



Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)

# Vinh Long Outlaws Winter Newsletter 2017

October-December.

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

4th. Quarter 2017

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VLOA -2018  
Reunion  
Charleston, SC.!!

## National Director's Corner

By- James Donnelly



### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Jim Donnelly

Well as I am writing this I am in Hawaii visiting our VLOA's web master Phil Van Alst and his lovely wife Moana. The Outlaw bond is alive and well. Phil gave us the around the island tour today. We will continue to tour tomorrow before boarding the boat the next day for a seven day around the island cruise then return to spend a few more days here before heading home. Two weeks is going to go by fast.

In VLOA news the reunion planning went well and I hope everyone will have a great time. Elsewhere in this newsletter are the itinerary and the registration form. The hotel was totally remodeled last year so it is basically new and I believe everyone will be pleased with the location. The North Charleston Marriott has a free shuttle to and from the airport and to the Tanger Outlet Mall. The most important thing about our reunions is getting to spend time with old friends and making new ones. The fully stocked hospitality room will be open when we are not attending events for this purpose.

As always, if there is anything the VLOA can do for you please feel free to contact me. This is your organization and I am here for no other reason than to be of service to our members. Until next time, stay well and safe.

*James Donnelly*

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Jim Donnelly, National Director

Virginia Beach, VA

Bert Rice, Deputy Director

Odenton, MD

Doug Wilson, Secretary

Costa Mesa, CA

Frank Estes, Treasurer

Ozark, AL

Jim Donnelly, Historian

Virginia Beach, VA

Bill Hensinger, Member-At-Large

Palmira, PA

Irwin Katz, Member-At-Large

Buffalo Grove, IL

Eric Ragsdale, Member-At-Large

Mesa, AZ

Bob Allen, Member-At-Large

Piqua, OH

Fred Rosenberg, Member-At-Large

Leesburg, FL

Bob Sharp, Newsletter

Albert Lea, MN

Phil Van Alst, Web Master

Hau'ula, HI

Bert Rice, Interim Chaplain

Odenton, MD

Terry Khachadourian, Distaff Advisor

Lilburn, GA

Tom Anderson, Permanent Advisor

Springfield, VA

Ernie Isbell, Ex Officio (2002-04)

Highland Village, TX

Tim Bisch, Ex Officio (2004-06)

Huntsville, AL

Joe Clelan, Ex Officio (2006-08)

Mechanicsburg, PA (deceased)

Frank Estes, Ex Officio (2008-10)

Ozark, AL

Bob Koonce, Ex Officio (2010-12)

Tacoma, WA

Angelo Spelios, Ex Officio (2012-14)

Weatherford, TX

Larry Jackson, Ex Officio (2014-2016)

Hilton Head Island, SC

## 2018 Reunion Shirts

### Ready for ordering!

Each Outlaw reunion gathering has been filled with colorful polo shirts worn by both the men and women. Of course, the reunion shirts are a long way from the “same color” uniforms we wore together over half a century ago. However, the identical-colored reunion shirts worn by so many of the reunion attendees, make the statement that there is still a “oneness” between all those who wore the Outlaw uniform and patch “way back then”.








This 2018 reunion shirts are a refreshing departure from the traditional shirts from previous reunions. First, it is one solid color, verdant green, with no alternating color sides or collar. It will comfortably blend in when in a crowd. Second, it has the naturally soft feel of cotton. It will also feature the Outlaw logo patch embroidered on the left front. Men’s shirts have a three-button collar placket. Ladies shirts have an attractive open “Y” neckline.

The price for each shirt remains at \$30, same as at the Branson reunion. (larger sizes slightly increased cost).

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find the Shirt Order Form with which to place your order. Although there are several months remaining before the reunion, you are asked to place your shirt order early if possible, well ahead of the reunion, so our supplier can be given an approximate number to be made. All orders are pre-paid, of course and your order must be received no later than August 17, 2018.

Tom Anderson is coordinating shirt orders, payments and delivery. Those who attend the reunion will find their shirts in their Welcome Bags at the VLOA registration desk. If you cannot attend the reunion but would like to have an attractive Outlaw-logo shirt, please add \$5.00 for shipping costs to your total. And, be sure to provide your name and mailing address on the Order Form. As it says on the Order Form, make your checks out to VLOA, not to Tom. (He can’t be trusted with your money). See you there !

## Vinh Long- Itinerary Charleston Reunion September 13-17, 2018

THURSDAY 13	FRIDAY 14	SATURDAY 15	SUNDAY 16	MONDAY 17
 <p><b>Check in at North Charleston Marriott HOTEL</b> Check-in: 4:00 PM</p> <p><b>12:00 Noon Hospitality Room Open</b></p>  <p><b>7:00 p.m. WELCOME DINNER at Hotel</b></p>	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p><b>9:00 a.m. City Tour/ Lunch on own</b></p>  <p><b>Return to hotel at 3:00 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>Group Photo 4 p.m. Outside Hotel</b></p> <p><b>Hospitality Room Open</b></p> <p><b>Evening Free</b></p>	<p><b>Breakfast 8:00 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>Executive Meeting</b></p>  <p><b>9:00 – 11:00 a.m. VLOA General Membership Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Group Photo Pickup</b></p> <p><b>12:00 a.m. Boone Hall Plantation Tour</b></p>  <p><b>Return to hotel at 4 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>Free Time Before Dinner 7 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>Carolina Queen Dinner Cruise</b></p> 	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p><b>9:00 a.m. Chapel Service</b></p>   <p><b>12 p.m. Patriots Point Tour: Includes USS Yorktown, Medal of Honor Museum/ Lunch on own</b></p> <p><b>Return to hotel at 3:00 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>Hospitality Room Open</b></p> <p><b>6:30-9:00 p.m. Farewell Banquet at Hotel</b></p> <p><b>Last Silent Auction</b></p> <p><b>Item Pickup</b></p> 	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p><b>Depart</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>FULL PACKAGE</b></p> <p><b>Single: \$1070</b> <b>Double: \$ 748</b> <b>Triple: \$ 642</b> <b>Quad: \$ 589</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b> Hotel Stay Hospitality Room Chapel Service Meals Listed Events Listed Transportation Reunion Website All Taxes and Gratuities</p>



# Vinh Long Outlaws Registration Form Charleston, South Carolina September 13<sup>th</sup> ~ 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name on nametag \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) Spouse/Guest (s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sunday Banquet Meal Selection Beef: \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken: \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian: \_\_\_\_\_ Fish: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hotel Room Choice: King: \_\_\_\_\_ Two Doubles: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 List any Special Needs: Wheelchair Access \_\_\_\_\_ Dietary Restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**HOST HOTEL: North Charleston Marriott, 4770 Goer Drive, North Charleston, SC 29406**

**REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES REUNION ACTIVITY PACKAGE:**

Hotel room with Breakfast, Welcome Packet, Name Badge, Hospitality Room,  
Thursday Welcome Dinner, Shows and Attractions, Transportation and Taxes. See Itinerary Attached.

**Registration Fee Hotel Room Occupants & Activity Package**

Single: \$1070.00 (Single Person)

Double: \$748.00 (Per Person)

Triple: \$642.00 (Per Person)

Quad: \$589.00 (Per Person)

**Please Circle Which Package**

**For activity package only contact Jim Donnelly 757-481-6196**

**\$160 Per Night with Breakfast at Hotel if staying Before or After Reunion Dates**

**TOTAL DUE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

A 50% deposit is requested by May 3, 2018 and final payment must be received by August 1, 2018. To guarantee reservation for tours/meals you MUST register by August 15, 2018. We cannot "add-on" at the reunion. No refunds on activity package after August 15, 2018.

**MAIL REGISTRATION & CHECK PAYABLE TO:**

GRAY LINE GATHERINGS PLUS, 155 Industrial Park Drive, Hollister, MO 65672

**TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD PLEASE COMPLETE BELOW:**

I authorize Gray Line Gatherings Plus to charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ on my card

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Add \$10 Per Person if paying with a Credit Card**

**417-338-4048** Visit your website home page at [gatheringsplus.com](http://gatheringsplus.com) to register online Click "MY EVENT" then on your logo or name enter **vloutlaws** for your password

## 2018 CHARLESTON OUTLAW ROUNDUP

## SHIRT ORDER FORM

The official 2018 Outlaw Roundup shirt is a rich, verdant green color. Made by Port Authority, the shirts are made of Meridian Cotton and have the naturally soft feel of cotton, which is a departure from shirts in some past reunions. Men's shirts have a three-button collar placket. Ladies shirts have an open "Y" neckline. The very attractive shirt will again feature the Outlaw patch embroidered on the left front.

Cost for each shirt remains at \$30. (NOTE: Added the cost for sizes 2XL =-\$32 3XL=\$34 4XL = \$36 men's or women's.) Please pre-order your shirt(s) on the form below. Shirts ordered by Reunion attendees will be in your welcome bag at the VLOA registration desk. If you will not be able to attend the reunion, but would like a shirt, see info below \*\*. A limited quantity of additional shirts may be available for sale at the Reunion.

Please Indicate Quantity Desired by Size:

## MENS' SHIRT SIZES:

XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL*	3XL*	4XL*	TOTAL#	COST
32-34	35-37	38-40	41-43	44-46	47-49	50-53	54-67		

Qty \_\_\_\_\_

## LADIES' SHIRT SIZES

XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL*	TOTAL#	COST
0-2	4/6	8/10	12/14	16/18	20/22		

Qty \_\_\_\_\_

\* Note: Cost for sizes 2XL - \$32 3XL - \$34 4XL - \$36 Men's or Women's

For Reunion attendees, please indicate name(s) and sizes needed, below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: \_\_\_\_\_

(Use the reverse side of this form for any additional information or comments)

\*\* Note: If you are not attending the Reunion, and would like an Outlaw shirt, please add \$5.00 for shipping costs and provide the following information:

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone #) \_\_\_\_\_

ALL ORDERS ARE PRE-PAID AND MUST BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 17, 2018 !.

Send this shirt Order Form, with payment – made payable to VLOA, to :

Tom Anderson

7880 Rolling Woods Ct #308

Springfield, VA 22152

Make checks or money orders payable to: VLOA . . . . not to Tom !

### VLOA Steering Committee Seeks New Members

As you read through this Newsletter, it is safe to assume that you have already come to the realization that the next Outlaw reunion is just around the corner. Better yet, we are rapidly approaching that corner! Everything is falling into place very nicely!

The entire four-day agenda is set. Our current National Director, Jim Donnelly, has done a magnificent job of reunion planning, as well as moving the Association forward, for the past two years.

In this Newsletter you'll find your Registration Form. Make a copy of it, fill it out, and send it in, with your check. (Do it NOW!)

The Silent Auction, the VLOA's primary income-producing event, is now ready to receive – **from YOU** - at least one or more items to be placed on the Auction tables. Tom Anderson is standing by to hear from you regarding your donation(s) to the Auction.

Phil Van Alst continues to promote the Reunion on the pages of the outstanding Vinh Long Outlaws website. Bob Sharp, who does an unbelievable job of putting out this massive Newsletter, has put together a number of articles designed to inform, and to urge, you to make your decision to attend the reunion.

However, there's still one more important aspect of the reunion that needs your help and your attention. The VLOA needs volunteers to serve on the governing body of the Association, the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee consists of five Members At Large who are elected from each two-year period in which the Outlaws served in Vietnam. (1964-65, 1966-67, 1968-69, 1970-71 and 1972 onward.) The Members At Large are nominated from, and elected by, Outlaw members who attend each reunion and will serve a two-year term

These five individuals provide a sounding board for the National Director, the Treasurer, the Secretary and others in a VLOA leadership role, to provide their thoughts on various issues that occur during the year.

There are no specific qualifications to serve as a member of the Steering Committee. The only requirement is that members are interested in, and want to be involved in, issues affecting the VLOA. The pay is poor but the opportunity to participate in VLOA issues is rewarding.

You don't have to be nominated from the floor by someone else. If you would be willing to serve as one of the Members At Large, from your year-group, please contact Tom Anderson [teander@cox.net](mailto:teander@cox.net) or 703-451-4015 and let him know you would like to have your name placed in nomination. If you are one of the currently serving Members At Large and desire to continue serving in that position, please also contact Tom Anderson. A ballot will be distributed at the Membership meeting.



## Directors' and Outstanding Outlaw's Award Nominations

By Frank Estes

The VLOA has an established awards program to recognize those individuals who have contributed significantly to the VLOA organization. Each of these awards has certain criteria which must be met to receive either of the awards.

**Directors' Award:** This award is the highest award the VLOA gives during any reunion year. This award is not an award that must be mandatorily presented at each biennial reunion. Only one of these awards may be given because it is to clearly recognize the one individual or couple who has made the greatest contribution to the VLOA organization over an extended period of time. The Directors' Award is reserved for any member or couple who gives substantial, quantifiable, long-term support to the VLOA through his/her contributions, time, energies, ideas, and accomplishments in promoting and furthering the aims and goals of the VLOA as a war veterans, not for profit organization.

**Outstanding Outlaw Award:** For those nominees whose contribution does not rise to the level of the Directors' Award, the Outstanding Outlaw Award may be given when a nominee has given service to the VLOA, such as meaningfully holding an officer/director's position and rendering recognizably important service concerning the furtherance of the VLOA's goals, objectives, history documentation, membership location, and preservation of the organization.

Anyone wishing to submit a nomination for the Directors' Award or the Outstanding Outlaw Award to be presented during this year's reunion in Charleston, South Carolina should send an email nomination to Frank Estes, Awards Committee Chair at the following: [estesf@troycable.net](mailto:estesf@troycable.net) or submit a letter of nomination to:

Awards Committee Chair  
c/o Frank Estes  
407 Country Club Drive  
Ozark, AL 36360.  
334-797-9196 (cell)  
334-774-5571 (home)

The nominations need to be received by the Awards Committee Chair not later than 1 August 2018 by email or letter as discussed above, and should contain the following information about the nominee's:

Name

Address

Phone number, and

A narrative commentary regarding measurable justification of why the nominee should receive the Directors Award or the Outstanding Outlaws Award.

Specifics regarding service in the Outlaws, Mavericks, Bushwhackers, Roadrunners, Signal Detachment, or the associated support organizations should be provided. Of particular interest should be the reasons that make the nominee worthy of receiving this award such as service to the VLOA, service to veterans or civic organizations, including positions of leadership or support in any of the activities being used to support the nomination.

Thank you.

*Frank Estes*

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

By Frank Estes

Annual Membership renewals are due each January as reflected in this extract from our VLOA ByLaws: **“Annual membership fees are due and payable to the Treasurer after January 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year and must be received no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>.”**

You might ask why should I be a dues-paying member participating in the VLOA. A few of the more important reasons are reflected in the following extracts from our VLOA ByLaws: **“Dues-paid or donations made by members (Active, Associate Life, or Life, as applicable) will receive each edition of the *Outlaw Newsletter*, a membership card approved by the Steering Committee, hold office, and vote (Active and Life members only), and be eligible for special promotions that may be offered during the calendar year.”** And: **“Non-dues-paid members will receive the quarterly *Outlaw Newsletter*, information announcements regarding upcoming Reunions, and be encouraged to join the VLOA by payment of annual dues. Should the VLOA’s financial status become questionably low, the Steering Committee is authorized to send *Outlaw Newsletters* only to dues paying members.”**

Additionally, those who pay their dues, attend the biennial Outlaws Roundup, and support the Roundup’s Silent Auction are making a major financial contribution to keeping the VLOA on solid financial ground. The proceeds from dues and the Silent Auction usually cover our quarterly newsletter publications and keeping the Outlaw Website updated and in operation. So, paying your dues is a vital part of keeping the Outlaws organization in operation.

If you haven’t paid your dues, please use the membership form on the back of this newsletter to join the Outlaws (if you have not done so in the past) or renew your membership. Thanks for your support.

### Vinh Long Outlaws Association (VLOA)

Balance effective 01/01/2017	\$34,975 .10
	_____

#### REVENUES:

Dues - Annual	\$470.00
Dues - Lifetime	\$1,800. 00
Sales, Silent Auction, & Miscellaneous	\$1,985. 00
	_____
TOTAL:	\$4,255. 00

#### EXPENDITURES:

Newsletters, website management, admin, supplies, bank acct, misc.	\$3,852. 66
	_____
TOTAL:	\$3,852. 66

INCOME (LOSS) - 12 months ending 12/31/2017	\$402.34
--	----------

<u>CASH BALANCE</u> - as of 12/31/2017	\$35,377 .44
	_____



### Who Do I Call For .....? ? ? ? ?

With the reunion fast approaching, below is a table showing points of contact for the primary features, events and items relating to the 2018 reunion.

VLOA Membership Application and dues payments:

Frank Estes: [estesf@troycable.net](mailto:estesf@troycable.net) or 334-797-9196

Reunion Registration: Gatherings Plus [gatheringsplus.com](http://gatheringsplus.com) or 417-338-4048  
 Go to: [gatheringsplus.com](http://gatheringsplus.com)  
 >MY EVENT  
 >outlaw logo  
 > P/W = vloutlaws  
 > download: Mail in Registration & Reunion Itinerary

Order Official Reunion Shirt: Tom Anderson [teander@cox.net](mailto:teander@cox.net) or 703-451-4015

Donate Silent Auction item: Tom Anderson

Steering committee nominations: Tom Anderson

Outlaw Awards nominations: Frank Estes

Outlaw challenge coin: Jim Donnelly [jcdonnelly1@cox.net](mailto:jcdonnelly1@cox.net)

From the Editor:

Hello and a Happy New Year! We hope all is well with you and your families. The time flies faster every year and we struggle to get everything done but it continues to pile up. So we continue to do the things we love and try to get the necessary ones done also. It is a good thing that we are retired as I don't have time for a job. Between running to medical appointments, Vets organization meetings, volunteer work, and the next thing you know it is Sunday and back to church. The weeks really fly by. We try to participate in 2/3 winter Sleigh and Cutter Parades as you know it gets cold and wintery up in this country. I have a couple of pictures I will share of Gloria and I with our mare mule "Sassy Girl" pulling our 125 year old two seater sleigh.

We hope and pray that you all stay well and enjoy what the Lord has given us. Hope you enjoy the newsletter and maybe you can find something to share with us as contributions are greatly appreciated. I am already starting on the next edition which is the 2018 Spring Edition. God Bless. Bob Sharp.

PS: Gloria asked me how cold is it? I said "I'm not sure but I just saw a kid with his pants pulled all the way up!!!"





## The Back Pew

By: Bert Rice



### A God Who Cares

In part by: Selwyn Hughes  
Submitted by: Bert Rice



The first four words in the Bible are: “In the beginning God!” Of course, the verse continues by stating, “created heaven and earth!” I think a good way that we might start the New Year is by remembering what God did and continues to do for us every day. With that thought in mind, it leads me to believe that indeed we will have a wonderful year ahead!

In his terms, Selwyn Hughes shares some insight for having God in our lives. He uses as his text Romans 5: 1 -6. “**1.** Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: **2.** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3.** And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; **4.** And, patience, experience; and experience, hope: **5.** And hope make me not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. **6.** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

We are seeing that the greatest purpose of our lives here on earth is to develop a deep and sensitive awareness towards others and demonstrate personal care for their pressing needs. “A Christian is one who cares,” we said. Is this just mere rhetoric, or does it have a basis in fact? It is based on the greatest fact of the universe --- the Creator cares. Regardless if our religious beliefs, we do have a God who cares.

A God who doesn't care doesn't count. If we believed that God didn't care, we would not, could not have respect for such a God. But our God does care. The Almighty has, by His own volition, entered through the door of humanity and involved Himself with us in the person of His Son, Jesus. What a wonderful blessing that is!

#### Let us Pray

***O Father, I see so clearly that You are a God who cares—really cares. And, because You care, I must care too. Help me become a truly caring person. In closing, we ask that you Father help us to remember those who remain steadfast in caring for the less fortunate and for those who need to be comforted and healed. Let us always be mindful of the needs of others. We ask this in Thy Holy Name and I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen***

*Bert Rice*



## The Pride of Being a Maverick, and Wearing the Red Bandana



Inside my man-cave here in Arlington, Texas, there hangs what appears to be a faded, weathered old rag that's not really much to look at. It's not worth very much either, at least to most folks. But to me, it's priceless! I say that because it reminds me of a time in my life when I flew with the finest group of young men I have ever known! During that time, we had all worn it with such great pride! But the old rag was still young. Just like all of us back in those days, it was still in its prime. It hadn't faded at all. It was still a bright red bandana! And for those of us who wore it with such great pride, it identified you as a Maverick! Whether you were a pilot or crewmen, it didn't matter! We were a team! We lived, laughed, drank and fought together! We would have died for each other, and sometimes we died together. Today, some 50 years later, it is still a source of tremendous pride for me!

My story began in November 1966 when a flight school classmate and I first arrived at Can Tho, Vietnam, a small city located deep in the Mekong Delta. It was also home to the 13<sup>th</sup> Aviation Battalion, also known as the Delta Battalion! It had seemed like forever since we had left the U.S. and the ride down from Saigon was courtesy of the U.S. Army in a large, twin-engine airplane known as a Caribou. The sun was hovering just above the horizon when we finally landed at the airport, but it wasn't long before we were in a jeep driving through town heading towards the Mekong Delta Hotel that had been "militarized" for military personnel. The driver didn't look very old, but he knew how to navigate expertly through a wide variety of cars, jeeps, bicycles, buses and mopeds, all of which announced their presence by an unending mixture of toots, tweets, whistles and other assorted forms of noise! Fortunately, he also seemed to know his way around and it wasn't long before we arrived at the hotel unscathed! At the entrance was a heavily guarded gate manned by armed MPs, a very ominous sign! Even though it had gotten our attention, the sight of all that barbed wire and sandbags stacked around every building ratcheted up our concerns even more! However, no one else seemed the least bit concerned about this strange new world we had just found ourselves in, so we managed to relax a bit ourselves!

As is usually the case, it wasn't long before we learned the best way to relax was at the hotel bar so, not wanting to miss out on an opportunity to have a cold beer after such a long, exhausting trip, we soon found ourselves in a neat little bar. From this vantage point, we could not only drink, but also forget our homesickness by listening to non-stop war stories, courtesy of the local veterans! After a while, someone suggested we go up to the roof where we could get a much better view of the city and surrounding countryside. With a couple of beers in hand, we went topside and managed to squeeze into a couple of chairs that overlooked the lights of Can Tho, and beyond that, the vast Mekong Delta bathed in total darkness!

Sitting there and enjoying our beer, we saw what appeared to be lightning flashes far out on the fading horizon, followed shortly afterwards by faint booms that didn't sound exactly like thunder! Suddenly, a few red tracer rounds spewed up from that same general area, arcing upward, then disappearing into oblivion as the tracers burned out! Then, seemingly out of nowhere, a fire-hose of red tracers appeared in the middle of the sky! The red fire-hose of tracers seemed to weave back and forth, all the while directed downward towards the area where the first set of tracers had erupted from! Soon, from far in the distance came a very distinct "b-r-r-r-t" sound that seemed to be a half-second out of synch with the tracer fire. Then a few more sporadic rounds cut loose from the ground directed toward whatever was controlling that fire-hose of tracers! Then another dose from that red fire-hose! We were not only mesmerized by what was going on, but also curious! Straining to see what type of invisible aircraft was spewing all that fire, we got our answer when someone next to us announced "that old Spooky bird is giving Charlie hell tonight!"

Cont. from pg. 11

That was our introduction to the legendary DC-3 that had been resurrected for duty in Vietnam as a heavily armed USAF gunship! We had just witnessed a pretty intense fire-fight on our very first night in the Delta! It was an awesome introduction to the Delta, for sure! But I also think this was our first inkling it might be a long year! A very long year!

The next day, it was strictly the luck of the draw, but Bill was assigned to the 114<sup>th</sup> AHC and I was assigned to the 175<sup>th</sup> AHC, both of which were located at Vinh Long. Just like that, I became an Outlaw, and I was pretty excited about that! As an Outlaw, I stayed focused on being the best pilot I could be, but I couldn't help but notice the pilots and flight crewmen that wore red bandanas around their necks. I also remember feeling comfortable when they were providing cover for us during combat assaults. After flying with the Outlaws for several months and enduring hot LZs, mortar attacks and on one occasion, sinking into the rice paddy unable to get out, I decided I wanted to be a Maverick pilot. By then, Major Jerry Hilleman had already rotated to the U.S. and Captain Joe Moffett had replaced him as Maverick Lead. It was definitely a proud moment when I officially transferred into the Mavericks and was presented that red bandana! As I recall, you didn't have to "earn" the bandana. It was presented to you when you were selected by the other Maverick pilots to become a member. After that, whenever I flew, I wore that bandana! Even if I had been scrambled out on a mission at midnight, I wore it! I took great pride in being a Maverick, as we all did. And serving under the leadership of Captain Joe Moffett was another great honor as well!

I've often been asked about the purpose of the red bandana and after speaking with several former Maverick pilots, we're all in agreement they were the brainchild of Major Jerry Hilleman, a well-respected combat leader! It seems he had a case of red bandanas sent over from the states, which he then distributed to each member of the Mavericks. Even though Outlaws, Mavericks and red bandanas conjure up visions of the wild & wooly west, I suspect the bandanas were what old-timers might remember as the kind worn by the old steam locomotive engineers and train crewmen. I say this because they were larger in size and were essential for wiping sweat from their brows, keeping dust out of their faces and, after being dipped in water, serving as "gas masks" while going through tunnels. BUT, most importantly, they were essential in preventing red hot cinders from sliding under their shirts! OR, maybe hot brass!

All the former Mavericks with whom I spoke agree the reason for the red bandana was two-fold. First of all, they were worn to prevent hot brass from slithering down the collar of an unsuspecting pilot and burning his back, a very painful event! Secondly, we also think his idea was to create a little more esprit-de-corps and pride in the Maverick platoon to set them apart from other companies by giving them an identity. In both cases, I think the red bandanas were successful!

All the hot brass flying around inside the aircraft was primarily because Maverick door gunners were free-gunners. Their M-60s were not mounted to the aircraft in any fashion. And I still remember being amazed at how smoothly they could handle those heavy M-60s, and how accurate they were! In fact, I still recall seeing some of them leaning outside the aircraft and firing underneath the aircraft to cover the opposite side when were making hard banking turns away from the target after completing a gun run! They were just damned good! And I don't recall too much brass flying around the cockpit unless we got out of trim or the gunner happened to lean back inside a bit too much while still firing. That's when I recall seeing a few rounds flitting around the cockpit, just looking for a collar to drop into! But that was a rarity! If a gunner wasn't good, I don't think he stuck around too long, at least not in the Mavericks.

Cont. from pg. 12

Things got hectic enough when you're engaged in a fire-fight. It was all about team work! And I always felt like I was flying with the best.

While you didn't have to earn the red bandana, you did have to earn a very small pin shaped like a bull's head. It was cheap, probably costing less than a quarter, but it was like winning the Oscar! You earned it by receiving your first "hit", or I should say, your aircraft did! And it could be prominently pinned on your cap from then on! It was presented with great fanfare and I think I earned mine on my first mission! I was very proud of that! After all, you couldn't be a real gunship pilot until you had taken a hit! When I think back to those days, I can only shake my head in wonder at how many of us survived! I guess it does prove the point that combat is definitely for young, all-knowing and bullet-proof warriors!

And I don't want to leave the Outlaws out because they had scarves rather than bandanas. Actually, it was more like a blue ascot that had an Outlaw patch in the center of it. The Mavericks wore the red bandanas every day, whereas the Outlaws wore theirs on special occasions. You might've been able to wear them any-time, but during the short time I served with the Outlaws, I can remember wearing the Outlaw scarf twice. One occasion was for an awards ceremony. The other time was more exciting and I can still remember it very clearly. It occurred when we were returning from Tay Ninh after spending a couple of weeks there in February, 1967 to support Operation Junction City, an operation of some notoriety since it involved the first paratroop drop into enemy territory since World War II! We didn't celebrate that, but we did celebrate our return to Vinh Long.

It had been a long, dirty trip spent living in red dirt and tents, plus we had lost a Maverick aircraft that had gone down in the jungle! Making matters even worse was the absence of laundry facilities, mess halls and worst of all, showers! We were dirty, stinky and homesick for Vinh Long! Consequently, when we were released from our "time served" in Tay Ninh, we wanted to let everyone know the Outlaws and Mavericks were coming home! And we wanted to look sharp doing it! So, we put on our cleanest dirty clothes, added the Outlaw scarf around our necks and packed our bags for the happy trip home! We also added a neat touch to the aircraft by adding smoke bombs to the skids of every Outlaw aircraft! A cord attached to the pins would allow the crew chiefs and gunners to pop smoke on command. It was brilliant in its simplicity! So, after a long flight home, we tightened up our formations of Outlaws and Mavericks to let everyone at Vinh Long know we were home! The smoke bombs were popped on command and it looked like a rainbow with all the red, yellow, purple and white smoke! We were glad to get home and take a long, hot shower! Then, maybe a beer or two! We were all definitely glad to get back to our home base and I don't think I ever heard anyone complain about our life at Vinh Long again! We all knew we had it pretty darned good in comparison to other places in Vietnam. It was a very memorable chapter in my life!

Dwayne "Willy" Williams  
Maverick 31 - 1966/67





## The Huey Gone- but Not Forgotten



How silent now is the sound of the Huey? Can we ever forget the ‘whup whup whup’ of the Huey rotor blades flapping the air? How gone is the sound of the crew working as a coordinated team on approach to a hot LZ? Gone is the sound of the airframe tech patching bullet holes in the Huey? But, the Huey is now silent. After decades of service, the iconic Huey has been retired from active duty. But the sounds, the smells, the look of the sleek aircraft profile, the feel of the aircraft skin and dozens of other Huey memories will never leave those who responded to their call to duty with the Outlaw unit in Viet Nam.

The 2018 Outlaw reunion in Charleston, South Carolina has but one purpose: To bring together once again those, whose time with the Outlaws- regardless of their job at Vinh Long- is still a source of personal pride - pride that WE WERE THERE! If you think you have memories now, just wait until your memories are merged with those of dozens of other Outlaws who bring their own memories to the reunion.

Every reunion seems to develop a character of its own. Perhaps it’s the location. Maybe it’s the venues visited. Oftentimes it’s the informal “catch-up” time in the Hospitality Suite. But, above all those, is the feeling of bonding, once again, with those who shared the same experiences, dangers and anxieties while serving with the Outlaws in Vinh Long.

This year’s Outlaw reunion will again have a variety of features, all designed to provide interesting, entertaining and thoughtful memories for those who attend. On our visit to Patriot’s Point we will see a Viet Nam Huey displayed in its original paint color, tail number, etc. Fixed displays of surplus Hueys are located in many places throughout the country. This particular Huey, however, has a unique, and poignant history. It had been sitting in silence for years until someone researched the tail number and combat history of the aircraft.

On October 1, 1968, Huey tail number 66-15005, was engaged in assisting an Infantry ground unit in combat. The door gunner, Sp4 Kenneth Plavcan, was seasoned, someone a pilot could trust with firing an M60 four feet from his head and capable of putting the first round on target while flying by at 80 knots.

Plavcan was pouring rounds onto a target, leaning out to fire under the ship, when 005 took fire, Spec. Plavcan was hit and died enroute to a medical facility. His actions were determined to have saved several lives in the ground unit.

Years later, 005 was being renovated to be placed on permanent display at Patriots Point. Time was short to finish the repainting on the ship. One of the museum’s maintenance crew was asked to work overtime to finish the paint job. He was a member of the Mother Emanuel Church and was to attend church services that night. That was the night that a shooter killed nine members in the church. Had it not been for 005, he too might have been a victim. Huey 005 may have again saved another life. We will visit Huey 005, which has been dedicated to Sp4 Kenneth Plavcan, during our trip to Patriots Point in September

The Huey may be gone, but it will never be forgotten by those whose memories of the Huey are indelibly recorded in their minds.

*Tom Anderson*

## Helicopter Crewmen Memorial To Be Dedicated in Arlington National Cemetery

It's been four years in the making, but helicopter crewmen, who were Killed In Action during the Vietnam War, will now have their own monument at Arlington National Cemetery. A dedication ceremony will take place at the ANC Memorial Amphitheater, located approximately 150 feet from the monument site, at 4:00 PM, April 18, 2018

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, in coordination with other Associations of helicopter crewmen, as well as Arlington National Cemetery, worked together to obtain final approval for the Monument.

The monument will honor the more than 5,000 military crewmen who died while operating helicopters in the Vietnam War. That number is the greatest single concentration of combat casualties who are buried in Arlington cemetery. The granite Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Memorial will complement, and will be placed near, a memorial red maple tree earlier dedicated in August, 2015.



The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association will donate this monument to Arlington National Cemetery.

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The 2 1/2-foot by 2 1/2-foot monument will be placed in Section 35 along Memorial Drive, not far from the Tomb of the Unknowns, in Arlington cemetery.

Preparing the site will require a 3-foot deep concrete footer to be poured to ensure the 1100-pound granite stone does not shift in the cemetery soil.

As we all know, the Vietnam War was known as the "helicopter war" because of the heavy reliance on helicopters to transport troops, evacuate casualties, provide close-air support and the dozens of other missions with which the Vinh Long Outlaws are intimately familiar. Tourists who visit Arlington don't go merely to visit graves but also to reflect on the many memorials such as Tomb of the Unknowns, the Viet Nam crewmen memorial and others which recognize and honor those who give the ultimate sacrifice.

The primary mission of Arlington National Cemetery is to provide grave sites for American heroes who died, with the secondary mission of being a national shrine. There is no way of knowing how many former Outlaws, Mavericks, Bushwhackers, Roadrunners etc. are interred in Arlington cemetery but it is known that there are a significant number of former Outlaws who are at their final resting place in the cemetery.

Again, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument will be dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Amphitheater at 4:00 PM, April 18, 2018.

VLOA National Director Jim Donnelly has indicated he will attend as well as this writer.

Everyone is invited to attend the ceremony at the amphitheater.

Submitted by Tom Anderson:

*Tom Anderson.*





## Jimmy Ray King

July 09, 1944 - December 08, 2017



Jimmy Ray King was born on July 9, 1944 in Pryor, Oklahoma to Arthur Ray and Gladys Obie (Robinson) King. He passed away on December 8, 2017 at his home in Pryor at the age of 73 years, 4 months and 29 days.

Jimmy grew up and attended school in Pryor, graduating in 1962. He joined the United States Army in September of 1962. During his military service he was a side gunner and chief engineer, serving in Vietnam. He was honorably discharged in September of 1965. He returned home to Pryor and later attended college at Oklahoma Military Academy in Claremore. He and Sharon Finnell were married on April 8, 1966 in Pryor. He worked at the Pryor OTASCO store and was promoted to OTASCO regional supervisor, over 7 states and 77 stores. He later worked for MUB in Pryor and retired after 17 years. He was a coin collector and enjoyed fishing and any kind of "fix it" work, from cars to weed eaters. He especially enjoyed spending time with his kids and grandkids and he will be missed by all who loved him.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Sharon, of the home; two sons, Billy Ray King and wife Jackie and Brett King and wife Christie, both of Pryor; seven grandchildren, Zoe, Rider, Jay, Matt, Daulton, Cheyenne and Dakota; one great granddaughter, Zella; sister, Joy Weaver of Owasso and numerous nieces, nephews and other friends and family.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Jimmy Ray King was my friend. We met in Ft. Rucker at Aviation School in early 1963 and upon graduation was assigned to the 227th Aslt Hel. Co. 11th Air Aslt Div. Ft. Benning, Ga. We trained with the company until September of 1964 and then was assigned to the 62nd Avn. Co. and deployed to Vinh Long, Vietnam. During our off time we would take off for Panama City, Fl. every chance we got and come back late at 110-120 mph in his red Ford Galaxie 500 2 dr Hd Top that he dearly loved. Below left: Relaxing in his area. Right: L-R Sp4 James Biedenbach, Jimmy King, Sp5 R. Tucker. RIP my friend. Bob Sharp.



## Gary Alan Blackman

Gary Alan Blackman, age 74, of Borden, Indiana, passed away on December 3, 2017 at his residence. He was born on March 26, 1943 in New Albany, Indiana. He was the son of the late Delbert Blackman and Doris (Loughmiller) Blackman.

Gary was a Vietnam Veteran and served with the United States Army. He was a retired FAA Aviation Supervisor. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Pekin.

Survivors include his son, Todd Alan Blackman and wife Beth, a daughter Tonya Ann Blackman and 3 grandchildren.

Preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Veletta Kay (Purciful) Blackman, and a brother, Larry Blackman.

The funeral services were held at the First Baptist Church of Pekin with the visitation at the Hughes-Taylor Funeral Home in Borden, Ind. Burial was at Martinson Cemetery with Brother Jerry Goodwin officiating. Please make donations to the First Baptist Church of Pekin.



## THOMAS WULFF, SR.

May 31, 1948 - February 1, 2017

### THOMAS WULFF, SR.

Thomas Wulff, Sr., 68, of Palm Bay, FL, died at home Wednesday, February 1, 2017 after a long and distinguished career in government service. Tom served honorably in the US Army in Vietnam as a helicopter crew chief, having been awarded two purple hearts, a bronze star, the air medal, among several others.

Following his military retirement he spent 20 years with the US Customs Service, ending that career as a Sr. Special Agent.

A true patriot, Tom was a lifetime member of the VFW, Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association and a longtime member of the American Legion. He was a loving, giving man who was exceptionally proud of all his children.

Locally, visitation will be held on Wednesday, February 8th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Strunk Funeral Home, 1623 North Central Avenue, Sebastian, FL. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Thursday, February 9th at 11:00 am at St. Sebastian Catholic Church, 13075 US1 Sebastian, FL. In Ohio, the family will receive friends Monday, February 13th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Ripepi Funeral Home, 5762 Pearl Road, Parma, Ohio. Interment will follow in Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery, Rittman, Ohio with Military Honors conducted by the United States Army Honor Guard.

Tom is survived by his wife, Candyce; sons, Thomas Jr. (Gina) and Ryan (Lupe); daughters, Nicole Cavanagh (Tom) and Dana Clore (Jeremy); the childrens' mother, Margaret Wulff; brother, Walter (Tina); sisters, Charlotte Schmitz (Larry) and Margaret "Koko" Park (Jeff); grandchildren, Ivan, Cynthia, Taryn, Kevin and Clare; great-grandchildren, Isabella and Carter as well as several nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Margaret Wulff; brothers, William and Timothy and sisters, Sandra Reece and Beverly Smith.



Born: May 31, 1948  
Death: February 1, 2017



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Winter -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 62<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Company, A Company 502<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Battalion, 175<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company, B Troop 1-158<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment (Iraq), 150<sup>th</sup> Transportation Detachment (“Roadrunners”), 28<sup>th</sup> Signal Detachment, and 25<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_