



the swash plate

MONTHLY
CHPA
NEWSLETTER

Combat Helicopter Pilots Association, Inc.

800-832-5144 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

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I hope everyone enjoyed a great Memorial Day weekend. Originally called Decoration Day, it was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868. On the first Decoration Day, 148 years ago General James Garfield, later to become the 20th President, made a speech which was in remembrance for the fallen soldiers of the Civil War. Then and now, Memorial Day is a day for Americans to remember those who risked their lives for the greater good of our country and show our appreciation for their ultimate sacrifice.

During the CHPA reunion in Washington, DC I had the distinct honor of participating in a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. My wife had the pleasure of talking with a WWII veteran for a few minutes. Those were memorable moments that neither of us will ever forget. Also not to be forgotten is that America is a great country and it is because of the sacrifices and valor of its brave service members.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending the recent 1st Avn Bde 50th year reunion at Fort Rucker. It was a two-fold, phenomenal opportunity. First, I was able to meet with fellow combat helicopter pilots of my era. Secondly, I talked with the current leadership at Fort Rucker who, with the utmost professionalism and leadership skills, help produce and guide our future Army aviators. But know that I was not alone in representing CHPA at this historical event. Also included on the CHPA team were Rusty, Lynn, and Loren. Rusty and Lynn are a husband/wife team who, in addition to this event, has repeatedly represented CHPA when we participate in trade shows. They have been doing it for a number of years and are extremely successful. Loren is a past Treasurer of CHPA. He represented us at the 1st AB reunion banquet. CHPA owes these enthusiastic volunteers a debt of gratitude for their hard work in making our Legacy organization one that is Above The Best.



CDR 1st AVN BDE - Col Buddy Hopkins (L), Rich Miller - CHPA, CSM Michael Sutterfield (R)

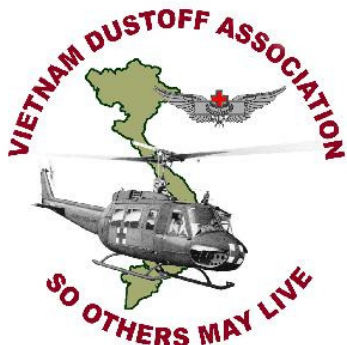
Do you have Patches?



Patches courtesy of Carl (Skip) Bell

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

Reunions and Gatherings



Vietnam Dustoff Association

"So Others May Live"

Gathering of Rusty Eagles--Reunion

OCTOBER 13 – 15, 2016

Pensacola, FL

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.vietnamdustoff.com/2016reunion.html>



USMC/Combat Helicopter & Tiltrotor Association

Pop- A- Smoke Reunion

AUGUST 24 – 28, 2016

Jacksonville, FL

FOR MORE INFORMATION

800-562-7226 / (757) 625-6401

skatz@popasmoke.com or lzzok@popasmoke.com



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 (Click: "Reunions") or contact Jim Donnelly, jcdonnelly1@cox.net 757-481-6196 for details and forms.

“At Ease, As You Were, Now Listen Up”

By: Gary Ferguson

Sound familiar? Those of us who have served in combat had these words embedded into our subconscious mind. To this day I can still hear the whoop, whoop, whoop of the Huey's rotor wash on the chopper pads while our chopper pilots waited for our arrival. Saddle up, its mission time again and we were grateful for the ride to work.

Not a day goes by that those memories of my combat days with Co. D 1st of the 5th Air Cav in Viet Nam, during the Tet offensive, is not front and center. For over 50 years I have dealt with those memories, held in the form of pictures in my subconscious mind. Those experiences are at the heart of my effort to heal from the invisible wounds of war. The first 19 years after discharge, I survived with the generous use of medications, alcohol, and drugs to numb my physical and emotional pain. Every veteran has his or her individual body pain consisting of physical, emotional, and spiritual diseases. Western medicine has libraries full of what it calls various states of disease treated by medications and various therapies. Veterans refer to it as simply “embracing the suck”.

Over the past 29 years I have not found it necessary to use any type of medications, prescribed or not, to deal with my military experiences. Recognizing that if I was to survive this hopeless state of mind and body I had better come up with a better plan. I got tired of holding my mud while slowly dying inside. Our military training was quite simple, to adapt and overcome, in order to survive. Our purpose was the mission, which gave us our sense of value. Our fire team and rear support made our outcomes possible. The military mindset of surviving creates a sense of learned helplessness when it is outside the context of the mission. Therein lies the problem for our veterans. Surviving is the opposite of Thriving.

THE BAD NEWS: Without a new mission that gives them a sense of purpose, Veterans will continue to struggle with their identity.

THE GOOD NEWS: Advanced Brain Technologies has partnered up with Pathways for Veterans to provide their propriety Listening Program to our veteran communities and their families. This is a game changer for our veterans. Can you imagine entering a hot LZ without the benefit of the pilot /copilots, their door gunners and/or air support? The outcome of the mission would certainly be different, likely, not possible!

Finally, veterans helping veterans are leading the way for a different outcome. Our veterans are now being provided a state-of-the-art technology team to make certain their new mission to transition back to civilian life is a success. Our mission, to make certain every veteran has the tools to transition back into civilian life with no one left behind. The Veteran-At-Ease-Reset-Listening-Protocols have now been implemented as one of the cornerstones of the Pathways 16-week curriculum-for-living program.

Much like the team who took us to work every day, but more importantly, brought us home at the end of the mission, Pathways has assembled an extraordinary team of professionals in the field and complementary alternative

modalities to heal the hearts and minds of our veterans. There is no greater healing sound than that of the distant sound of whoop, whoop, whoop coming to pick you up your wounded and then take you back to base camp.

The profound gratitude that infantry soldiers have for those who kept us safe transcends this lifetime. Chopper pilots are like firemen, "they are going in when everyone else is headed out". I personally know of no other group I would rather ask for help, than Chopper Pilots.

The help Pathways is asking us to provide is to spread the word to our veterans and their families of the service provided at Pathways and The Veteran-At-Ease-Reset-Listening-Protocols under a GSA contract through Pathways and Advanced Brain Technologies.

There is no cost to our veterans since they have already paid the price. If you would like to continue to serve your country by serving our veterans, please visit our website at www.pathwaysforveterans.org and fill out the contact for information link at the top of the page and a Pathways trained representative will assist you. For old school guys, just pick up the phone and contact Gary Ferguson on his direct line at 1-916-932-6549.

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 or give us a call at 800-832-5144 and let us know.

Vietnam Adventures of a Young Helicopter Pilot or Collecting Material for Future Happy Hours

By Duane Keele
USMC, Air America

Fresh out of Pensacola flight training in the spring of 1965 with a brand new set of Naval Aviation Wings, I was headed for my first squadron assignment at Kaneohe MCAS in Oahu, Hawaii with a big smirk on my face because the other graduates couldn't believe I had gotten such a great assignment as a fresh newbie aviator just out of flight school. However, only minutes after checking in at HMM161 the smirk quickly disappeared. The old "Pineapple Squadron" was at present enroute to Vietnam where the buildup in SE Asia was now underway. I had expected that the first few months out of the training command would be devoted to building time and learning squadron tactics for future battle conditions. DUH!! A week later, I was on a plane to Okinawa to join my battlefield bound squadron almost directly out of flight school to the early days of the Vietnam War.

When I finally got over that shock, my next thoughts turned to how this might all end. Several options occurred to me. I could come out of this in a zipped in a

body bag. Bad option. I could return maimed seriously, a mental wreck, catch a horrible disease in one of those bars I had heard of, wounded and sent home early, captured, or maybe even as a hero. Being shot down never crossed my mind. So what happened? Shot down and scared speechless, but none of the other misfortunes befell me.

After airlifting the supplies for Chu Lai airfield off the LPH we were on, the squadron moved up to Hue Phu Bai airport. A few months there and I was sent with a detachment of seven of our aircraft to Qui Nhon. It was a huge improvement from the secluded Phu Bai airfield since the Qui Nhon base was located almost downtown for a little off duty R and R. We were also offered to move into the air conditioned barracks of the army helicopter company moving further inland. This only lasted a short time since the last of the army troops being moved out went on a little temper tantrum and tore up what to us was a tremendous upgrade from

tents. I don't think they thought Marines would be happy living in such plush conditions.

Given the opportunity, I found that a bunch of senior Marine officers will always come up with any way to glorify the Marine Corps' image while at the same time furthering their careers. Apparently somewhere along the upper Marine Corps' chain of command someone found out that the 1ST AIR CAV had formed into an aviation assault force and was headed for the An Khe area, just inland from Qui Nhon. The army was preparing to make a big show of the CAV's arrival by "staging" a "clearing operation" in the vicinity of Bon Son. News correspondents and cameras were even to be included in the operation. Those aforementioned Marine leaders decided these photo ops would be great for the Corps image and volunteered our seven helicopters to tag along behind the army.

The day before the operation the army dispatched a helicopter load of experts to the operation's LZ to land and look the area over to insure good photo op. But another "sinister force" in the area was observing this load of experts wondering what they could possibly be up to. Come the morning of the operation, our helicopters joined up in the staging area behind the army's 20 Hueys. I was in the last helicopter flying as copilot with Capt. Phillips. We picked up our 8 troops and fell into formation as tail-end Charlie. A very well organized formation headed for the LZ on what was a very pleasant morning. However, as the formation neared the LZ the peace and quiet gave way to a lot of radio traffic. It was quickly becoming obvious something not very pleasant was taking place up ahead. The crews in the lead Hueys could be heard calling the gunships over the LZ giving locations of the ground fire they were receiving. The gunships were calling instructions and locations to each other, and it was becoming apparent that our photo op was turning into the real McCoy. The radio chatter included sounds of gunfire in the background. As we came into sight of the landing area, we could see the gunships making runs on the different gun emplacements and an army troop Huey sitting in the LZ not moving.

Approaching the outer edge of the LZ, I could see a VC machine gunner starting to open fire from the right side of our approach path into the drop zone and then a second emplacement started to open fire on the left side to form a cross fire. It was the only way in and we were going right through the middle. The helicopter ahead was already past the fire. We were their main target. I was trying to monitor the engine instruments when I heard the first thud. We were hit. Then another and

another until it sounded like we were flying through a hail storm. Shortly following that, I saw the engine oil gage start to drop. I pointed it out to Capt. Phillips. We both knew this aircraft wasn't going to fly much longer, but all we could do was go as far as it would go. We managed a power landing beside a burning Huey and dropped our troops. We lifted off trying to get out of the hot LZ. I called the helicopter ahead of us flown by Capt. Martinez, to advise him we wouldn't be going much further under our present circumstances. He replied he would cover us. We went probably a quarter of a mile before the engine seized, and we went into a rice paddy. Capt. Phillips made nice autorotation, and Capt. Martinez swung around and followed us in.

On the ground, I looked out about 75 yards and saw at least a couple dozen VC coming out on the paddy towards our H-34. (I learned later we had landed right in a regimental sized enemy headquarters - that "sinister force" watching our experts the day before.) Capt. Phillips, I suppose out of habit, was shutting down the helicopter. I yelled at him that it had already shut itself down in flight as I twisted to the window and hurled myself the 10 feet from the cockpit to the rice to the rice paddy and sprinted the 30 feet or so to the rescue helicopter.

Our crew chief, a small guy from New York, had pulled his M-60 machine gun from its mount and was standing in the paddy beside the helicopter with the gun resting in his arm firing at the oncoming VC. I don't know if he hit anything, but he looked like a miniature John Wayne. I was yelling at the crew from my position in the rescue helicopter to "move it for God's sake." While doing this, the VC had come out of the jungle on the left side of the rescue helicopter. A firefight had broken out on that side between the VC and the left side gunner. I suddenly felt a hot burning thump on my butt. I instinctively dropped flat on the floor feeling sure I had just qualified for the Purple Heart. This of course froze the crew running for the helicopter. I reached back to feel the extent of my wound. I raised and looked back to see the side M-60 shell casings flying all over the cabin. No blood, no torn flesh, no Purple Heart. I continued to motion the crew to get their ass in the helicopter. We departed the paddy with no hits.

Our crew was done for and felt quite relieved. The helicopters that got out of the LZ unscathed on the first trip had to go back with more troops to reinforce the first wave. Some did so for a third trip. When the day was over, only three of the army's 20 helicopters were left in flying condition. Three were left in the LZ - one burning. We recovered our seven helicopters. The one I was in was recovered a couple days later and had to be sent

for extensive repairs. It had 53 bullet holes in it. Seventeen in one cylinder which is what brought it down and probably kept the cockpit free of bullets. None of our pilots or crew were injured on the mission. But wait....the rest of the story. It of course took me months to quit hearing about my wound. But another event that occurred that day received attention for a lengthier period. It seems that when I arrived back at the staging area, I was the only one of the crew that had clean boots and pants cuffs. The other crewmen were

covered with mud up to their knees. I was accused of making a most rapid transit from a downed helicopter to a rescue chopper. I was never able to explain how it happened, but perhaps there is a speed at which Vietnamese mud is not able to adhere to clothing. If so, I probably obtained that speed that day.

It was not one of my better days in Vietnam, but it has provided me with ample story material at reunions.

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 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:

Annual:	<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				
Lifetime:	<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 _____						
Legacy:	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 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 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 _____
 Name/eMail of others you would recommend as qualified for CHPA Membership _____

Membership Type and Dues:

Annual: Pilot Flight Crew One Year-\$30 Two Year-\$55 Three Year-\$80
 Friend of CHPA, Individual- \$30 Friend of CHPA, Corporate-\$50

Lifetime: Pilot Flight Crew Under 50-\$585 50-59-\$475 60-69-\$350 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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