garland, along with other researchers have provided insights and explain campaigns that the unit participated. This fascinating history brought to life by intertwining comments from some of the members of the 161st. If you flew helicopters in Vietnam, this should be motivation to get your unit to produce a similar book. If you were a member of the 161st, Bravo Zulu, that's Navy speak for a job well done. What is even better is that all the proceeds go back to the 161AHC Association LLC. To get your copy of the book, which will not be sold in bookstores, contact John Hastings via the unit's website at www.161AHC.org.



Undaunted Valor Medal of Honor Volume 2, by Michael Jackson, published by Matt Jackson Books, ISBN 9781671942509 (paperback), 356 pages, \$14.99.

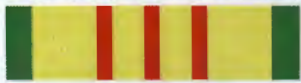
This is the second in Matt Jackson's series of books about Army Aviation during the Vietnam War. All three use the same main title, *Undaunted Valor* and have a different subtitle, i.e. Volume 1 is *An Assault Helicopter Unit in Vietnam* and Volume 3 is *Lam Son 719*. This book - *Medal of Honor* - is what I call "faction"

because it is based largely on real events, but there are names, dates and places changed, to use the words of the old *Dragnet* TV series, to protect the innocent. Matt's style is different in that if you are interested in how Army helo pilots communicate, i.e. talk to each other under stress, in combat and when having fun, then you'll find the book rich in dialogue. For those of us who spent a year or more in Vietnam courtesy of Uncle Sam, the characters familiar because we've all met them in different places and branches of the service. The events should bring home memories for all Army aviators who were in country. The book is a different approach engaging and very well done.



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