

## **The Ranger Hilton**

By Senior Officer, Donald Pond

Back in the day (1970's), when I was a cadet and advancing through the Ranger classes, a lot of my ranger training was conducted locally, just out side of Willow Grove JRB and off of Keith Valley Road in Horsham. This location was known as the "Ranger Hilton." The Ranger Hilton was an abandoned children's camp site that closed in the late 1950's after a Marine - Fury F-13 fighter jet crashed while attempting to land at the base. Unfortunately, there were many fatalities and the camp was forced to close to the public. Later on, the site became a law enforcement training facility and gun range for the Horsham Township Police Department and regional SWAT Teams. Group 90 (now Group 3) ranger staff facilitated many training exercises from that location. Our group SAR Officer was

Major Al Ozosky. Major "O" as he liked to be called, is a Hawk Mountain Expert Ranger (belt #61). He has quite a sense of humor, too. If you run into him some day, just ask him if he remembers the old bees nest in the sleeping bag trick while we were bedded down for the night on a weekend mission. As I recall, we were called to search the banks of Schuylkill River above Pottstown, PA (fall of 1973). Anyway, on a serious note, I owe a debt of gratitude to Major "O" for allowing me the opportunity to advance my leadership, survival, and navigational skills. Which, I am still using some 30+ years later.

**I salute you Major "O" – A true mentor.**