



Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)

Vinh Long Outlaws Summer Newsletter

April-June.

The VLOA is a 501(c)(19) nonprofit, tax exempt war veterans' organization.

2nd. Quarter 2017

Inside this Issue:

National Directors Corner	Pg.1-
Silent Auction. 2018.	Pg. 2
An old soldier looks back.	Pg. 3-4
My last time in a Huey.	Pg. 5-6
Veterans online Exchange.	Pg.7
The Back Pew.	Pg.8
Word of a great loss, Sr. Mary.	Pg.9
A Memoriam.	Pg. 10.
50th. Reunion Battle of Easter Sunday	Pg.11 -12
Mt. Soledad Revisited	Pg.12
Mt. Soledad-continued.	Pg. 13
From the webmaster.	Pg. 4
VLOA Treasures report. Frank Estes.	Pg. 14
VLOA Treasures report. Frank Estes.	Pg.15

VLOA -2018
Reunion
Charleston, SC!!

National Director's Corner

By- James Donnelly



Well as usual not much to report. We are still waiting for the final breakdown and confirmation of our itinerary from Brisson Gray Line the company we have chosen to coordinate the Charleston 2018 reunion. I will get Phil Van Alst our web master to post any news on the website as it becomes available.

Port Rice has graciously consented to be our acting Chaplin so a big thank you to him. We are still looking for someone or a couple to take over the silent auction. I will help by being the collection point for items, photographing them and transporting them to Charleston. Please consider helping out. This is one of the biggest fund raisers for the VLOA and a much anticipated event. We really need someone to step up for this one. I am sure that Jack and Fran Konopka would be glad to talk you through the process. They were in charge of the auction for several reunions and did an outstanding job.

I like many of you have been following our former National Director Larry Jackson and his wife Polly world travels on facebook. Sorry I am not as exciting but maybe Larry will write up a travel update for us. As I told you in the last newsletter Vickie and I are planning to go to Charleston to preview the sites in September and will report back with pictures. Then in February we will be returning to Hawaii for the around the island Cruise and to spend some time with Phil Van Alst and his lovely wife Maana. We are looking forward to that one, but not the plane ride. Might have to have a few drinks to get through that ride.

Spending much of my time at home in the glass studio making stained glass creations for friends and family. If you would like to see some of them check out my facebook page. I have posted about 15 pictures and will update it with my latest projects.

In closing my thanks to all of you for being a part of the VLOA and for those who have not joined yet, why not? I look forward to seeing you all in Charleston on start making those plans to attend now. Stay safe and well.

James Donnelly.

2017

We're Only a Year Away !!

2018

With Reunion 2018 only a year away, the myriad of planning activities to make it another successful get-together are now at max rpm! Jim Donnelly has already done a fantastic job of putting together all the major items: Location, entertainment venues, meals, transportation and dozens of other little-noticed, but absolutely essential parts to make-

Reunion 2018 top even Branson 2016, which was GREAT!

But, my objective here is to bring to everyone's attention the one event that, without question, is **vital** to the continued life of the VLOA itself. And that is, the SILENT AUCTION.

Other than our annual membership dues, the VLOA does not ask for monetary contributions, in any way, from our members. However, the VLOA treasury depends heavily on the generosity of those who attend the reunion to participate in the always-popular Silent Auction. Participation includes two things: contributing items to be bid on by the attendees as well as purchasing items that others have – sometimes reluctantly – donated to the auction.

The cost-per-person we each pay to attend the reunion basically covers the cost of hotel rooms, transportation, meals and other such "attendee- used" items necessary to make the reunion "happen". But, it's the many "extras" that must be funded for from the treasury. Signage, banners, libations, refreshments, gratuities, recognition mementos for outstanding service to the VLOA, postage and mailings and dozens of other "incidentals" that cannot be forecast, or budgeted, ahead of time.

And, the appeal for auction-items goes out to ALL OUTLAWS who receive this Newsletter, not just those who plan to attend the reunion! In the past we have had a number of contributions from Outlaws who can't make the reunion, but who want to help contribute to the success of the effort. (Maybe they just want to get rid of some things???)

Having done two or three Outlaw Silent Auctions in the past, I contacted Jim Donnelly and asked if he would mind if I took on the Auction for the 2018 Reunion. I convinced him because I offered three qualities that should make a good Auction Planner: Age, experience and stupidity! (You have to be all three to want to take this on, and I have them all!).

Here's how you can start your planning.

Locate one, two or three items that you feel would appeal to your fellow Outlaws (or their ladies!). (Your wife can probably find lots of things for you to get rid of.)

Write up a short description of what you'll be contributing.

Email your description – and a picture of it, if you can –and send it to me.

If you plan to attend the reunion, bring your item(s) with you to Charleston. My "staff" will be glad to take them off your hands as soon as you arrive.

If you cannot attend the reunion, please contact me and we'll work out a plan to get your item(s) to the reunion site.

I'll start entering your items into the new Bid Booklet as soon as I hear from you. Your Association needs all the help you can give.

Please contact me (**Tom Anderson**) by phone (**703-451-4015**), email (teander@cox.net) or mail (**7880 Rolling Woods Ct. #308 Springfield, VA 22152**) and let me know what you will be contributing as well as a description of your item(s) for inclusion in the Bid List book.

Please keep in mind that the Silent Auction brings in over 1/2 of the revenue needed to support the many expenses incurred both during the reunion as well as over the course of the two-year break between reunions. Without the Silent Auction, the Association would not likely continue to exist. I'm asking for your help.

See you in Charleston !!! Thank you all in advance!! Tom Anderson.



AN OLD SOLDIER LOOKS BACK

These days seem to be the shorter days of my life. Every Sunday afternoon, I fill up the little seven-compartment boxes of morning-and-evening pills but, somehow, it seems that it takes only about 2 or 3 days before I'm filling them again! What happened to the other 4 or 5 days ???

I read more books now than I did when I was in a working life. I don't read fiction books because non-fiction seems to continue a life-long continuing education program. There are a lot of Viet Nam books. . . I've read some but a number of them seem to be filled with the author's self-aggrandizement.

I have enough put away for my "old age" so that I won't have to board with either of my sons. I deeply feel the loss of my life-partner Pat, but I know that many of my Outlaw friends have also lost their spouse. And, like me, all of us have good friends to keep our mind focused on the future, not on the past.

I look at pictures in scrapbooks more often now than I did when I was collecting them. We put those pictures into what were once soft and clear plastic-covered pages. Now those pages tend to stick together when I open them. Doesn't matter much because no one seems to be keenly interested in those 50 year-old pictures of people they didn't know anyway.

Many are pictures we took together in Vinh Long from 1964 through 1972. They bring back the memories of friends with whom we shared the same daily routines during our year(s) in Vinh Long. I get to thinking about those faces in the pictures and how proud we were of each other. How much we depended on each other, regardless of our rank or station at that time. How grateful we were that we had those kind of friends to bond with during those days.

We were aviators, mechanics, crew chiefs, gunners, armament specialists, drivers and cooks. We found ourselves together in that isolated little airstrip near Vinh Long, Viet Nam that no one in the states had ever heard of. We didn't make any headlines. We participated in operations throughout the Mekong Delta, from Saigon to the U-Minh forests south of Cau Mau and from Rach Gia near Cambodia to the South China Sea. We fought the war of the 60s and early 70s, a war that people in the states couldn't relate to because most couldn't even find Viet Nam on a map. We didn't look for glory or require medals to prove how good we were. We were called and we went to war. Some of our people didn't return.

When we returned, some of us took off the uniform to find careers elsewhere. We became fire-fighters, engineers, police officers, clergymen, bankers, pilots, doctors, carpenters, teachers and nearly every profession you can imagine. Some of us continued to proudly wear the uniform until our military career ran its course.

Cont. from pg. 3.

Today, most of us are retired after a lifetime of family responsibilities and career challenges. And while we fill our days doing things we thought we never had time to do, we still find ways to be productive in our lives, both for self-fulfillment and to make the lives of others around us a little easier.

The things we had in common back in Vinh Long, we still have in common today. We were there, together, in Viet Nam, and we were friends and young soldiers. Today we're still friends, but old soldiers. And, to get together, we have this wonderful little organization we call the ***Vinh Long Outlaws Association***. We keep up with each other; we feel the happiness of each other's successes and the pain of each other's losses.

I find it doesn't take much to make me tear-up when talking about those old friends. How many times have I tried to make a "toast" at dinner about something that is so meaningful to me, or relate a story about one of those old friends, only to find I can't get the words out. I stop talking and sit down before I can finish the words I wanted to say. Someone else at the table always finds something to say right away to break the awkward silence. I think they know, without my saying anything more, how deeply I feel about those old friends.

It's a lot easier to say these things to myself, then put them on paper. I don't have to try to verbalize these thoughts, I can just write them. I've said it many times, how proud I am to have been a part of that Viet Nam Outlaws group.

So, today, I'm saying those things again.....only in writing. . . . and I still tear-up thinking of how much that Outlaw bunch still means to me.

Tom Anderson.

Request from your Webmaster

Just a reminder that the web site under "Membership" "Chaplain" has an area for "Prayer request."

If you would like to include someone in that section please email the details to me at:

vinh-long-outlaws@hawaii.rr.com.

Thank you.

Phil Van-Alst.

My Last Time In A Huey

I was short. It was around ten or so at night and I was leaving the next day on a C130 to go up north, and on to the Freedom Bird for the world. I already had my short timers party and all the paper work was done. All I had to do was wait. So I hung around the hangar, when Mr. Gossom came over and asked me if I wanted to fly over to Can Tho with him to pick up thirty cases of oil. Well, I thought the world of Mr. Gossom, after all we went through together. He was the best pilot in our company, at least he was to me.

I was with maintenance and went up with Mr. Gossom whenever he asked. It didn't matter what he flew or where he was going, I was always happy to go up.

So anyway, I said yes. Then he said, oh by the way, there is this newbe that wants to go too. That didn't act to well with me but I already agreed. This new kid had only one day in company.

Boy, talk about two opposites. We walked over to the helicopter we were going to take. It was number 11. The guys called it Super Rag. It was a UH-1D and the oldest helicopter in our company. What a night this was turning out to be. The only good thing was we had two pilots.

So here we were going to Can Tho with a newbe, a short timer, picking up 30 cases of oil in the oldest helicopter in the company. All I needed was for it to rain, you guessed it, and it rained.

We landed at Can Tho and Mr. Gossom said, it is 12 o'clock, they have midnight chow here. He asked if we wanted to go. I said no, you go ahead, I will load the oil while you eat. The newbe stayed with me. It had stopped raining by now and I watched them walk across the runway and then they had to cross over

the pond on a bridge.

The newbe and I finished loading the oil on the helicopter. I started to tell him about the do's and don'ts to staying alive while he was in-country. All of a sudden I hear that familiar sound, thud, thud thud. You know the sound of the mortar leaving the tube. Well, I headed for the pond, then I thought about the newbe, I turned around and grabbed him and we both went in.

I didn't know where the bunkers were,

we were sitting on the runway. I felt the water was the safest place to be. Of course the newbe thought I was crazy but as soon as the mortars would hit, he would understand. So I waited, they didn't hit inside, they hit outside the compound. They were out going. Boy, did I look like a fool. Now the newbe knew I was crazy. Then I saw Mr. Gossom and the other pilot walking over toward us. They, too, heard the mortars leaving the tubes. They were walking across the pond when it

Cont. on pg.6



Cont. from pg. 5

happened and they jumped in.

So there we were, standing there all wet and laughing as hard as we could at each other. Then we heard more thumping in the distance and we laughed even harder, when all of a sudden there was an explosion, then another and another. This time it was incoming. The pilots ran to their seats. I ran for the tie down rope on the rotor blades. I took the rope off and headed for the crew chief seat, when I noticed the newbe running around the helicopter, I mean running around over and over. I waited for the right moment then jumped him. I threw him in the gunners seat. I fastened his seat belt, I told him not to move.

Meanwhile the mortars are hitting all around us and the pilots are pouring on the power trying to get the blades going as fast as they could before they pull up on the collective. No time for a hover check here. I put my headset on then I thought about the newbe setting there all by himself. I wondered if he would stay there or would he panic and try to get out and run. What he had done earlier was something that any newbe would have done. This was one hell of an experience for his first time out. So I hit the intercom button and asked Mr. Gossom if I should close the side doors just incase the newbe might panic, he said ok. So I climbed over the cases of oil and closed the side door by the newbe climbed back over to my side and closed that door too. Meanwhile the helicopter is ready to lift off. I think. The pilot pulls up on the collective and the helicopter starts to lift. We are moving now. The nose is down, we are moving

forward. I can see the explosions, the tracers going out, coming in and some are going up. Then I thought to myself the only fire power we have on board is two M-16s and two 45s. Oh hell, how did I get in the predicament! The pilots are scared, I'm scared and with good reason. We are taking off with 30 cases of oil, which is a lot of weight and we are doing it with the oldest helicopter in the company. There is one hell of a battle going on below us and I have less than 12 hours to go.

We finally are up to a safe altitude and all the time I hear over the radio the familiar sounds of the war. Someone says I see the flash of the mortar tube, Charlie is everywhere. Then I hear that artillery is coming in. They are telling us to drop down and do it now. So we go into a dive, I think to myself the helicopter is now going to hold up to this much punishment, what else could go wrong. Then all of a sudden all the windows fog up because of the sudden change in temperature and the doors are closed. Now we are flying blind and leveling off. So I crawled over the cases of oil and ask the newbe if he is ok. He says, I am fine, then I ask to open the doors, they say ok. Again I see the war that is going on below us. We finally landed at home at Vinh Long. Man what a night and what a last flight. In a machine that wouldn't die.

That was the last time I flew in a Huey and I wouldn't trade that moment for all the money in the world. I love the Huey.

Sam Hayes

CM-Maintenance-175th Outlaws

Veterans' Online Exchange Shopping

For some time, in military periodicals, there has been discussion of a pending policy that would make military Post Exchange merchandise available to honorably discharged veterans. That program has now been approved, and adopted, by the Department of Defense.

Indications are that the program will be easy to work with. However, before a veteran can begin online shopping, he/she must first obtain a verification of their discharged status.

To do this, a special, independent, website, VetVerify.org, is available for Veterans to check their eligibility. The site accesses DOD records and will confirm whether the Veteran has the proper discharge status to qualify. Records must be complete. The Vet-Verify website will provide a secure verification form to be filled out. Because many veterans records have not yet been digitized, it is recommended that you begin the verification process now, to ensure you can take advantage of this benefit.

While shopping privileges will exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it does include the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known well by past and current service members and their families.

The system will offer free standard shipping to US Zip Codes when the online purchase totals \$49 or more plus tax-free shopping on top of already lower costs on clothing, electronics and more.

The Vet-Verify organization anticipates a large number of veterans will attempt to access the website at the same time, when registration begins and access may be delayed when the system capacity is reached. For more information about the Veteran's online Exchange shopping you can call 1-844-868-8672.

DOD officials have indicated that the new Veteran's online benefit will strengthen the Exchanges' online businesses to better serve current patrons. The program will likely double the exchanges' online presence, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments, and improved efficiencies.

The program begins, and shopping can start, on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2017!

**'No arsenal, or no weapon in the
arsenals of the world, is as formidable
as the will and moral courage of free
men and women.'**

- Ronald Reagan

**'If we ever forget that we're one nation
under GOD, then we will be a nation
gone under.'**

- Ronald Reagan





The Back Pew

By: Bert Rice



Remembering and Preparation

prepared by Bert Rice



I am writing this short message on the eve of Independence Day 2017. The 4th of July conjures up many thoughts and feelings that go back to childhood. I am sure many of you feel the same way. It is one of my favorite holidays because of its significance.

The founding fathers were generally men of God though some did not believe in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. No matter, all were imbued with a sense of patriotism and in the belief that all men were created equal. The Bill of Rights and our Constitution support their beliefs, much to our benefit. They sacrificed greatly to found a Nation based on certain freedoms. We have as a Nation been blessed mightily since its founding for which we are truly thankful. I have been in awe of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and what subsequently happened to many of them. As a reminder, of these great patriots some died at an early age, several died as paupers, and others died of various reasons, only a few became famous as we know.

I think of then and now. Our country has experienced a tremendous transformation during the past nearly 250 years, mostly in a positive way, at least I like to think so. On the positive side, without a doubt the United States is a super power and that can be confirmed by myriad factors. On the less positive side we have seen an erosion of many long held beliefs and traditions. That brings me to the main point of my message. Our Judeo-Christian values and beliefs have been and are being criticized and, in fact, attacked by many non-believers. The greatest failure is that those of us who are believers either sit idly by or say little to combat the attacks.

I want to share Ephesians 6:13-19: *"13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,"*

What the apostle Paul is telling us with his letter to the Ephesians is that evil is all around us and the devil has to be defended against with the whole armor of God. We must be well equipped and prepared to stand and face the evil one. Not only must we defend ourselves but we can go on the offensive in two primary ways. First is the sword of spirit, which is the word of God, and secondly, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayers and supplication. Paul exhorts us to keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and to open our mouths boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel. I know from personal experience that this takes courage. Here are a couple of questions. Where do you stand; and have you stood lately?

Please pray with me: Gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that our thoughts, words and deeds are pleasing to you. Help us to take on the whole armor of God so that we are prepared to confront the evil one. You have given us the means to defend against the evil one and we are prepared to attack with the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and by praying to you for help. We ask a special blessing on all members of the Outlaws and their families. We believe in and trust you. Thank you for loving each one of us. Please comfort those who mourn, heal the sick, and, always Father be with us in time of need. Help us to be mindful of the needs of others. We pray in thy holy name, and I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen

All,

With sadness this Email is forwarded. In her own words "...the old engine has ground to a halt..." Sister Mary was indeed an "engine" of the Convent of the Good Shepherd Sisters at Vinh Long as well as for the Army Aviation Units stationed there. She accommodated all of us with generosity, love and support while we were stationed there. Whatever need or support we requested from them, she always provided us whatever she could from her resources or contacts. Sister Mary and her groups of Nuns, many Irish as was she, remain in my mind as the most wonderful caring women I have ever met.

I most probably have left many from my address line, so please forward to all those we remember who knew the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Al

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us in prayer on Friday, as we held Sr Mary's mass of thanksgiving here in Nong Khai. It was a beautiful celebration.

It is monsoon season and the previous week, we had heavy showers every day but from the Sunday when Sr Mary died, to Friday afternoon when she was buried, not one drop of rain fell. People were able to come and go all week and attend prayers, masses and meals unencumbered by rain. It started again Friday evening and has not eased up since!

We are attaching two files – one her 'Eulogy' and the other 'Honouring Sr Mary', which is an account of the days following her death to her burial.

To all who wrote or phoned, again we thank you and hope that what we are sending now, helps you share our farewell for Sr Mary – so dear to us all.

with love and prayers,

Sr Pranee and Community (Sisters and Antonia)

Thanks for the update. She and her fellow nuns and the orphans that provided such a wonderful service for all of us at Vinh Long are one of the many fond memories of those days long ago. Can you believe it will be 53 years this September.

Once I threw a pair of fatigue pants in the trash because one leg was badly torn. Our house boy retrieved them and sent them to be laundered. They came back with a new leg sewn on – mind you the color didn't match but they were serviceable. And who can forget Charlie the monkey's fatigue uniform, complete with airborne wings and aviator wings that the girls sewing class made for him.

It was decided that he wasn't qualified to wear those wings and since he probably couldn't be taught to fly a helicopter, he could become airframe qualified. With the aid of an 81mm mortar flare parachute Charlie made his one and only jump (with a lot of help from a couple of warrant officers) from the Vinh Long tower. The chute opened but Charlie caused it to fall when climbed the risers. Thus his landing was expedited and rough but, he survived. I don't think he ever got over that experience or forgave anyone who was involved.

Those are some of the happy memories from the Vinh Long assignment. I'm sure that all of you have many fond memories of your own.

Best wishes to everyone.

Ernie and Linda

A MEMORIUM TO A LIFE OF DEDICATION, CHARITY, HOPE AND LOVE



SISTER MARY HAYDEN

September 19, 1919 – July 30, 2017



Many Outlaws, and others, who during their tours at Vinh Long had opportunity to meet the Nuns of the Good Shepherd Convent located near by our installation. Many Nuns were of Irish decent and some Asian; all immediately made an impression upon any who visited them, as gracious, friendly and dedicated. Dressed in pure white habits they literally flowed about their work while providing us laundry, tailoring service, along with the caring, schooling and training of some 150 young girls. A stalwart among the Nuns was Sister Mary Hayden who accommodated all ailments with her generosity, love and support. Whatever the need or request, she always provided what she could from their resources. With sadness, she left this earth July 30, 2017 to join her Lord.

Born into a farming family, at an early age lost her sister and mother, raised by her father, a "wild youth" as described by herself. In 1938, at the age of 17, she left Ireland to become a missionary for the Good Shepherd Mother House in Angers, France where she entered the novitiate in 1939. After taking her first vows was sent to Orleans where she endured the privations of WWII all the time tending to those in need. After the War, she returned to Angers and made her final vows in 1945. Her "long and solitary walk" of 15 years continued until granted a return to Ireland before being sent to Sri Lanka where the sisters ran a social institution for 600-700 women and children. There, she completed studies under the British system to be a teacher, excelling in languages. The end of her twelfth year, she and Sister Dymphna Brady were sent to Vietnam not knowing another war awaited. They established their first Good Shepherd house in 1958 at Vinh Long where they began their selfless devotion to girls and women in their care. In 1964 began a mutual beneficial relationship with American forces stationed nearby while continuing to the care, training and educating of young girls which soon grew to more than 150. The good Shepherd compound stood as a virtual "Garden of Eden" in contrast to the country surroundings.

The year 1968 and TET brought upon the Sisters and their facilities, again, the heartbreaking experiences of the devastation of war requiring the safe evacuation by helicopter of 8 Nuns and 200 women and children from their convent compound by brave Captain Robin Miller. The damage done to their compound was severe. Despite the destruction, Sister Mary and her group of Nuns returned to rebuild and continue their charitable works for young women and girls. In 1970 a second house opened in Saigon providing vocational training for war widows and refugee girls and a clinic for mothers and babies. Sister Mary relocated there as Provincial Superior, responsible for countries of Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. As the war there wound down, and eventual withdrawal of American troops, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and their girls and women became refugees until evacuated to an aircraft carrier, further traveling with 5,000 other refugees to Subic Bay by merchant ship.

Her travels continued including many to those countries she had been Superior, visiting each of the Good Shepherd houses established there. She was called to be Superior in Bangkok where sisters worked with women from the poorest slums. Her term there ended four years later with a Bishop's invitation to start a community house in Nong Khai, where Sister Mary was to remain for 37 years. In those years she spent writing projects, contacting benefactors, welcoming visitors, planning, constructing and dreaming big to ever changing needs. And, in that time made three return trips to Vietnam paving the way for the return of the Good Shepherd.

Tireless in all her efforts throughout her last 37 years ministering to the poor in far off countries, age became a reality. As quoted, weeks before she died, "At long last, I feel the old engine grinding to a halt but I know I can see the lights of the station beckoning me. I know that when I reach them, I will take everyone who has been in my life with me - all those whom I have loved; all those who have asked for my prayers. Every night, I will always call them, 'My little ones. I know I will take all 'my little ones' with me. I will not step off the train alone'.

Sister Mary was indeed an "engine", remembrances of her by those who knew her will not grind to a halt but continue down our own memory tracks as the most wonderful caring woman we have met.

(NOTE: Respectfully, much of the above is a summary of Sister Pranee's "Sr Mary Hayden—A Gift of Self")



Welcome Home- Hero's Reunion.



Approximately 165 pilots, crewmembers family and friends gathered for 3 days at Mineral Wells, Texas. The facility, at the Mineral Wells base, thanks to Donnie Hoover and the Chamber of Commerce-was fantastic. Chuck Carlock- noted author and VN veteran pilot had on display his entire collection of VN artifacts- 2 Huey's a slick and gunship- and unbelievable collection of paraphernalia.

Over 45 crewmembers from the 175Th Avn. Co. Who were involved in the Easter Sunday Battle on the Mang Thit canal remembered that fateful day exactly 50 years to the day later with a reunion.

Highlights of the event included a welcoming banquet BBQ dinner and a special presentation on the history of Viet Nam and the Delta region where the battle took place. Additionally, a slide show of the players- Crew Chiefs, Door gunners, Pilots, Warrant and Commissioned Officers- their duties and responsibilities. We had many family and friends there, as we wanted them to know what was going on and why!!

Saturday's main event was a steak dinner, and then a recap of the Battle! With members form the infantry unit in attendance, we were given an overview of the operation and participants shared their experience form that day- the loss of crewmembers, loss of troops in the LZ and the rescue of the downed crews.

A great celebration of hero's from long ago!

The finale was exceptional. A documentary film produced by Dwayne Williams that "re- lived" the experience. The film team built a set in 1967 Vinh Long style and we experienced a mortar attack and scramble, a flight mission into a hot LZ—and believe me it was like being there again!!

The real highlight of this event-was to see friends from 50 years ago, and for our family and friends to understand what we did long ago and far away!!

We paid a special tribute to our lost brothers and to those who were unable to attend!

Submitted by:

Ron Petty.

Cont. on pg. 12.



Cont. from pg. 11.



The Reunion members of the Battle of Easter Sunday. 50th. Anniversary held March 23rd. thru Sunday, the 26th. 50 years to the day. What an awesome group of Veterans.

MOUNT SOLEDAD REVISITED

Surrounding the Southern California coastal plains village of La Jolla is a crescent shape of hills whose prominent peak is 822 feet high aptly named Mount Soledad (Sp: solitude). In the 1930s and 1940s La Jolla's population was less than 4,000, with streets well laid out along the coastal areas and few lazily winding roads up the hillsides. Homes clustered around the village center with two major hotels, one movie theater, several banks, assorted shops, grocery stores, bakery, automobile dealers, professional offices, churches, cafes and the like. Near the village center churches, one hospital, community building, playground, schools and other various enterprises to include a country club golf course. The homes in the Village neighborhoods of North Shores, Hillside, Muirlands, South La Jolla, Hermosa (Sp: beautiful) and Bird Rock were sprinkled about with homes, many spaces and vacant lots in between. Bordering the coastline and hillsides were found the more affluent homes, which dotted those areas. From on top Mount Soledad one had a 360-degree panoramic view as far as the eye could see on a clear day. To the West spread the Pacific Ocean, below Mount Soledad the neighborhoods of La Jolla; to the North along the coast line lay Torrey Pines Mesa, the small enclave towns of Del Mar, Rancho Santa Fe, Solano Beach, Encinitas, Carlsbad, Oceanside and further; to the East spread the hinterlands and plains of a major portion of San Diego County spotted with small villages, Kearney Mesa with it's WWII Naval Auxiliary Air Station (Now: Marine Corps Air Station Miramar [Sp: view - sea]); and, to the South beach towns of Pacific and Mission Beach, Point Loma, San Diego Bay and Harbor, the City of San Diego, Consolidated/Vultee Aircraft Plant, Lindberg Field, the Marine and Naval Training Bases, Silver Strand, Coronado Island, North Island Naval Air Station, National City, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach and the U.S. and Mexican border, one could even spot the several Mexican Islands off Baja California. A beautiful breath taking sight in those years.

Atop, Mount Soledad a large wooden Christian Cross first erected by private citizens in 1913. During ensuing years the Cross weathered storms, destruction, vandalism and always was replaced. By 1934, a second and sturdier Cross of stucco over wood frame was erected by a group of Protestant Christians and Easter sunrise services were intermittently held there. A wind storm blew the Cross down in 1952, and in 1954 a Cross of reinforced concrete, 29 feet tall mounted on a circular concrete stepped platform 14 feet

Cont. on pg. 13

Cont. from pg. 12

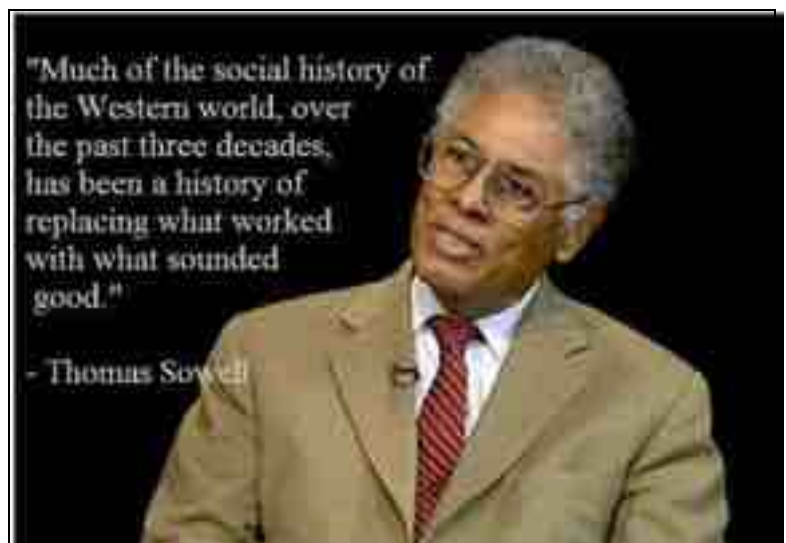
high was erected replacing the older structures and dedicated as Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial Cross. Maps indicated the location as the "Mount Soledad Easter Cross"; the word "Easter" was dropped in the 1989 and changed to Mount Soledad Memorial situated in Mount Soledad Natural Park, an area dedicated San Diego City Parkland. The construction, maintenance and preservation of the memorial were accomplished by the Mount Soledad Memorial Association through volunteer help and financial donations.

Beginning in 1989, a long complex and continuing story of litigation ensued from suits filed in local, state and federal courts for the removal of the Cross from the memorial, which was on public land as it "fosters an excessive entanglement by government with religion" (RE: Bill of Rights First Amendment, U.S. Constitution). Court orders for the removal of the Cross were issued by various jurisdictions, appeals followed, hearings, stays of court orders issued, and further years of litigation continued. For a brief time the solution was for the City of San Diego to sell one-half acre containing the memorial to the Mount Soledad Memorial Association, the sale and transfer was upheld by a judge in 2000, but soon an appellate court found the sale in violation of the California State Constitution. The City of San Diego and the Mount Soledad Memorial Association sought review by the U.S. Supreme Court, petitions for review were denied. In 2004, the U.S. Congress passed a Public Law designating the Memorial as a national veterans memorial and under the bill, the site would become part of the National Park service with a proviso to be maintained by the Mount Soledad Memorial Association. The San Diego City Council voted against this proposal fearing it would move the separation of church and state issue to the federal courts and eventual removal of the Cross. Public opposition to the Council's action resulted in a public referendum to transfer the property to the Interior Department as a veteran's memorial. The referendum proposition passed with more than 75% approval by the voters. However, more litigation was to come and by October 2005, a California judge ruled the ballot measure in violation of the California Constitution as the maintenance of the "Latin Cross" on the property was an unconstitutional preference of religion.

More court orders for the removal of the Cross based on "the separation of church and state" issues, hearings, appeals, stays of court action, etc. occurring in state and federal courts. In 2006 Congress assumed ownership of the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial by eminent domain transferring the property to DOD. Legal battles persisted not only over the church and state issues, but also over the eminent domain authority of Congress to assume the property. In 2015 the property on which the memorial stands, was sold by the Federal Government to the Mount Soledad Memorial Association for \$1.4 million. That action was not without controversy; however, courts upheld the transaction. A few legal fights linger to remove the Cross, but the Cross remains atop its stepped pedestal surrounded with six walls placed along and around the steps containing over 4,000 photographs of veterans from all conflicts and all faiths each etched on separate black granite plaques. The Mount Soledad Memorial Association continues to administer and maintain the Veterans Memorial.

Today, that panoramic view from atop Mount Soledad to the West the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean remains, the rest is now carpeted with large buildings of all sizes and homes of all descriptions with the once individual villages and towns blending one into another all forming towns and cities into an solid mosaic spreading across the inland landscape view, all crisscrossed with highways, byways and freeways some 5 or 6 lanes each way. Yet with all the differences from seventy-five plus years ago, the view from Mount Soledad is still a wonderful sight. The once small village of La Jolla and its neighborhoods now boast a population of 46,000+. After over 100 years and the recent 25 years of controversy and litigation a Cross still stands solidly atop its pedestal there at the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial for all to see and visit and enjoy the view.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.soledadmemorial.com FOR MORE PHOTOS: www.google.com and type "Photos of Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial"



2nd. Qtr.- 2017- VLOA Treasurers Report by Ernest Estes.



Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)		
Balance effective 9/1/2017		\$34,975.10
REVENUES:		
Dues - Annual	\$350.00	
Dues - Lifetime	\$1,000.00	
Dues - Associate Lifetime	\$0.00	
Sales & Miscellaneous	\$1,970.00	
TOTAL	\$3,920.00	
EXPENDITURES:		
Newsletters, inventory, administration, miscellaneous	\$1,024.44	
TOTAL	\$1,024.44	
CASH BALANCE - 6/30/2017		\$37,270.66
Details: 6 month period - 1/1/2017 thru 6/30/2017		
Revenues Detail		
Sale of Outlaws coins	\$1,945.00	
Reunion 2016 Silent Auction payment	\$25.00	
Sub Total	\$1,970.00	
Annual Dues (AD) - 2017		
Amilio Alvarado	\$25.00	
Frederick W. Jacobs	\$25.00	
Richard M. Dyer	\$25.00	
Norris Marshall	\$25.00	
Michael Colaneri	\$50.00	
Dale A. Roland	\$25.00	
Harold E. Feathers	\$25.00	
Donald R. Hawk	\$25.00	
Mark W. Fontenot	\$25.00	
Edna McGuire	\$25.00	
Donald S. Palmer	\$25.00	
Gordon K. Whitehead	\$25.00	
John W. White, Jr.	\$25.00	
Sub Total	\$350.00	
Lifetime Memberships (LM) - 2017		
James A. "Spanky" Reese	\$100.00	
Michael R. "Mike" Brady	\$100.00	
Richard W. Payton	\$100.00	
Steven J. Hopkins	\$100.00	
Thomas C. Pratt	\$100.00	
Fred M. Rose	\$100.00	
John E. Doyle	\$100.00	
William B. Sturtevant	\$100.00	
Thomas R. Overmynder	\$100.00	
Joseph J. O'Neill	\$100.00	
Ivan W. White	\$100.00	

Cont. from pg. 14.

David M. Osborne	\$100.00	
Richard H. Kimble	\$100.00	
Roger D. Shook	\$100.00	
Dennis J. Baker	\$100.00	
Stephen T. Bebol	\$100.00	
Sub Total	\$1,600.00	
Associate Lifetime Membership (ALM) - 2017		
SubTotal	\$0.00	
Total Revenues - 6 month period 2017	\$3,920.00	
Expenses Details		
Bob Sharp - 4th Qtr 2016 - Newsletter	\$591.68	
Bob Sharp - 1st Qtr 2017 - Newsletter		
Bob Sharp - 2nd Qtr 2017 - Newsletter		
Bob Sharp - 3rd Qtr 2017 - Newsletter		
Admin - Postage, Deposit Tickets, Media, Supplies	\$40.44	
Paper bank statements	\$1.50	
Account checks	\$17.90	
Purchase Outlaw coins (reimbursement to Jim Donnelly)	\$943.42	
Stop Payment on Tim Cox check	\$25.00	
Commercial Bank fee on stop payment check	\$4.50	
Total Expenses - 3 month period 2017	\$1,624.44	
INCOME (LOSS) - 6 month period ending 06/30/2017		\$2,295.56

PICKING A PROFESSION

An old southern preacher from Georgia had a teenage son named Phil and it was getting time the boy should give some thought to choosing a profession. Like many young men, the boy didn't have a clue what he wanted to do, and didn't seem too concerned about it. One day, while the boy was away at school, his father decided to try an experiment. He went into the boy's room and placed four objects on his desk:

A Bible —A silver dollar—A bottle of Jack Daniels—A Playboy magazine

The preacher then said to himself "I'll just hide behind the door, and when he comes home from school this afternoon, I'll see which object he picks up.

If it's the Bible, he's going to be a preacher like me, what a blessing that would be.

If he picks up the dollar, he's going to be a businessman, and that would be OK.

If he picks up the bottle, he's going to be a no-good drunkard, Lord, what a shame.

Worst of all, if he picks up, that horrible magazine, he's gonna be a skirt-chasin' bum.

The old man waited anxiously, and soon heard his son's footsteps entering the house and whistling as he headed for his room. The boy tossed his books on the bed, and as he turned to leave spotted the objects on the desk. With curiosity in his eye, he walked over to inspect them. He picked up the Bible and placed it under his arm, dropped the silver dollar into his pocket, uncorked the bottle, and chugged a big long drink, while he studied the detail of this month's centerfold....." Lord have mercy." The old preacher disgustedly whispered, "he's gonna be an Army Aviator!"

Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)
 c/o Robert J. Sharp, Editor.
 17489 US Hwy. 65
 Albert Lea, Minnesota. 56007
 handybobsharp@gmail.com
 Cell 507-828-3062 –H Ph.507-373-6452



Summer -2017

Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)
Membership Application/Renewal Form

Memberships in the VLOA is open to any person of any rank who served with any lineage unit known as the “Outlaws” (and “Mavericks” and “Bushwhackers” armed platoons) or any affiliated unit at any time between August 1964 and the present. These units include the 62nd Aviation Company, A Company 502nd Aviation Battalion, 175th Aviation Company, B Troop 1-158th Aviation Regiment (Iraq), 150th Transportation Detachment (“Roadrunners”), 28th Signal Detachment, and 25th Infantry Division’s “door gunners.”

Active (with vote) or Associate (without vote) Membership is \$25.00 annually, payable each January. A Lifetime Membership (with vote) is a \$100.00 one-time fee. A Lifetime Associate Membership (without vote) for spouses and relatives is available for a \$100 one-time donation. Higher levels of Lifetime Memberships are available; contact the National Director at: fbi_jim@hotmail.com. To pay initial or renewal membership dues for this calendar year, please complete and forward this form, with dues payment, to:

VLOA-Treasurer: c/o Frank Estes, 407 Country Club Drive, Ozark, AL 36360.

First Name _____ MI ____ -- ____ Nickname _____ Last Name _____

Telephone # (home) _____ (work) _____ Spouse’s Name _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Rank (while assigned to unit) _____ E-Mail address _____

Dates assigned in Outlaws/attachments (Mo/Yr to Mo/Yr) _____ to _____

Unit/plt/sect/position _____ Radio Call sign _____

- Please initiate ___ or renew ___ my Active ___ Associate ___ VLOA membership. **Make \$25.00 check payable to VLOA.**
- Please initiate my Lifetime ___ Lifetime Associate ___ VLOA membership. **Make \$100.00 check payable to VLOA.**

____ Please do not renew my VLOA membership, but keep my name on the VLOA roster. I understand I may not receive any future issues of the VLOA Newsletter unless I am a current dues paying VLOA member.

____ I know a former Outlaw/Maverick/Roadrunner or other affiliated unit member and have indicated his/her name, address, and phone number on this form.

Comments: _____