

Vinh Long Outlaws Newsletter

Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)

April - May - June 2011

2nd Quarter 2011

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NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

Greetings All:

Here are just a few things for the Directors Column his time. First Nell Moist has decided to step aside as our Newsletter Editor. Her expertise and hard work over the years has made it a "First Class" publication that we are proud of and so fortunate to have. Nell, we *Thank You*, thank you for your years of service to the VLOA. Frank Estes volunteered to be our Newsletter Editor on an interim basis until we have a new editor. Thanks, Frank.

Now here's an excellent opportunity for a VLOA member to step forward and volunteer for the good of the order. There has to be a member that is just waiting to try out their journalistic skills, and keep our line of communication open to the membership!

Last newsletter, I made mention that there should be something to report on our up and coming reunion in 2012. Well, things are moving along, although somewhat slowly, a little slower than we would like; however, per conversation with The Reunion Brat (TRB) (our reunion planner), she informed me that she has oodles of information for us to go over. So by the time you read this newsletter, we'll be going over the various proposals with the planner, and getting information to the Steering Committee for their input and recommendations. Now for some house keeping news. We have filed our 2010 Federal tax return on time and it has been accepted by the IRS. Now, there is a story behind this years filing, but I'll save it for the reunion just incase anyone has had trouble sleeping. I'm sure that that the explanation will put you to sleep. However, I would like to thank Tony, Frank, and Chester for their input, "We Gotter Done"!

If you have some story from when we were in Vietnam or stateside that you would like to share with the membership, don't hesitate to let Frank know, one of the hardest things an editor faces (continued on page 2)

(Director's Corner from page 1)

at times is how the heck he/she is going to fill the pages. Also, those Human interest stories are things that I know a lot of the membership looks forward to reading, so what are you waiting for? Write that page or page-and-a-half story and photo's are good too, send it in! Frank's e-mail is estesf@cobridge.tv.

Lastly, I'd would like to encourage those members that have not paid your dues to do so pronto. Another very important thing, we would like to keep in touch with you so please, if you have changed address, or e-mail, or phone number please keep us up to date. I've had several occasions this year that we have tried to contact some one only to find that they moved or we have a wrong phone number. Yes, we do have a website, but not all information is available via the Internet.

Gosh, and I thought I wouldn't have anything to say this time.

Bob

HELP WANTED!

We are looking for a VLOA member or relative thereof who would like to be the Editor of our *Vinh Long Outlaws Newsletter*. There are a number of former Editors who would be willing to mentor and help train whoever volunteers for this very rewarding and important VLOA position. If you are interested, please contact Bob Koonce or Frank Estes.

The Back Pew

By John Doyle

Somewhere along the way I acquired a military pocket knife. It is silver metal with US stamped on the side. It has a master blade, a can opener, a leather punch, and a bottle opener. I know most of you know the type of knife I just described. If it was a GI issue, I don't remember its being issued to me. Not only that - it has USMC on the handle!

It is the knife I take with me when Ruth and I are hiking the trails. The main blade can cut through almost anything. Recently, on a morning hike after some bad weather, the trail was blocked by a tangle of vines that had been blown down and across the trail. No problem! I whipped out the knife and started cutting vines, some as round as my fingers. In about five minutes we were able to proceed.

In some ways this knife reminds me of God. There just doesn't seem to be an obstacle too big to handle for either one of them. The knife is able to get me out of tight spots. However, God can get us out of any spot, no matter how insurmountable it may seem.

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God:"

II Corinthians 3:5

"Casting all your cares upon him: for he careth for you." I Peter 5:7

Special Prayers

We send special prayers for those suffering during flooding along the Mississippi River and to the tornado victims in Alabama . And, a special prayer for Al Moist's speedy recovery from bypass surgery and to all our VLOA members dealing with health issues.

General Jack Mackmull:

Passing of a Legend

By Frank Estes

On April 3, 2011, General Jack Mackmull passed away while dining with his wife, Beverly at a local golf course's Sunday buffet luncheon. We lost a great soldier, great leader, and great friend. Many of you will recall that he commanded the 13th Delta Battalion while we were assigned to the Outlaws, Mavericks, and Roadrunners at Vinh Long. I will always remember my first meeting with then LTC Jack Mackmull.

The Mavericks were scrambled from their standby status to proceed to an area north of Ca Mau for a briefing upon arrival. Following our normal procedures, the Mavericks scrambled to their aircraft and cranked. Jim Rausch was my copilot/gunner for this flight. After all gave their thumbs up signal, I turned on the rotating beacon, led the flight out onto the runway, and began our take off. Maverick's procedures called for hand and light signals until we arrived in the operational area and then we could use the radios. Enroute, we only monitored the radios.

As the last aircraft caught up to the flight, John Doyle came on the intercom and stated that the flight was "up," at which point I turned off the rotating beacon (the signal that the flight would now go to cruise speed) and rolled the nose over to 60 knots.

About half way between Vinh Long and Can Tho, Outlaw 6 came on the radio and stated that I was to land at Can Tho and pick up a passenger. I did not "Roger" the radio transmission because the Mavericks were to use radio silence until we arrived in the operational area. Outlaw 6 came on the radio again with the same message, and directed that I acknowledge his order to pick up a passenger. So, I gave him a "Roger."

All the time, I was thinking: we don't haul passengers! We are gun ships! The slicks haul passengers; we shoot 'em up when we get in the operational area, and we surely don't haul passengers in the process.

Anyway, I made the contact with Can Tho tower and got permission to land. Upon landing, we hovered to the side of the runway, and someone came to Jim Rausch's window. All of a sudden, Jim unplugs his helmet cord, unbuckles, and steps out of his side of the cockpit before I can react.

A very large person in fatigues starts fumbling with getting over the seat armor and into the copilot/gunner's seat. What the h---! We are not hauling a passenger in the gunner's seat! Just as I'm about to key the mike and tell Outlaw 6 that this is

a bunch of BS, the "passenger" turns to me with a grin from ear to ear. Immediately I see the LTC rank insignia on his collar, and his name tag. Uh, oh! THIS is the big boss!

LTC Mackmull pulls on his helmet and plugs in his mike cord. Then he says, "Hey, I'm going to be your copilot/gunner on this mission. Any problems with that?" Well, what do you think I said; "No sir. None at all."

We took off and proceeded to the operational area. Enroute, I did my very best to lead the flight and simultaneously give LTC Mackmull a quick checkout on the gun and rocket systems. Then, I covered as much of the emergency procedures as possible.

After finishing these briefings, I realized that I would not only be leading the flight, but also reading the map, listening to all three radios, and trying to keep us all alive with a complete "gun ship newbie" in the left seat.

Suffice it to say, LTC Mackmull got some real combat experience that day. He definitely was a fast learner, got to shoot the guns a lot more than he expected, and got to see some combat action up close and personal. I learned to do a lot more multi-tasking than ever before; map laid over the instrument panel, working three radios, watching to make sure he didn't flip the wrong switches, and trying to pay attention to how my crew was reacting to our situation. He probably didn't know that I was praying all afternoon that nothing serious would happen to harm any of our crew or our aircraft. Nothing did.

This entire mission showed me that LTC Mackmull would be the kind of battalion commander that anyone would want to serve under. He was a true gentleman, great soldier, superb commander, and in the many years that followed, became a great friend.

General Mackmull will be sorely missed by many soldiers that he led; soldiers that thoroughly enjoyed serving under him. May God rest his soul.



Retiring the last Huey

By CW4 Lawrence Castagneto (given at the retirement ceremony at Fort Rucker, AL)

As a Vietnam Veteran Army Aviator, I would like to thank everyone for coming to this special occasion, on this to be honest...very sad day, the end of an era; an era that has spanned over 50 years; the retirement of this grand old lady "OUR MOTHER" ... the Huey. I would like to thank MG Crutchfield for allowing me to speak at this event and try to convey in my own inadequate, meager way...what this aircraft means to me and so many other Vietnam veterans.

First a few facts: It was 48 yrs ago this month that the first Huey arrived in Vietnam with units that were to become part of the 145th and the 13th Combat Aviation Battalions; both units assigned here at Ft Rucker today. While in Vietnam, the Huey flew approximately 7,457,000 combat assault sorties; 3,952,000 attack or gunship sorties and 3,548,000 cargo supply sorties. That comes to over 15 million sorties flown over the paddies and jungles of Nam, not to include the millions of sorties flown all over the world and other combat zones since thenwhat a amazing journey.... I am honored and humbled to have been a small part of that journey.

To those in the crowd that have had the honor to fly, crew, or ride this magnificent machine in combat, we are the chosen few, the lucky ones. They understand what this aircraft means, and how hard it is for me to describe my feelings about her as a Vietnam combat pilot.... for she is alive... has a life of her own, and has been a life long friend.

How do I break down in a few minutes a 42 year love affair, she is as much a part of me, and to so many others,,as the blood that flows through our veins. Try to imagine all those touched over the years ...by the shadow of her blades. Other aircraft can fly overhead and some will look up and some may not; or even recognize what they see but, when a Huey flies over everyone looks up and everyone knows who she is... young or old all over the world she connects with all. To those that rode her into combat... the sound of those blades causes our heart beat to rise... and breaths to quicken... in anticipation of seeing that beautiful machine fly overhead and the feeling of comfort she brings. No other aircraft in the history of aviation evokes the emotional response the Huey does... combat veteran's or not... she is recognized all around the world by young and old, she is the ICON of the Vietnam war, U.S. Army Aviation, and the U.S. Army. Over 5 decades of service she carried Army Aviation on her back, from bird dogs and piston powered helicopters with a secondary support mission, to the force multiplier combat arm that Army Aviation is today.

Even the young aviators of today, that are mainly Apache pilot's, Blackhawk pilot's, etc., that have had a chance to fly her will tell you there is no greater feeling, honor, or thrill then to be blessed with the opportunity to ride her thru the sky... they may love there Apaches and Blackhawks, but they will say there is no aircraft like flying the Huey " it is special". There are two kinds of helicopter pilots: those that have flown the Huey and those that wish they could have.

The intense feelings generated for this aircraft are not just from the flight crews but, also from those who rode in back ...into and out of the "devils caldron". As paraphrased here from "Gods own Lunatics", Joe Galloway's tribute to the Huey and her flight crews and other Infantry veterans' comments: Is there anyone here today who does not thrill to the sound of those Huey blades?? That familiar whop-whop-whop is the soundtrack of our war...the lullaby of our younger days it is burned in to our brains and our hearts. To those who spent their time in Nam as a grunt, know that noise was always a great comfort... Even today when I hear it, I stop...catch my breath...and search the sky for a glimpse of the mighty eagle.

To the pilots and crews of that wonderful machine ...we loved you, we loved that machine. No matter how bad things were...if we called ... you came... down through the hail of green tracers and other visible signs of a real bad day off to a bad start. I can still hear the sound of those blades churning the fiery skyTo us you seemed beyond brave and fearless... Down you would come to us in the middle of battle in those flimsy thin skin -chariots ...into the storm of fire and hell..

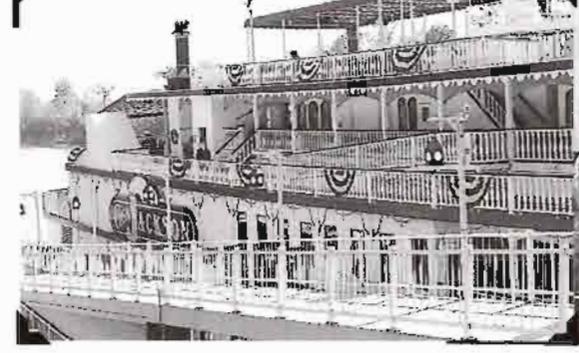
...we feared for you, we were awed by you. We thought of you and that beautiful bird as "God's own lunatics"... and wondered ...who are theses men and this machine and where do they come from Have to be "Gods Angels".

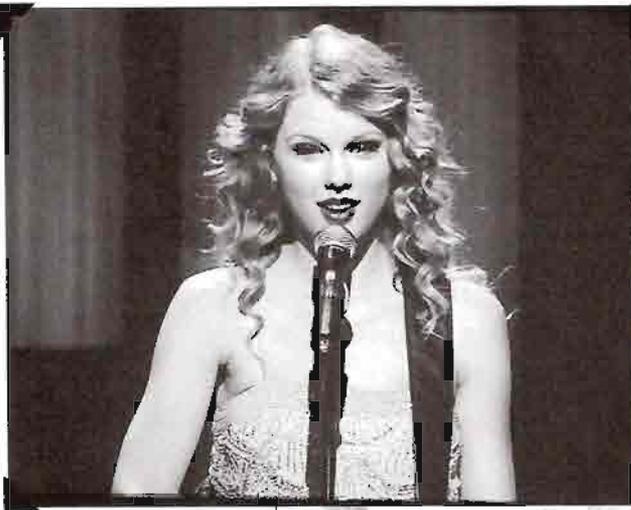
So with that I say to her, that beautiful lady sitting out there, from me and all my lucky brothers, that were given the honor to serve their country, and the privilege of flying this great lady in skies of Vietnam - Thank you for the memories...Thank you for always being there...Thank you for always bringing us home regardless of how beat up and shot up you were...,

Thank You!!!! You will never be forgotten, we loved you then..... we love you now... and will love you till our last breath ... And as the sun sets today, if you listen quietly and closely you will hear that faint wop wop wop of our mother speaking to all her children past and present who rode her into history in a blaze of glory ...she will be saying to them: I am here... I will always be here with you. I am at peace and so should you be ... and so should you be.



Have you paid your dues?





What Happened to the

Major's Jeep?

By Sp4 Gary Halase

(lhalase@new.rr.com)

For most of us, the tensions, pressures and anxieties of our year in Viet Nam have largely faded into the past. However, with the passage of time, certain incidents of that year, and often those with a little humor involved, make even better stories when retold today. I was involved with one of those incidents, which didn't seem too funny at the time, but, when thinking back on it, still makes me chuckle. And, those of you who were there at the time will probably remember it.

I worked in the Outlaw motor pool. Not exactly a job that exposes you to daily combat stresses but yet one that is a vital part of the overall "readiness" of the unit. And, as like every member of the Outlaws, we took great pride in the fact that we could fix any problem that was thrown our way. One morning, after we had been in Vinh Long about two or three months, Major Anderson's personal jeep turned up in the motor pool in a sad state of disrepair. Lots of damage.

What happened to the Major's jeep? Now that's a question a lot of people have asked me. But a question that really didn't need an answer, as anybody could see, was that it had had an accident the night before. The real question was, who did this? How did it happen? Did anybody get hurt? All I could say was, "not me". And these were just a few of the questions going around the compound for a couple of days, which everybody was talking about, quietly, amongst themselves.

Over in the motor pool, we all knew what happened and who did it. But nobody would put a name to these questions, until, suddenly, the company First Sergeant was quickly transferred out. (No names, but you all probably remember when that happened.)

Now we had this wrecked jeep sitting in my motor pool in bad need of repairs. Major Anderson was doing a lot of flying and so didn't use the jeep very often. The Motor Officer, Captain Jerry Wade, and Motor Sergeant Pauley, both came to me wanting to know how we could take care of this mess. But, there was another mess that I was in.

You see, I had just got busted from E4 to E3,

through my own fault, and with no hard feelings towards the Major. Plus, I also knew I was going to be transferred to Soc Trang. So, these three great minds, the Motor Officer, the Motor Sergeant, and the newest PFC in the company, all agreed that I could, and would, fix the jeep, back to new, but with no paperwork. Now I was on a real mission because, if I could pull this off, it might help me get my E4 back!

The first thing I had to do would be to call my buddy in Saigon who could help me get the parts, off the record of course. Well, Captain Wade said he'd get me there whenever I was ready to go. And so, after about 4 trips to Saigon I got all the parts I needed to fix the jeep. (I didn't really need 4 trips to Saigon to get the parts, but a little R&R never hurt anybody, did it?)

Well, I worked day and night to get that thing fixed before the Big Transfer. And from time to time the X-O, Captain Iller, would stop by the motor pool to see how things were going, along with the new First Sergeant, M/Sergeant Ray Hall. Things were going quite well, except nobody would say if I would get my stripes back. All I could get out of any of them was just that "it might help".

Well, after about three weeks, I got it all fixed and painted up really nice, and it was given back to the Major. (I'm not sure that for a while he even knew that his jeep was "down for maintenance"). There was something about that jeep that he liked, as he could have had his pick of any jeep on the lot. But he stuck with the one I fixed.

Anyway, about a month after it was fixed I made my E4 back, as well as a big "thank you" from the Major. Sgt. Pauley even allowed me to regularly volunteer as a Huey door gunner so I got a chance to participate even more directly in the mission of the Outlaws.

Soon, however, the transfers started. Part of the unit was sent elsewhere, so we didn't all rotate back to the States together. I went to the 101st Aviation Company in Soc-Trang. I wished I could have stayed in Vinh Long because when I left, I knew I had friends in high places. I took a picture of the jeep right after that happened and also had a picture after it was fixed. But, when I shipped my foot locker home, it was broken into and I lost those pictures.

All this was done with no questions asked as to where the parts came from. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

**In Memory of:
George S. Prescott**



George S. Prescott, 67, of Tilton, New Hampshire died Tuesday, May 31, 2011 at the Franklin Regional Hospital in Franklin following a period of failing health. He was born in Concord, June 16, 1943, son of the late Stanly H. and Isabelle (Carr) Prescott. He had resided in Loudon where he spent his youth and attended school.

He graduated from Penacook High School, class of 1963.

He went on to serve with the US Army during the Vietnam War. Following his service, he continued working with Air America.

George returned to New Hampshire and worked as a police officer with the Town of Tilton from 1972 to 1992, retiring after serving as Chief for the last 15 years in his career there. He resided in the Northfield-Tilton areas for over 40 years.

He was a life member of the American Legion, Post #49, Northfield; life member of the VFW, Post #1698, Franklin; Franklin Lodge of Elks; life member of the National Rifle Association; member of the New England Association of Chiefs of Police; New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police; life member of the Vinh Long Outlaws Association; and, member of Air America Association. A Mason, George was a longtime member of the Doric Centre Lodge #20 in Tilton. An

outdoorsman, George enjoyed hunting, fishing, and riding his ATV.

His family includes:

Two sons: Shannon E. Prescott of Loudon and Peter W. Prescott of Tilton,

Daughters: Mary E. Steady and husband Matt of Northfield and Pam J. McLaughlan of Gilford,

A Brother: Stanley H. Prescott II and his wife Maureen of Loudon,

Nieces and nephews.

George was buried with military honors at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery, 110 D. W. Highway in Boscaawen, New Hampshire.

Those wishing may make contributions in George's name to the New England Police Benevolent Association, Attn: Steve Henry, PO Box 292, Tilton, NH 03276-0292.

*(Isbell's in Australia & New Zealand,
continued from next page)*

Monday we took a flightseeing tour over the mountains/glaciers to Milford Sound. Once there we took a cruise on the sound with great waterfalls, high mountains on both sides, dolphins playing tag with our boat and seals. On the flight back we flew about 500 feet above two glaciers. Ernie rode up front (right seat) with the pilot.

Tuesday was great, we went to the Walter Peak High Country Sheep Farm and were able to feed and mingle with the sheep, saw a sheep dog demonstration and sheep shearing demonstration. That night back in Queenstown, we took the Skyline Gondola up to the restaurant at the top of the mountain to attend a native song & dance show and have dinner. Very nice.

Wednesday we shopped in Frankton and did some shopping in Queenstown. Thursday the Chilean Volcano Ash caused our home bound flight to be delayed. After numerous changes, we left down under on Friday, June 24th, at 5 pm and arrive in Dallas on June 24th at 5:30 pm. WOW! Needless to say we were glad to get home Saturday afternoon.

Great trip we can recommend it, but "dammed" long flight.

Isbell's Trip to Australia and New Zealand Or (As Ernie said, "Another 17 hour flight across the Pacific-Oh Joy")

In June we marked another two places we wanted to visit off our Bucket List by visiting Australia and New Zealand. We started planning this trip in 2010 for a week in June 2011 at a timeshare in Queenstown, New Zealand (NZ). As the time got closer we found out that Qantas Air was flying out of Dallas/Ft Worth direct to Australia starting June 1st. At that point we decided to add another week to our vacation and spend a few days in Sydney, Australia (AU).

The evening of June 11th we boarded Qantas Air seated in Premium Economy—almost like business class. The seats reclined and we were near the bathrooms. What more could you ask for at our age. Once seated, we were given a bottle of water, a glass of champagne, and noise canceling headphones so we could watch our own individual TV. We also received a blanket and a kit bag containing a sleep mask, toothbrush and tooth paste. Dinner was served on real plates with real glasses and silverware. After dinner, it was lights out and you could watch movies on your TV or go to sleep. After 17 hours, we arrived (finally) in Brisbane, AU, on the morning of Monday, June 13th. They had to refuel so we could go on to Sydney. After arrival in Sydney, we breezed through immigration and customs and hired a taxi to take us to the Marriott Harbour Hotel. Our room wasn't ready, so we made arrangements through the concierge for some tours. That afternoon, we walked two blocks to Circular Quay to take a harbor tour. As a point of reference—the Sydney bridge is on one side of the Circular Quay which goes around the harbor and the Sydney Opera House is on the other side. Spectacular scenery all around

We were wide awake at "0-dark-thirty" on Tuesday, which was OK as we had a tour of the city that morning which left at 7:30 am. We saw the sights on land that we had seen while on the previous days harbor cruise. We had fish & chips for lunch at a restaurant on Circular Quay—how very United Kingdom. After lunch, we walked up to the Museum of Sydney, which covers the founding of Sydney. It was winter down under so the walk was rainy and very windy. It collapsed Linda's umbrella 3 times. She said it was umbrella "3" and Linda "0."

Same early wake up on Wednesday. That day our tour left at 7:15 am for the Hunter Valley Wine Tour; it took about 2 hours to drive up there in pouring rain—did we mention it rained the whole time we were in Australia. We visited a little wildlife park and yes we did get to pet a koala bear and got to feed some tame kangaroos. Saw several kinds of fowl, dingo's, giant turtles and a 16 ft. crocodile. We did tastings at three wineries, a cheese shop and a chocolate shop before returning to the hotel. Good thing someone else was driving. It rained all day. At the second winery we bought a



Ernie & Linda in the "Colonel's Bar" at the Walter Peak High Sheep Farm

case of 2009 Thomas "Kiss Shirax." If you say it fast it sounds weird like "kiss your ___."

Thursday was our free day and we chose to wander around the local area. Met some Aussies at lunch, who suggested a good place to have dinner; nice dinner but costly. We found Australia to be very expensive due to the exchange rate.

Friday, June 17th, was spent at the airport waiting to fly to New Zealand. Suppose to leave at 7:15 am. And, we finally left about 1:30 pm and arrived at 6:30 pm. Too, late to go on to Queenstown, NZ. The delay was due to the Chile Volcano Ash. We were put up at a local motel. Our wakeup call Saturday morning was a small earthquake. Up for a nice breakfast and we were able to fly on to Queenstown, NZ. The timeshare was at Club Pacific in Frankton, a suburb of Queenstown, overlooking the Frankton Arm of Lake Wakatiup, a glacial lake, surrounded by the Remarkables Mountains. Beautiful view. We settled in and walked uphill about 5 blocks and found the local pub. Met a Kiwi named Graeme. Kiwi is what the New Zealanders call themselves.

On Sunday our Kiwi friend showed us the area and suggested things for us to do and see. We went to the bus stop, bought a weekly pass and rode the bus into Queenstown. Did some shopping and found Taste of Wine, which is a shop that featured 80+ New Zealand wines. They gave you a wine card & glass; you inserted the card into a tasting machine and pressed the button to serve your glass—selecting either a taste, half or full glass and it put the charged amount on the card. You paid at the register before you left. Neat system, especially good because they served a great sampler of NZ cheeses and crackers to go with the wine.

(continued on previous page)