

Swift Current

The official publication of
the Swift Boat Sailors
Association

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Comments &
suggestions to-
dc.current2@gmail.com

PCF-1 in Panama

For Naval Historical Foundation 10-23-2013 by Jim Deal

PCF-1 was a training boat for Vietnam Swift Boat sailors at U S Naval Amphibious Base in Coronado, CA until the PCF Training School was closed at the end of the Vietnam War, which ended April 30, 1975.

PCF-1 was transferred to U.S. Naval Station, Panama Canal, Rodman, Panama, CZ assigned to the Harbor Patrol Unit (HPU)

The Harbor Patrol Unit (HPU) was established in Panama in 1975 originally drawing active duty crewmen and boats from both East and West coast Coastal River Squadrons during a time when the U.S. was worried Communism was establishing a foothold in Central America. Subordinate to USSouthCom, its mission was the defense of the Canal Zone in Panama. The Panama Canal was and is one of the world's most strategic waterways in the world and the HPU for years provided waterborne security that expanded into other missions. In 1987 HPU would be established as Special Boat Unit-26.

"...the US Navy's unofficial "Best Kept Secret" was the formation of Harbor Patrol Unit (HPU), Naval Station Panama Canal. The secret wasn't exactly a secret. It's just that no one ever heard of the little unit of six patrol boats." QM1 (SW/CC) Howard H. Nash, USN, (Ret) (<http://www.warboats.org/sbu26nash1.htm>)

" From 1978 to 1982, the primary mission for HPU was High Value Transits (HVT's). Simply put, escorting vessels of sensitive nature through the restricted maneuverability of the Panama Canal. HVT's were taken seriously by HPU personnel, the Naval Station Commander, and US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), if not, by the vessels being escorted." QM1 (SW/CC) Howard H. Nash, USN, (Ret) (<http://www.warboats.org/sbu26nash1.htm>)

Special Boat Unit 26 was established in 1987, from its pre-runner unit Harbor Patrol Unit (HPU). It was subordinate to both USSouthCom and Special Boat Squadron Two. Located at Rodman Naval Station, Panama its mission was the defense of the Panama Canal Zone and Mobile Training Teams to Central and South American Countries. SBU-26 was the only whole Special Boat Unit located outside the U.S. and was dis-established in 1999.

After a tour of duty with SBU-26, PCF-1 was transferred to NAVSCIATTS

[NAVSCIATTS] Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School

"We were a 7 man team known as SCIATT (Small Craft Instruction and Technical Team), said Phil Bonilla,

"Approximately 1983 was when we got commissioned as NAVSCIATTS." (Interview with Phil Bonilla)

"...NAVSCIATTS official establishment as a Naval Shore Command (1st CO was CDR Richard James Flanagan, USN) on July 21st 1983 under President Reagan's directives to enhance U.S. security forces relationships in Latin America and the Caribbean." (<http://www.navsoc.socom.mil/NAVSCIATTS/history.htm>)

PCF-1 was in **Operation Just Cause** 1989-1990

Upon Orders from the President George H. Bush, the removal of Manuel Noriega and his regime was authorized. Panama had been a long time base for U.S. forces and HQ for U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND with many units stationed in Panama.

The Naval Special Warfare Units stationed there already had intimate knowledge of the areas. These units were based at Rodman Naval Station Panama. These units were called by the U.S. Special Operations Command "Task Force White" and divided in to 4 Task Units each with a separate Mission.

The prevailing story is that "- The boat was discovered in Panama, during the fall of 1994, and rescued from the scrap heap by numerous ex-Swifties. The boat was transported to Norfolk, VA and restored. After completion of the restoration, it was then used as part of the "Last River Run" reunion, at the Washington Navy Yard in June 1995." (<http://swiftboats.net/PCFlistingFiles/PCF1-9.htm>)

"Sounds like a good story but it is untrue, our guys busted their butts keeping PCF-1 and PCF-2 in good running shape", said Scott P. Ward, NAVSCIATTS (Interview with Scott P. Ward spward@NaCMED.com)

BM2 Abiezer Rodriguez and BM3 Monserrate Garcia and ENC Fred did all the Hull refurbishing and paint work in Little Creek Virginia when the PCFs where shipped there in 1995 prior to being handed over to the Museum...

"After completion of the restoration, it was then used as part of the "Last River Run" reunion, at the Washington Navy Yard in June 1995. At 10am, 18 April 1998, PCF 1 was moved to its new permanent location, on a set of concrete pedestals at the far end of the seawall, along the Anacostia River, forward of where the USS Barry is berthed. Her bow faces towards the river.....within a few feet of the water's edge. The forward pedestal gives the boat a slight upward tilt. The space itself, where the boat rests, is surfaced in a pattern of bricks, in a semi-circle, interspersed with a pattern of white concrete. It gives the area a sense of permanence, focus, and dignity. At a ceremony held at 9am, 23 April 1998, PCF 1 was rededicated with a plaque placed on the forward pedestal of her stand." (<http://swiftboats.net/PCFlistingFiles/PCF1-9.htm>)

Sources

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brp1Vew9WGI>

<http://www.warboats.org/sbu26nash1.htm>

<http://www.navsoc.socom.mil/NAVSCIATTS/history.htm>

<http://swiftboats.net/PCFlistingFiles/PCF1-9.htm>

Interview with Scott P. Ward spward@NaCMED.com

Interview with BM2 Abiezer Rodriguez

Interview with BM3 Monserrate Garcia

Interview with Phil Bonilla

(Operation Just Cause), 20 December 1989, 31 January 1990

President's Corner

Here is hoping everyone had a Merry Christmas and you have started a very Happy New Year. I was able to talk to many Swift brothers over the Christmas break. It was uplifting to find out how well many of us are getting along.

As we move into the New Year we must remember our Swift brothers who passed on this last year. Tuck Brant has a column in this issue of the Swift Current that lists the recent passing of some of our crew mates.

Terry Boone the Ship's Store manager has ordered more inventory and has a listing in this issue of the items for sale and the cost. Please contact Terry for any purchases through his email so he will have a record of all transactions.

Jim Deal is reworking the SBSA web site. The new site will be more user friendly and have the ability to post news updates on the site. It will also have the function to send out email information to all members.

Mike Solhaug is heading up the 2015 Reunion committee and they have selected Washington, DC as the host city. The host hotel will be selected in late January and they will begin working on tours and events. If you live in the area or just want to help please contact Mike Solhaug. I know he can use volunteers. We are about 18 months out and a reunion requires a lot of volunteers.

I want to say a special word about the work of Don Hammer our new treasurer. Don has gone above and beyond expectations to provide us with a monthly financial update for the Association and developed a budget for 2014. Great job Don!

During this next year if you are planning a local reunion, please let us know, and we will publish the dates in the next Swift Current. Many of our members are quite interested in attending any Swift reunion.

These are a few of the activities currently underway; I will keep you updated in each issue of the Swift Current on the progress we are making. Please contact any of the officers with suggestions or concerns; we are interested in doing the right activities, the right way, for our association.

Van Odell
President SBSA

New Book

Our Swifty, Andy Horne (CosDiv 13) has his first novel coming out January 2014.

Mixed Company is the first of the, *Decent Men Series*, freestanding stories linked by a few common characters.

Mixed Company is about a swindler, and former Swift Boat sailor, never seen at our reunions. At home he is an honest good ole' boy entrepreneur and successful investor; however, on his business trips he is an occasional crook. Nobody in Texas, not even his wife or family suspects his other life.

When he returns from an extended con out of state to his small hometown, he expects to rest. Tired, aging and out of shape, he realizes that bad men have come to take down the local bank. His wife and mother-in-law own substantial shares in that bank. How can he frustrate their efforts and avoid notice by the authorities? While finding those answers, Andy introduces you to many colorful and engaging characters.

The Series explores the lives of post-Vietnam War veterans without bogging down in the political or social passions of that war. *Mixed Company* studies one man and the good people who, without knowing it, change his life.

You can reach Andy at 409-621-2888 or through his email at aahorne@comcast.net. Orders may be made through his website, www.AndyHorneBooks.com, with Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Books-a-Million. You can also order from your local independent bookstores. Also, you are invited to "like" his Facebook page, Andy Horne Books.

Of course, he will sign all copies he sells personally presented to him at reunions. The book is also available for pre-publication orders on Amazon at a discount or through Barnes & Noble. No EBook yet.

For those of you who order through Amazon, you will not receive your book before the New Year.

Andy guarantees a good story. Whenever you read *Mixed Company*, Andy needs you to spread the word. Other early readers have said it is a fun book. Below is an endorsement by one of those readers.

*"Great story. Interesting characters. Excellent plot. Fascinating fraud schemes.
Crisp dialog. Well written."*

Ron Woods
Former FBI Agent, United States District Attorney
for the Southern District of Texas

Open letter to the membership from the Secretary and Swift Current Editor.

I apologize for not getting all the membership cards out this year. There is no excuse, but I have an explanation: two arterial operations, two downsize moves, a beach property purchase in St. Croix which required major remodeling, and finally Dengue Fever, which is a debilitating disease with no real treatment but bed rest. If you have recently joined SBSA and have not received a membership card, please send me your name, address, and year joined either via email to dc.current2@gmail.com or to DC Current, 3220 Estate Golden Rock, St. Croix, VI 00820 And I will get a card out to you soon.

As you can also see, this Swift Current is pretty sparse. I meant to include some Gig Harbor and Minnesota State Fair material, but just ran out steam.

D. C. Current

Ship's Store

Terry Boone has reopened the Ship's Store. You can order either by email (mtboone@aol.com) or letter at Terry Boone, 10223 N. Baltimore Ave., Kansas City, MO 64155. Only checks are accepted. There will be a small shipping fee. The items available and the price list is:

ITEM	SELL PRICE
Div 11 Pins	\$4.00
Div 12 Pins-A	\$3.00
Div 12 pins-B	\$3.00
Div 13 pins	\$3.00
Div 14 pins	\$3.00
Div 15 pins	\$3.00
Div 16 pins	\$3.00
SBSA pins	\$2.00
SBSA Patches	\$1.00
Vietnam Combatant Craft Crewmember patch	\$2.00
SBSA stickers	\$0.50
Swiftboat bumper sticker	\$1.00
Hats -VCCC	\$18.00
Hats-Swift	\$18.00
Challenge Coins	\$8.00
Shirts- polo L	\$24.00
Shirts- polo XL	\$24.00
Shirts- polo XXL	\$24.00
CosRon One Pins-Blue Swift Pin	\$5.00
Gold Swift Pin	\$4.00

Deceased Swifties 2013

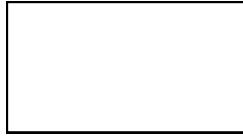
Paul "Pete" Webster	Jacksonville, FL	2013
Thomas R. Sheridan	Damascus, OR	2013
John H. Hill	Bogalusa, LA	2013
Richard H. Larkam	San Antonio, TX	2013
Steven E. Weekley	Columbia, SC	2013
Gerald J. Lyall	Chantilly, VA	2013
Thomas A. Withey	Spring Valley, CA	2013
Laurence D. Garrettson	St. Thomas, VI	2013
Paul M. Montgomery	Fulton, MO	2013
John V Hecker	Erie, PA	2013
Claud "Jerry" Jernigan	Albany, OR	2013
John J. Michels, Jr.	Closter, NJ	2013

Change of Address? Need new membership card?

Stay in touch with your shipmates!

Membership card replacement fee \$5.00.

Contact DC Current, Secretary
Email– dc.current2@gmail.com



Swift Boat Sailors Association
3220 Estate Golden Rock#324
Christiansted, VI 00820

Don't Even Think of Moving Without Telling Us!

Email - Letter - Telephone - Just DO IT!

DC Current:(603) 918-0992:dc.current2@gmail.com: 3220 Estate Golden Rock, Christiansted, VI 00820