

# Vinh Long Outlaws Newsletter

July—September 2011

Third Quarter 2011

## National Director's Corner

### Inside this issue:

National Director's Corner	1
The Back Pew Historic Savannah	2
Fort Pulaski, Savannah, GA	3
Veteran Reunited with His Vietnam Helicopter	4-5
Three Strikes! By John Doyle	5-6
VA Cemetery in Mobile, AL	6
Locating Mission Outlaws	7-8
China Experience by Larry Jackson	9-10
Battleship Park, Mobile, AL Huey	10
Current VLOA Roster	11-17

Greetings, have good news for you we have a site for our 2012 Outlaw Reunion it is Savannah Georgia, and a Hotel the Savannah Georgia Hilton Desoto, we also have a date September 6<sup>th</sup> thru the September 10<sup>th</sup>. We also have entertainment and tours scheduled.

Savannah has a lot to offer us as far as things to do and places to see. Savannah is noted for it's Southern Charm and is Historical Significant. Many old homes, that are open for tours, and has a Vibrant historic district, that is full of shops and restaurants, which just by chance is were are hotel is located Smack Dab in the middle of the old part of the city with many places of interest with-in walking distance of the Hilton Desoto. You can Check out the hotels website

[www.desotohilton.com](http://www.desotohilton.com).

One of our outings will be a city tour that will give you a sampling of what the city has to offer, and maybe give you a starting point for some exploring on our free time.

Several points of interest you might consider would be Fort Pulaski, Hunter Army Airfield in Pooler GA., Paula Deans Restaurant, the Market District, just to name a few.

We will be doing our registration for the reunion differently this time, you will be able to book the hotel, yourself, and put hotel on your credit card, will have more information on this in the next newsletter with all the registration info for you.

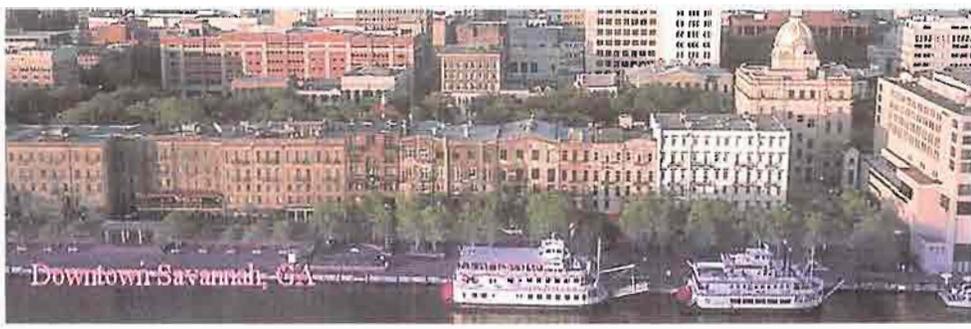
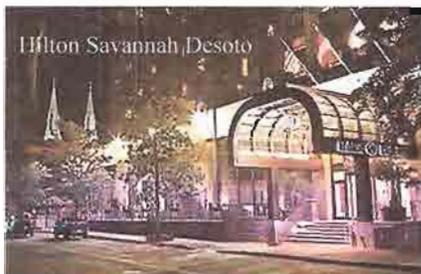
Also in the next newsletter I intend to acquaint you with our reunion city Sa-

vannah.

I know some of you are wondering why not "Las Vegas"? With out going into a lot of details let me say that it just wasn't a "Good Fit" for our organization. Also other locations didn't meet our needs also, and many were considered. Yes I thought this reunion would be one that Laurie and I would be able to drive to, but Savannah is just slightly out of my driving range. Guess will have to endure the TSA again! Ugh! Don't mind the pat downs or the rustling through my luggage; and telling me how untidy the contents are, hum I wonder who made it that way? I don't know but probably the thing that bothers me the most is the giggling and pointing at the Body Scans.

Much more Later

Bob



## The Back Pew

By John Doyle

### What You Thought You Heard Me Say

#### I. Introduction:

*At one of my pastorates, I had a Deacon who I was very friendly with. But, as often happens, friends have disagreements. That is what happened with us.*

#### II. What we say is not always what people hear.

*I like to joke around with people. Deacons were my favorite since they*

*seemed to always be so "business like" all the time. One day the Chairman of Deacons and I were having a "very minor" disagreement.*

*Joking, I said, "You better be careful, I have a friend in Jersey named Guido, who loves to break kneecaps." Now I said this with a smile on my face.*

*About a year later, we had another disagreement. This one was not so minor. At some point, the Deacon*

*said, "And I don't care about your friend Guido!"*

*He had thought what I said about Guido was a threat. I said something meaning one thing, in this case humor, but he heard me make a threat!*

*Be careful of not only what we say but also how we say it.*

## HISTORIC SAVANNAH, GA

In 1733, there were 114 new arrivals to the area, which then consisted mostly of forest, with a small Indian town and a trading post as the only signs of civilization. The newcomers were English settlers led by James Edward Oglethorpe—a politician, soldier and philanthropist bent on establishing the 13<sup>th</sup> colony of Georgia.



Oglethorpe selected a bluff on the south side of a mighty river as the site of the colony's first city, and he christened the fledgling town Savannah after the Indian name for the waterway. Aided by the Yamacraws, a tribe of American Indians who lived nearby, the settlers struggled but made a go of establishing a city in the wilderness.



During the first two decades of its existence, Georgia was a trusteeship created to give people who were out of work a place

for a fresh start. By 1766, Savannah was home to almost 18,000 people and a healthy economy based on exportation of rice.

The city became a major exporter of cotton in the early 1800's and its prosperous residents built elegant homes and enjoyed a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Although the city came through the Civil War intact, the conflict left Savannah bankrupt, but a resurgence in cotton production soon had Savannah back on its feet and prospering.

The decline in cotton production and the Great Depression threatened to curtail Savannah's progress in the 1920's and 30's but the town got a boost when Union Bag and Paper Company opened a large plant just west of the city. The plant—now a part of International Paper Company Empire and still one of the city's largest employers—helped Savannah through those tough times, as did the presence of the military here during World War II. Two Large Army Air Corps bases were in operation in Savannah, and one has been retained in the present-day form of Hunter Army Airfield.

By Bob Koonce



## Fort Pulaski, Savannah, GA



Fort Pulaski was named in honor of Revolutionary War hero Casimir Pulaski, Construction began on Cockspur Island where previous forts had been built to provide defense against enemy ships entering the Savannah River,

but failed to withstand the test of time. However this new fort was the grand engineering achievement, and was part of the Third System of Sea Coast Fortifications being built along the east coast in a program to update the nations coastal defenses.



The fort began construction in 1829 and was eventually completed in 1847. Some 25 million bricks produced locally were used to build this impregnable fortress. Sandstone and Granite were brought from Connecticut and New York as well. As progress continued on the fort, 20 32-pounder naval cannons were mounted in 1840.

The fort was designed to carry 150 guns, but no additional cannons were added until Confederate troops seized the fort in 1861.

Along with Lt. Joseph K. F. Mansfield assigned to the Fort Pulaski project was another officer of West Point. Second Lt. Robert E. Lee, at 23 years of age, was given his first assignment on September 27, 1829 to join the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Cockspur Island. There he assisted in the construction of Fort Pulaski. Lee was instructed to oversee the repair of the embankments and drainage systems.

He was later promoted to acting assistant commissary of Subsistence of the Post.

On April 10, 1862, a mortar shell announced the beginning of the Federal attack to regain the fort and once again secure it in Federal hands. Thirty hours later, Fort Pulaski southeast angle lay in ruin and the Confederates surrendered.

Two things lead to the forts fall, one being the use of Rifled Cannon against the masonry walls, and secondly the Federal knowledge of exactly where the forts powder magazines were located.



## Veteran reunited with helicopter he flew in Vietnam



*Al Iller in the same helicopter he flew in Vietnam.*

*By Dianne Pitts*

On Sunday morning, April 16, Al Iller, a retired U.S. Army Colonel and Vietnam veteran, and his close friend Les Henderson, both of Berryville, headed east toward Walnut Ridge. Their mission was to visit Jason Hammock and take a look at a vintage helicopter.

This was not just any helicopter, but the same helicopter Al had flown in Vietnam 45 years ago. He had visited Jason, the owner of the helicopter, earlier this year but was back for a return visit—and a flight.

The helicopter, located at Black Rock, was parked in front of Jason's pristine hanger, home for the aircraft. The helicopter was painted in civilian colors and not the Army olive drab as Al remembered. He was viewing the same serial number UH-1B, known as Outlaw (OL11), that he had flown in Vietnam but it was now emblazoned with an FAA registration number.

The Bell Helicopter manufacturer's serial number, the military olive drab and gray paint in most of the interior confirmed the origin. The instruments and flight controls appeared original. A few had been reconditioned or replaced.

As Al climbed into one of the pilot seats,

memories of Vietnam were awakened. After startup, a thorough run up and functional check of all systems, Jason brought the helicopter to a hover and began the take off and climb. Once airborne, Jason asked Al to take over. Al, now 80, took command of the controls. The ride was a little rocky at first, but it didn't take long before he was back in the groove. He maneuvered through the skies, made several approaches to landings, hovering and take off.

Although the reason for this adventure was much different from the Vietnam missions, this experience was a tribute from Jason to Al for serving his country more than 40 years ago.

Over lunch of beans and macaroni with tomatoes at the Wings of Honor Museum at Walnut Ridge Airport, Les and Jason listened as Al reminisced about the two tours in Vietnam and the interesting journey of the OL 11 UH helicopter from Vietnam

*(continued on page 5)*



*Al in Vietnam, 1964-65.*



*Jason, Al and Les pose in front of the OL 11 helicopter.*

(Veteran Reunited continued from page 4)



Once airborne, Al took over.

to Jason's hanger. After serving in a number of Army Aviation units, OL 11 was declared government surplus, acquired by the Los Angeles Fire and Rescue Department, and ultimately purchased by Jason in 2004.

A Craighead Electric member, Jason's company, Precision Rotors, Inc., now operates the OL 11 in clearing electric and gas pipe line rights-of-way. The helicopter is equipped with a 4-cylinder 20-HP gas engine driving ten 24-inch circular saw blades on a long boom attached to the helicopter cargo hook. Al is a Carroll Electric member.



The helicopter with saw boom.

## Three Strikes!

By John Doyle

In early June, Ruth and I went on vacation to Alaska and Yukon Territory. We flew to Seattle, where the tour began. The next day we went by tour bus to Vancouver, Canada, where we boarded a Holland American Line ship for a three-day sail to Skagway, Alaska.

Skagway is famous for its history as the starting point for the gold prospectors that swarmed there after the Gold strike of 1896. It is also a summer tourist town that still has wooden sidewalks. Several cruise lines stop here on their 7-day Alaskan sail.

**STRIKE 1:** That evening in Skagway, we were to visit a local garden. Our tour included dinner in their restaurant. We were to meet the tour director in the hotel lobby at 6 PM. We arrived about eight minutes to six to find three other couples in the lobby, waiting. About ten after six, we realized something was "not right here." It seems the tour director decided we were all on the bus, and left early.

Fortunately, the hotel called the Garden and confirmed our group was already there. They also provided a shuttle van to take all of us to the Garden. (I would have hated to miss my dinner.)

Day 6 was one of our favorite days. After breakfast, we boarded the narrow gauge White Pass & Yukon Route train. Our trip would take us up the White Pass Trail, a climb of over 3000 ft. We rode in the original coaches, which have been lovingly brought back to their original condition. We would travel a little over 27 miles to the top of the pass. It is the same route followed by the prospectors as they traveled to the gold claim area. This is a trip not to be missed.

At Fraser, British Columbia, we joined back up with our tour bus for the ride to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, where we would spend the night. The afternoon highlight was a visit to a sled dog training facility. I must admit that I was not looking forward to it. Turns out, I loved it.

On day 7, we followed the legendary Alaskan Highway to Beaver Creek for an overnight stop. Beaver Creek is a small cluster of service businesses, a church, and not much more.

We hit the road on day 8 for a 10-hour journey to Fairbanks, Alaska, our home for the next two days and nights. We had hoped to see moose, bear, and other wildlife along the route. Some on the bus claimed to have seen a bear. We didn't. However, we did see one moose. Wildlife was scarce on this trip.

The next day in Fairbanks included a visit to a "First Nation," or native village, on the Chena River. We traveled on an authentic sternwheeler, the Discovery. The boat trip and visit to the native village were most interesting. Two native girls, sisters, demonstrated how they called moose. The first gave the traditional moose call. The second broke everyone up, when she said, "Here, moosey, moosey!" This was followed by lunch at the famous Pump House Restaurant on the Chena River.

Day 10 and we are traveling to Denali National Park by train in the "dome cars," which served coffee, soft or hard drinks, and snacks or breakfast. I must admit, Denali was one of the reasons I wanted to take this trip. The highlight of our two-day stay in Denali was the park tour on day 11 aboard a park operated (school type) bus. This great tour lasted for about 6 - 7 hours.

Day 12 and, we are headed for the Kenai Peninsula, about a 100 miles south of Anchorage. Altogether, this is about an 8-hour trip from Denali to Seward. (continued on page 6)

*(Three Strikes continued from page 5)* Another mishap this morning, I laid my glasses on the bed and forgot them. Yep! You guessed it. I knocked them off the bed, and proceeded to step on them, doing major damage.

We stopped in Wasilla, Home to Sarah "I want to be President" Palin. It is also the place I left \$159.00 for a new frame for my glasses. So what if they were a little too big for the lens? I could see again! Back on the road,

We traveled along the bay from Anchorage to Seward. This is another must-see for any trip to Alaska. Mountains, lakes, brooks, rivers, and the bay, beauty on all sides.

**STRIKE 2:** We arrived at the lodge in Seward, just in time for supper. We had a really good meal, and were flying high. When we got to the room, we discovered our luggage was still at Denali! For some reason, the Denali Lodge crew, responsible for getting our luggage onto the tour bus, missed ours.

The next day was a full one. We went whale watching and saw several whales as well as puffins. It just so happens that I have a long love affair with these remarkable little critters.

After the cruise, we traveled by bus back to Anchorage. We would spend the night here, and fly home in the morning. On arrival at the hotel, we were pleased to find our bags waiting for us in the room.

The highlight of the hotel stay was dessert that evening. We had very large banana splits

The final day.

**STRIKE THREE:** Having an early flight, we were in the hotel lobby by four AM. The airport was right across the street from the hotel, but getting there required using the shuttle van. The van dropped us off on road level. We had to get up one flight to get to the check in, security check, and our flight.

We each had a large suitcase with wheels, and a carry-on bag. We could not find the elevator,

so we used the escalator. Ruth went first, followed by her suitcase, me, and my suitcase. Yes, we have heard "never take luggage on an escalator," but hey, we needed to get upstairs. Halfway up, Ruth's suitcase started to give me trouble. I guess it didn't want to hold hands. And I was so nice to it! I reached for it, forgetting I had the handle of my bag tightly in my hand on the step behind me. Oops! Ruth's suitcase "attacked me," pushing me back onto my suitcase. The result was not pretty. Have you ever seen a grown man do a back flip down an escalator? As I said, it was not a pretty sight.

The first thing that flooded my mind was to close my fist and protect my fingers from the meshing stairs. The next thing was to try to figure out why that woman a few steps below me kept yelling, asking me "Are you all right sir?" Couldn't she see I just accomplished an Olympic quality back flip?

The good news: One small cut on my arm, bruised ribs,, bumps and bruises enough to fill a C-130, and a much-bruised ego!

The flight home was uneventful. They didn't even offer me a parachute!

**Footnote:** In 1969, after my 3<sup>rd</sup> tour in Nam, I was assigned as 1SG of the 90<sup>th</sup> Avn. Company, at Fort Richardson in Anchorage. After the first year, we still had traveled very little in Alaska. We thought we had two more years before I retired. We were wrong. I was Medically Retired in June of 1970. This was our "Go back and see everything we missed vacation."

**PS:** The doctor said physically I was fine. Mentally, I should have my head examined. I do not even remember hitting my head.

In spite of my mishaps, this was "a home run," the best vacation we have ever taken. Details of the trip available for the asking.

John Doyle

## VA Cemetery in Mobile, AL Area

MG (Ret) McNair (former CG, Fort Rucker, AL) has been working on a new VA Cemetery for veterans in lower Alabama since the Mobile Cemetery is full and they must bury their veterans in Pensacola or Biloxi - or in the Montevallo or Fort Mitchell Cemeteries hundreds of miles away. The VA agreed to fund the Cemetery construction if the State would maintain it, and the Alabama Governor approved legislation to do that. The first shovel of dirt was turned last year in a grand ceremony in Spanish Fort, AL. The VA money and the Cemetery are in the pending 2012 appropriations budget. MG McNair said that we have a lot of patriotic folks in that part of Alabama, just like the Wiregrass and all over the country.



1		14	Al Guthrie	27	Jim Coleman	42	
2	Bill Lowie	15		28	Lou Litt	43	Charlie Humphries
3	Ernie Isbell	16	Jim Kirkley	29	John Brown	44	Tom Anderson
4	Dale Sherrod	17	Steve Morgan	30	Frank Estes		
5	Ed Piper	18	Al Iller	31	Bob Bergquist		
6	Dave Davis? NOR	19	Bill Hensinger	32			
7		20	Angelo Spelios	33			
8	Bill (Gary) Barmore	21	Bob Scott	34	Don Newman		
9	Richard Banazack	22		35			
10	Jim Longhoffer	23	John Sedam	36	Jerry Wade		
11	Harold Simpson	24	Richard Eskey	37	Chuck Wren		
12	Doug Armstrong	25	Tony Clemente	38	Alfred (A.J.) Brown		
13	George Kyle	26	Billy Hampton	39	Les Haverfield		
				40	Paul Queen		
				41			

**HELP!! HELP!! HELP!!**

We need your help to identify the names of the missing Outlaws. Please see photo on next page for close-up photo of these individuals.

After forty-seven years let's solve the mystery! These are enlarged pictures of the still unknown members of the "First 44 Outlaw Aviators". Please take few minutes and try to finally give them their names so they may take their rightful place in history. Thanks, Jim Donnelly



#1



#7



#15



#22



#32



#33



#35



#41



#42

# China Experience

By Larry Jackson

Polly and I went on a tour of China this summer with a group of 13 members of our golf club. We flew from Atlanta to Seattle and then on to Beijing. Really a long day as it took about 30 hours.

We began our trip in the capital city of Beijing, with a population of over 14 million. We visited the magnificent Forbidden City, Summer Palace, The Temple of Heaven, the incredible Great Wall and Tiananmen Square. The Forbidden City or Imperial Palace is an example of concentric-square city-planning. This was the home and audience hall of the Ming and Qing emperors. 100,000 artisans and 1,000,000 laborers built the Palace City between 1406 and 1420 during the Ming Dynasty. Its grounds cover an area of 178 acres and it contains approximately 9,000 rooms. It was the home to 9,000 ladies in waiting and 100,000 eunuchs. The Temple of Heaven is a masterpiece of 15<sup>th</sup> century architecture. It consists of the Hall of Prayers for Good Harvests, the Imperial Vault and the Circular Mound Altar of Heaven.

Tiananmen Square covers 98 acres and includes the Great Hall of the People, Qianmen Gate, Monument of People's Heroes and Chairman Mao's Memorial Hall where the body of Mao Tse Tung lies in state. This square is where emperors issued decrees and where Chairman Mao proclaimed that China was the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.

Construction of the Great Wall began 2000 years ago during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC). The effort required hundreds of thousands of workers and ten years of hard labor under General Meng Tian and used an estimated 180 million cubic yards of rammed earth. The wall never did perform its function as a defense line to keep invaders out. We were able to walk about a mile on some of the wall that has been restored. It was quite impressive.

We also visited a Kungfu School where we were treated to exciting and impressive demonstrations of the martial art. This school is a boarding school and includes children as young as 4 years old. We also visited a home in the Hutong district (historic district in downtown Beijing) where the residents demonstrated the ancient art of painting inside snuff jars with water colors.

Our next stop was the port city of Shanghai which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in China with a population of 19 million. It is situated on the East China

Sea and is the gateway to the Yangtze River valley. It is the largest port city in China with a harbor area 40 miles in length.

Highlights included the Bund/Shanghai Museum

which undertakes to collect, excavate, store and study the cultural relics of the country. We also visited the Yu Yuan Gardens

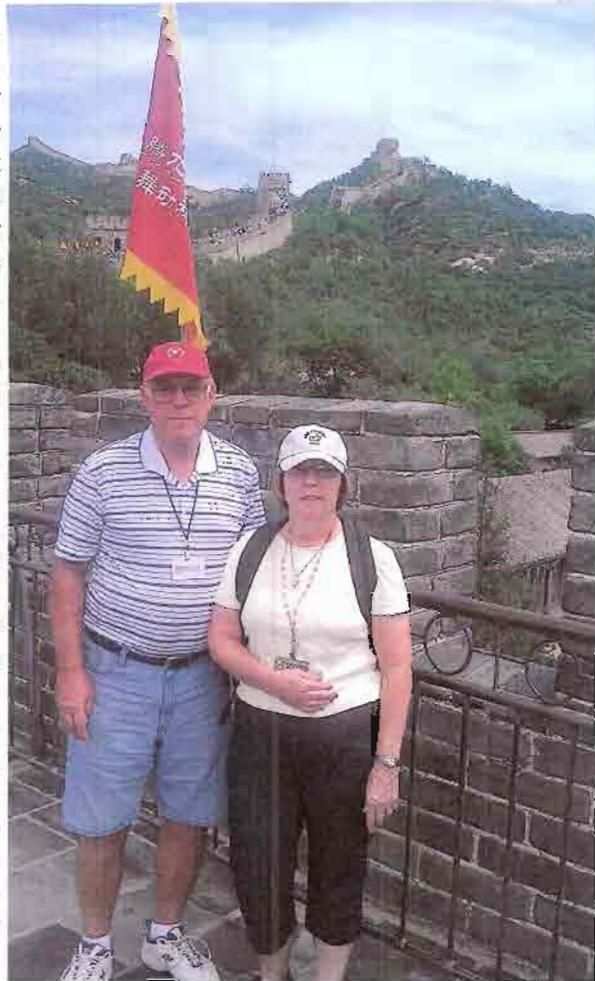
which were built from 1559-1577. It was very impressive with its zigzag layout of pavilions,

terraces, chambers and towers, lotus ponds, winding paths, little bridges, rockeries and strange stones. We also visited the Jade Buddha Temple that was built on the outskirts of Shanghai in 1882. It enshrines the white jade reclining Buddha statue and a giant jade Buddha statue seated cross-legged. These statues were brought from Burma by Monk Hui Gen.

We rode a Bullet Train from Shanghai to Suzhou which is the Venice of China. The train reached a top speed of 320 km/hr. What a thrill. The city was very pretty with canals everywhere with beautiful parks and historic homes.

One of the highlights of the trip was taking the Magnetic Levitation train from downtown to the airport. The train is raised above the track by magnets which then repel it down the track. The top speed was 430 km/hr (267 mph). It is the only train of this type in the world. The trip took 8 minutes.

Our next adventure was a 4 day cruise on the Yangtze. Our first stop was the Three Gorges Dam which is the largest dam in the world. It is 600 feet high and 1.4 miles long. It created a reservoir 360 miles long and *(continued on page 9)*



(*China Experience continued from page 7*) submerged 13 cities, 140 towns, 1352 villages and 75,000 acres of cultivated land. It displaced 1.3 million people. We cruised through the Xiling Gorge, Less Three Gorges, Wu Gorge and Qutang Gorge. The scenery was really beautiful with rock cliffs and farms up on the mountain sides. We also visited a relocated farm family in their new home.

We disembarked in the city of Chongqing which is the largest city in China with a population of 32 million. It is situated at the confluence of the Yangtze and the Jia Ling rivers. The old city is set on a peninsula that rises in tiers against the high, steep slopes of a mountain. The narrow, winding roads that sometimes turn into flights of stairs means that you rarely see the ubiquitous bicycles of China here. We also visited the General Stillwell Museum and the zoo where we were able to see a Panda.

Our next stop was Xi'an which is located at the starting point of the Silk Road. The highlight here is the Terra-Cotta Warriors. They were discovered accidentally by a farmer who was digging a irrigation well in 1974. The Terra-Cotta Warriors became one of the greatest archeological treasures in the world. Archeologists have uncovered over 7,000 life-size figures in the vault, grouped in the battle order, rank by rank, some mounted in horse-drawn chariots, others in infantry groups armed with spears, swords, and cross-bows. Each figure was indi-

vidually molded and painted with bright colors. No two faces of the Qin warriors are alike and anatomical details are surprisingly life-like.

Our final stop in mainland China was the city of Guilin which means forest of Cassia trees. The city was founded during the Qin Dynasty and developed as a transport center with the building of the Ling Canal in 213 BC, which linked the Pearl and Yangtze River systems. We took a cruise along the Li River where we were able to enjoy the unique Guilin scenery—both to China and to the rest of the world. From a lush green plain laced with rivers and lakes spring steep, rounded towers of stone, which loom singly like battlements or fade in ranks toward the horizon. While the mountains are at most 600 feet high, it is their shape and dramatic setting that makes them remarkable. Much of the time, they are shrouded in fog.

Our final stop was in Hong Kong. I had visited there in 1966 on an R & R. It had changed dramatically. We visited Victoria Peak and took a tour of Kowloon and the New Territories. We flew home from Hong Kong to Detroit and then on to Atlanta.

We all were very impressed with the vitality of the country and their people. They have worked very hard to upgrade their infrastructure including toll roads and airports. I think we will be in for a rough time over the next 20 years to keep up with them economically. The entire trip was fascinating and educational.

### **Battleship Park (Mobile, AL) Huey has Outlaw Logo**

COL (Ret) Bill Callender (Mobile, AL, & a former Maverick Lead in '68-'69) has been working for over a year with the folks at Battleship Park in Mobile, AL, to locate a UH-1 to replace the one they lost in their Park, since it was wiped out by a severe hurricane a few years ago along with their H-19. UH-1's are hard to come by now since the few remaining ones still flying are working somewhere. MG (Ret) Carl McNair (Alexandria, VA & former CG of Fort Rucker) had a good lead on one on a platform in Eufaula, AL which has deteriorated badly. So, MG McNair sent word to COL Callender who, along with some more Army aviators were working on the project, and turns out they have acquired a UH-1 and it is going through their restoration shop at Battleship Park. COL Callender wanted the Outlaws to know that it will be restored and painted with the Outlaw logo. So, if you ever pass by Battleship Park on the I-10 Causeway into Mobile, your spirits will be lifted, albeit not in Vinh Long.

Information provided by MG (Ret) McNair; article by Frank Estes

#### **ADVERTISEMENT**

The VLOA is still looking for a volunteer to assume the responsibilities of the Newsletter Editor. Anyone interested please contact Bob Koonce.

#### **Food For Thought**

- Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons. (General MacArthur)
- If you see a bomb technician running, keep up with him.
- Humility is a virtue until one becomes proud of it.
- Life has become so complicated that not even the teenagers have all the answers anymore.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

The 13th Combat Aviation Battalion (know as The Delta Battalion) that was station in Can Tho, will hold its annual reunion on May 17-20, 2012 at Fort Rucker, AL. Information will be posted on the Delta Battalion's website in the near future.