

VINH LONG OUTLAWS NEWSLETTER

VINH LONG OUTLAWS ASSOCIATION
(VLOA)

January, February & March - 1st Quarter 2011

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Directors Column

I hope this newsletter finds you well. Seems like this year has gotten off to a roaring start. However Old Man Winter just doesn't want let up just quite yet. We continue to get plenty of rain and snow in the mountains. Laurie and I are eager for the weather to improve with so many things to do in the summer; planting flowers, going for long walks in the park, vacations etc. But again winter just doesn't want to say good-bye. However we take to heart that winter is just about through. We know this by those familiar indicators - Lawn Furniture and Barbeques are out at Wal-Mart.

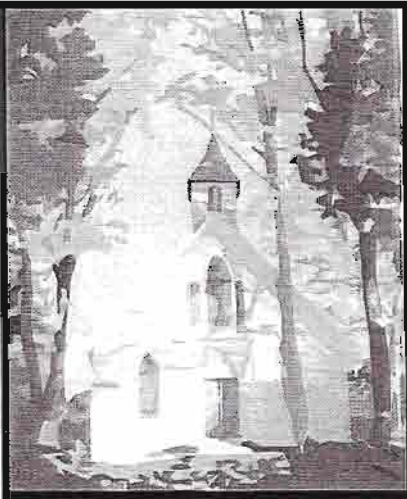
The big news is that we have hired a reunion planner! We have selected "The Reunion Brat" from Green Water, Washington. Bids will be going out to the various hotels and locations, probably as this newsletter is being printed. We should be getting cost figures for the reunion in a month or so. The Steering Committee will be working on the figures by early summer. Hopefully by next newsletter will have more to share with you?

Don't know if you have been inundated by all the mail from various charities this year, but there sure has been a lot left at our mailbox. It seems as though it's the year of veteran's charities. Some are familiar, but most just seem to pop up from nowhere. Most are probably legitimate, but some relying on the good will of the public towards our troops are out for a quick buck. I guess what I'm saying is to be careful, and check them out before you donate. Al Iller gave me a website that you can use to see if these people are on the up and up, and that is www.charitynavigator.com. Just to let you know my favorite veterans charity is the Vinhlong Outlaw Association.

Just a quick mention; if you haven't yet paid your annual dues, please do so now. If I'm not mistaken, you can still claim the dues on this years' income tax since we are now a 501© 19 veterans association.

Respectfully

Bob



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

"The Back Pew"

From our VLOA Chaplain: John Doyle

Growing Older - Growing up

How many times have you had someone tell you to "Grow up!" ? Fact is, it takes some of us a lot longer than others. I swear I have met people that were "old" when they were still in their twenties. However that does not describe me. I am presently a 75 year old kid. Should I live to be a 120 years old I'll still be a kid on the day I die. My kids might disagree, they think I was an "old fuddy-duddy" when they were growing up. I'll tell you a secret, it's fun being a kid no matter what your age.

With that said, there is a time and situation that requires us to grow up. I'm referring of course to our spiritual life. I can tell you from experience that the world's best seller and least read book is the HOLY BIBLE! Many are those who read the words but never see the "WORD." They can quote paragraph and verse, but have never taken the time to listen to its message.

It's time to ask yourself , "Have I grown up in Christ?" If you honestly answer NO, then it's time to "grow up."

In the Book of John, Chapter 8, verse 47a says:

"He who belongs to God, hears what God says..." (NIV)

FROM AIR FORCE TO ARMY TO OUTLAW

The Air Force, for a stretch, enjoyed the professionalism of one of the most professional and proficient OUTLAWS we have all been fortunate to know. Until Leon Osterland decided that he wanted to hang out with a more expert branch of the Military he served in the United States Air Force. After becoming a member of the US Army and after a period of time at Fort Benning, Ga., Leon was assigned to the 150th Transportation Detachment (CHFM) Fort Eustis, Va.

By (MOS) Military Occupation Specialty Leon was a Sheet Metal Worker. The professional aspect of his job was not real clear until after our arrival in Vinh Long, Vietnam. The quantity of sheet metal repair was immense but Leon was not panicky about the hard work or the inordinate demand placed on him. Even after a long hard day Leon would, time and again, return to the hanger when needed to repair unwanted holes and damage. Self inflicted or enemy fire.

Leon was always in search of volunteers to buck rivets and shimmy the tiny Tail Boom. Leon's dilemma was that Bell Helicopter had built the tiny Tail Boom with about the same girth that he enjoyed. However, with Gary Gilbert as a go to guy he always accomplished the impossible. It is the writers recollection that Leon, in collaboration with Sgt. Proctor, concocted the much needed and unforgettable Doyle Pole.

Should Leon have patented the sheet metal Beer Cooler? They were trendy and fit in with the stylish decor of the time, did a great job and were in big demand. It kept all brands of Beer cool but would only keep soft drinks warm. It was a true Beer Cooler!

An overall readiness status, in excess of 80%, was realized, in large measure, because of the expert sheet metal work, dedication to duty and professional resolve of Leon Osterland. Leon is a credit to himself, the US Army, the OUTLAWS and the 150th Transportation Detachment. He should stand tall in the memories of the expert work he did as a member of the 150th Transportation Detachment (CHFM) and an as a Vinh Long OUTLAW.



The above article was submitted by **Shorty Farley** with the photo being submitted by **Bob Koonce**

“MAVERICK” FACTS
DID YOU KNOW?

Where in the world did the term “Maverick” come from? Some may think of the movie “Top Gun”, or the “Outlaws and Mavericks” of Vinh Long Vietnam. But no! Reading history is an enlightenment for some, and enjoyment for others and with each some discoveries are sometimes encountered. Likewise it was for me when I read a recent book, “The American West”, by Dee Brown. Half way down page 63 I found this interesting paragraph in Chapter 3, “Cattle, Horses And Cowboys” describing large cattle ranches in Texas and cattle drives of the 1830’s and 1840’s.

In the interest of time and with no further literary embellishment the paragraph is quoted as follows:

“During the Mexican War, while most of the Texas ranchers were too busy with other matters to attend their stock, many cattle reached maturity without being branded. Colonel Samuel A. Maverick owned such a herd near San Antonio. Maverick had taken four hundred cattle as payment for debt in 1847, and had them delivered to his place on Matagorda Peninsula. As his duties kept him in San Antonio, he had no time to look after the cattle, which multiplied rapidly on the tall grass on the Peninsula, and were wild as antelopes. So many stayed to the mainland unbranded that when ranchers in the coastal areas saw an unmarked Longhorn, they would say: “That’s one of Maverick’s,” or “That’s a Maverick.”

And so began the coining of the word and meaning of “Maverick”!

Submitted by: Al Iller

PLEASE READ

“VLOA members who attended the Outlaw Nashville Roundup and took their name tag holder home with them, please mail them to Frank Estes, 407 Country Club Drive, Ozark, AL 36360. We need to collect them for reuse during the Outlaw Roundup 2012. Thanks.”

From: Frank Estes

Seine River Cruise

Submitted by Bob Koonce

Polly and I took the Paris to Normandy River Cruise on Grand Circle last July. We travelled with our next door neighbors. We flew into Paris and boarded our river boat. We had 2 days in Paris and took a city tour by bus the next morning. We had seen all of the Paris tourist attractions on a previous trip but we spent a lot of time walking the neighborhoods in Paris which really gives you a better perspective than the major attractions. We also spent one morning touring the Mus'ee d'Orsay (Impressionist museum) which is housed in a train station that was built on the site for the 1900 Paris World's Fair. We then cruised out of Paris on the Seine to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise where Vincent Van Gogh spent the final 3 months of his life. We took a walking tour of the town including the wheat field which was the scene for his Wheat Field With Crows that was one of his last works. It still looks like the painting.

The next day, we visited Monet's Garden in Giverny. The gardens were as beautiful as his paintings. The walk around the garden included the Japanese Bridge and water garden shaded by weeping willows and the pond full of water lilies. The next day we visited the village of Les Andelys where the Chateau Gaillard, the stronghold of Richard the Lionhearted, is perched on rocky cliffs. It was built in the 12th Century and offers a panoramic view of the Seine and the countryside. The next day, we visited Rouen, where Joan of Arc was imprisoned, tried for heresy, and burned at the stake. We saw the 14th-century abbey where she was sentenced to death and the Market Square where she was executed in 1431.

After leaving Rouen, we cruised to Caudebec where we visited Pont-Audemer with its half-timbered buildings-survivors of the Battle of Normandy-and the charming canals that run between them. We also visited the Abbaye St. Wandrille, a Benedictine abbey in the village of St. Wandrille. Our next day started with a visit to the D-Day Utah Beach battlefield. We then visited Pointe du Hoc where the Allied forces scaled the 328-foot cliffs where they were able to silence the German artillery. The D-Day landings, codenamed "Operation Overlord", were the largest military operation in recorded history. The beaches of Normandy bore the brunt of the invasion as nearly 7,000 boats hit the beaches along the coast of Normandy. More than a thousand Allied troops died on Omaha Beach alone. Our final visit of the day was to the cemetery of Coleville sur Mer where 9,368 American soldiers rest. This was the highlight of the trip. Grand Circle in conjunction with the cemetery staff held a ceremony honoring these fallen soldiers. They invited all the veterans in our group to stand in front of the memorial. They then played the Star Spangled Banner and Taps. They provided a bouquet of flowers for each couple or individual for us to place on a grave of our choice. Polly and I chose one of the more than 300 unknown graves. It was an extremely moving experience. The beauty of the cemetery is awe inspiring. Every headstone is perfectly aligned and the view across the cemetery overlooks the English Channel. What a wonderful way to finish a trip.

The Fort Wolters Gate

Through this historic gate, the main entrance to Fort Wolters, located on the eastern edge of Mineral Wells, TX, passed thousands of students, all intent on becoming U. S. Army helicopter pilots. Activated in 1956, the U. S. Army Primary Helicopter School trained more than 40,000 student pilots before its closure in 1973.

The Primary Helicopter Center in 1956, renamed Fort Wolters in 1963, provided basic and primary flight training for the U. S. Army's rotary-wing pilots. The base also trained helicopter pilots for the Marine Corps in 1968 and for the Air Force in 1970. By 1970, Fort Wolters spread over 8,500 acres, plus an additional 1,700 acres of leased land, to provide space for more than 1,000 helicopters.

The base was also the home of the Beach Army Hospital, the Eighty-fourth Military Police Detachment, the 328th United States Army Band, and United States Army Reserve Detachment 20, Sixteenth Weather Squadron.

The main gate, as it appeared around 1968, is shown in the photo. On the left side of the entrance was a Hiller OH-23 helicopter and on the other side, a Hughes TH-55 helicopter.

In 1975, the base was deactivated and part of the land and facilities became the property of the City of Mineral Wells, TX, and private businessmen. Ninety acres and thirteen buildings became the Education Center of Weatherford College. A portion of the land was transferred by the United States government to the State of Texas for development as part of [Lake Mineral Wells State Park](#).

Fort Wolters Restoration Project

A group of local officials, community leaders and interested individuals formed a [committee](#) in the Summer of 2010 to oversee the restoration of the main gate into Wolters Industrial Park on Highway 180 E on the east side of Mineral Wells. The restoration will "capture the essence of the sign as it was when the Primary Helicopter School was active", said Beth Watson, one of the committee members.

Leaders for the group elected at the group's meeting on July 27, 2010, are Dr. Ronny Collins – Chair, Mary Creighton – Reporter and Jim Messinger – Treasurer.

The project was expanded at a previous committee meeting to include three phases: Restoration of the main gate, installation of a parking area adjacent to the east side of the gate that includes signage describing the gate and its history and installation of a second parking area on the triangle of land just north of the gate where the main road splits (the current location of the Camp Wolters Historical Marker).

The project was organized into three phases, as defined below.

Phase I

Phase I includes painting of the overhead sign and support structure, repair of the masonry walls, installation of landscaping and installation of the 1967-era name on the sign: U. S. Army Primary Helicopter Center, Fort Wolters, Texas. The sign will also carry a set of wings and signs representing the insignia of the 4th Army (on the left side) and The Primary Helicopter Center (on the right side).

In addition, helicopters of the same types originally mounted on each side of the sign will be provided by The National Vietnam War Museum; a Hiller OH-23 on the left and a Hughes TH-55 on the right. The OH-23 has been donated by Fort Wolters Helicopters to The National Vietnam War Museum for this purpose. Both helicopters will undergo significant restoration prior to placement at the gate. Also planned are signs in front of the walls next to the helicopters on either side of the main gate that will carry the current name of the park, Wolters Industrial Park.

Phase II

Phase II includes the installation of a new asphalt parking area large enough for six to eight cars, along with interpretive signage carrying the history of the Main Gate. Landscaping around the parking area and lighting are also planned.

Phase III

Phase III includes the installation of a new asphalt parking area large enough for six to eight cars on the triangle of land a few hundred feet north of the Main Gate. Interpretive signage nearby will carry the history of the post from its early days as Camp Wolters, later days as Fort Wolters and, eventually, its conversion to Wolters Industrial Park. Additional signage describing Wolters Industrial Park, including a map of the park and a list of current residents with their contact information, is planned. Landscaping around the parking area and lighting are also planned.

(cont'd on Page 7)

(cont'd from Page 6)

Funding the Project

The estimated cost of the project's three phases is \$50,000. Fundraising by the group has already begun. The National Vietnam War Museum, a 501c3 nonprofit corporation, has agreed to act as a Fiscal Sponsor for the project so that contributions to fund the project may be tax deductible.

Contributions may be made by mail using a check or money order made to The National Vietnam War Museum and mailed to P. O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76068-0146. Please add a notation on the check that the contribution is for the Wolters Main Gate Restoration Project.

Online contributions may be made using a credit card on the museum website at www.NationalVNWarMuseum.org. Select *Gift Shop* on the Home Page navigation bar and then scroll to the order form in the Gift Shop, where you can enter your information and indicate that the contribution is for the Main Gate Restoration Project.

Sponsorships

Sponsors are being sought for significant components of the project, such as the gate sign painting, new signs, landscaping, parking lots, lighting, electrical power systems, water systems, etc. Contact the committee members below for the details.

Recognition of Contributors & Sponsors

Contributors will be listed on the signage in the front parking area. Sponsorships are available for various components of the project and all Sponsors will receive special recognition on the signage.

This information on Camp Wolters was suggested to us by Angelo Spelios

Kartoons by Koonce

