



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

October 2016

We want your pucker factor stories no matter which conflict you flew in. I realize not everyone enjoys writing, so call me and we'll get your story by phone, and you get final editing approval. Your fellow CHPA members will enjoy reading your version of an interesting day.

Here's several ways to reach me.

Terry Garlock – Swashplate Editor
770-630-6064 cell
800-832-5144 CHPA
hq@chpa-us.org



Rich Miller

president@chpa-us.org

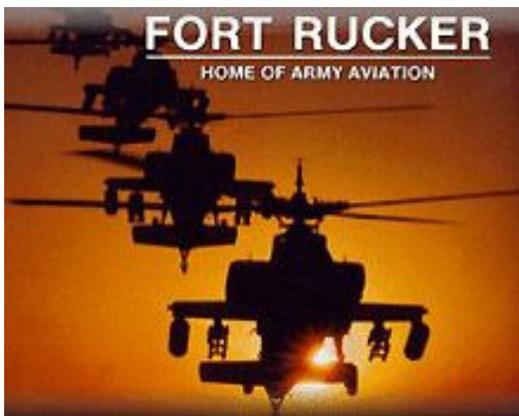
In This Issue

- The President's Corner
- Same Song, Different Dance - by Dan McClinton
- A War Story . . . well, sort of! - by Terry Garlock
- Reunions and Gatherings
- Member apps/renewal forms

The President's Corner

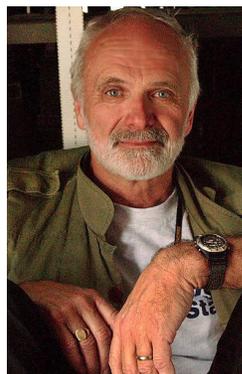
CHPA Annual Reunion

Better hurry to register at www.chpa-us.org for the CHPA Annual Reunion near Ft. Rucker Thu Oct 13 through Sat Oct 15.



The event will include a tour of the Fort Rucker Aviation Museum and a special annual Dothan community event. There will be three dining events, two of which will be held in the Landing Zone located at the former O'Club. Most of you likely have fond memories of that facility and the long since removed aircraft on sticks. As always, we will hold the member's annual meeting.

Transportation from the Dothan, AL airport to the Holiday Inn can be arranged by calling the hotel at 334-699-1400.



autobiography.

The most important part of the Annual Reunion is our fellowship. I look forward to seeing you there.

Please Recruit Members

CHPA is not a last-man-standing organization. We are a non-profit 501(c)19 Veterans Organization of members who have served in rotary wing combat, an elite club of a select few. With your help, we are preserving the Legacy of combat helicopter crews, and the fellowship among them, for generations. With that in mind, do a

favor for CHPA, and for someone you know is qualified to be a member. Reach out to them and start the conversation with *“There’s an organization you need to join.”* When asked why, tell them, “Because there are damn few people qualified to join since it requires combat rotary wing experience. You’re qualified to be a member of that elite club, and you should be a member!” You can tell them CHPA is about preserving the Legacy of rotary

wing crew and pilots, that we remember and honor fallen aviation comrades, and we are dedicated to educational and charitable activities related to the military helicopter community – all services, all branches.

Or you could borrow Terry Garlock’s method, “Shut up and get out your wallet! I’ll sign you up and you’ll be connected to others like you.”

Same Song, Different Dance

“Crazyhorse is cleared to engage...”

ZONE 9, VCTY Sadr City, 2 June 2007

by Dan McClinton



Well, here I am flying again as Crazyhorse 07, wingman for CW4 Kevin Smith and Attack 06 again...pretty much because nobody else wants to. Once again, we are trolling around in the Ironhorse AO west of Camp Taji. It’s as dark as five feet up

a well digger’s ass and we are flying over a rutted, blown-up, worn-out road providing security for a route clearance team looking for IEDs. We wonder how long it’s going to be, before the commander gets tired of flying around in the dark looking for bad guys who, in this weather, are more than likely hiding inside somewhere watching goat porn, or whatever it is that they did, when not planting IEDs or launching rockets indiscriminately in the general direction of people they had some sort of beef with.



I look around, keeping an eye on the lights of the surrounding villages and from time to time, Camp Taji.

The weather is pretty crappy as a dust storm is starting to blow in from out west and the visibility is starting to drop. My ability to see the surrounding lights are my only clue to the amount of reduced visibility. If we screwed around and let the visibility get too bad we would have to resort to attempting a recovery on instruments to either BIAP or Balad, the airbase about 20 miles to the north, since Taji didn’t have an approach that would allow us to recover in this mess.

As the trail aircraft in the flight, we monitor the BN command network. A part of our duties is to call them periodically, to update them with what we are doing and where we are. We also monitor the net in case BN comes up with something important for us to do.

Around 2130, we get a call from CPT Paul Daigle, the battalion battle captain, directing us to a grid zone identifier located in Zone 9 near Sadr City. It is an area, from which, a lot of indirect fire has been aimed at coalition forces over the past several months.

A large observation balloon known as a JLENS¹ on FOB Loyalty has spotted an indirect fire team setting up rockets in the middle of a soccer field, which were being aimed at the “Green Zone”².

We were then told to proceed to that location in order to engage and destroy the rockets, the launchers and any people dumb enough to be around them. Flying in my front seat tonight is CW2 Brian Carbone who was assigned to the Avengers of A Company; he rapidly

¹ JLENS is the name given a large balloon with cameras that were flown over several sites in Baghdad and on Camp Taji.

² “The Green Zone” was the area in central Baghdad where the seat of Iraqi government was based as well as several embassies and assorted US Military installations including a hospital.

enters the coordinates given us and sends them via the aircraft IDM to flight lead.³

I called 06 on team internal and gave them the heads up that data was inbound via the IDM, "Check mail, Target 10." I then attempted to brief the commander on the particulars of the situation. The target hand-over and mission re-tasking ends up taking a lot longer than it should have. I don't know if they were distracted, forgot how to store the target in the aircraft database, or whatever, but eventually Brian ended up re-sending the information to lead, verbally as we flew towards downtown Baghdad as fast as our aircraft would go.

When the Apache is flying near max speed it has a particular gait and vibration that is not unlike a horse at a full gallop. To fly faster in a helicopter, the pilot pushes the cyclic forward with his right hand and pulls the collective up with his left. So the person flying (depending on your stature) actually leans forward like a rider on horseback. We were truly Cavalry Soldiers on the charge heading for a fight.

About half way there we get another call from Attack Mike telling us that an OCFI ROZ⁴ has become active in the vicinity of our target. We get the center-mass grid for the ROZ and Brian enters it into the aircraft database as a 3KM ring, which shows up on the moving map display on my instrument panel as a red circle with a cross hatch. This allows us a quick reference to easily see the airspace now denied us. Technology is great when it works like it is supposed to.

It is immediately obvious that we can no longer fly direct to the target and now have to adjust our route to the east to avoid the Operators. I relay to lead that we now need to fly east between the Tigris River and Route Pluto (the north/south running road that skirted Sadr City to the west) due to the OCFI activity. Since we really didn't want to fly into Sadr City unless we had to, we had about a half mile stripe of area that we could use with Sadr City on the east side and the OCFI ROZ on the other, as the most direct route available to the target.

The detour ends up costing us several minutes enroute. It caused me some anxiety because at that time we had no way of knowing if that the minutes lost would mean that the enemy would be able to engage with their weapons or even possibly escape. I felt antsy, and time crawled as the adrenaline began to pump through me. I

realized I was squeezing the cyclic in a death grip (a nervous habit I had) so I took a deep breath and flexed my right hand to get some circulation going again and to try and relax a bit. I sneak a look off to my left, I can see the Oil Refinery that was dubbed the Taji flame east of the airfield so I know at least the weather is still holding for now.

As we closed in on the target, I told Attack Mike that we would be pushing off the BN net to the ground unit. We got to the freq in time to hear CZ 06 making his initial call to the owning ground unit, Strike Main. After the usual back and forth, Strike relayed the same basic info that Attack Mike had given us initially. We were rapidly closing to within range. Brian had slaved our sight to the coordinates of the suspected enemy rocket team and was scanning for a target. We were still several kilometers out when Brian called that he had the target in sight. I had his video as an underlay on my left Tactical Situation Display, so glanced down and sure enough there was a van and what looked like a lot of rocket launchers arrayed across the soccer field, all aimed toward the "Green Zone" (the area where the Iraqi Government and a lot of coalition infrastructure was located). I called lead and let them know we had a "tally" on the target.



We ended up working through some shot geometry due to the location of the OCFI ROZ. Unfortunately for us, the ROZ was placed in an area that prevented us from using the most advantageous axis of attack on our target. So we worked around to the southwest and set up an attack axis headed toward Sadr City, shooting where our

³ The IDM or Improved Data Modem (Improved from what I don't know) is part of what makes a Longbow Apache a Longbow. The IDM is a tri-service device that offers backward capability to the OH-58D airborne target hand-over system (ATHS) and tactical fire (TACFIRE) network. With TACFIRE integration, the Longbow can send target information to the entire TACFIRE net for immediate suppression. Besides target handover, the IDM provides the capability to send fragmentary orders (FRAGOs), enemy/friendly location updates, graphic updates and changes, and any other pertinent information from the commander to the Longbow Apache company/team, or from the aircraft to a commander, while en route to or in the battle position. This timely exchange of information reduces the time of manually plotting information and increases operational tempo, allowing the commander to shape the battlefield. The data transfer module (DTM), mounted in the Longbow Apache, is used to quickly upload the

mission data and initialize aircraft systems for the mission. Data can be loaded into all aircraft or loaded into the first aircraft and transmitted via the IDM to all other aircraft in the mission. The IDM in Iraq was used, primarily to move target data from one aircraft to another in the flight. Once accepted by the receiving aircraft, and then made the priority target by the CPG, the aircraft sights could be slaved accurately to the position.

⁴ OCFI or Other Combat Forces Iraq was the euphemistic term used to describe a conglomeration of Special Operations units that were operating in Iraq. They sought out to capture or kill high value targets and had a lot of assets that were devoted to that task. A ROZ or Restricted Operating Zone was established to keep those, not involved in the operation, clear or to use the military made-up word, deconflicted.

rounds would cross over the stands on the south side of the soccer field. Kevin told us that, initially, we should take the van and they would fire on the rocket launchers and then we would adjust future attack runs from there.

ATK 06 then called Strike main, described the target and asked for permission to engage. Immediately Strike called back, "Crazyhorse 06 you are cleared to engage..." Kevin had already rolled the flight inbound toward the target. I had slowed down in order to give us enough spacing behind lead to cover their break and then be able to engage our targets as quickly as possible.

Lead is pressing in on the target and then begins firing his 30mm cannon...on the van.

Brian tells me they are hitting our target, so I glance down to the TSD just in time to see lead's 30mm rounds striking the van. Not wanting Brian to try and shift targets at the last moment and possibly screw up the shot I tell him to go ahead and hit the van again. Brian fired two ten round 30mm cannon bursts into the van, which caused the smoldering van to burst into flames.

Several days later, when we saw the FLIR video shot from the JLENS, we could see two individuals running away from the van toward the bleachers as our team engaged the van. I don't know about lead but we never saw those guys with our TADS. Score another one for the legacy FLIR which was notorious for a lack of resolution. Fortunately, some overhead asset saw them and tracked them to their hiding place in Sadr City, where they and their operation were rolled up in a raid a few days later.

As the flight came around for the second pass, Kevin relayed to us that he was going to take out some of the rocket launchers. First, they fired two pair of rockets with little to no effect. Continuing the pass, they began to engage with the aircraft's 30mm cannon. From my position it appeared that they were almost directly above the target. I could plainly see the rockets exploding as they were struck by the 30mm rounds. Some of them cooking off and flying around the soccer field like some pyrotechnic snake gone wild. It was pretty spectacular. Due to the fact that Kevin had slowed to almost a hover, I maneuvered around to protect him as best I could by flying a figure 8 pattern to the south and east. During this, one of the rockets lit-off and launched, going just underneath Kevin and ATK 6's aircraft. I was worried that they were about to shoot themselves down so I called a warning, "You had a rocket just go under you..." Immediately after the call, lead accelerated and moved out to a little more respectable distance from the exploding ordinance.

It was a phenomenon that was common among Apache pilots when firing from an orbit. I have done it myself. I called it swirling around the drain. If you weren't careful, while firing, the tendency was to tighten the orbit, getting closer to the target with each turn much like water swirling around the drain in your sink. Having watched a lot of gun camera tapes, I can say this was a fairly common occurrence. We were trying to combat it within the battalion...but it seemed to be in the nature of the gun pilot.

As we widened up the orbit, the flight received a call from Strike requesting that we service the burning van with a Hellfire missile. Lead was going to take the shot, so I hung out pulling security as we positioned ourselves for lead to fire a missile at the now blazing van. The missile came off the rail and struck the van. Unfortunately, being a November model missile with a thermobaric warhead that relies on overpressure to destroy, it didn't do much more damage to the van.

After completing that shot, someone in Strike had either spotted or gotten the word that there were individuals that had been seen fleeing the van hiding under the north bleachers. They requested we look for these people and engage to destroy, when they were located. It wasn't apparent until we started looking at them, but the stands surrounding the field were made from concrete and from where we were looking (from over the soccer field looking toward the stands) it was difficult if not impossible to see anything hiding under them. Just when I thought we were just-wasting time with this, one of the people hiding underneath the stands decided he couldn't take it anymore and decided to move. We saw a figure move across one of the entrance-ways and lead opened fire with his 30mm. As they worked the west end of the bleachers we put a few bursts into the eastern part of the stands to attempt to flush them out. I saw a lot of cement chips flying but I doubt we did much more damage than that.



After a few minutes of that, Strike, apparently unsatisfied with the results of the first missile hit on the van, requested another Hellfire be put into what was left of the vehicle. Lead was kind enough to allow us to take the shot. It was then, that Brian told me this was going to be his second Hellfire shot ever. His first one wasn't too successful as it was a "worm burner" (a missile that for one reason or another comes off the aircraft and flies into the ground at a point not intended by the shooter) and he admitted to having some concern regarding this shot. I told him not to worry; that I would give him plenty of time to set this up and it would be a piece of cake. We made

sure we had a Kilo missile spun up, as that warhead was a little more suited to the target than a November model. I took tactical lead of the flight and went outbound a little more than we really needed to give Brian a little more time to set up his shot. Once established inbound, I slowed down to about 60 knots.

I was looking inside at Brian's setup a little more than I should have and we ended up climbing a bit. I corrected this, but I felt bad about making him work a little harder on the target tracking than he should have.

Just as we came into range for the shot, the missile started giving a "backscatter" message from the laser return, it was either from the smoke from the burning van or all the dust in the air, as the weather was getting progressively worse. As he had the missile set up in a mode called Lock On After Launch (LOAL), Brian released the laser trigger, fired the missile and then released the target. The 2nd missile Brian had ever fired flew true to the target and blew what was left of the burning van all over the soccer field.

Soon after that shot we were told that an F-16 with the callsign Weasel 35, was on station and that he had eyes on⁵ an individual hiding underneath the bleachers we had engaged previously. I guess this just wasn't going to be "Seymour Hiney's" night.

As the plan evolved, Weasel 35 would lase the target and Crazyhorse 06 would maneuver his aircraft, allowing him to engage with a single Hellfire missile. The attempted target handover was cringe inducing, as the commander had never attended any of the air ground integration classes or pilot's briefs where these techniques were discussed. He stumbled through it and after a couple of dry passes (quite frankly I was worried about the F-16 running out of gas before they got it done) CZ06 finally managed to get a missile off the rail and on the target. Weasel called back with good BDA, but even after getting back to the TOC and looking at the shot on the big screen in the TOC, I couldn't tell what, if anything, was under there. I guess we would take Weasel 35's word for it. He did, after all have a better FLIR that we did.

While CZ06 was maneuvering and attempting to engage the bleachers, I received a call from the TOC on BN internal informing us that there was a brigade weather recall for the dust storm and we needed to RTB⁶ as soon as possible. I didn't want to lay more information on lead while they were trying to get a shot off, so I told ATK

Mike," roger" and we stood by until the engagement was over. Finally, after they finished up with the BDA, I was able to relay the weather recall info.

It was a short 10-minute flight back to Taji that went without incident. After landing we went through the post flight ritual, and the CDR completed the debriefing paperwork. I dropped off my gun camera tape and aircraft data card. I finished the evening back at my desk in the rear of the TOC, knocking out some of my daily, required administrative tasks.

The next day I received an e-mail from the S3, asking me to fill out a sworn statement on the mission from the night before. I knocked it out fairly quickly and sent it back with a note that said if they needed anything else to please let me know.

Several weeks later, after returning from flying a mission, I saw a green binder on my desk. It was one of the binders the Army uses for awards. Opening it up, I saw the citation for an Air Medal for the events that took place on 2 JUN 07. I guess it's a good thing I decided to come to work that day.

For his actions on the night of the second of June two thousand and seven, Chief Warrant Officer Two Brian Carbone was presented the Air Medal for Aerial Achievement (First Award) by his company commander during a rare day off at the Taji swimming pool.



Dan McClinton

⁵ "Eyes On" means that the speaker has the target or object of interest in sight.

⁶ Return To Base

A war story . . . well . . . sort of!

by Terry Garlock

Eight years ago when I turned 60, I decided to overcome my innate distaste for the very idea of a tattoo. My tongue-in-cheek thinking was that since my body was a wreck I may as well use part of it for art. And so after some careful selection of images and discussion with our local tattoo guru here in the bedroom community of Peachtree City, GA, about 35 miles south of Atlanta, I came up with the design shown below which now graces my right calf.



I have two daughters younger than makes any sense for a man my age, both adopted at 12 months old from orphanages in China. Kristen, now 14, contracted an illness at age seven that rendered her epileptic and has learning challenges that classify her as “special needs,” and so I help her through daily homework and studies, which you would only appreciate if you knew I was born with no patience and then it got worse. As I tell her teachers, “I didn’t even like 8th grade the first time I went through it . . . “

Melanie is now a sophomore at U of GA, but she was 10 years old the day I picked her up from school with my tender leg after leaving the tattoo parlor. I had on long pants so she couldn’t see the tattoo, but nothing stops that little fireball and she grabbed the piece of paper in my truck cup-holder between us like it belonged to her, as everything in my possession did in her mind, and she glanced at the Tattoo parlor receipt, loudly exclaiming while I was driving, “Holy crap! Dad got a tattoo! Mom’s gonna’ freak!”

Well, Mom didn’t care and as far as I’m concerned, it was and remains none of her business, anyway. And for curious people who ask about my tattoo, most often I dismiss their assumption I owe an explanation by saying something like, “I picked it out of a book.”

But you guys are the very ones for whom my tattoo does bear some explanation.

It starts when I was a rookie Cobra pilot in Vietnam and had occasion one day to kill an ox. The ox was in a free fire zone far from civilians, was presumably a beast of burden for our enemy, strapped to a cart with contents covered with a tarp, which we assumed were weapons or other tools to be used against us. We set up to destroy it same as we would destroy an enemy truck. There were no people within sight in the rolling jungle hills, just a lonely ox and cart on a path near the top of a hill. It doesn’t take many smarts, though, to scramble away from an obvious target in the open and hide in the jungle when an enemy helicopter approaches, especially a fire team of two Cobras.

John Synowsky, my Platoon Leader, said from the back seat on intercom, “Kill it.” My thoughts were, “Oh, man, I do NOT want to kill this ox.” John said, “Use the blooper.” That’s what some of us called the 40mm grenade launcher in the turret under my feet, and if you ever used one you know if you watch carefully you can catch a sight of the rounds as they fly to the target in their arch because they are a relatively slow and heavy round. Which means after you fire a burst of 3-4 rounds, adjusting fire was not easy because by then you are in a different place and perhaps climbing and turning or . . . well, you get it.

So we didn’t use the blooper in close proximity to friendlies, it was harder to control with accuracy than a stream of minigun tracers. It was very useful at the end of a rocket run; we would throw a few rounds out toward the target to “cover the break” since we were vulnerable when turning our belly to the enemy to pull out, intending that the slow rounds would arrive at the target to detonate as we were turning, hoping to keep the bad guys’ heads down, even though the other ship in the light fire team of two we always used was then rolling in from the racetrack pattern we used and would cover us with their minigun. Our tactics included the obvious – vary the approach direction to keep the enemy guessing and try not to overfly the target.

John was telling me to kill the ox with my blooper to get some practice since I was green. I started with a very short burst of a couple of rounds that went wide even at our low altitude of maybe 300 feet as we circled, counting on our wingman flying cover around 1,500 feet and poised to roll in on the enemy with rockets while we were the bait. We kept a watchful eye for any movement of enemy and poised to pounce – or skedaddle – if they decided to risk taking us on while we were so tastily presenting ourselves in their kill zone. But we had obviously caught a small party on the move and they likely realized we were trying to tempt them and were smart enough not to reveal their position. It was probably only a couple of guys crapping their drawers while we buzzed them but we never knew.

My second burst of a couple rounds hit the ox and blew a cantaloupe-sized chunk out of his side, then I did it again with the next burst and the ox was down and kicking, and I'm sure bleating if we could have heard his noise. I told John, "I can't stand this, I'm using the minigun!" So I gave John a moment to back off and climb a little to avoid ricochets, then I hit the ox with a solid burst of 7.62, which more than killed it.

The enemy never did reveal, and we flew on to wherever we were going, that part escapes my memory, but I do remember clearly feeling like a blue ribbon a-hole for killing that ox, and especially for the misery I put it through before the fatal shots. I never forgot that.

So I flew in the snake and killed the ox, which is half of the story of my tattoo. The other half comes from what some would call Karma. On the Chinese Zodiac calendar, each year is represented by an animal in a repeating pattern of 12 animals. In their belief system a person born in the year of a certain animal takes on some personality characteristics of that animal. My younger daughter Kristen was born in the year of the snake, while Melanie was born in the year of the ox.

So maybe Karma was just waiting for me to come to my senses to have that tattoo carved into my leg.

But I am thankful I never did have to kill an elephant.

One thing among many that Americans would never understand about Vietnam is that we killed elephants, and with good reason. How stupendously cruel!

My guess is most elephant kills were on or near the Ho Chi Minh Trail – likely mostly killed by helicopter crews - where elephants were used as enemy beasts of burden. They humped guns, ammo, mortar shells and every other implement and supply of war down the trail on foot, by bicycle, in trucks, in carts pulled by oxen, by elephants and so on. I never saw it myself but I did hear reports of battery-driven headlights on elephants on the trail at night.



North Vietnamese enemy soldiers with their transport elephants on the Ho Chi Minh Trail

Of course Americans at home have no clue about the different world we call war, that war is an ugly, nasty, unforgiving business that will steal your soul if you let it,

that the only good thing from war besides victory is the brotherhood we share from it, and the only place to find glory in war is in Hollywood movies. Which brings me at long last to the story.

I will call a retired colonel "Cpt. Smith" since that was his rank at the time and it isn't convenient to get his permission to use his name. Similarly I will call the offending party "Specialist Jones."

Cpt. Smith, told me about his motivational speech to his men one day, summarized in these words. "The American people want us to win this war, but they don't like the idea that anyone would get hurt. So use discretion, especially if any reporters are in the vicinity!"

Cpt. Smith had his units in the field when he was at Pleiku in the Central Highlands one day and received a radio call requesting his immediate presence near Da Lat. They had a situation.

His helicopter landed with his dog handler and translator aboard by pre-arrangement, and he found the situation was that one of his men, Specialist Jones, had shot an elephant. The "situation" was that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was quite far away, this was a somewhat populated area, and Jones had shot the elephant in the hind quarters with a carbine, nothing near a fatal wound but far from a brilliant pull of a trigger. The elephant couldn't stand on that injured leg and was down and making racket in its misery, which was like a clarion call to gather a crowd of civilians.

The elephant seemed to be in distress not only by the wound, but its weight prone on its side was making breathing difficult as it struggled for air.

Cpt. Smith wasted a few moments asking Specialist Jones what the hell he was thinking when he shot the elephant, receiving the equivalent of "I dunno'." Cpt. Smith also remembered this same man had received the Silver Star on a prior tour and he may have had some experiences on or near the trail then that may factor in to being trigger-prone with elephants. And he didn't want Jones to be sacrificed for an indiscretion.

So Cpt. Smith proceeded to the elephant with his dog handler and translator. He soon realized they needed to finish the job on the elephant, but knew it had to be done in as tasteful a way as possible as the civilian crowd kept growing, so he couldn't just shoot it. Cpt. Smith knew his dog handler had meds to put dogs down if wounded, and asked him if he had enough to do the job on this elephant. The dog handler had no clue, of course, but he began administering doses he hoped would be quickly fatal until his supply was exhausted. Finally, the elephant gave one last moaning breath and then lay still and silent.

The civilian crowd soon took up a mournful chant that was completely beyond the understanding of Cpt. Smith, but with the situation somewhat resolved he took more notice of his surroundings and found they were in a fenced area with a sign posted. He asked his translator what the sign, written in Vietnamese, said.

The translator said, "You not want to know, Captain."

Cpt. Smith insisted, so the translator told him, "Sign say Da Lat Zoo."

Uh-Oh.

There was another sign, this one clearly about the elephant, and Cpt. Smith asked the translator and once again had to insist. The translator told him that sign said this elephant was a gift to the Vietnamese people from Mahatma Gandhi.

That's when Cpt. Smith saw his career flash before his eyes as it disintegrated into a pile of rubble.

Knowing this ugly event was not likely to be contained with so many civilian witnesses, and knowing Specialist Jones was due to DEROS soon and would be leaving the Army when he arrived in CONUS, and knowing the search for the guilty would soon begin, and knowing the Army would eagerly offer one of their own as a sacrifice to lousy publicity, and wanting to protect as much as possible a man who had performed admirably up to that point, Cpt. Smith promptly gave Specialist Jones the punishment of an Article 15.

Which was prescient on his part because some days later he received instructions from above to prepare Specialist Jones for a Courts Martial. Cpt. Smith responded that was not possible because he had already given him an Article 15; it goes beyond my understanding but I suppose there is an Army version of protection against "double jeopardy."

And so the controversy died, at least long enough for Specialist Jones to escape back to CONUS and into the safety of civilian life before the American news media picked up a whiff of the story.

Cpt. Smith knew nothing of the story making the news in America about callous US soldiers killing an elephant, in a zoo, no less, and he was caught off guard when summonsed to Brigade HQ, skipping right over Battalion. He didn't know what was coming, but he was smart enough to know it could not be good.

When he arrived, the Brigade CO told him, "Captain, don't assume you are here to receive a medal!" Cpt. Smith assured the CO he had no such assumption but did ask why he was there. The CO explained that his company's escapade had made the news back home, causing deep embarrassment to the Army. He also said there was a result from that publicity requiring the Captain's presence, making the hair stand up on the back of Cpt. Smith's neck as he wondered what was coming.

The CO said, "Captain, the San Diego Zoo decided to send a gift to the Vietnamese people of a very young

elephant to replace the one you publicly destroyed. So you, Captain, are personally going to lead the squad that delivers this elephant to the zoo at Da Lat." He handed Cpt. Smith some paperwork, indicating the elephant was aboard a ship due to arrive at the Qui Nhon port, while Cpt. Smith wondered how the hell he would transport an elephant, even a small one.

So Cpt. Smith, with more than a little trepidation, took a lowboy truck and some chains and tackle along with a squad of men, to meet the elephant, which was accompanied by two attendants from the San Diego Zoo, which was fortunate because soldiers don't know how to deal with and care for or chain in place an elephant, no matter how young.

And so their one-day journey to Da Lat turned into four, but the good news is that was because of the joyous welcome they would receive. The elephant had been chained so it could stand or sit in the truck bed, and by the time they reached the general vicinity of their destination, the word had spread and Vietnamese were crowded along the roadside for miles. They had to make a number of stops to accommodate the wishes of civilian crowds. Flowers were thrown to the elephant countless times, and many gifts were given to the troops delivering the elephant, whereupon Cpt. Smith very quickly and smartly learned that the refusal to accept an offered gift would be an unforgiveable insult, and so one of the trucks in the small convoy accumulated a large pile of various small gifts offered for the good will of the gift of an elephant, the odious offense inflicted on the predecessor elephant having been apparently forgotten.

So, for me there are a few points in this story. First, the American people at home are clueless about the vagaries of war. Second, stupid and wildly humorous things happen in every war – if you could pick a combat vet from the Civil War he would surely tell you about stupidity that still strikes his funny bone, and this was one Cpt. Smith brought home from Vietnam to tell his grandchildren. Third, the military machine will crush you like a bug if you are the sacrificial lamb selected to deal with bad publicity. And last, I have no corroboration of this story other than what Cpt. Smith told me, for which I am grateful since nothing ruins a good war story like an eye witness.

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>

Share this Swash Plate newsletter

Note the member app and renewal forms below - send to those qualified to be members. Tell your fellow combat helicopter pilots and crew, "Our combat experience makes us part of an exclusive club. You should be a member of CHPA. Get out your wallet and join!"

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



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 _____

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.