

VHPA - GEORGIA CHAPTER Minutes, February 8 Meeting

Mighty 8th Air Force Museum, Savannah, GA

The meeting opened at 11:00 with President Steve Crimm leading the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence to remember those who did not live to join us.

Steve Crimm talked about the special nature of the meeting to (1) invite Savannah area Vn Hel pilots join us, and (2) to memorialize the loss of a fellow pilot in the presence of his family.

There were 42 adults present, including pilots and family members of Pat Hughes, plus some children family members.

Each pilot introduced himself, his unit, tour years and location, callsign etc. Of particular interest were four Vietnamese pilots who flew helicopters with ARVN forces.

The reading of the minutes of the previous meeting was waived as they are now available on the web site, and we moved into the old business.

Old Business:

Secretary-Treasurer Terry Garlock reported the state of the bank as \$1,251.78 in checking, and \$1,509.79 in money market, total amount \$2,761.57 with 24 members still owing 2003 dues. He also submitted to President Steve Crimm a written report of bank balances and all debit and credit transactions.

Terry Garlock reported that Jim Torbert and Bill Stanley had spoken to a group at Southern Polytech University.

A report on the parade was postponed in the absence of Jim Torbert.

New Business:

President Steve Crimm explained to visitors from Savannah the purpose of our chapter, and some of the projects we have undertaken, including the speakers' bureau and the Veterans Day Parade. He asked all present for ideas on a project the chapter might commit itself to. One idea proposed was capturing on video the stories from Vietnam as told by its members.

Steve also proposed to the group that Savannah become a sub-chapter, and asked for volunteers to organize the group locally. He identified a couple of candidates to talk with later and will report on progress of the Savannah sub-chapter. The record should show this was a very successful meeting in recruiting attendance and interest, and seemed to be enjoyed by all in attendance.

In Memory of Carl Patrick Hughes

With the family members of Pat Hughes in attendance, Terry Garlock spoke the following words prepared for the occasion:

Today we honor the memory of Carl Patrick Hughes, a US Army Warrant Officer Helicopter pilot who died in the service of his country on September 3, 1969 at 22 years old. He flew with the Lancers, 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion (AHB), 101st Airborne - Airmobile, from Camp Evans in I Corps, South Vietnam.

Reggie Kenner remembers Pat as short and funny, but Reggie Kenner was 6' 5", so I'm not sure his version of short can be trusted. More importantly, Reggie remembers Pat as a confident and capable pilot, and Reggie said he always felt a little better in dawn's early light when he discovered his assigned co-pilot for the day was Pat Hughes.

And Reggie says Pat was quick. One day they went down in the mountains near Eagle's Nest. Reggie says by the time the dust settled and most parts stopped moving, someone scrambled to open Pat's door to check on him, but he was already sitting on the ground smoking a cigarette.

Steve Crimm flew with the Lancers, too, but Steve didn't know Pat because their timeframe didn't overlap. I didn't know Pat, either. But he was one of us, so we all know some things about him, don't we?

For example, we know Pat Hughes was tough and smart and tenacious, because if he was not ALL of those things he would not have made it through flight school. The washout rate was 65% when I was there. We also know he served his country at a time when it was unpopular to wear a uniform.

There are other things we know about Pat Hughes, because when our country sent us to war as young men, we learned some things you cannot learn any other place.

Those who found a way not to serve might have wondered "What must it be like in battle, would I be frightened or would I have courage?" But those of us who did serve soon learned that courage is not the absence of fear, courage is getting the job done while you're so scared your hands shake.

We learned that when the shooting starts we're not fighting for the flag, we're fighting for one another.

We learned what it is to dedicate yourself to a cause greater than your own self-interest, for no matter what we each thought of the war, as we strapped in, cranked up and prepared to fly each day, we were motivated by serving our brothers on the ground. They needed us to take them to battle and take them out, to bring them ammo, food and water and an occasional beer. They needed our gun cover and rockets when the enemy was strong. They needed to know we would pick up the wounded as fast as we could even under fire, and that we would take our dead brothers, too so they could go home. Our brothers needed us, and however bad it was the day before, we always had to go.

We learned firsthand what Admiral Chester Nimitz meant in 1945 when he said "uncommon valor, common virtue" as he marveled at the brutal punishment absorbed by US Marines fighting for control on Iwo Jima.

We all remember the famous photograph of our men raising the flag on Iwo Jima. James Bradley's father was one of those men. Bradley wrote the book titled "Flags of Our Fathers." As he interviewed the "heroes" of Iwo Jima and searched for the essence of Adm. Nimitz's "uncommon valor", he was frustrated as they each told him the same thing. "I didn't do anything special", they each said, "I just did my job like the other guys." Bradley finally figured out the meaning of Adm. Nimitz's observation, and that the real answer was the "common virtue" of ordinary men and women doing extraordinary things. These Marines suffered together, they came to love one another, and they fought desperately to keep one another alive.

And when some of them were singled as heroes, they didn't want to stand apart from all the others, they took enormous pride in being one of the guys they grew to love and admire.

Admiral Nimitz's "common virtue" was there aboard my father's ship, the Fanshaw Bay, as they furiously fought the Japanese Fleet, like David fighting Goliath, to protect our invasion force when McArthur's Army returned to the Philippines. Admiral Nimitz's "common virtue" was there in my unit in Vietnam, when two fellow pilots risked their life without a moment's thought to rescue me one day, as just one example. And I know Admiral Nimitz's "common virtue" was there with each one of you, and with Pat Hughes.

Even though I don't know some of you, I am proud to be one of you, because I know some things about you our mothers and fathers taught us to admire. And we know those same things about Pat Hughes, don't we?

Those who have never been to war sometimes wonder why veterans like to gather, like we're gathered here today. Some say veterans gather because nobody else can understand what war is like. But I think its more than that. I think we seek one another's company because we see in each other what is best about ourselves. I think we are drawn by the "common virtue" that binds us all together as brothers and sisters, and I think we are drawn by the often unspoken memory of all the others like Pat Hughes who paid the ultimate price for their brothers and their country.

And now, as we present this plaque to the family of Pat Hughes, please stand with me.

Terry Garlock read the words as Steve Crimm presented the plaque to the family:

B Co (Lancers)
158th Assault Helicopter Battalion (AHB)
101st Airborne-Airmobile Division
Vietnam 1969 - 1972

In Memorial
Carl "Pat" Hughes
Lancer
Aviator
Republic of Vietnam
Camp Evans - I Corps
1969

West from the South China Sea through the Ashau Valley to Laos and beyond
From DaNang Harbor, North to Quang Tri and the DMZ
We depended on him - And he was always there

We most solemnly and sincerely, promise and swear - his uncommon valor
Will be treasured and honored in our memories forever

Now in the High Unterspased Sanctity of Space
We know he has put out his hand and touched the face - Of God

Ben Peeples then came to the podium to share a few thought about Pat, whose nickname was "Stump," who he had known quite well. Ben had been on the accident board to investigate the incident of Pat's death.

After a moment Steve Crimm opened another topic, expressing the chapter's gratitude to Woody McFarlin for serving as President for two years and being the founder of the chapter. Steve presented him with a gift from the Chapter, a wooden model of an AH-1G Cobra helicopter.

The next meeting was announced as May 17, 2003 in Warner Robins, Aug 15 open, and Nov 1 in Atlanta.

Adjournment was at 1PM, and individual discussions continued.
Terry L. Garlock
Secretary/Treasurer