

Swift Current

The official publication of the
Swift Boat Sailors Association

First Qtr 2010

Comments & suggestions to-
editor@swiftboats.org



Team Jacksonville really went all-out in staging the reunion last summer. So far on the East Coast we've had a full power outage and now a tornado that was visible from the front of the hotel.



If the tornado wasn't thrilling enough, here are Mr. & Mrs. Ed Stokes after being married just prior to dinner on Friday night.

From left to right:
Jennifer Sorenson
(Anna's daughter,
Terry Symmes (Wey's
wife), Anna Stokes
(bride), Chaplin Tom
Bingol (behind Anna), Ed
Stokes (groom PCF 56),
Wey Symmes (PCF 56),
Andrew Sorenson
(Anna's son-in-law)

A Thank You to Vietnam Vets from a Marine in Iraq

A guy gets time to think over here and I was thinking about all the support we get from home. Sometimes it's overwhelming. We get care packages at times faster than we can use them. There are boxes and boxes of toiletries and snacks lining the center of every tent; the generosity has been amazing. So, I was pondering the question: "Why do we have so much support?"

In my opinion, it came down to one thing: Vietnam. I think we learned a lesson, as a nation, that no matter what, you have to support the troops who are on the line, who are risking everything. We treated them so poorly back then. When they returned was even worse. The stories are nightmarish of what our returning warriors were subjected to. It is a national scar, a blemish on our country, an embarrassment to all of us.

After Vietnam, it had time to sink in. The guilt in our collective consciousness grew. It shamed us. However, we learned from our mistake.

Somewhere during the late 1970's and into the 80's, we realized that we can't treat our warriors that way. So, starting during the Gulf War, when the first real opportunity arose to stand up and support the troops, we did. We did it to support our friends and family going off to war. But we also did it to right the wrongs from the Vietnam era. We treated our troops like the heroes they were, acknowledged and celebrated their sacrifice, and rejoiced at their homecoming instead of spitting on them.

And that support continues today for those of us in Iraq. Our country knows that it must support us and it does. The lesson was learned in Vietnam and we are better because of it.

Everyone who has gone before is a hero. They are celebrated in my heart. I think admirably of all those who have gone before me. From those who fought to establish this country in the late 1770's to those I serve with here in Iraq. They have all sacrificed to ensure our freedom.

But when I get back, I'm going to make it a personal mission to specifically thank every Vietnam Vet I encounter for their sacrifice. Because if nothing else good came from that terrible war, one thing did. It was the lesson learned on how we treat our warriors. We as a country learned from our mistake and now treat our warriors as heroes, as we should.

I am the beneficiary of their sacrifice. Not only for the freedom they, like veterans from other wars, ensured, but for how well our country now treats my fellow Marines and I. We are the beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

Semper Fidelis,
Major Brian P. Bresnahan
United States Marine Corps

President's Corner

Shipmates:

Hat's off to Gene Hart and Team JAX for the great time we all had in Jacksonville in July 2009. It was a pleasure to see thirty Swifties who were attending their first ever SBSA reunion. JAX 2009 had it all....from a tornado before the Banquet to a wedding..Congratulations, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Stokes! All who attended left Jacksonville with fond memories. High on that list was our last opportunity to shake hands with Vice Admiral Earl Frank Rectanus, U.S. Navy (Ret). He passed away on December 7, 2009 in San Diego, California.

Since the Jacksonville Reunion, we've picked up eleven new members...Welcome Aboard! The official SBSA Logo made its debut at the Jacksonville Reunion. Patches and decals were made available in the Ship's Store and they were a big hit. Another item that was received well was the presentation of an SBSA Challenge Coin. Images of these two items can be found in this newsletter and are already available via the SBSA On-Line Ship's Store on the Internet.

One of the benefits of attending SBSA reunions is the opportunity to have a say in the selection of the next SBSA Board of Directors. Voted in at the Saturday morning Business Meeting to serve a four year term was Donavon "DC" Current, Joe LaVoie, Michael Solhaug and Raul Herrera. They will join Jim Deal, Dave Wallace, Virgil Erwin, Tuck Brant, and Joe Ponder, current Directors. The new board voted Dave Wallace as Chairman, Raul Herrera, President, Michael Solhaug, Vice-president, and Gene Hart will serve as Secretary / Treasurer. BRAVO ZULU to exiting Directors, Jim Schneider, Bob Ankenbauer, and Gene Hart, for their dedication and service to the Association.

The membership was called on to make a city choice for the 2011 Reunion. Virgil Erwin and Joe Ponder presented information on the six cities being considered. By majority vote, San Antonio, Texas was chosen to be our host city for the 2011 Reunion. See 2011 Reunion Details, this newsletter.

Terry Boone's quest to place a blue oval Swift Pin on all of our Honor Crew's grave markers is all but complete. Although the bodies of Bruce Timmons and Frank Bowman were never recovered, there is action pending on getting memorials established for these two Swift Boat sailors. After a long search effort, the so evasive grave marker of Jack Charles Rodriguez (PCF-4 tragedy) was finally located. OinC Charles Lloyd and Terry Boone plan to visit Rodriguez' grave site this summer. Lanny Buroff's grave marker will probably be pinned in April or May. Martin Doherty is buried in Ireland and his brother will do us the honor this summer. BRAVO ZULU Terry, Allen LoBean and Ken Magnus!

I am also pleased to announce that "DC" Current has taken the role as our new Swift Current Editor. Please assist him by providing news worthy items that he can consider for future newsletters. Our thanks go out to Dave Wallace who has hung up his green editor's visor after many YEARS of outstanding service. BRAVO ZULU, Dave!!



Article from the Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) about new Swift Boats built by Sewart Seacraft in Berwick, LA. Hat-tip to Tony Taylor for this historic pic. This is also posted on the SBSA's website in MyFamily.COM.

Aluminum Boats

Four new PCF Swifts, built for Navy use as PT boats in Viet Nam, take a trial run in the Louisiana bayous before being shipped for duty in the South China Sea. Built of marine aluminum alloys supplied by Reynolds Metals Co., the craft were adapted from the high speed crew boats used to service offshore oil rigs. The 50-foot boats have a speed in excess of 25 knots and are built by Sewart Seacraft in Berwick, La.

New SBSA Members since July, 2009

Claude S. "Chuck" Farmer, Jr	Fernandina Beach, FL	Quinhon	1968-1969
James L. Miller	Port Orchard, WA	An Thoi	1968-1969
Jerry L. Frohbieter	Lawrenceville, GA	Cat Lo	1970-1971
Billy R. White	Springfield, OR	Danang	1968-1969
Angelo J. Caraffo	St. Louis, MO	SEAFLOAT	1967-1970
Robert A. Withee	Vancouver, WA	Advisor Team 143	1969-1970
Howard S. Emerick	Jacksonville, FL	An Thoi	1968-1969
Larry W. Gilbertson	Baldwin, WI	An Thoi	1968-1969
Stan Kosmicki	Anchorage, AK	An Thoi	USS Krishna
Laurence J. Garrettson	St. Thomas, USVI	Cam Ranh Bay	1966-1967

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Christopher H. Benn North Kingstown, RI EN2 aboard PVF 828 @ SBU-13 SPECWARGRP 1 Mid-80's



Dale Hartog has assisted Terry Boone in pinning two more Swiftie KIA on July 30, 2009.

Deceased Swifties June 2007 forward

Billy P. Carwile	Raeford, NC	2007
Jerry E. Cline	China Grove, NC	2007
Vincent J. Feuerborn	Galveston, TX	2009
Grover L. Handley	Crescent City, CA	2007
Edward M. Lammons III	Tampa, FL	2008
Donald H. Patterson	Virginia Beach, VA	2008
James D. Sarver	Walkerton, IN	2008
Don A. Voss	Townsend, MT	2008
Fred Cooper		2009
Larry Kuentzel	Virginia Beach, VA	2009
Ron Henderson	Sioux City, IA	2009
Ronald M. "Porky" Rinehart	Dayton, Texas	2010

Change of Address? Need new membership card?

Stay in touch with your shipmates!

Membership card replacement fee \$5.00.

Contact Gene Hart, Secretary/Treasurer
Tel. (904) 234-4278 Email- ghart@unf.edu

Fathers Day is June 20, 2010—Let your wife and kids see this page. New Swift Challenge Coin (at right)
The SBSA Ship's Store is open and now takes credit cards at:
<http://swiftboats.org/shipstore/catalog.html>



Arlington National Cemetery - Eligibility for Internment (Ground Burial)

The persons specified below are eligible for ground burial in Arlington National Cemetery. The last period of active duty of former members of the Armed Forces must have ended honorably; Internment may be casketed or cremated remains.

- a) Any active duty member of the Armed Forces (except those members on active duty for training only).
- b) Any veteran who is retired from active military service with the Armed Forces.
- c) Any veteran who is retired from the Reserves is eligible upon reaching age 60 and drawing retired pay; and who served a period of active duty other than training).
- d) Any former member of the Armed Forces separated honorably prior to October 1, 1949 for medical reasons and who was rated at 30% or greater disabled effective on the day of discharge.
- e) Any former member of the Armed Forces who has been awarded one of the following decorations:
 1. Medal of Honor
 2. Distinguished Service Cross (Navy Cross or Air Force Cross)
 3. Distinguished Service Medal
 4. Silver Star
 5. Purple Heart
- f) The President of the United States or any former President of the United States.
- g) Any former member of the Armed Forces who served on active duty (other than training) and who held any the following positions:
 - a. An elective office of the U.S. government
 - b. Office of the Chief Justice of the United States or of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States
 - c. An office listed, at the time the person held the position, in 5 USC 5312 or 5313 (Levels I and II of the Executive Schedule).
 - d. The chief of a mission who was at any time during his/her tenure classified in Class I under the provisions of Section 411, Act of 13 August 1946, 60 Stat, 1002, as amended (22 USC 866) or as listed in State Department memorandum dated March 21, 1988.
- h) ANY FORMER PRISONER OF WAR, WHO, WHILE A PRISONER OF WAR, SERVED HONORABLY IN THE ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL OR AIR SERVICE, WHOSE LAST PERIOD OF MILITARY, NAVAL OR AIR SERVICE TERMINATED HONORABLY AND WHO DIED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 30, 1993.
- i) The spouse, widow or widower, minor child, or permanently dependent child and certain unmarried adult children of any of the above eligible veterans.
- j) The widow or widower of:
 - a. a member of the Armed Forces who was lost or buried at sea or officially determined to be missing in action.
 - b. a member of the Armed Forces who is interred in a US Military cemetery overseas that is maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission.
 - c. a member of the Armed Forces who is interred in Arlington National Cemetery as part of a group burial.
- k) The surviving spouse, minor child, or permanently dependent child of any person already buried in Arlington National Cemetery.
- l) The parents of a minor child, or permanently dependent child whose remains, based on the eligibility of a parent, are already buried in ANC. A spouse divorced from the primary eligible, or widowed and remarried, is not eligible for internment.
- m) Provided certain conditions are met, a former member of the Armed Forces may be buried in the same grave with a close relative who is already buried and is the primary eligible veteran.

Now this is the way to celebrate your 75th birthday. See Grant Hibbard fly!!!





State Vietnam Sailor of the Year

The Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument (VUMM) is offering each State a unique service to honor a State Vietnam Sailor of the Year on an annual basis. The Memorial Wall at VUMM, in Coronado, California, honors the 2557 US Navy and Seven US Coast Guard Sailors who died in Vietnam, 1960 to 1975. VUMM will provide interested State organizations with an electronic roster of the names and other information (including home town and State) for these Sailors as etched on the Memorial Wall. The State will then select (on an annual basis) a State Sailor to be remembered at an Honor Ceremony at the VUMM. The State will also pick a target date for the Ceremony

and build an Honor Package for the Sailor. This package, which shapes the structure of the Honor Ceremony, may, at the discretion of the State, contain such things as a State Proclamation, other testimonials, pictures and other artifacts that capture the memory, service and sacrifice of the selected Sailor. The Honor Package is sent to VUMM, where, on the target date, the Ceremony is conducted and recorded. State Representative physical presence at VUMM for the Ceremony is not required ... although certainly welcomed. The emphasis is on honoring the Sailor regardless of who can physically be at the VUMM on a given target date. The VUMM returns the Honor Package to the State, augmented with artifacts from the ceremony such as AV recordings, State flag flying over the Memorial during the Ceremony, and other items as appropriate. Both the State and VUMM may publicize the results of the Ceremony. VUMM will kick off this complementary State Vietnam Sailor of the Year Program in calendar year 2011 with a cadre of "Plank Owner" States that would like to help commission the Program. This is a win-win Program whereby the State can honor its Veterans and VUMM can support its mission to do the same. The VUMM Rep, Bob Bolger, bob.bolger@gmail.com, 619-421-3335, is looking for States who would like to work with him in 2010 to make the Program a success in 2011. Many of you reading this Swift Current, by virtue of your interest and experience in veterans' affairs and personal connections, have insights into individuals and organizations in your home State who/that could productively and enthusiastically participate in such a Program. If you have any such points of contact please feel free to contact them directly or refer them to Bob. Bob can provide you ... and any interested folks ... an electronic copy of the roster of Sailors and the Program Guide Book which provides additional details. This is not just about Swifties ... it's about all of us Navy & Coast Guard Shipmates who served in Vietnam. We ain't getting any younger. Help commission an easy to administer Program to honor our Shipmate Comrades-in-arms in the years to come.

NEW VUMM Website!!!

Shipmates: I am pleased to announce that we have successfully transitioned to the new web site for the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument. A major feature of the new web site will allow you to go to the "locate a name" on the left side of the home page, enter the name of a Navy or Coast Guard person who sacrificed their life in Vietnam, click on "view" and the actual entry on the panel on the Memorial Wall will be displayed. This new web site was paid for by shared contributions from the Mobile Riverine Force Association, the Gamewardens of Vietnam and the Swift Boat Sailors Association and the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument Fund. There are tours of the boats displayed and we invite you to view them. I hope you will pass this link to all who may have served in the Vietnam War and who have family or friends who may have served. We would appreciate hearing of any difficulties you may have in accessing the site.

<http://vummf.org/default.aspx>

Ken McGhee



Want a ride on a Riverine Group One boat?

Mike Solhoag presented a Patch Case to Captain Tony L. Krueger, Commodore of Riverine Group One on behalf of SBSA.

RivGru One has a nice new facility overlooking the main waterway entrance to Little Creek Amphib Base in Virginia. He extended an open invitation to Swifties for a visit and ride. Contact for visits is

CMDCM Norm Giroux, a great guy.
757-462-7400 ext 167

Mike also gave CAPT Krueger an acrylic Swift with lighting base.

2011 SBSA Reunion News

The 2011 SBSA Reunion will be held in San Antonio, Texas. The reunion dates are as follows: Check-in on Wednesday, May 4th and check-out on Sunday, May 8th. The Crowne Plaza Riverwalk will be our host hotel. Follow up mail outs will include tour information, San Antonio attractions, as well as a Reunion Registration Form.

In an effort to encourage more membership reunion participation, we are offering a special reduced room rate of \$107 for all SBSA members in good standing. There are two conditions: **You must register with Military Reunions To Remember AND make hotel reservations at the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk in San Antonio, both not later than 4 April 2011.**

Hotel reservations can be made now by calling 1-888-233-9527. You must announce that your reservation is for the Swift Boat Sailors Association 2011 Reunion. The MRTR Reunion Registration Form will be available soon, via USPS and through our web site.

San Antonio is a vacation destination draw on its own. We expect that the rooms are going to be booked at record pace. Therefore, due to the number of rooms reserved for our members, you don't want to be caught calling in your reservation and sending in your registration late....you may find yourself scrambling for accommodations, or paying the high regular hotel room rates at other hotels with no discount available from the SBSA.

Therefore, call in your hotel reservation now! All it takes is a credit card and you requesting the SBSA Reunion Room Rate reserved for SBSA members. Your credit card WILL NOT be charged a single cent until you check out. You can also register via the Internet at the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk's special SBSA web link at:

<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/SwiftBoat>.

Also, check the SBSA web site soon for 2011 Reunion News. Reunion information will also be released via the Swift-L and through the MyFamily web site.

San Antonio....here we come!!!



Swift Boat Sailors Association
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 Jacksonville, FL 32257-8926



Under a new rule, VA would not require corroboration of a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA psychiatrist or psychologist confirms that the stressful experience recalled by a Veteran adequately supports a diagnosis of PTSD and the Veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor. Previously, claims adjudicators were required to corroborate that a non-combat Veteran actually experienced a stressor related to hostile military activity. This rule would simplify the development that is required for these cases.

NEW PTSD RULE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) acknowledges that some "blue water" Navy veterans were exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides while their ships operated on inland rivers of Vietnam. Proving exposure may be easier now that the VA has released a list of vessels with confirmed participation in "brown water" operations. FRA strongly encourages all Vietnam Navy veterans and retirees to review the following list of "blue water" Navy vessels and operation dates released by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and is posted with this story on the News page of www.fra.org. If a veteran's service aboard one of these ships can be confirmed through their military records during the time frames specified, exposure to herbicide agents can be presumed without further proof, thus expediting the VA claims process. The list includes all vessels with the designation PCF [Patrol Craft, Fast] during their entire tour. "Thousands of Navy veterans who served aboard ships during the Vietnam conflict experience health problems related to herbicide exposure, but their illnesses and disabilities are not automatically considered service-connected in the eyes of the VA," explains Chris Slawinski, FRA's national veterans' service officer. "The VA restricts this type of presumptive service connection to vets who had 'boots on the ground' or can prove their ship operated on inland waterways. This new information from the VA will make it easier for these Navy veterans to prove exposure and will hopefully facilitate more timely determination of benefits."

If you or someone you know served aboard any of these vessels during the times indicated, a VA claim for exposure to an herbicide agent should be filed as soon as possible. To start a claim, contact your nearest VA Regional Office (a list is available at www.va.gov/VA/benefits/offices.asp) or contact Chris Slawinski at chris@fra.org or 1-800-FRA-1924 (ext. 115).

Thanks to Keith Evans (Cat Lo 68-69)

ATTENTION ALL SWIFTES

Presumptive Agent Orange Exposure for Some Navy Crews