

VIETNAM VET SPEAKS ON EXPERIENCE FLYING A MEDEVAC HELICOPTER

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Phil Marshall, 1969 Vietnam veteran, poses with a UH-1, or Huey, medical helicopter.

MENTONE — Vietnam veteran Phil Marshall, 69, Springfield, Ohio, was the guest speaker at this year's Rotors Over Mentone event Aug. 26 at the Bell Aircraft Museum, 210 S. Oak St., Mentone. Marshall flew unarmed medevac helicopters as a member of the 237th Medical Detachment while in Camp Evans and Quang Tri, Vietnam, during the Vietnam War in 1969. Marshall authored "Flying Unarmed Medevac Helicopters in Vietnam" and "Vietnam Diary".

This year's aircraft focus was on the Huey, or UH-1, a medical evacuation helicopter. Around 7,000 Hueys were deployed during Vietnam. Due to the Geneva Convention, Hueys were kept unarmed.

While Marshall had planned a presentation full of pictures, power was accidentally turned off to his projector and the presentation continued without.

Marshall spoke of his experience as a pilot, drawing a notable amount of attention to the fact that many Vietnam pilots were less than 22 years of age. He stated that the US Army drew in young recruits by telling them they could fly



Marshall said that despite the dangers he found his job very rewarding.

helicopters, comparing the rush felt to that of handing a 17-year-old keys to a fancy sports car.

“To be old and wise you have to have been young and stupid,” Marshall said regarding the dangers presented to young pilots and the sometimes risky choices that were made.

Marshall also spoke of the dangers of flying an unarmed medevac, noting that unless the helicopter was in the air it was an easy target. Pilots often had to think on their feet to avoid being struck by mortars.

Marshall repeated numerous times that despite the dangers of his job he found it very rewarding. Marshall was wounded during a night mission in November 1969 and sent home to the United States.

There is currently no museum dedicated to remembering the Huey aircraft used in Vietnam, but the American Huey 369 organization is hoping to change that. The group is currently fundraising for Phase II of building a museum in Peru, Ind. not far from Grissom Air Force base. For more information go [online](#).

For the Rotor’s Over Mentone event, a helicopter ride through Goshen Helicopters was originally planned. Unfortunately, due to technical issues the aircraft could not make it. However, a restored Huey was available for rides with a membership fee.

The event featured food, free tours of the museum and a RedCross Bloodmobile to donate blood.



*A restored UH-1 medical evacuation helicopter.
Rides were available in the afternoon.*

