



the swash plate

MONTHLY
CHPA
NEWSLETTER

January 2016

From The President

Rich Miller

As we come out of the holiday season, it is perhaps time to reflect on feel-good moments.

Your organization is involved in charity projects. It should be a feel-good moment for those who contributed to our charity projects like the Christmas Boxes for the Troops project and Goldie Fund scholarship program. If you helped coordinate the 2015 annual reunion and contributed to the success that it was, it is one of these moments. We have dedicated members who volunteer to man the CHPA booth at events like the HAI Heli-Expo, AAAA, and several airshows. It's a feel-good moment for me to know that these volunteers are dedicated to this essential work and serving the Association and their fellow CHPA members. The leadership at CHPA is proud of all the achievements mentioned here, as well as of those which remained unnoticed.

As with any fraternal organization, there are always projects to accomplish and new challenges to be met. I encourage you to contribute new ideas and suggestions. And of course, it is always appreciated if someone wishes to share the job by serving on a project or committee.

This coming year the CHPA Board of Directors will be investigating some new approaches in maintaining the legacy of the organization, as well as expanding our affiliations. Upgrading our social media platforms is also being researched. We will again try to repeat our past successes in membership recruitment and name branding by attending the previously mentioned 2016 HAI and AAAA trade events, and the American Heroes airshows. And, of course, we will hold the next reunion at the home of Army Aviation - Fort Rucker, Alabama.

I hope this coming year for you will be one of good health and great moments. I thank you for your continued support of CHPA and look forward to what is in store in the coming year.



Presenting!

- **"From The President"**
Rich Miller
- **"Recipe Request"**
Sue Prescott
- **"Mr Curtis Flies A Fixed Wing"**
Robert Curtis
- **"Executive Director Farewell"**
Jay Brown

And much, much more!

Richard Yood, MAS

Vietnam
67 – 68 & 70 – 71
Master Army Aviator, Ret

The logo for Vernon graphics | promotions features the word "vernon" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "graphics | promotions" are written in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font, separated by a vertical bar.

**Unit Insignia or Logos on:
Coins, Caps, Shirts, Knives, Awards,
Mugs, Badges and Much More!**

Contact Rick Yood

rick@richardyoodmas.graphics

800-359-7062, Cell: 850-339-0116

www.myvernon.biz/rickyood

How Are We Doing?

Jay Brown

Every month we try to bring you articles and notices that interest all of our members. Of course that entails gathering news items and articles from various sources and varying topics, from the humorous to serious news of world events. We hope we're meeting your needs and providing entertainment and we'd love to hear from you on whether we're meeting those goals.

If you have a comment or suggestion on what we've done well, where we could improve or want to submit a story drop us an email at HQ@chpa-us.org or give us a call at 800-832-5144 and let us know. Always of particular interest are stories from our members and supporters. Anything from tales of woe in Flight School to genuine TINS TIW stories can be submitted. So drop us a line and tell your story.

Share the "Swash"

Please feel free to forward this issue of "The Swash Plate" to your colleagues, potential members and other interested parties!

Sponsorship

Please consider sponsoring CHPA's programs. You may make tax deductible donations to support the Goldie Fund, CHPA's Scholarship program, the Holiday Boxes for the Troops, T-shirts for Heroes or the Association. For further information please look at Sponsorship at the website, <http://www.chpa-us.org>.

Reunions and Gatherings

Are you planning a reunion or event that may be of interest to our members? Let us help you get the word out and support veterans groups of all sizes and locations. Just send a message with the information to HQ@chpa-us.org. If you have a logo, send that along as well. Be sure to include accurate contact and registration information and we'll take care of the rest.

The *Swash!*

[Call for Articles]

One of the things we all know, nobody tells a better story than a combat helicopter crewmember, whether it's the truth or "enhanced truth." Our most entertaining and informative stories come from you, our membership. We often receive responses from our members when an article is published that opens a memory or touches a nerve, in a good way.

So where are all the story tellers out there? All you veterans of the skies of OEF and OIF with an idea for an article, or a story to tell it's as easy as sending it in. Take a moment to lay fingers on keyboard or just put pen to paper and send them in. You can email them to hq@chpa-us.org or through the US Post Office to: CHPA • PO Box 2585 • Peachtree, GA 30269

Help us help you tell the tales of your experiences and continue to preserve our shared legacy of combat under a rotor disc.

Recipe Request

Sue Prescott

CHPA is still hard at work, trying to pull together enough recipes for a cookbook worthy of our audience. We would still like your stories and recipes. We need MORE. Recipes with a story about learning/cooking it when overseas or when a service member returned from a deployment are even better. Submit recipes to RecipesCHPA@yahoo.com.

I love to cook and my friends and neighbors all benefit from it. I collect recipes and love to try new ones. When I started this project, it was my intent to put the recipes in a common format with common words for the methods to make the recipes consistent; my engineering background coming through. That format is ingredients first, in the order used, then instructions. That's not absolutely true anymore. I've received a couple of recipes that are so engaging, though not in my format and words, that I will be including them as written.

Also, please remember, if you want to submit a recipe you copied from a website or book, change up the directions (they're the copyrightable content). Or let us know that they need to be changed; and please give attribution to the author. (This just keeps us safe.)



GOT PATCHES?

CHPA continues to receive quite an assortment of patches from our members. These patches are displayed at our booth at HAI, Quad A, and VHPA. Several of you have donated patches, but we're always looking for more. They are very eye catching and help us garner attention. So please dig through your old patches and if you have some you'd like to share, send them to us at:

CHPA • PO Box 2585 • Peachtree, GA 30269



CW2 Curtis Flies a Fixed Wing

Robert F. Curtis

"Life member former Army CW2 and Marine Corps Major Robert Curtis is the author of two books on flying in Vietnam and elsewhere, "Surprised at Being Alive" and "The Typhoon Truce, 1970"

In my impressionable youth I had a wild idea about becoming a lawyer, having read former aviator F. Lee Bailey's book, *The Defense Never Rests*. So, in 1972, after four years Army service as a CW2, including a year in Vietnam flying Chinooks with the 101st, I resigned to go to college. Right before I was due to separate, an Army aviator friend who was also attending the University of Kentucky, told me about the Army National Guard and what a good deal it was. The aviation facility was only 30 miles from the University, perfect for a part time job. Intrigued, I called the office at the Boone National Guard Center, in Frankfort, KY, for more information. It just so happened that the State Aviation Officer, a colonel, was flying down to Fort Campbell where I was stationed in three days. I offered to pick him up and take him out to lunch so that we could talk about the Guard and exchange war stories. We liked each other, so I was invited to Frankfort to see the facility and the aircraft.

A week later, I pulled into the parking lot at the National Guard Center. I was wearing civvies, since I thought I would just be looking around. To my surprise, I was told I would have to show I could actually fly before my application would be accepted. I protested that I did not bring my flight gear, but the CW3 Instructor Pilot (IP) just laughed. He handed me a flight helmet and ten minutes later I was strapped into the cockpit of a UH-1D Huey, doing the start checklist while wearing chinos and a short-sleeved shirt. The IP acted as copilot and had me do all aircraft commander (AC) duties. It was a joy to fly a Huey in civvies. We spent a pleasant 45 minutes doing various maneuvers around the local area before returning. The IP liked my flying, so I was, much to my delight, accepted as an aviator in the Kentucky Army National Guard.

The National Guard was indeed an ideal fit for a college student. I scheduled classes three days a week, leaving the other two free for flying. When school was out for the summer, I made myself available for extended periods, so I often found myself flying more than I did during my final year of active duty. One day I found myself part of a mission headed to Fort Rucker, Alabama, to pick up three UH-1B Hueys to bring back to Frankfort. The Hueys were old Vietnam veterans, serving as initial training aircraft ever since their return from the war in 1964 or 1966 and were all very tired aircraft by 1975, ready for the "bone yard" or the scrap heap. The reason we were getting them at all was that we needed something more modern than the two CH-19s that we had been using as maintenance training aircraft. Obviously, a reciprocating engine helicopter is of little use in training maintenance men who would be supporting turbine-engine aircraft, so the Army generously offered the B models on the proviso that we pick them up ASAP.

Alas, the Army National Guard was short of TDY money to use for six airfares from Kentucky to Alabama. Solution? The Kentucky Air Guard could fly us down in their VIP-outfitted C-54. They had a mission that required them to go to Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, MS, just down the way from Fort Rucker. They agreed to take us to Fort Rucker the day following their mission, so all was perfect, i.e. no airfare, just per diem for the six of us. The Colonel State Aviation Officer decided to go along "to get out of the office for a while," he said.

I was very impressed with their VIP C-54. Developed from the DC-4 airliner, this C-54 was a real beauty. The interior was leather lounge seating, in addition to airliner seats here and there. It had a full galley and I suspected, a bar hidden somewhere. We were shortly off on a leisurely trip south, cruising at 190 knots



CW2 Robert Curtis with KYARNG Huey

somewhere below 10,000 feet. The Air Guard pilots loved that airplane, but knew that like the UH-1Bs we were picking up, it was shortly to be flown to Davis-Monthan to be retired or scrapped. They were completely right – the C-54s were all gone by the end of 1975.

Once at Keesler AFB, we decided to go out to a favorite restaurant for dinner. The Air Force loaned us a van and driver, so we could enjoy ourselves without worrying about drinking and driving. As the nine of us (six Army Guard aircrew, two Air Guard aircrew, and the colonel) settled in for dinner, drinks and war stories, the colonel pulled out his wallet and laid a \$100 bill on the table. “Let me know when it’s gone, boys” he said. We were amazed; \$100 was a lot of money then. A couple of us Warrant Officers looked at each other and came to a silent agreement: we would spend that \$100 as quickly as possible. I called the waitress over and said, “Buy that table over there a round of drinks.” My fellow CW2 pointed to another table and said, “Them, too!” The colonel heard all this, but just laughed. In less than ten minutes the \$100 bill was gone. The colonel didn’t bat an eye, he just pulled out another \$100 bill and laid it where the first one had been. And another one after that. The evening progressed and so did the rounds of drinks. Not sure we ever actually ate dinner. I could see where this was going and decided to do more observing than drinking. Once, in Vietnam, before a totally unauthorized “USO” show, I drank entirely too much, woke up on the sidewalk the next morning, mosquito bitten and too hung over to fly for two days, and vowed to never do that again. I nursed my second beer and laughed at the others. Eventually the evening ended and the van took us back to the BOQ, all happy and laughing.

The next morning everyone, except me, was paying the wage of sin, complete with pounding headaches and general misery. The C-54 pilots were in just as bad shape as the Huey pilots, except that they had to fly and the helicopter pilots didn’t. They were eight hours from bottle-to-throttle, but just barely. Take off from Keesler was normal in all respects and the C-54 soon climbed to a VFR cruising altitude for the short trip to Fort Rucker, AL. As soon as it leveled off, the Aircraft Commander left the cockpit and came into the cabin, where he laid down on one of the couches. He was holding his head and moaning slightly. I unbuckled my seat belt and walked up to the cockpit, where the copilot sat in the right seat, also holding his head while watching the autopilot fly the aircraft.

I motioned to the open seat and he waived me in. “Want to fly?” he asked as I put on the headset. I took the control wheel in hand, whereupon he turned off the autopilot. We were on a VFR flight plan and had the sky to ourselves that morning. I asked if I could maneuver the aircraft a bit and he nodded yes, so I put it into a gentle right bank for a bit, then rolled it back to the left. I pulled the nose up gently against the trim and held it for a ten knot speed loss before I pushed it back over. I was enjoying myself immensely, particularly since I could hear groans from the back every time I changed altitude or heading. The copilot had the VOR tuned to the successive stations and for 30 minutes, I held the big plane more or less on course and altitude. Sadly, they would not let me land it. I was a bit miffed. After all, I had at least 20 flight hours as a map holder in various fixed-wing aircraft, albeit none this big, in my log book. How hard could it be to land one? Just another running landing, just like the ones I had done in Chinooks four years before, I thought. I vacated the seat as the AC returned to the cockpit, but at least they did let me stay in the jump seat for the landing.

Later, as I approached graduation from college, I decided to join the Marines and fly some more instead of becoming a lawyer. I went back to flying helicopters, since by that time I had decided that there just wasn’t any future in flying aircraft with wheels that moved and wings that did not. And besides, as someone once told me, it is inherently unsafe to start your take off roll without flying speed over your wings. The only fixed-wing I flew after that was the T-28 during training, with one radial engine instead of four, like the C-54. Still, that VIP C-54 was one beautiful aircraft. I’m still positive I could have landed it, but I guess the crew just weren’t that hung over.

CHPA Store Sale

Jay Brown

Our High quality Poplin Button Down shirts and Charles River Windbreakers are being closed out. Once the current stock is depleted they won't be restocked and The Charles River Windbreakers are almost gone. When they're gone, they're gone for good so if you haven't purchased yours, now is the time. Also, the "Goin' Home" print has been reduced 20%. Get yours now by visiting the CHPA store page and clicking on 'Merchandise Order Form' at the bottom of the page. <http://www.chpa-us.org/chpa-store>

Farewell from the Executive Director

Jay Brown

In 2008 I was in the first year of my term as CHPA President and was attending the Quad A convention in Nashville with then Chairman, Steve Reilly. Steve and I were discussing some problems we were having with the management company and considering options on how to best address those problems. It was apparent to both of us that the management company would have to be replaced, but by whom? Then I did the unthinkable. I volunteered.

I had had plenty of practice with the website and member database as the VP for Membership and told Steve that the learning curve would be steep but I thought I could work my way through the website, database, newsletter and the tasks associated with a management company. I also told him that I would do it as long as the association needed me to, and would do so without pay as long as I was a voting member of the Board. So that's how I became the Executive Director, a job that I've enjoyed doing for almost eight years.

I was correct about the steep learning curve. Maintaining the website proved to be the largest and most difficult challenge and there were some errors within the membership database that had to be worked through. I am pleased to report to the membership that those errors have been fixed and the website is stable and up to date. Getting it that way and keeping it that way has gotten easier over time as I learned the "tricks of the trade."

Some of you more sharp eyed readers have probably noticed the CHPA mailing address in the newsletter has changed. After doing this job for eight years I've decided it's time for me to "retire" again and take some time for me to enjoy more activities away from the computer. I've enjoyed doing the newsletter, answering the phone, talking to the members both on the phone and at conventions, running the CHPA store and basically being the voice and face of CHPA and I hope I've served you all well. I ask that you have some patience as the Board of Directors works through the process of moving operations to Georgia and transitioning the Executive Director duties to whomever takes on this task.

Just so everyone knows, I'm not going anywhere with regards to my membership and support of CHPA. I'll continue to be at the conventions and business meetings, bending ears and elbows with the greatest guys and the prettiest wives and significant others on this planet. I hope to see more of you there as we continue to preserve our legacy as "God's Own Lunatics."



Why there should be memorials for Iraq and Afghanistan

Terry Garlock

Some years ago when my daughter Melanie and I were on a rare car trip together to visit a friend in Virginia, I squeezed in a little time to take her to Washington, DC since she had never been there. She was 13 years old.

I told her we didn't have much time on this trip but she could choose two things she wanted to see. She chose the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I was elated that she had actually listened to a few things dear old Dad was saying all those times she was rolling her eyes. Besides, those two venues are close together, saving us enough time to drive past the Supreme Court and I took her to watch the Changing of the Guard at Arlington's Tomb of the Unknown, and tried to explain why that place is sacred.

But we weren't there yet.

As I drove north from Richmond and had my teenager captive in the passenger seat, I told her I wanted to explain why "The Wall" at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is special. I told her the names on the wall make it personal, and since the names are organized in order of date of death, even with a catalogue to guide you to the right panel you still have to search and search for the name you are seeking, and suddenly it dawns on you there so many freaking names, and with every name is a story of a family's broken heart. Those stories get lost in the numbers.

I said to Melanie, "When a mother and father get unexpected visitors, a uniformed officer and a chaplain, to inform them as compassionately as they can that their son has been killed in a war that may be the worst day of their life. How long do you think it takes for them to get over it?" After a moment's thought Melanie said, "Never."

I was proud of her. I told her she was exactly right, that after their initial grieving they take that anguish and do the same thing that our troops do in combat when bad things happen - they push and cram it down into a secret box deep inside them and close the lid tight so they can go on with life, put one foot in front of the other and do what they must do.

But ... no matter how many years may pass, when they open the lid to their secret box, those memories are still wrapped in the feelings they had at the time, just as fresh as yesterday.

I told Melanie about two fellow Cobra pilots who tangled with an enemy big gun and lost, went into the trees and stuck high in triple canopy, where they died a pilot's worst nightmare, burning alive. I was telling her names and details I am leaving out here to make sure their families never know, but my voice was breaking as I drove, my vision blurred as tears streamed down my face, and in her awkward concern not knowing what to do, Melanie patted my shoulder and said, "Don't cry, Dad."

I told her, you see what happened when I open my secret box. Those memories are still painful, and maybe they will soften if I open my box a lot of times, but we like to keep our secrets.



I said to Melanie, “When I show you those two names on The Wall, you will remember some of what I’ve told you, but you will never feel what I feel. And that’s the power of The Wall. It comes from within the people who were involved, the painful memories they bring to The Wall.”

As veterans and family members approach The Wall, the air turns electric as secret boxes fly open and memories come alive with long-concealed heartbreak, finally set loose to run free.

People bring small gifts to leave there every day.

Jamie O’Hara wrote a song about the things people bring and leave at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. One verse of that song says:

They come from all across this land
In pickup trucks and minivans
Searching for a boy from long ago.
They scan The Wall to find his name
The teardrops fall like pouring rain
And silently they leave a gift and go.

That’s what happens every day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Visitors leave flowers, notes, letters, Boy Scout pins, photographs, boots, medals and a thousand other things that have deep meaning only to them. Every day the National Park Service gathers up the items left there and sends the non-perishables to a growing warehouse, and soon there will be a museum putting those items on display.

All of these are reasons we should build memorials for Iraq and Afghanistan, including the Gulf War. Veterans of those wars should have their own special place to gather, to grieve, to visit their dead brothers – and sisters – to talk to them like we do at The Wall, to confess their guilt at having lived through it while they did not, remembering their faces frozen forever young, never having lived out their lives, never knowing the joy of watching kids and grandkids grow up.

We should build those memorials. If the self-serving politicians, and go-along-to-get-along Pentagon are going to send our troops to discretionary wars, and burden their families with multiple deployments, the very least they can do is be honorable enough to provide a suitable memorial to those who died serving our country.

Whatever the war, our troops who serve together in battle share an unspoken pledge; “I will remember you.” We can keep that unspoken promise, remember them, never forget, and provide a place for their living brothers and sisters to visit, a place to open their secret box and let the memories under pressure run free.

We should build those memorials now.

How I Became a Two Fisted Drinker

Jay Brown

Some people, particularly at our conventions, have commented on my affinity and capacity when it comes to “adult beverages.” My drink of choice had always been a good bourbon or sour mash whisky, but I was not a “hard drinker. Then, one evening at Ft. Rucker that all changed and I had the dubious distinction of “two fisted drinker” hung on me. It was a beautiful evening and my class was attending a social gathering to meet and mingle with some of the lovely flowers from the Ft. Rucker area. These beautiful young ladies had graciously agreed to attend this function with the knowledge they’d be in the company of young men who were surely destined for service in Vietnam, with the dangers associated with that assignment. We were especially grateful for the break in training, if only for an evening, and the opportunity to relax in such enticing company ... except for a few of us who were already “taken.”

I was one of those “taken” and was enjoying a bourbon with an equally “taken” friend, CHPA member Brad Atkinson. Brad and I developed a friendship starting in basic training at Ft. Polk and that friendship continues today. Brad suddenly saw someone across the room he desperately needed to talk to and handed me his drink saying, “Hold this for me, I’ll be right back.” I took his untouched drink in my left hand, holding mine in my right, which I continued to sip. Apparently the person Brad went to talk to needed an extended conversation because I finished my drink before he came back. Looking down at the drink in my left, and thinking of the waste it would be to just continue to hold it, I started to sip from that one, figuring to replace it when Brad returned. I was still holding my empty glass in my right hand. That did not go unnoticed by our Senior TAC, who strolled casually over to me and as I lifted the glass, stopped in front of me, face to face at “Senior TAC” spacing and said, “You might want to slow down, Candidate.” And the legend was born.

Call on Us!

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