



# the swash plate

MONTHLY  
**CHPA**  
NEWSLETTER

**Combat Helicopter Pilots Association, Inc.**

800-832-5144 [hq@chpa-us.org](mailto:hq@chpa-us.org) PO Box 2585, Peachtree City, GA 30269

**May 2016**

## From the President

Notice to rotary wing – crew and pilots - combat vets of the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan and other post-Vietnam conflicts: we want more of you as members. We would like to involve you in leadership, and we want your stories for this newsletter. We'll even help with the writing if you will call us. Help us preserve your legacy and ours.



**Rich Miller**

[president@chpa-us.org](mailto:president@chpa-us.org)

## In This Issue

From The President

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Fallen Angel, 2 Feb, 2007

First, I would like to thank our Treasurer, Terry Garlock for picking up the slack on last month's newsletter when I was dealing with a family emergency. As we combat helicopter pilots are well aware, it lessens the pucker factor when someone you trust is covering your six.

Please know that you have a superb team of CHPA members who are working hard and coordinating the many details needed to enhance our presence, and name branding as the premier Legacy organization within the fraternal aviation community. We had a very successful presence at HAI. Just a few days ago, those same hard working members wrapped up another successful annual presence at the Quad A convention.

Including me, CHPA will have a small group of dedicated members representing CHPA at the upcoming 1st Avn Bde 50th reunion at Fort Rucker. We expect that the camaraderie and enthusiasm will be contagious. If you are attending, please make an effort to meet and greet with us.

Included in my recognition, respect, and praise, is the team who is working to coordinate the next annual CHPA reunion. In the next month or so we will lock in a date, lodging, transportation, tours, a banquet event, and a host of other details that we feel will make you want to attend and re-visit Mother Rucker, home of Army Aviation.

The CHPA leadership is working hard to spread our mission message and to build the membership base.

We are gaining a good deal of visibility among the fraternal aviation community. But, visibility is only one aspect to the success of recruiting new members. I would like to respectfully suggest that the momentum can increase if you, the present members, help with recruiting. So please call or email a fellow combat helicopter pilot and ask them to join our organization. Do not forget our brothers and sisters in the Guard and Reserve who have served.

CHPA is not a Last Man Standing organization but rather a Legacy organization that will continue to exist and foster the preservation the legacy and contributions of crewmembers and pilots in combat, all services, all conflicts.

The CHPA Facebook Group has 3000+ members accessing the site. If you have an opportunity to do so, please join that group.

I would like to remind everyone that the Goldie Fund Scholarship program was kicked off last month. It is a long standing program that provides scholarships for those who are eligible to receive those funds. Please go to our website and review the requirements for submitting an application.

## Do you have Patches?



Several of you have graciously donated patches or pictures of them to CHPA. Please dig through your old patches and consider donating or taking a picture of it and sending to us for inclusion in the newsletter.

Email to [hq@chpa-us.org](mailto:hq@chpa-us.org)

Mail to CHPA, PO Box 2585, Peachtree, GA 30269

## Reunions and Gatherings

### Big 50th for the Golden Hawks!



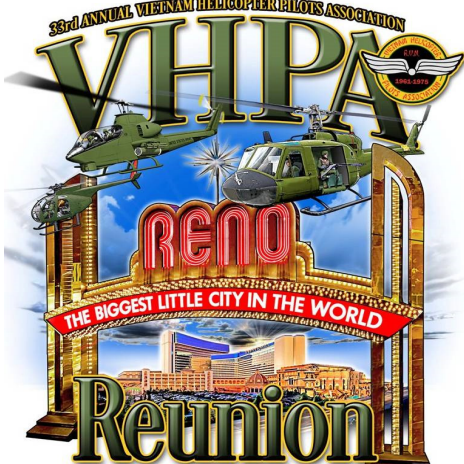
The Golden Anniversary of the largest and most lethal Army Aviation unit ever devised in the history of modern warfare, the 1st Aviation Brigade celebration & reunion is planned for May 12-15, 2016. This celebration will include post tours, a look at the training facilities, briefings on current Army 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](mailto:goldenhawkes.1stavnbd50th@gmail.com)

Or check the website at:

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

### VHPA Reunion



The 33<sup>rd</sup> 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>



## Vinh Long Outlaws Association Reunion

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](http://www.vinhlongoutlaws.com) (Click: "Reunions") or contact Jim Donnelly, [jcdonnelly1@cox.net](mailto:jcdonnelly1@cox.net)  
757-481-6196 for details and forms.

## CHPA Pucker Factor Moments

(Caution: an eye witness could ruin your war story!)

Have you contributed at least one of your **Pucker Factor** moments to The Swashplate? If not, why haven't you pulled pitch and done so? The moment your rear-end took a big bite out of the cockpit seat is something your fellow CHPA members will instantly find familiar. It is not necessary that you be an award winning author. Put everything into your own words and we will be standing by if you want help to put it into "smoother" words.

Every month we try to bring you relevant articles and notices that interest members. Of course that entails gathering news items and articles from various sources and varying topics. We hope we're meeting your needs and would like to hear from you. [HQ@chpa-us.org](mailto:HQ@chpa-us.org) or give us a call at 800-832-5144 and let us know.

## Fallen Angel, 2 February, 2007

By Dan McClinton

I knew something was wrong almost as soon as I got out of bed, that morning. When I tried to check my e-mail, the INTERNET was down. I stuck my head outside the trailer and it was unusually quiet. Something just didn't feel right. As I wasn't on the schedule to fly that day, I took my time putting on my uniform and set out for the TOC.

It was immediately apparent when I opened the door to our CP that something terrible had occurred.

We had an AH-64D Longbow Apache down and the crew was lost.

When they came to work that morning CW4 Keith Yokam and CW2 Jason Defrenn attended a mission briefing with their wingman and flight lead Crazyhorse 07 (CZ07). They walked out the door as Crazyhorse 08 (CZ08), did their pre-flight, ran up and took off just like

every other mission they had flown in Iraq during this deployment. Because the BN had experienced some gun failures during attempted engagements in the last several weeks, the commander had instituted a policy to have crews test fire their guns in the beginning of the Attack Weapons Team (AWT) mission window. Unfortunately, at that time, there were only two approved test fire areas. One was in Zone 101, to the east of Taji, which was regularly patrolled by coalition forces. The other was northwest of Taji, just past a road called Route Redlegs, which was in an area that had not been regularly visited by ground patrols since we had last been here in OIF 2. This was the test fire area that the team of CZ07 and 08 chose that morning.

As they approached the test fire area the flight ran into an enemy ADA (air defense artillery) ambush. Much



like the crew of Easy 40 almost two weeks before, Keith and Jason were surprised by a coordinated attack by multiple weapon systems, designed to bring maximum firepower to bear against an airborne target. Using a model first developed by communist guerillas in Vietnam, the enemy arrayed themselves either in a triangle or square with heavy weapons (usually .50 CAL machine guns or higher) at each corner. They would typically wait until a flight had entered the ambush, engaging the last aircraft. To counter this tactic, some units preferred to use a technique known as combat spread.

In the combat spread, a flight of two basically flew line abreast with at least 1000 feet between aircraft. It required a good deal more communication between aircraft to operate effectively than traditional formations, but it definitely had some advantages. Most of us chose to use a modified free cruise formation where we would remain between 30 and 45 degrees off lead to either side. This allowed lead to see his wingman and allowed them freedom of maneuver without having to announce a turn ahead of time. These formations all had strengths and weaknesses. There was, and still is considerable discussion about what formation(s) should be used in combat for attack helicopters.

On that day, Keith and Jason were flying slightly behind flight lead, as they entered the ambush area. As is their wont, the enemy chose to engage the trail aircraft as he was in the middle of the ambush zone. The aircraft was struck with multiple rounds in the aft near the rear avionics bay and the hydraulic fluid reservoir. In the cockpit of CZ 08, they knew the aircraft had been hit. They pushed through the ambush and attempted to evaluate damage. Keith announced to lead that he had received enemy fire and had a utility hydraulics failure. The emergency procedure for that particular failure would have been for them to make the 5-minute flight back to Camp Taji or, in the worst case, pick a spot and find a place to land.

Keith and Jason elected to stay and fight. On the cockpit flight recorder and gun camera tapes, CW4 Yokam was heard saying that he was electing to stay and fight so nobody else would have to deal with these people. They could have easily landed the aircraft or returned to base but the crew made the decision that they would fight back that day.

During the rapid, turning, turbulent fight that followed CZ 07 never noticed the fire that had begun burning through their wingman's tail section. Keith and Jason had no way of knowing that they were on fire as there are no sensors in that area of the aircraft to detect one. So minutes after initially coming under fire, as they were attempting to engage the enemy with 2.75 inch rockets the aircraft finally gave up, coming apart and falling to earth. Crazyhorse 08 was lost.

CZ 07 first noticed that there was a more serious issue when they attempted to call their wingman and received no answer. Then they spotted the smoke. They flew over to what used to be an AH-64D Longbow Apache and saw a burning twisted wreck in a field, in the middle

of Iraq. They tamped down their feelings of rage and despair and did their job. They called in the Fallen Angel to Attack Mike (Attack main or 1-227<sup>th</sup> HQ), established security and guarded their fallen comrades until the Cavalry arrived.

A Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was Air Assaulted in to secure the site, initially. It took a ground convoy from 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (1BCT) over 7 hours to fight their way through multiple IEDs, taking casualties in the process, to get to the site, but they persevered and eventually made it. It was a particularly bitter pill, for those of us who had been here during OIF 2, to see this area that had been cleared of AIF, again riddled with IEDs and other enemy activity. The pilot's remains were secured and returned to Camp Taji where they were prepared for their journey home. The rest of us were left to think about how this event occurred and how we could work to make sure it didn't happen again.

In the aftermath, we applied lessons learned from this event and we put our heads down and drove on.



CW4 Dan McClinton in Taji, Iraq, north of Baghdad 2006

Anytime a unit loses someone there is a ceremony that according to tradition must be carried out. This occasion was no different.

A military memorial can be quite affecting. I sometimes think that the Army sat down and tried to make something so emotional that it would get it all out of your system at once so you could go on and get past this painful experience.

For those who are unfamiliar with a military memorial service, at the front of the room is a wooden stand; on it is a rifle with its bayonet thrust into the ground for each Soldier that has left us. On top of the rifles today rest the flight helmets of Keith and Jason. Draped around the rifles are their dog tags and at the foot of the rifles are their boots. As there are no caskets present, those are the physical representations of our lost comrades.

After everyone available to attend is present, the ceremony begins while others continue their missions non-stop. The chaplain gives his remarks which are for the most part pretty standard for a funeral service. Then ATTACK 6 makes his remarks, as quoted below in documents I kept from that day:

***Battalion Commander's Remarks, CW4 Keith Yoakum and CW2 Jason Defrenn Memorial, 6 Feb 2007.***

*Troopers and friends of the First Team, the Warrior Brigade, and the troopers of the 1-227th ARB. A special recognition to SGT Brandon Brown, (CW4 Yoakum's nephew from the 618th Eng Co. up North). Thank you all for attending this memorial in honor of our two American heroes. Thank you all for your outpouring of support, thank you Garry Owen for taking care of my guys and helping to bring them home. Thank you Sustainment Brigade, Mortuary Affairs for the sensitive job you perform every day taking care of fallen American Soldiers.*

*On Friday, February 2nd, 2007, the Battalion suffered an immense loss of two American heroes who both chose to embody a cause bigger than their individual aspirations or their families. While we do not risk lives unnecessarily, we have all chosen a profession with the very clear understanding of the danger during our period of setting history for others to follow. With this danger comes the possibility of loss and despite our best efforts we don't always succeed in bringing all of our soldiers home.*

*Such is the case tonight as we mourn the deaths and celebrate the heroic life of two of our own, Chief Warrant Officer Four Keith Yoakum and Chief Warrant Officer Two Jason Defrenn. I will not be able to appropriately express the great loss of these two heroes to the 1-227th Regiment nor the great loss to their families and friends back home. Words alone cannot*

*describe their split second decision to place the lives of their lead aircraft pilots ahead of their own.*

*With extraordinary valor, Keith and Jason led the Battalion by attempting to destroy an enemy anti-aircraft Machine Gun position North of Camp Taji. They pursued this valiant effort while never giving up protecting their lead aircraft from enemy fire. Their heroic achievements on that day were extraordinary as they provided the aerial security to their lead aircraft while maneuvering to a position to engage a heavy anti-aircraft machine gun position that threatened other aircraft teams operating in the same area. This single action, in the face of the enemy fire, saved his lead aircraft from further harm and other aircrews operating in the area. Keith and Jason knew this anti-aircraft system posed a grave danger to other aircraft operating in the area. They understood the grave dangers of enemy anti-aircraft systems very well as only approximately 13 days ago, they were one of the first responders to the UH-60 aircraft shoot down known as Easy 40 East of Baghdad on the 20th of Jan. In this extremely high threat environment and enemy infested area, Keith and Jason identified and destroyed an anti-aircraft system in zone 207 ensuring this enemy threat was eliminated before other aircraft arrived on the scene. As Keith and Jason's determination and valor was evident during the Easy 40 shoot down on the 20th of Jan, so too was their determination and valor on the 2nd of February during the period leading up to their perilous crash.*

*During their valiant efforts, their aircraft, after receiving extensive enemy anti-aircraft machine gun fire, losing power and hydraulic pressure in a severely crippled condition, crashed and this led to their tragic loss. Listening to the voice of Crazy Horse 08 on the radio, it was very clear to me that the lives of their lead aircraft and other aircraft teams operating in the area were of higher importance than their own. Protecting their brothers in arms was very important to Keith and Jason.*

*This is a significant and life changing loss to all of us; however, I believe we must have confidence that somehow their death serves the greater good for Freedom and mankind. For now, we can find comfort in the fact that they fought valiantly while demonstrating the best of our American tradition and that is Selfless Service. They are our heroes. They are First Team heroes. And, they are America's heroes.*

*This is our story and I ask you to tell it to all. You tell them, this story is one of great courage and sacrifice that Americans and America should know. You tell them, we are hurt but we are not broken. While our grief is great, this grief must be channeled into a greater faith and resolve for mission accomplishment and defeating those*

that choose to do further harm to any American soldier. This is our commitment.

*These brave men put their lives, their families, and their dreams on hold because they wanted to make a difference for America. And, that they did! Both of these officers touched every one of you in the First Attack in very close and personal ways. Personal courage, extreme loyalty, selfless service, honor, and laser sharp duty first are core attributes that these two showed every day and on the 2nd of February 2007. Keith and Jason are a part of each and every one of us here as soldiers and leaders.*

*Their bright stars will always shine high above us and their gallant light will guide us in darkness till dawn's early light. And, this will be our motto, "In God is our trust." And, the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave. Both Keith Yoakum and Jason Defrenn, you now re-enter the land of the free and the home and hall of fame of the brave. You will always be in our hearts.*

*Keith Yoakum and Jason Defrenn, Crazy Horse 08, you are mission complete. Rules of Engagement complete and precise; Call sign retired from the Crazy Horse rolls; aircraft logbook of Aircraft 02-05337 complete and closed out; cockpit clean and ready SPARKLING as always; fuel sample checked and found okay; this is Crazy Horse 6, we bid you farewell, Heroes and Brothers at War, until we meet again in some place afar.*

After the commander finished, CW2 Brian Carbone, a member of A Company and friend of both pilots, performed a guitar melody which combined Amazing Grace and the Star Spangled Banner that was most touching.

The final gut wrenching thing is the roll call followed by the firing of the volleys and Taps.

For the roll call the company First Sergeant stands up at the back of the auditorium and calls out a name or two of Soldiers who answer "present" or "here" he then calls out, "Mister Yoakum". Again he calls "CW4 YOAKUM" louder.

Finally, he shouted "**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER FOUR KEITH YOAKUM**" even louder.

Then same procedure was done for Jason.

"Mister Defrenn"

"CW2 DEFRENN"

**"CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER TWO JASON DEFRENN"**

Then you could hear the muffled commands to the firing party just outside the open door. Then the snap and pop of the rifles being readied followed by . . .

READY. AIM. FIRE.

FIRE.

FIRE.

The sound of the rifles echoes through the building.

Then comes the sound of Taps played by a single bugle. It just rips right through me. I stand there at attention with tears streaming down my face looking straight ahead.

As the final notes drifted away into the smoke laden sky at Camp Taji we all filed up to the helmets sitting on the rifles at the front of the room said a prayer or a goodbye and then went out of the building and went back to work.

Several weeks later 1 BCT caught the bastard responsible for planning the helicopter ambush. Last we heard of him he was in jail, which was too good for him as far as we were concerned.

CW2 Defrenn was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (posthumously) and CW4 Keith Yoakum was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (posthumously) for their actions on 2 February 2007.

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CW4 (Ret) Dan McClinton is a member of the CHPA Board of Directors. He was an AH-64 Apache Longbow pilot in Iraq with 1/227<sup>th</sup> Avn, 1<sup>st</sup> Cav from 2004-2005, 2006-2007, and 2009-2010. He is presently the Program Manager for Bell 412 Flight Safety International, DFW Center. DMcClinton@chpa-us.org

## Share this Swash Plate newsletter

Note the member app and renewal forms below - send to those qualified to be members  
CHPA – 800-832-5144 [hq@chpa-us.org](mailto:hq@chpa-us.org) PO Box 2585, Peachtree City, GA 30269



Combat Helicopter Pilots Association





## Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

### Membership Application

Mail or eMail application with supporting documents  
(please print clearly)

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

#### Contact information/Profile:

Name (Rank/Mr./Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Name you prefer to go by \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary eMail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phn \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary eMail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phn \_\_\_\_\_

#### Military Aviation Information:

Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Flight School Class/# \_\_\_\_\_ Total Flight Hrs \_\_\_\_\_ Combat Flight Hrs \_\_\_\_\_  
Combat Tour Date(s) With Units \_\_\_\_\_  
Location or Theater \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Combat Acft (List All) \_\_\_\_\_ Combat Medals/Awards \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach documentation of qualifications such as DD214, unit orders, award orders, combat flight records, or other documentation of combat helicopter experience. If the documents you need are inaccessible, please call us to discuss.

#### Optional Information:

Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_ Current Employer/Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Related Associations to Which You Belong \_\_\_\_\_  
How Did You Learn About CHPA? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name/eMail of others you would recommend as qualified for CHPA Membership \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership Type and Dues:

<b>Annual:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot	<input type="checkbox"/> Flight Crew	<input type="checkbox"/> One Year-\$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Year-\$55	<input type="checkbox"/> Three Year-\$80	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend of CHPA, Individual- \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend of CHPA, Corporate-\$50				
<b>Lifetime:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot	<input type="checkbox"/> Flight Crew	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 50-\$585	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-59-\$475	<input type="checkbox"/> 60-69-\$350	<input type="checkbox"/> 70 & over-\$175
If you wish to pay \$100 now and the balance of Lifetime dues in equal installments over 3 months, initial here _____						
<b>Legacy:</b> Complimentary membership for immediate family member of deceased who would have qualified. Deceased Name _____ Relationship _____ Service _____ Aircraft _____						

#### Payment Method:

☐ Cash ☐ Check (Payable to CHPA, mail to address above)  
Credit Card: ☐ AMEX ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ Discover

To avoid expiration, I hereby authorize CHPA to renew my annual membership with this credit card - Initials: \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_  
If this is a gift membership, or paid by business credit card, you must provide billing name and address tied to your credit card or the credit card payment authorization will fail:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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 membership will be accepted. If membership is denied, my payment will be refunded. 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.



## Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

### Membership **Renewal**

**DO NOT USE FOR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Mail or eMail application with supporting documents  
(please print clearly)

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

You may either renew by completing and mailing or emailing the form below, or renew online by logging in to [www.chpa-us.org](http://www.chpa-us.org) and selecting My Profile on the Menu. At the top you will see a reminder to pay dues and to check your expiration date. If you get stuck call us and we'll figure it out.

#### Contact i nformation/Profile:

Name (Rank/Mr./Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Name you prefer to go by \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary eMail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phn \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary eMail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phn \_\_\_\_\_  
Name/eMail of others you would recommend as qualified for CHPA Membership \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership Type and Dues:

<b>Annual:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot	<input type="checkbox"/> Flight Crew	<input type="checkbox"/> One Year-\$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Year-\$55	<input type="checkbox"/> Three Year-\$80	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend of CHPA, Individual- \$30		<input type="checkbox"/> Friend of CHPA, Corporate-\$50			
<b>Lifetime:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot	<input type="checkbox"/> Flight Crew	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 50-\$585	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-59-\$475	<input type="checkbox"/> 60-69-\$350	<input type="checkbox"/> 70 & over-\$175
If you wish to pay \$100 now and the balance of Lifetime dues in equal installments over 3 months, initial here _____						

#### Payment Method:

☐ Cash ☐ Check (Payable to CHPA, mail to address above)  
Credit Card: ☐ AMEX ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ Discover

To avoid expiration, I hereby authorize CHPA to renew my annual membership with this credit card - Initials: \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_  
If this is a gift membership, or paid by business credit card, **you must provide billing name and address tied to your credit card**  
or the credit card payment authorization will fail:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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