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MONTHLY
CHPA
NEWSLETTER

800-832-5144 hq@chpa-us.org PO Box 2585, Peachtree City, GA 30269

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From The President

Rich Miller president@chpa-us.org

In This Issue

In the Life Saving business

Don't Worry!

Crew Chiefs & Door Gunners

Reunions and Gatherings

What can I do for CHPA?

CHPA President Rich Miller is dealing with a family emergency, I am his stand-in for this month's newsletter. The piece about him below is really a tribute to all of you who were part of the life-saving business.

Terry Garlock, Treasurer

Notice to Iraq & Afghanistan vets: we need more of you as members, and we want your stories for this newsletter. We'll even help with the writing if you will call us.



In the Life-Saving business

Rich Miler was a Dustoff pilot in Vietnam, like many of you in that war and subsequent conflicts. His photo from that time – at the 54th and 68th Medical Detachments - shows that like many of us who were Warrant Officers, his hair and mustache were probably pushing the envelope. Far more important are the wounded who lived because he and many of you like him did the job so well, with such determination.

As a gun pilot in that war I flew cover for Dustoff many times, often as a close cap around a hoist mission when you were most vulnerable, doing our best to intimidate the enemy to hold their fire and remain concealed. I am convinced some of our enemy honored the non-combatant meaning of the red cross on your aircraft, and of course we know some used the red cross for a bull's eye.

Just last week I taught two high school classes, each 1.5 hours in a history elective course on the Vietnam War. I use a Powerpoint slide show I developed over 14 years of teaching a session titled The Myths and Truths of the Vietnam War. Prominently featured are Dustoff and Medevac.

I tell the kids, who are eagerly interested, that Dustoff and Medevac were important not only because they saved lives, but for the first time in a war, grunts had the comfort of knowing if they were hit in the filth of the jungle in the middle of nowhere, these helicopter crews would scramble and take extraordinary risk to get them to a hospital within an hour.

Later in the presentation I tell them combat deaths in Vietnam were comparable to the rate in WWII, but that severely wounded were three times the WWII rate. And I ask them why, let them think and once in a while a bright kid comes up with the right answer.

Because of Dustoff and Medevac, countless severely wounded lived who would have died in previous wars.

And I tell them I was one of them.

(continued)



My next door neighbor, Wayne Franz, was trained as a medic and assigned to a Dustoff unit. On the way to join his unit, he expected some indoctrination, some sort of break-in, but when he reported he was immediately told to dump his bag and jump on the helicopter with rotors winding up on the pad because, "We're short a man and we have a mission, now hurry!"

Wayne was apprehensive, never having been on a helicopter before and certain he might fall out from the zigs and zags of a treetop flight and maybe a button-hook landing in an LZ where tracers were flying while troops hustled three wounded on litters stacked in the back. Wayne started hurriedly checking bandages and applying compresses while the aircraft jerked off the ground and did even more extreme zigging and zagging while he was trying to remember what he had been taught, checking vitals, inserting IVs for fluid and praying, "Please, God, don't let any of these men die before we hit the hospital pad!"

While Wayne was frantically going from one wounded to the other, doing what he could for them while instinctively gaining his "helicopter legs" to keep his balance, the pilot surprised him by suddenly touching down the hospital pad. He helped the ground medical crew get the litters out and on their way to triage, then he stepped out of the aircraft on wobbly legs with blood all over him and said to himself, "What the hell just happened?" And of course he wondered whether he would live through that year.

The doctors and nurses were wonders of their own, carrying inside the daily pressures of a relentless stream of broken young men.

When I was shot down in a Cobra, impact was hard enough to knock me out and take one inch off my height by crushed lumbar vertebrae, legs paralyzed. My flying days were over halfway through my first and only tour. After surgery the feeling in my legs slowly came back and over months in hospitals I learned to walk again.

The two Cobra pilots who risked their neck to rescue me are particularly proud of the Soldier's Medal they received for that rescue. They have fistfuls of other medals, but I think they very much like the notion that amidst all the killing we did, I am one they were able to save, a little taste of the life-saving business you guys carried out every day. I visited one of them in North Carolina last week, and will see them both in Texas in October.

After I was stabilized over a few weeks in the Long Binh Evac hospital, I was loaded with many other litters on a hospital C-141 flight to another hospital in Japan. Vibrations of the flight hurt bad enough I couldn't help the tears quietly streaming down my face, but it was too soon to give me another pain shot and the pretty nurse sat with me and held my hand for a while. I never forgot that small kindness among many others.

There are ten thousand stories about all of you in the life-saving business, and having talked to a lot of vets I can promise you this. So long as we are alive, somewhere every day someone is thinking about you with gratitude, wishing they could find you to shake your hand to say thanks for the difference you made in their life.

I am one of them, and I'm proud to be among you.



Don't worry!

One day, a long time ago, there was a helicopter pilot who was rather humble, quiet and unassuming, did not push the envelope or challenge authority, played nice with others, was polite and agreeable, did not drink or swear or chase women, and avoided flight anywhere near a combat situation.

But . . . it was a long time ago, it was just one pilot and it was only for one day.

Tribute to Crew Chiefs and Door Gunners

Mike Ryerson served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam two tours, 66 and 68, as a Forward Observer until he was wounded twice in one day. Thereafter he became an Operations Chief with 9th Marines Regimental Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) and finally the S-3 Operations Chief with Fox Battery, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines. He wrote this piece as a tribute to his friend, Bruce Hunter, who was a door gunner. Mike gave his enthusiastic permission to use his piece in this newsletter, and he would be pleased to hear from some of you by his email michaelryerson@sbcglobal.net

The Man in the Doorway

by Michael Ryerson

They came in low and hot, close to the trees and dropped their tail in a flare, rocked forward and we raced for the open doorways. This was always the worst for us; we couldn't hear anything and our backs were turned to the tree line. The best you could hope for was a sign on the face of the man in the doorway, leaning out waiting to help with a tug or to lay down some lead.

Sometimes you could glance quickly at his face and pick up a clue as to what was about to happen. We would pitch ourselves in headfirst and tumble against the scuffed riveted aluminum, grab for a handhold and will that son-of-a-bitch into the air.

Sometimes the deck was slick with blood or worse, sometimes something had been left in the shadows under the web seats, and sometimes they landed in a shallow river to wash them out.

Sometimes they were late, sometimes they were parked in some other LZ with their rotors turning a lazy arc, a ghost crew strapped in once too often, motionless, waiting for their own lift, their own bags, once too often into the margins.

The getting on and the getting off were the worst for us but this was all he knew, the man in the doorway; he was always standing there in the noise, watching, urging, swinging out with his gun, grabbing the black plastic and heaving, leaning out and spitting, spitting the taste away, as though it would go away.

They came in low and hot, close to the trees and dropped their tail in a flare, rocked forward and began to kick the boxes out, bouncing against the skids, piling up on each other, food and water, and bullets... a thousand pounds of C's, warm water and rounds, 7.62mm: half a ton of life and death.

And when the deck was clear, we would pile the bags, swing them against their weight and throw them through the doorway, his doorway, onto his deck and nod and he'd speak into that little mike and they'd go nose down and lift into their last flight, their last extraction.

Sometimes he'd raise a thumb or perhaps a fist or sometimes just a sly, knowing smile, knowing we were staying and he was going but also knowing he'd be back, he'd be back in a blink, standing in the swirling noise and the rotor wash, back to let us rush through his door and skid across his deck and will that son-of-a-bitch into the air.

They came in low and hot, close to the trees and dropped their tail in a flare, rocked forward, kicked out the boxes and slipped the litter across the deck and sometimes he'd lean down and hold the IV and brush the dirt off of a bloodless face, or hold back the flailing arms and the tears, a thumbs-up to the right seat and you're only minutes away from the white sheets, the saws and the plasma.

They came in low and hot, close to the trees and dropped their tail in a flare, rocked forward and we'd never hear that sound again without feeling our stomachs go just a bit weightless, listen just a bit closer for the gunfire and look up for the man in the doorway.

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Reunions and Gatherings



Vinh Long Outlaws Association

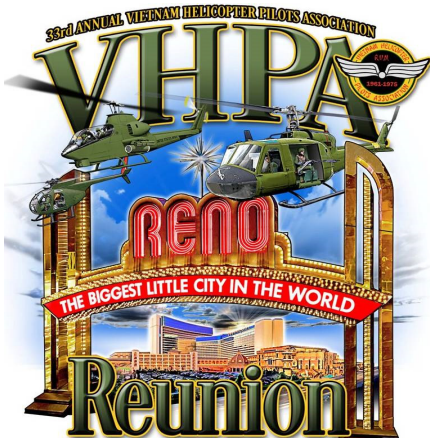
The VLOA - Vinh Long Outlaws Association, will be holding its biennial reunion in Branson, Missouri September 15-19, 2016. The reunion is open to all former Outlaws, Mavericks, Bushwhackers, legacy units and support elements. Complete details can be found on the VLOA website www.vinhlongoutlaws.com (Click: "Reunions") or contact Jim Donnelly, jcdonnelly1@cox.net 757-481-6196 for details and forms.



Ft Rucker - Big 50th for the Golden Hawks!

The Golden Anniversary of the largest and most lethal Army Aviation unit ever devised in the history of modern warfare, the 1st Aviation Brigade celebration & reunion is planned for May 12-15, 2016. This celebration will include Ft Rucker post tours, a look at the training facilities, briefings on current Army aviation equipment, training displays, a little simulator time on the new stuff, static aircraft displays, and a memorial service. For more details and registration, email: goldenhawkes.1stavnbd50th@gmail.com or check the website at:

<https://13thdeltacombataviationbattalion.shutterfly.com>



VHPA Reunion

The 33rd Annual VHPA reunion will be held in Reno, NV July 5-10, 2016 at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino. Local tours, a golf outing, sighting, speakers, mini reunions, and a host of other scheduled events are on the agenda. For further details: <http://www.vhpa.org/news.htm>

What can I do for CHPA?

by Andy Burleigh



Andy Burleigh

As the new CHPA VP of Membership, I'm so glad you asked.

This is your organization and we need you to recruit qualified members to make it stronger. Every combat-qualified crew or pilot is a welcome addition, and we especially need more post-Vietnam members. We don't yet have our first qualified female member.

Please consider how Terry Garlock did it last week.

At Mimi's, his Peachtree City, GA coffee hangout, Skip Ragan came in to join him. Skip flew slicks his 1st Vietnam tour with the Kingsmen in I Corps, focused on SOG, FOB, LRRP and SF missions to unmentionable places with an all-volunteer crew. His 2nd tour was with Terry's 334th unit, though two years later and he flew Cobras with the Playboys after Terry had flown with the Dragon platoon.



Ed "Skip" Ragan

Terry said to Skip, "There's an organization you need to join," followed by Skip's dubious look and "What?"

Terry told him CHPA and what it means, that we include crew as members even though we screwed up and left them out of the name, and told him, "You need to be a member of this one, buddy!"

You can pay \$30 for a year or \$55 for two years, or at your advanced age, Grandpa, Life Membership is only \$175. So get out your credit card and tell me which one you want and I'll do the rest to make it easy on you since I can vouch for you."

Skip gave Terry his credit card and said, "Do Life for \$175 so I don't have to put up with your crap every year!" Well, OK then. Terry already has Skip's detailed info so he can enter it into the CHPA system for him.

Now, Skip has as many stories as I do though I flew OH-6s with the Cav in the Delta, and we know each other well since I was a member of the Pucker Factor Club when Terry first set it up in Peachtree City before I moved to South Carolina. Terry frequently joked that since Skip and I are both blessed with an abundant gift of gab, if we spend too much time close together it might cause a rip in the fabric of space-time.

But now that I was Shanghaied to be VP of Membership and Skip is a new CHPA member, I am already conspiring with him by phone to get his help recruiting.

Skip knows the parents of a female UH-60 pilot who served in Afghanistan and was the unit CO, so here's what Terry and I told Skip. "When you get in touch tell her we want her as a member, and Terry will sponsor the first \$30 for her two year membership if she will pay the other \$25 to have skin in the game." So maybe that will work, and maybe she will lead us to others, we'll see.

You can do the same as you persuade the other Type-A combat helicopter crew and pilots you know that they should belong to CHPA. If you are willing you might even try, "I'll sponsor your first year with \$30 out of my pocket, but don't embarrass me by letting your membership lapse, rotor-head!"

Finally, Terry's cell number is below and for now he's the one who enters new members into the CHPA system. If you risk losing a prospective member reluctant to do the paperwork, call Terry and if not immediately convenient he'll set a time to do it over the phone. Of course you have to be able to vouch for their combat experience, else Terry will need to ask them to send documentation.

This is doing our part to make CHPA a better organization. Now it's your turn. Bring in new members to make CHPA stronger, and reach out to me with any recruiting ideas you might have. Here's how to reach me or Terry.

Andy Burleigh, CHPA VP Membership
404-625-5321 cell membership@chpa-us.org

Terry Garlock, CHPA Treasurer
770-630-6064 cell hq@chpa-us.org

Note the new member application and member renewal forms attached. Forward this newsletter to qualified friends. Recruit members and please stay current.

CHPA – 800-832-5144
hq@chpa-us.org
PO Box 2585
Peachtree City, GA 30269



Combat Helicopter Pilots Association



Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

www.chpa-us.org, 800-832-5144

Membership Application

Contact Information/Profile:

Name (Rank/Mr./Ms.) _____ Date of Birth _____

Name You Prefer to Go By _____ Address Line 1 _____

Address Line 2 _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

eMail _____

Military Aviation Information:

Flight School Class & No. _____ Branch of Service _____ Combat Flight Hours _____

Combat Tour Date(s) With Units _____

Location or Theater _____ Combat Acft (List All) _____

Call Sign(s) _____ Medals/Awards _____

Optional Information:

Hobbies _____ Current Employer and Position _____

Related Associations to Which You Belong _____

How Did You Learn About CHPA? _____

Name & eMail of a Friend Who May Wish to Join _____

Membership Type and Dues:

Annual Pilot Flight Crew One Year - \$30 Two Year - \$55 Three Year - \$80

Lifetime Pilot Flight Crew Under 50 - \$585 50 - 59 - \$475 60 - 69 - \$350 70 & over - \$175

Friend of CHPA, \$30/yr Friend of CHPA, Corporate - \$50/yr Legacy*

* For Legacy Members, Qualifying deceased family member information:

Name _____ Relationship _____ Service _____ Aircraft _____

LIFE Membership dues may be paid in installments with an initial payment of \$100 plus three equal payments over the next three months. If you prefer this method of payment, please initial here: _____.

Payment Method:

Cash Check (Please make check payable to CHPA) Credit Card AMEX MC VISA

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____

If this is a gift membership paid by credit card, or paid by corporate card, please provide billing name and address:

Signature _____

I hereby authorize CHPA to automatically renew my annual membership. Initials: _____

If mailing, send application and payment to: CHPA, P.O. Box 2585, Peachtree City, GA 30269.

I certify that the above information is true and correct. I understand that my membership application will be reviewed by the CHPA Board and that, upon approval, my payment will be processed. If membership is denied, my payment will be refunded in full.

Please attach documentation of qualifications such as DD214, unit orders, award orders, combat flight records, or other documentation of combat helicopter experience.

Please call 800-832-5144 or eMail hq@chpa-us.org if you have any questions. Thank you.

I acknowledge that information provided on this application may be used by CHPA for publishing an online and/or printed directory or for eMail communications to and from the membership. If you do not wish to receive eMail from CHPA, such as the monthly newsletter, please check here. _____



Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

www.chpa-us.org, 800-832-5144

Membership **Renewal**

Please use this form to renew your membership; not for new applications for membership.

CHPA notifies its members that their dues are about to expire. The majority of members can easily renew their dues online by logging into the Web site, www.chpa-us.org, and visiting My Profile under the Directory tab. While online, you can also update all of your profile information. However, if you experience difficulty or would prefer to renew by mailing or faxing this Annual Dues Renewal Form, please feel free to do so. Our fax number and physical address are listed below. Please remember to check your expiration date in your profile before completing this form.

Contact Information/Profile:

Name (Rank/Mr./Ms.) _____ Date of Birth _____

Name You Prefer to Go By _____ Address Line 1 _____

Address Line 2 _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

eMail _____

Membership Type and Dues:

Annual Pilot Flight Crew One Year - \$30 Two Year - \$55 Three Year - \$80

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Friend of CHPA, \$30/yr Friend of CHPA, Corporate - \$50/yr

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If this is a gift membership paid by credit card please provide billing name and address:

Signature _____

I hereby authorize CHPA to automatically renew my annual membership. Initials: _____

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Please call 800-832-5144 or eMail hq@chpa-us.org if you have any questions. Thank you.