



THE FWCVHPA NEWSLETTER

FORT WOLTERS CHAPTER - VIETNAM HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

March 2001

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President's Report

To be or Not to be that is the question!!!

We have all responded to part of that question, we are members of VHPA and of the Ft Wolters Chapter. Now are we going to be **Active Members?**

Because of you we had the greatest reunion ever in 1998, but since then many of you have not been to any of our chapter meetings.

Bring yourselves, your ladies and a friend to the March meeting. You will find your friends, good food and a great speaker. In addition we will have the brother of MSG Roy P. Benavidez, Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam.

The 2001 VHPA Reunion is in Denver this year and I hope that we can have a good turnout for that.

I am looking forward to seeing **ALL** of you at the March meeting.

John Grow

Family Contacts Committee.... connects veterans, families.... by Julie Kink

*Editor's Note: Julie Kink was only eight years old when her brother David, a Scout Pilot, was Killed In Action. She didn't understand, and because of the times there was no one to enlighten her; she grew up not knowing who her big brother really was. Evidenced by the following article Julie never toots her own horn, therefore I feel obligated to step aside from my sometimes role as "Curmudgeon-At-Large" and do it for her. Julie is not "just a member" of the FCC; through her own beginning efforts to find her brother's friends in order to gain some sort of understanding of who he was, and might have become, she is virtually its founder. Julie's efforts through the FCC - as well as other similar endeavors -- are genuine, and there is no guile to be found in her. Since our fateful meeting on a cold and rainy night in November 1996, at the apex of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., it has been my honor to call Julie my friend, and my privilege that she considers me one of her **Big Brothers**.*

From a daughter...

"I received a phone call from someone who knew my father. It was the hardest thing I've ever done, to talk to him, but it was also the most meaningful thing I've ever done...."

"I can remember being so proud of him. I was 13 and was the only one home that day when those two officers came to the house. I did not know or understand what happened to him over there, until now...."

From a sister...

"I have finally met my brother's Lt. who was with him the day he died. He was the

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Vietnam Books By Vietnam Vets

only one out of three who survived the ambush. He had always wanted to find us to tell us he was sorry it wasn't him. He too did not know where to begin his search. My family has since met his in person, and the healing has been tremendous all around...."

The stories are as varied as the personalities involved, but each one reflects the healing that can come from connections that are being made between those who served in Vietnam, who lost their buddies, and the friends and family members waiting back at home whose fathers, sons, uncles or brothers never returned.

Driving those connections, for helicopter casualties, is a small group of volunteers who comprise the Family Contacts Committee of the Vietnam Helicopter Flight Crew Network. The committee, formed in July 1997, has assisted with more than 260 cases so far - sons and daughters seeking to understand the father they never knew, brothers and sisters eager for clues to their loved one's personality in Vietnam... and fellow veterans wishing to find the family members of their fallen brothers so they can finally say, "I never forgot him."

It's often the little things that families want to know: what his nickname was; what his job was in Vietnam; whether he worked every day or got any relaxation; what daily life was like; what he ate, talked about, laughed about, cried about.

Veterans often just want to tell the family of their lost friends, "He was a good soldier and a fine person, and I still think about him every year on that day."

The FCC is accessible via the internet at <http://www.VirtualWall.org/contacts>. There is an email link for those seeking assistance or wishing to inquire about a case.

Friends and family members of Vietnam helicopter unit casualties who contact the FCC committee chair, Gary Thewlis, are assigned to one of the committee members. Their job is

to provide guidance and assistance, and to facilitate the actual contacts as needed. The committee uses the history archives of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA), members of VHPA and the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association (VHCMA) and other sources of information about the person and their unit. To protect the privacy of association members, committee members will make first queries themselves and take guidance from those contacted.

The FCC does not yet have a web-available list of all helicopter crew members they have been contacted about, but the FCC chairman has the full list and can respond to queries. If there is someone you want to know about, please contact FCC Chairman Gary Thewlis, fccontac@mindspring.com, 1177 Solano Ave., Sonoma, CA 95476; 707-935-9241.

If the casualty you knew is not one the FCC has been contacted about, your input is still important. You may provide valuable information should the family or friends of that person ever approach the FCC for assistance. And, if your wish is to take the initiative and locate the family yourself, the FCC can help in that search as well.

To all who have assisted with FCC cases over the past three years, thank you for helping with the healing. Your willingness to share memories is appreciated more than you know. As one daughter put it, **"Please tell the vets they have the power to pass on our fathers' hugs."**

Julie Kink,
FCC member
Sister of WO1 David Kink
C Trp 1/9th CAV KIA 8-3-69
KINK100@AOL.COM

Secretary's Report

There ain't none.... he didn't go to the party, and no one else is talking. (Hmmm.... wonder what happened that they don't want us to know about... Hmmm....Did Holley wear his spurs with his Cav hat...? What did Angelo break this time...? Inquiring minds want to know...Ed)

Jerry Barnes

Treasurer Report

Prior Balance(01/12/00)	\$2989.39
Income	\$987.43
Expenses	NONE
Balance (01/15/01)	\$3976.82

We still have some of the model helicopter kits for the OH23 Raven and the TH55 *Mattel Messerschmitt* for \$15 each.

Jim Messinger

e-mail ADDRESSES

If you're in the e-mail database, you will get a quarterly newsletter. If you don't have an e-mail address, why not? Whad-dya, some kind of a fruitcake? Don't you know this is a new century, a new milleniu.... a new milleneu.... a new.... aw shoot: it's 2001, and way past time for you to get with the program! Now get up off some of them bucks and go buy a computer.... clean out that spare bedroom (*admit it... you don't want anyone spending the night anyway*) get yerself "on-line." Don't you know there are a gazillion programmer geeks out there depending on us to keep them in Skittles and Snikers bars! And we better not catch you looking at them nekkid wimmins, either! We're watching you, Angelo!

Jerry Barnes <baron67@home.net>.

PARAPHERNALIA COMMITTEE

Chapter paraphernalia can be purchased by contacting **Bob-bey Bateman** (940-325-8427 or bbman@cox-internet.com). Patches (\$5), an audio tape of Vietnam-era music (\$10), T-shirts -- available in two colors (\$15), caps (\$15), museum

bricks (\$100). The patch graphic is in the newsletter mast-head.

Members: Bobby Bateman, Charles Holley, Ron Paddock, Bob Springer (Chair)

"THERE I WUZZZZ....."

Editor's Note: OK, I know we are primarily a helicopter bunch, and not everyone can be as pretty, or as smart as we are. However, we have for far too long neglected our fixed-wing brethren (and cistern), and I think it is time to rectify that situation. The following is the best I could come up with on short notice. Also, try to remember that there are no young Army Caribou pilots! (Gotta love number 15.) ☺

Rules of the Air:

1. Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.
2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.
3. Flying isn't dangerous. *Crashing* is what's dangerous.
4. It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were down here.
5. The ONLY time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire!
6. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.
7. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.
8. A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. A "great" landing is one after which they can use the plane again.
9. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.
10. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp. (NATOPS-USMC)
11. The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival, small probability of survival and vice versa.

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12. Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.
13. Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.
14. Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of take offs you've made.
15. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are.
16. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.

17. Helicopters can't fly; they set up an unsympathetic vibration with the surface of the earth, and the earth rejects them until they quit doing it.
18. If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be.
19. In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminum going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.
20. Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgment.
21. It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.
22. Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.
23. Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to repeal.
24. The three most useless things to a pilot are the altitude above you, runway behind you, and fuel in the truck.

Ft Wolters/Mineral Wells VHPA Chapter web site
<http://www.fwcvhpa.org>

You can now join the *Chapter*, pay your dues, buy *Chapter* paraphernalia, join "Friends of the Museum", and buy *Museum* bricks using MasterCard or Visa via our secure server connection. (. . . *and maybe even contribute to the Newsletter Editor's retirement fund. . . .aw shucks. . . it was worth a try ☺*)

Each month a number of inquiries are made about *Fort Wolters* and its history, many going back to **WW II days**. These inquiries re-emphasize the importance of capturing and displaying the history of *Fort Wolters* through the *National Vietnam War Museum* and through both the *Chapter* and the *Museum Websites*.

Members: Jerry Barnes, Del Belanger, Ed Faught, (Chair), Charles Holley, Ira Will McComic, James Rankin,

And this from "the glass is half full" files....

Shamelessly stolen from the "Short Final" files of AVWeb.com
 We were flying over Madison, Wis., on a nice Sunday headed for lunch and in contact with the exceptionally great people at the Madison TRACON. All of a sudden we heard a voice over the frequency:

"Ah, Madison, this is Cessna 12345 ... lost."

The cheerful controller came back and asked if the pilot could enter a squawk code; she could and did. The controller then asked her destination, to which she responded, "*Madison.*"

A few moments later, the controller came back: "Okay, 12345; you're not lost ... you just haven't found the airport yet."

Ed.... been there, done that..

The National Vietnam War Museum

Reminder: The Tom Thumb Good Neighbor Program as assigned the National Vietnam War Museum account number 8775. Use your REWARD Card for a 1% contribution to the museum. Additionally, if you have Kroger in your area contact Jim Messinger for a card that provides similar donations to the museum.

To learn more about the efforts to establish **The National Vietnam War Museum**, visit the office in the Mineral Wells airport, write them at *P.O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76449-0146*, or visit their web site at www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org.

Charles Bogle

Director NVNWM

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Remember, dues are due on or before January 1, and to make it easy, you can pay by credit card. Just go to

<http://www.fwcvhpa.org> and follow the link for buying paraphernalia, paying dues, etc. Ten dollars isn't much to spend for the good fellowship, newsletters, and the chance to be involved with the museum project. And don't forget, you can always pay dues ahead, say for 5 years (\$50) or ten years (\$100) or even more, as a hedge against inflation.

Tom Forbes

Members: Tom Forbes, (Chair), Virgil Laughin, Gerry Morgan, and Jack Suttle. (*Guys, I'm not sure what it means but I saw Jerry Barnes give Tom Forbes a five gallon bucket of "Blue Streak Butt Kicker" so I'm sending my hot check in early... Ed.*)

57th AHC "Gladiators" & "Cougar Guns" Reunion

2001 is here and that means the next reunion for the Gladiators and Cougars is just a few months away. This year the reunion is going to be in Las Vegas, NV, 20 through 23 September, at **The New Frontier Hotel**. For special reservation rates call them direct at 1-800-634-6966 and identify yourself as a member of the "57th AHC Gladiator Reunion." Thursday the 20th rate will be \$59 for the night, and Friday and Saturday room rate will be \$69; upgrade to an atrium suite can be had for \$20 extra per night. Rates will apply for two days before the reunion until two days after scheduled departure date (Sunday). Call for reservations TODAY!

America West and SouthWest Airlines have both agreed to give our group discounts off the lowest rates available at the time of reservation. Call America West at 1-800-235-9292, group ID Code is 6045. Call SouthWest reservations at 10800433-5368, group ID code is R3723.

Lee Westbrook
The Original "Gladiator 13"

Meetings Committee

The next quarterly Chapter meeting will be held on Saturday, **March 17, at Risky's Barbeque in the Stockyards**. The guest speaker this time will be the brother of the late MSG Roy P. Benavidez, Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam who was from Victoria, Texas. The Executive Council will meet at 1100, and the usual festivities of scarfing down massive quantities of cholesterol laden groceries will "officially" begin at 1145. That don't mean you have to wait until 1145 to show up; come early and get a good seat, and if you must, drink Canada Dry! The chow at **Risky's** is what the cook in "City Slickers" was talking about: "It's brown, it's hot, and there's plenty of it!" And the prices are reasonable, too. Remember: there is free parking for **Risky's** customers just down Exchange Blvd., towards the old packing houses, in the alley on the south side of the street. Look for the sign.

Gerald Brazell

Members: Vance Barton, Bobby Bateman, Gerald Brazell (Chair). (*Editor's Note: I once tried to drink Canada dry; didn't do it, but I had 'em working nights to keep up!*)