



# 48<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

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## Greetings One and All,

Where does time go? I swear I just finished unpacking stuff from the San Antonio reunion and putting it away and now it's time to pack it all up again and get it sent out. I can't figure out where time goes anymore.

So now it's **Attention all of you East Coast Folks!** We're coming to Philly! We're coming to you! That's right; we're coming to the land of Philly cheese steaks, hoagies and Tastycakes and many other local specialties. Since I'm originally from Jersey, I've been looking forward to this one so get your beer goggles on and let's go!

## Now the Rest of the Story.....

Way back in 1987, I was watching the nightly news and the newscaster was talking about a reunion of Vietnam helicopter pilots that was being held on the Queen Mary in the Long Beach harbor. I had never heard of the VHPA or what their purpose was. Out of curiosity, more than anything else, I managed to get to the Queen Mary just in time for the night of the final banquet. After just milling around for a few hours, I pulled pitch after failing to run into anyone I recognized let alone someone from the 48<sup>th</sup>. While disappointed that I didn't meet anyone I knew, I did note that there was some rather robust consumption of adult beverages going on. That piqued my interest but not enough to attend another one. It should be noted that back in 87 at the Queen Mary, there was a grand total of about 400 attendees. Fast forward to 1993; while just still milling around, out of the blue I received a call from someone who identified herself as Becky Fry. After further identifying herself as the wife of a Dave Fry who I served with in the 48<sup>th</sup>, she began her sales pitch. Dave and Becky were calling everyone they knew or could find who served in the 48<sup>th</sup> to get them to Scottsdale for a reunion on the 48<sup>th</sup> in July. Scottsdale in July - you gotta be kidding! I can sorta remember being somewhat non-committal and said I would try to make it. I had just started seeing a chick who I'll call Cindy and the more I thought about it; it seemed to be a convenient excuse to get her into a hotel room for a few days while maybe seeing some of the old crowd again. A no-lose situation no matter how you looked at it. After arriving in Scottsdale and while attempting to cool off in a pool that had a water temperature of about 90 degrees, I see Dave Fry walking around the pool. Now as we all know, Dave hasn't changed much in the past 40 years. While I recognized him almost immediately, he walked right past me. I guess I know who changed more. After identifying myself and meeting the lovely Becky, we proceeded to meet and greet several other Blue Stars that Becky had been able to convince to come to Scottsdale in July. Needless to say, that was the start of our reunions. In 1994 the VHPA reunion was held in Philly. Dave and Becky once again took to the phones and began calling everyone they could and the word began to spread. The 1994 reunion in Philly marked the 1<sup>st</sup> formal reunion of the 48<sup>th</sup>. I say formal in the sense that a reunion block was scheduled and advertised and we actually met in a room and not randomly at the bar.

This year we'll be gathering in Philly once again from July 1<sup>st</sup> through July 5<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to those efforts by Dave and Becky, we are now getting ready to enjoy our 15<sup>th</sup> reunion. What started as a small gathering has now grown into the largest gathering by a single group at the VHPA reunion. We will be gathering this year at the Philadelphia Marriott located in Center City Philly at 1201 Market St. The negotiated VHPA Rate this year is \$115 a night. Not bad for Center City. Reservations can be made by calling "Pass Key" at 800-266-9432. Be sure to tell them you're there for the "VHPA Reunion" so you'll get the advertised rate. Our "formal" reunion will be held on Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> beginning at 1300. So come one – come all, bring your families, grand kids, friends and anyone else you'd care to bring. Meet & greet some old friends and make some new ones. Philly is the place to be this July and we're looking forward to seeing you.

### **And the Activities.....**

Once again we're attempting to set up a TOC; a central meeting place where we can gather, sit back and relax while enjoying the Class VI activities. I am currently working on getting some more information to determine what types of TOC facilities are available. Those who were in San Antonio last year can remember the great TOC we had. It came complete with a large outside balcony overlooking the Alamo and the Riverwalk. We usually get a pretty good crowd going and we want to make sure we can accommodate everyone. Our TOC has become very popular with even those who weren't in the 48<sup>th</sup> and it seems everyone comes by at some time or another during the reunion. One of the TOC highlights last year was our hot dog stand – courtesy of Dave and Becky Fry. We had hot dogs going 24 hours a day and I can tell you that we went through more than 100 pounds of dogs. Hopefully, we will be able to do this again and perhaps expand the menu to include the ever popular polish sausage. I do not have the cost of the TOC yet, but I'm hoping it will be similar to San Antonio. As in the past, we count on you to contribute to the TOC fund to cover our expenses. Once again, I'm asking for your support and appreciate any contribution you can send to help out. Our TOC remains free to everyone and is only supported by your contributions. Help us make it a success once again. The location of the TOC will be posted in the VHPA registration area. Our TOC will be open from July 1<sup>st</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup>, with the exception 1300 to 1700 on July 2<sup>nd</sup> – during our reunion.

As always, this year we are going to rely on the generosity of those attending to bring a case or two of beer, some wine, soft drinks, etc. to donate to the TOC. Additionally, we'll have a "donation" jar for drinks for say \$1 a beer, to help ensure we don't lose our shirts and to build a war chest for future reunion activities. Remember, any funds raised above our expenses will remain in our Association Treasury and will be used in future reunion activities. It's worked out well in the past and hopefully the same formula will work. If you cannot attend this year's festivities but wish make a contribution or if you are attending and would like to send your contribution now, you can send your contribution to:

Bobby Schulze  
PO Box 142  
Baileytown, AL 35019-0142

Please be sure to indicate on your check that it is for the "TOC contribution". One item of note is that last year, your Blue Star Association was able to contribute \$500 to help with the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual fall reunion in Gettysburg. It was through everyone's generosity and support that we were able to do this. We'd like to be able to contribute to the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual fall reunion this year that will be held in Williamsburg, VA. Your generosity will help us do this. More on the Williamsburg reunion at the end of this Newsletter.

For those of you unfamiliar with PA liquor laws, PA has “State Stores” where they sell hard stuff and wine. Beer can be purchased from a distributor and a bar can sell 6 packs to go. It’s a rather inconvenient way to do business in my view but it’s what they have in place. For those of you who are driving, perhaps you can throw a few bottles or a few cases in the trunk and bring them along. Since we’ll be in Center City, it may be difficult to find a State Store or distributor close by.

### **The Blue Star Reunion....**

Our “formal” get together is scheduled for July 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1300 to 1700 with activities moving from the reunion hall to the TOC after 1700. The location of our “formal” gathering will be posted in the VHPA registration area. As always, it doesn’t cost a cent to attend our reunion. Our reunion is independent of the VHPA activities. As I’ve said, they provide us with the reunion facilities at no cost. We will also have a slide projector & screen available along with a TV/VCR combo. If you have slides, movies, VHS tapes you’d like to share, please bring them. I’d really like to encourage all to bring pictures, movies, slides, etc. to share with all.

### **Other Reunion Events.....**

The VHPA has scaled down the number of planned reunion events this year. If you are interested, these events can be viewed on the VHPA website at [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) and click on Reunion Information. In order to attend any of these events, you must register with the VHPA, pay the registration fee and pay for the event ticket. If you are not a VHPA member, you must be sponsored by a VHPA member to do this. We have many Blue Star’s who are willing to sponsor you if you need a sponsor. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you wish to attend any other event and need a sponsor.

### **An Important Point.....**

Not to be confused with the above comment about “VHPA registration”; our (the 48<sup>th</sup>)s reunion activities are FREE, no dinero required. If you WANT to participate in a VHPA sponsored activity, you have to register. You don’t for the Blue Star reunion on the 2<sup>nd</sup>! You have full access to the HQ hotel, our TOC, the VHPA vendor area and anything that is not a “ticketed” event. The exception to this is the banquet and dance on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. More on that below.

### **Banquet....**

Another significant major event of our reunion is the banquet and dance. This year the banquet will be held on July 3<sup>rd</sup> even though the reunion continues on through the 4<sup>th</sup> and wraps up with check out on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The banquet is the largest event of the VHPA reunion. The food is usually pretty good for banquet food and the entertainment is terrific. The VHPA has recognized that many folks would like to attend the banquet but didn’t feel that it should be necessary to register and pay the registration fee to do so. Once again this year you can purchase a ticket for the banquet *without* having to register or pay the registration fee. That means it is open to all – VHPA member or not. This year a banquet ticket for a non-registered guest is \$100. You may be able to purchase a banquet ticket at the reunion but I strongly suggest that you purchase one now. Again, please contact me for further information if you wish to attend the banquet. We are working on ensuring that all who want to sit in a group as the Blue Stars will be able to do so. We hope to get enough tables set aside to accommodate all us. Based on what I’m seeing for the registrations now, I’m figuring that we’ll have enough to fill *at least* 5 tables and probably more.

### **Banquet Seating....**

This year's banquet seating will be similar to last year's. Once at the reunion, you'll present a banquet meal ticket, and from a large floor plan of the banquet area, pick an empty seat at an available table. The seat and table number will be noted on the banquet ticket. In the past, the VHPA has set aside a block of tables for the Blue Stars. The block should be noted on the master plan from which you pick a table and a seat. Look for this block when you are picking a seat.

### **Philly in a Nutshell....**

History abounds in Philly. There is an abundance of historic attractions within walking distance of the Marriott. Such places as Independence Hall, the Betsy Ross House, the US Mint, etc. In addition to the historic sites, you won't leave Philly hungry. The host hotel is located next to the Reading Terminal Market; a working rail station with a fantastic farmers market on the lower level. You'll find the best Philly cheese steaks, hoagies and roast pork sandwiches as you will anywhere in the City. In addition to the prepared food, it's a great farmer's market featuring foods and products by the PA Amish and a great place to people watch. Something that I haven't seen mentioned anywhere is that just a short ride across the Delaware river, in Camden, New Jersey, the battleship New Jersey is anchored and now a museum. For those of us who had the luck to land on the Jersey, it'd be a great time to visit her once again.

### **Raffle....**

Once again we hope to have a raffle to help with expenses and the like. I say "hope" because we always depend on you for the raffle items. Anything will help and anything you can beg, borrow or steal will be appreciated.

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fall Reunion ....**

Through the efforts of Tony Teranna and Cliff Whiting, the Blue Stars have established a fall reunion. The reunion last year was held in Gettysburg, PA and was a resounding success. The fall weather was just perfect and Tony conducted a battlefield tour that was better than one you'd get from a Park Ranger. This year, we're gonna do it again. At the Gettysburg reunion, it was suggested that the 3<sup>rd</sup> fall reunion be held in Williamsburg, VA. Ben and Janet Gay have taken the bull by the horns and have put the Williamsburg reunion on the map. Here's the skinny:

48<sup>TH</sup> AHC REUNION  
**WILLIAMSBURG, VA**  
NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
(Thursday – Sunday)

This will be our 3<sup>rd</sup> Company fall reunion. The past reunions have been GREAT and we look forward to Williamsburg being another special time together.

### **HOTEL**

Hilton Garden Inn, 1624 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA.  
[www.williamsburg.gardeninn.com](http://www.williamsburg.gardeninn.com) (1-877-stay-hgh toll free) (direct: 757-253-9400)  
For recent reviews of the hotel, check out [www.TripAdvisor.com](http://www.TripAdvisor.com)

The time was changed to November to secure a much better room rate and to avoid congestion from major events during October. The room rate is \$89.00 per night and registration must be

made 30 days prior. On October 5<sup>th</sup> the reserved block of rooms will be released to the public. After that date all reservations will be based on availability and current rate, and will NOT include breakfast.

This Hilton is a top-notch facility, extremely clean, with handicap access and a private room available for the TOC. This hospitality room (TOC) will be provided complimentary with 20 confirmed room reservations. The committee will make arrangements for all beverages and snacks in the TOC.

Each sleeping room is equipped with microwave, coffee maker, refrigerator and wireless access, all complimentary. The \$8.95 breakfast, hot and made to order, will be provided to us at no charge. Available 24-7 are: hot tea and coffee in the lobby; indoor pool and hot tub; business center; and the Pantry with food and beverage items for purchase.

The banquet on Saturday night will be catered by the hotel and served in the TOC. The menu, at a reasonable cost, will be determined and provided later. With so much to do in the area, the hotel has agreed to accept reservations at the \$89 rate up to 2 days prior and 2 days following event dates. We will be sending a direct link to book your reservations on line, or you can call the hotel at 757-253-9400.

#### POPULAR AREA ATTRACTIONS

Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, VA with lunch buffet

Yorktown Battlefield (Revolutionary War)

Colonial Williamsburg

Colonial Downs Racetrack

River Walk Landing, Yorktown

College of William and Mary

Shopping: Prime Outlets, Yankee Candle, Merchant Square in Colonial Williamsburg

Jamestown Settlement

Plantation Tours

Mariners Museum

Williamsburg Winery

Civil War Battlefields and Sites

#### TRANSPORTATION

If you plan to drive, complimentary parking is available at the hotel.

RIC-Richmond International Airport is approximately 35 minutes from Williamsburg.

Other nearby airports: Newport News/Williamsburg and Norfolk International.

A Williamsburg Visitor's Guide is available from the Chamber of Commerce. To request the guide go to [www.williamsburgcc.com](http://www.williamsburgcc.com).

If you have questions or need further information, please feel free to contact Ben or Janet Gay at 804-966-9843

A personalized group webpage has been published by the Hilton Garden Inn for us. The webpage address is:

<http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/groups/personalizes/PHFWHGI-BLUST-20091103/index.jhtml>

#### **For the Wives, Girlfriends or Significant Others....**

At our last reunion in DC, the wives, girlfriends or significant were encouraged to wear one of your old flight suits (I know it'd never fit me again) to the mini and it was a rousing success and the wives, etc had a great time. Cindy has asked me to once again post this with the hope that

most of us can dig a flight suit out of moth balls and show your colors once again. Please pass this on and help make this a success once again.

**In Closing....**

I'm personally excited to hear that an old friend will be attending his 1<sup>st</sup> reunion. After Vietnam, he did what most of us thought about doing, he moved to Australia. He went to work for Columbia Helicopters and has been living in Australia and working in Indonesia ever since. His schedule prevented him from attending the July reunions but he recently retired and will be in Philly this July. Who is he? Well none other than the infamous Ernie Zeitler. Along with Ernie, I've noted that another famous Blue Star will be at the reunion. He was said to be the 1<sup>st</sup> pilot to extend for the 48<sup>th</sup>. In recognition of his dedication to duty, a poster of him was hung on the wall in the Ninh Hoa O Club. Many of us remember the poster as being the target of our Hail and Farewell glasses as we downed our Blue Star Specials. Yes, Loren Hall will be in Philly. I haven't seen him since Vietnam but I'll never forget the name.

I'm also excited about possibly seeing another old friend, Bill Brophy. The "Broph" is infamous in Blue Star circles as having lived in Australia while he was still "supposed" to be in the 48<sup>th</sup>. That was quite an R&R! Some fancy footwork and Broph's natural charm (and some help from Capt. McKelvey) allowed Bill to be with us today and not in Leavenworth ☺. Bill lives just outside of Philly and I promised Bill that if he didn't come to see us, we would come to see him. The bus is on standby Bill!

I'm sure many will recognize these names but some may not. If you've haven't been to a reunion in awhile or never at all, come on out and renew a friendship with an old friend or meet a new one. One thing I can guarantee is that we know who the last men standing in the TOC will be. Make no mistake that if anyone thinks they can outlast Jack Audiss, John-Al or Rick Lester, it'll be a memorable challenge and photo worthy!

I'm sure that the miserable economy has hurt many of us. The economy will make it difficult, if not impossible, for many of us to attend. I can only speak for myself in saying that if I wasn't still working, I wouldn't be able to fund a trip like this out of any retirement funds. I'm hoping that the many members we have in the tri-state area are able to make it to Philly to join us. It's not often a reunion is held so close and possible to drive to. I know many of us are hesitant to go to a reunion for fear of what to expect. I was the same way once. After the Long Beach reunion, I didn't attend another reunion for 6 years; didn't have any real interest. After Scottsdale, my opinion changed and while I have missed some, I've been able to attend most of them since. There are also many of us who have attended a reunion and felt that it was a waste of time. The reasons are many, from someone having pissed us off for whatever reason to the feeling that it just wasn't for me anymore. Whatever the reason may be, we miss you and we hope to see you again. Reunions can be lousy or great. It just depends on us. We do everything we possibly can to ensure that all who attends from the 48<sup>th</sup> or a supporting unit are welcomed and have a good time.

Hope to see everyone in Philly. If I can answer any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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