



# The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 9 Issue 1

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**“Aerial Rocket Artillery”**....when called on by those who were in danger, our units were there laying it on the line.

We were proud of our Aerial Rocket Artillery Team then and still proud of it now.

The Straphanger Gazette is a quarterly publication of the Aerial Rocket Artillery Association. Issues will be published on or about the 1st of January, April, July and October. Members who have e-mail will receive a copy as an pdf.

**The Best of Times...the Worst of Times.  
America Needs the Best of the Worst.  
VOTE!**



## *President's Corner*

### YOUR ASSOCIATION

Eight years ago the association was reorganized with a Board of Directors assuming control of, and making decisions regarding the association, with all board members having input into any decisions concerning the operation of the association. At that time, By-Laws were written which established our name and purpose, how we are organized, membership requirements, Board of Directors responsibilities and terms of office, and the handling of funds for the association, along with other areas concerning the association. The results have been positive with growth in membership, and a positive accountability and growth in our operating funds. Our reunions have been held in different locations each year since 2008. We now have cities, such as San Diego, Fayetteville,,Wright-Patterson and Cincinnati, contacting us to have our reunions with them.

The past and current board members have worked hard and diligently to insure that the association remains a viable entity. Most have held more than one position over the years, and several have been reelected to their positions for multiple years. This is your association! There is a reason why you attend the reunions. In this issue is an article written by Col. Mike Norman (a former DUSTOFF pilot) entitled “WHY WE GATHER”. I think it hits the nail on the head on why we belong to organizations and why we have reunions. It does for me! We want you to step forward and provide us with your time and ideas, and be willing to accept one of the positions coming open when new board members will be elected at our business meeting on 10 September 2016 in Colorado Springs. I encourage each of you to make yourself available to fill these slots and/or to host a reunion.

If you have not made your reservations for Colorado Springs, please do so as soon as possible. Again, the hotel has requested that reservations be made by 6 August. We do need a final count for meals for 7 and 10 August. The hotel number is 1-719-599-9100. Hope to see you there.

Keep your rotors in the green

ARA 6

*Editor's Note: Our President has alluded to this excellent analysis of why we are what we are. It is only fitting to share its content.*

## Why We Gather

I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw right down to their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered to me by fate and the US military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone else such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried forever my reputation, and the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; such is the province of legend and myth. Most of my comrades have drifted far from me now, sending only occasional word now and then. I know that one day even these could fall to silence. Some of the men will stay close; a few perhaps close at hand. Today in my autumn years, clearly my best friend in life is a fellow soldier.

As long as I have memory I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world my last thought will be of my family and of my Army comrades.... such good men.

Colonel Mike Norman

## Belshazzar Did Not Read the Writing on the Wall and was Found Wanting

In this issue you will find the obituary of one of our original and much admired teammates. As the years hurry by this becomes a far too common event. Each reunion is not only a fun-filled event for our families and friends. It may represent the last opportunity to see and greet people who have been important parts of our lives. In Columbus, GA, last year, we re-united the rescued and the rescuers from a thrilling moment in our times.

The Board of Directors wants to remind all members of the 2016 annual reunion. The reunion is scheduled for September 7-11, 2016, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 7290 Commerce Center Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80919. Our hosts are Larry and Regina Mobley, with the Board of Directors assisting. Room rates are \$117.00 per night, plus 9.63 % tax. Rates are good for two days post 7-11 September 2016. Reservations may be made by calling 1-800-362-2779 or 1-719-599-9100. When making reservations use code "ARAA" to ensure you receive the \$117.00 rate. Thirty-five (35) rooms have been set aside for our reunion. You are encouraged to make your reservations early as more rooms can be set aside as needed. The hotel has requested that all reservations be made by 6 August 2016. Embassy Suites provides a complimentary cooked to order breakfast each morning, plus free drinks during the evening reception each day. For those who are flying, flights can be made into Colorado Springs Airport (COS). We are excited about this reunion and encourage all to make hotel reservation and submit reunion registrations soon. The form is on the following page.



Hillary Headquarters

Seen in Dearborn, MI, the first U.S. city to become almost completely Muslim. Hillary wants to bring in another 50,000 Syrian refugees—largely unvetted. When someone tells me (in their holy book, their signage and their actions) **I BELIEVE THEM!** Wake up America. Many Muslims are honest immigrants—**BUT WHICH ONES ARE THEY?**





# Final Flight

LTC (Ret) Charles R. Palmer passed from this life at his Marietta, GA home on May 25, surrounded by his loving family. Charles was born January 21, 1935 to Ralph and Jewel Palmer. He met his wife Carol Ann when they were students at North Georgia College and they married in 1956. He graduated NGC in 1956 with a commission in the US Army Reserve. A career officer, he served with distinction until his retirement in 1976.

Beginning in field artillery, he completed flight school in 1958. He was a Senior Army Aviator. He flew Army fixed wing aircraft and helicopters in Central America with the Inter American Geodetic Service.

Charles was one of the first pilots to arrive at Fort Benning in February 1963 for the beginning of what became 2/20<sup>th</sup> ARA, 1<sup>st</sup> Cav Div He was a helicopter gunship pioneer in 377<sup>th</sup> ARA, 11<sup>th</sup> Air Assault. They wrote the book on the tactics and technique on the employment of aerial rocket artillery in a combat environment. He deployed with many of us to Vietnam.

Charles served two tours of duty in Vietnam. In 1965 with the C Battery/2/20th ARA, he was aircraft commander during the Battle of the Ia Drang. In 1970, he commanded the 243rd, Chinook Helicopter Company. He later commanded the helicopter flight school at Fort Stewart before retiring there in 1976 as Assistant Deputy Post Commander.

Decorations include: Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star with 3 oak leaf clusters, 13 Air Medals, 2 Army Commendation Medals, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon and four Overseas Bars. He was also given a commendation by the government of Costa Rica for a daring helicopter rescue of several civilians during a flash flood. He led a successful civilian career in Safety and Loss Control with Mission Insurance, Allied Products, SIS and Regional Reporting.

During the later years of his life, he fought bravely though many health challenges including heart failure, kidney failure and leukemia, defying the odds and beating every prognosis while retaining his sense of humor. He was an intelligent, humble man of honor, valor and faith who always had a word of encouragement. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Carol Ann Palmer; children David, Chris and Casey, five grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Emails to the family can be sent to [palmer56@aol.com](mailto:palmer56@aol.com).

LTC Palmer was buried with full military honors at the Kennesaw Memorial Park in Marietta, GA, on May 28, 2016. Thank you, Chris, for the information. We pray God's mercy and strength be with your family.



Lt. Col Palmer in 1965



## Chaplain's Corner

### *“In the Listening Mode”*

While a very useful method of maintaining radio silence, being in the “listening mode” may have its draw-backs when the first transmission comes over the net as a garbled unintelligible message. Then the radio silence is definitely abandoned with multiple calls, “to repeat the last transmission!” One waits for the discernible words that make sense to our brain so we can act accordingly.

When I was assigned to the 7/17 Air Cav Sqdn at Pleiku in 1968, our headquarters operations center was trying to locate an overdue and unreported aircraft that had left a remote site of B Troop at Phan Thiet enroute to Camp Enari. As the night wore on past midnight, the Squadron Commander, LTC Bob Reuter, was showing signs of great concern. At the time I was the S-1 and was sitting in the Office with him and Major Dick Marshall, the S-3, and a few others. After listening to their failed efforts to contact flight control in II Corps, I asked if I could give it a whirl. Everybody said,, “Go for It!” It took me at least five attempts to get a conversation that was understandable and we located the helicopter which had encountered severe weather and had to divert to Nha Trang, landing at 17<sup>th</sup> Aviation Group's airfield. All was well and we went to bed relieved that the crew and aircraft were secure.

Point of the story, it took quite a while to get the message through! Sometime patience and persistence is the key factor.

Reading in the Old Testament, I Samuel 3:1-21, we find that the boy Samuel had a difficult time hearing the Lord calling for him. He was ministering under Eli who was going blind, and thinking Eli was calling his name, he ran to him, saying, “Here I am Lord!” Eli told him that he had not called and that he should go back to bed. This was repeated three times. Finally, Eli realizing that the Lord was calling the boy told him to go lie down and if he calls you again, you shall say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” Samuel was able finally to hear the Lord speaking to him and became a great spokes person for the Lord.

May we listen in silence for the Lord to speak to us and be able to respond to his call.

Peace,

Bruce Wilder,  
Chaplain

# Blue Max



Story and Photos

by SP5 Irwin Polls

The alarming news blares over the field radio at the Quan Loi airstrip. A U.S. light observation helicopter has been shot down and enemy anti-aircraft fire is playing havoc with rescue attempts.

Artillery support is required to silence the enemy gunners. And the call goes out to the "blue Max". Within minutes two AH-1 Cobra gunships from F Battery, 77th Artillery are speeding toward the crash site.

As they near the target area, the two aircraft commanders (A/C's) are in contact with the command and control ship already on the scene. Colored smoke spiraling from beneath them identifies the location of the downed chopper. From command and control comes the direction and range to the enemy guns. The A/C of the lead Cobra puts his gunship into a dive from several thousand feet, fires a single pair of 2.75-inch rockets and pulls out. Bearing down behind him is the wing ship, unleashing its initial burst of rockets before "Charlie" has a chance to catch his breath.

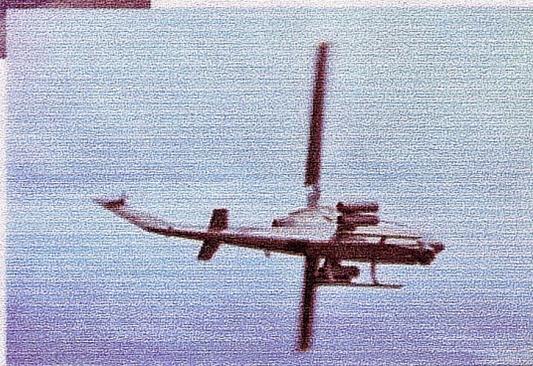
"Add 100 and fire for effect", comes the order from command and control. Again the lead ship begins its descent...500, 1000 feet. Through his "pipper" device the A/C aims at his target and saturates the area with rockets. At the other end of the imaginary circular track which the two gunships form in the sky the second Cobra begins its run, allowing but seconds to pass before firing its deadly ordinance.

After several more strikes, all is quiet below. No longer harassed by enemy fire, the rescue chopper lands and the downed crewmen are extracted. Their mission accomplished, the gunships return to the air strip to re-arm and await their alert. Although a newcomer to the 1st Aviation Brigade, F Battery, 77th Artillery has been unloading its rocket arsenal upon enemy targets in Southeast Asia for nearly six years. Its history reads like a chronicle of the major confrontations of the Vietnam conflict.

Designated Alpha Battery, Second Battalion, 20th Artillery until April 30 of this year, the unit came ashore at Qui Nhon on September 15, 1965, with its parent command, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Alpha and its two sister batteries comprised the Army's first aerial rocket artillery (ARA) battalion, an extension of the traditional fire support role of the field artillery to the demands of airmobile warfare. Flying rocket mounted UH-1B helicopter gunships, its aviators were able to provide immediate fire support to units which often operated beyond the range of conventional artillery. The 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery saw its first major action in the Pleiku Campaign of October and November 1965. What began as an effort to relieve the besieged U.S. Special Forces camp at Plei Me evolved into a full scale offensive on the part of American forces

and the first major confrontation between a U.S. division and a North Vietnamese division.

Two years of support for 1st Cavalry Division operations in what is now northern Military Region 2 culminated in Operation Pershing and the Battle of Tam Quan on the Bon Song Plain in early December 1967. Aircraft of the 2/20th Arty flew at ground level between the division's forces and the enemy, providing a screen behind which the Skytroopers could withdraw while heavy artillery destroyed the enemy bunkers. For the gallantry displayed by its gunship crews, the unit received the U.S. Valorous Unit award. Alpha Battery was further recognized with an individual Valorous Unit Award for the performance of its men in the Tam Quan engagement.



*The Blue Max Cobra is on his way to the objective. Once he has sighted his target, he fires his rockets and comes out of his strike pattern.*

Shortly after the 1st Cavalry Division moved south to Military Region 1 in early 1968 the Communists launched their massive Tet Offensive. The three batteries of the 2nd Bn, 20th Artillery were to play an important part in the success of the allied counter-offensive, participating in the recapture of the city of Hue, the relief of the Marine base at Khe Sahn, and the invasion of the A Shau Valley.

By the time the division moved south to Military Region 3 in the autumn of 1968, the unit had begun its transition to the AH-1 Cobra gunship. And prominently displayed on the new gunships was the blue Maltese Cross, recalling the feats of the German flying aces of World War I as they vied for that most coveted of medals, the "Blue Max". The skill and courage of the pilots of the 2nd/20th Arty at Tam Quan and in numerous other engagements had earned the battalion its new symbol and nickname. Even today F Battery remains a "blue Max" unit to all those it supports. From its new base of operations near the city of Tay Ninh, Alpha Battery furnished artillery support for both U.S. and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) operations in the western part of MR 3 throughout 1969 and early 1970. When U.S. forces closed the border into Cambodia on May 1, 1970, Alpha Battery gunships flew their first missions into territory with which they would again become familiar long after. American ground troops had returned to the confines of the Republic of Vietnam. Scheduled for a March 25, 1971 stand down in conjunction with a redeployment of two brigades of the 1st Cavalry Division to CONUS, Alpha Battery received eleventh hours orders reassigning it to the 1st Aviation Brigade. It joined the ranks of the Golden Hawks on April 1 as a subordinate unit of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion, 12 Combat Aviation Group, and established its new base of operations at Plantation Army Airfield. At the end of April, A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery, became F Battery, 77th Artillery.

Blue Max gunships laager each night at either at Quan Loi or Tay Ninh on five-minute alert for fire missions radioed from the 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry tactical operations center at Phu Loi. When the air cavalry's visual reconnaissance teams ferret out an enemy bunker complex or meet resistance from enemy ground troops, the call goes out to the Blue Max. Two gunships are quickly en route to the target., their pods laden with 2.75 inch rockets with either 10 or 17-pound warheads. A Cobra can carry as many as 76 of the lighter-weight rockets on one sortie.

The two gunships comprise the battery's basic fire mission unit—the section. However, when the situation demands, a third gunship is attached to the ARA section and it becomes a heavy fire team. Normally two of F Battery's four sections are on alert status daily, while the remaining gunships are undergoing routine maintenance at Plantation.

"We generally begin our rocket runs from higher altitudes than air cavalry units, since we don't have a low (observation) ship to keep tabs on", explains CPT Michael F. O'Keefe, a platoon leader in F Battery. "And since our mission is strictly that of artillery support, we rely almost exclusively on our rockets. Rarely do grenade launcher on the turret".



Blue Max aircraft commanders usually complete their runs before descending into the effective range of the .51 caliber anti-aircraft fire which they frequently encounter on missions over Cambodia.

“Back in February and March we were breaking lower”, continues CPT O’Keefe. ”But during one short stretch we had several ships shot up, so we decided it just wasn’t worth the risk”.

Additional practice in sight adjustment was required for registering accurate hits from the higher altitudes, but the effort has paid off. The battery has not lost a ship in several months, and its pilots have become very adept in striking their targets from altitudes up to 5,000 feet.

“Blue Max—Alpha” is finally bowing out after nearly six years of action in Southeast Asia. As of this writing, F Battery, 77th Artillery is standing down for inactivation in early August. From the coastal plains to the rugged mountains near Khe Sanh....from the Central Highlands to the Cambodian jungles — wherever the call for fire support has gone out to the Blue Max, the response has been quick and the results often devastating to the enemy. Future analysis of this “helicopter war” will hardly bge complete without recognition of the key role of aerial rocket artillery and the contributions of Alpha and its sister batteries of the “Blue Max”.

**This article appeared in Hawk Magazine—Summer/Fall Issue, 1971**

### ***No one believes seniors . . . everyone thinks they are senile.***

*An elderly couple was celebrating their sixtieth anniversary. The couple had married as childhood sweethearts and had moved back to their old neighborhood after they retired. Holding hands, they walked back to their old school. It was not locked, so they entered, and found the old desk they'd shared, where Jerry had carved “I love you, Sally.”*

*On their way back home, a bag of money fell out of an armored car, practically landing at their feet. Sally quickly picked it up and, not sure what to do with it, they took it home. There, she counted the money - fifty thousand dollars!*

*Jerry said, “We've got to give it back.”*

*Sally said, “Finders keepers.” She put the money back in the bag and hid it in their attic.*

*The next day, two police officers were canvassing the neighborhood looking for the money, and knocked on their door. “Pardon me, did either of you find a bag that fell out of an armored car yesterday?”*

*Sally said, “No.”*

*Jerry said, “She’s lying. She hid it up in the attic.”*

*Sally said, “Don't believe him, he’s getting senile.”*

*The officers turned to Jerry and began to question him.*

*One said: “Tell us the story from the beginning.”*

*Jerry said, “Well, when Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday ...”*

*The first police officer turned to his partner and said, “We're outta here.”*

*And Then:*

*Earl and Bubba are quietly sitting in a boat fishing, chewing tobacco and drinking beer when suddenly Bubba says, “Think I'm gonna divorce the wife - she ain't spoke to me in over 2 months.”*

*Earl spits overboard, takes a long, slow sip of beer and says, “Better think it over ... women like that are hard to find.”*

**TOO GOOD NOT TO SHARE**

# The Saga of An Loc and F/79 continues.....

*In the April/May/June issue of the Straphanger "HEAT" described the action of F/79 primarily on 13 April 1972 and covered the arrival of the newly developed High Explosive Dual Purpose (HEDP) rockets. The entries below, from the Task Force Gary Owen S-3 journal, reflect the level and intensity of the fighting around An Loc in mid-April. TRAC is MAJ GEN Hollingsworth unit of advisors.*

The bold entries highlight the activities of F/79 ARA.

15 April 1972:

0255 hours – TRAC: F/9 is to stage from Lia Khe. Be prepared to depart Bien Hoa at 0700H and to engage enemy armor vehicles, conduct recon in designated boxes. **F/79 to be on standby (30 min) starting at 0630H. Be prepared to engage enemy armor vehicles.**

0520 hours – TRAC: Since approx 0440h An Loc has been under heavy ground attack from S-SE and taking incoming. **Bounce heavy fire team of F/79 AFA ASAP w/nails.** Weather at An Loc is bad. All families of fighters cannot operate. Put F/9 on alert to depart 1<sup>st</sup> light. Fire skids up at 0520. 2<sup>nd</sup> team at 0550h. Notified TRAC to make sure Lai Khe fuel and ammo points are open. **F/79 ships are Serpents 25, 33, 12, 24.**

0620 hours – **F/79 has five ships at An Loc. Serpent 26 was #5 our assets 5 MAX birds for our AO.** Note: it was unusual that call signs of the attack helicopters would be included, especially down to identification of wingmen. Though always reported to Brigade, elsewhere in the journal even heavy hunter/killer team leaders, who were the mission commanders, are not identified by call sign. This appears to be a personal touch by whoever kept the journal that day.

0730 hours – TRAC: Reports 23mm AA E of An Loc. FAC's report 37mm but no location.

0814 Hours – TRAC: Requested F/9 to be bounced to work visual recon boxes. Skids up at 0825h. Our representative at An Loc will control our assets. Approx 1000h the rest of the 8<sup>th</sup> ARVN Airborne Battalion may airlift in An Loc. **May need MAX to engage ground to air fire.**

0940 hours – TRAC: LTC Folyer wanted a message passed to DCO-A that An Loc requested gunship support to protect Tactical Operations Center. Tanks 500 meters from the TOC. TRAC Commanding General says Cav Troop to be used to find anti-aircraft positions for forward air controller.

1035 hours – TRAC: Troop concentrations and 10 tanks in box at XT735894,731885,721905,and 716897, requesting arclights. The hunter /killer teams found, attacked, and silenced the active major caliber AAA positions, resulting in the next entry.

1050 hours – DCO-A: Reports no 23mm or 37mm AA fire east of An Loc at this time, but great deal of .51 cal. Ground to air fire.

1135 hours – Msg fr GEN Hamlet: Get 400 heat rockets to Lai Khe ASAP. Note: This was the day the newly developed High Explosive Dual Purpose actually arrived in country. The journal never differentiates between the old and marginally effective HEAT, and the refined HEDP, referring to all armor piercing rockets as "heat". This is similar to the unit's generic method of referring to any Cobra being used in the attack role as "MAX."

1500 hours – TRAC CG: At 1450 ten tanks were attacking An Loc. 9 were destroyed. CG TRAC wants more air to destroy tanks before they get in the city. They are in the city and the ARVNS are destroying them there by cluttering the street.

**CW2 Ron Tusi, F/79 ARA, made real good use of those HEAT rockets. The NVA tanks were within a few meters of the 5<sup>th</sup> ARVN Div headquarters in downtown An Loc. They were close enough to fire into the windows of the buildings that had command bunkers in them. When the conditions further deteriorated the US advisors specifically request Cobras and not TACAIR because of the proximity of friendly troops and civilians. Confident of his ability to deliver accurate fire on moving tanks, he responded immediately despite intense air to ground fire. He single-handedly attacked the threatening enemy forces, killing four tanks, damaging one and forcing the other to withdraw from friendly positions. Turning his attention to the supporting NVA infantry, he killed several and forced the retreat of the remainder. For his extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, Tusi received our nation's second highest award for heroism, the Distinguished Service Cross. Although the action described above was the high point in Tusi's activities during the An Loc defense, it should be noted that he also received a Silver Star, three DFC's, a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star and numerous other awards during the forty five day period of the battle. Many former members of Blue Max recall that Ron Tusi was so enraged over the high density of tanks inside the city that he hovered down the roads, sought out the tanks, got behind them and hovered fired into the engine decks causing massive explosions in the power train and fuel storage areas of the tanks. Although he did not blow the turrets off the tanks like as a TOW missile would, a burned out tank is a dead tank.**

The last journal entry for the day promised that the excitement would continue.

2310 hours – TRAC G-3: Mission tomorrow is to prepare to execute and order to 1) Send 1 heavy fire team to arrive An Loc by first light. 2) Send 1 cavalry troop to arrive An Loc at first light. Additional guidance from 1<sup>st</sup> Cav S-3: All gunships should have at least 50% HEAT rockets.

There are more entries as the battle and these will be continued in another issue of the Straphanger.

Jesse L. Hobby  
Armed Falcon 29F1

The following article appeared in 82<sup>nd</sup> FA News section of the March/April issue of the "SABER". The staff writer, Bill Thomason stated that a year ago he had received an email from a lady that during the actual Vietnam War was a very inept and uninformed individual that later managed to get the right information and changed her entire attitude about the Vietnam War. He, like most of us, remembered well the attitude that most of us endured during and after the Vietnam War and can appreciate the attitude change that came years later. He also states that "It is a pleasure to wear to wear my cap that displays my military history and the fact that I served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam during the Vietnam War." Here is the letter.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO ANYONE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

"Dear Hero,

I was in my twenties during the Vietnam era. I was a single mother and I'm sad to say, I was probably one of the most self-centered people on the planet. To be perfectly honest...I didn't care one way or the other about the war. All I cared about was me.....how I looked, what I wore, and where I was going. I worked and I played. I was never politically involved in anything but I allowed my opinions to be formed by the media. It happened without my ever being aware. I listened to the protest songs and I watched the six o'clock news and I listened to all the people who were talking. After a while, I began to repeat their words and, if you were to ask me, I'd have told you I was against the war. It was very popular. Everyone was doing it, and we never saw what it was doing to our men. All we were shown was what they were doing to the people of Vietnam.

My brother joined the Navy and then he was sent to Vietnam. When he came home, I repeated the words to him. It surprised me at how angry he became. I hurt him very deeply and there were years of separation.....not only of miles, but also of character. I didn't understand. In fact, I didn't understand anything until one day I opened my newspaper and saw the anguished face of a Vietnam veteran. The picture was taken at the opening of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. His countenance revealed the terrible burden of his soul. As I looked at his picture and his tears, I finally understood a tiny portion of what you had given for us and what we had done to you. I understood that I had been manipulated, but I also knew that I had failed to think for myself. It was like walking out of a nightmare, except that the nightmare was real. I didn't know what to do.

One day, about three years ago, I went to a member of the church I attended at that time, because he had served in Vietnam. I asked him if he had been in Vietnam, and he got a look on his face and said, "Yes," Then, I took his hand, looked him square in the face, and said, "Thank you for going." His jaw dropped, he got an amazed look on his face, and then he said, "No one has ever said that to me." He hugged me and I could see that he was about to get tears in his eyes.

It gave me an idea, because there is much more that needs to be said. How do we put it into words.....all the regret of so many years? I don't know, but when I have an opportunity, I take it.....so here goes. Have you been to Vietnam? If so, I have something I want to say to you.....thank you for going! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please forgive me for my insensitivity. I don't know how I could have been so blind, but I was. When I woke up, you were wounded and the damage was done, and I don't know how to fix it. I will never stop regretting my actions, and I will never let it happen again.

Please understand that I am speaking for the general public also. We know we blew it and we don't know how to make it up to you. We wish we had been there for you when you came home from Vietnam because you were a hero and you deserved better. Inside of you there is a pain that will never completely go away.....and you know what? It's inside of us too; because when we let you down, we hurt ourselves too. We all know it.....and we suffer guilt and we don't know what to do.....so we cheer for our troops and write letters to "any soldier" and we hang out the yellow ribbons and fly the flag and we love America. We love you too, even if it doesn't feel like it to you. I know in my heart that, when we cheer wildly for our troops, part of the reason is trying to make up for Vietnam. And while it may work for us, it does nothing for you. We failed you. You didn't fail us, but we failed you, and we lost our only chance to be grateful to you at the time you needed and deserved it. We have disgraced ourselves and brought shame on our country. We have learned a terribly painful lesson at your expense and we don't know how to fix it.

From the heart - Julie Weaver, 237 Gatewood Circle E. Burleson, TX 76028-7917, [julieweaver@juno.com](mailto:julieweaver@juno.com).

Thought this was worth re-publishing in the "Straphanger" for our readers who are not members of the 1<sup>st</sup> CavDiv Association.

Jesse L. Hobby  
Armed Falcon 29F1

*Editor's Note: It is late but the sentiment is spreading and hopefully the generations to come will realize that the price of their freedom was our sacrifice and that of the millions who went before and unfortunately will yet come.*

**HELP:** *Wiley Wayne McCrory passed away in January. He served two tours in Vietnam, was a West Point graduate and one of the "Boat People ". His available obituary does not give much information about his RVN time. If anyone remembers him and would like to help bid farewell to one of our own please contact the Editor at [asatalbot@juno.com](mailto:asatalbot@juno.com).*

# Ladies of the Association

## .....AND WE LEARN WITH TIME

As we grow older, and hence wiser, we slowly realize that: Whether we wear a \$300 or \$30 watch -- they both tell the same time. Whether we carry a \$300 or \$30 wallet/handbag --- the amount of money inside is the same. Whether the house we live in is 300 or 3,000 or 30,000 sq. ft. -- the loneliness is the same.

And, we realize our true inner happiness does not come from the material things of this world. Whether we fly first or economy class, if the plane goes down --- we go down with it. Whether we fly first or economy class, if the plane reaches its destination, everyone arrives at the same time. Therefore we should realize that when we have mates, buddies and old friends, brothers and sisters, with whom we can chat, laugh, talk, sing, talk about north-south-east-west or heaven and earth -- that is true happiness!

### **Six Undeniable Facts of Life**

1. Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy, so when they grow up they will know the value of things, not the price.
2. Best wise words: "Eat your food as your medicines. Otherwise you have to eat medicines as your food."
3. The one who loves you will never leave you because, even if there are 100 reasons to give up, he or she will find one reason to hold on.
4. There is a big difference between a human being and being human. Only a few folks really understand that.
5. You are loved when you are born. You will be loved when you die. In between you have to manage!
6. If you just want to walk fast, walk alone; but, if you want to walk far, walk together!

### **Six Best Doctors in the World**

1. Sunlight
2. Rest
3. Exercise or Activity
4. Diet
5. Self Confidence
6. Friends

And, finally: The nicest place to be is in someone's thoughts, the safest place to be is in someone's prayers; and the very best place to be is in the hands of God.

Regina  
ARA mistress

**Conundrum** Free people are not equal. Equal people are not free. (Think this one over and over and it makes sense!)

"A gun is like a parachute. If you need one, and don't have one, you'll probably never need one again."

The definition of the word Conundrum is: something that is puzzling or confusing

### **Here are six Conundrums of socialism in the United States of America :**

1. America is capitalist and greedy - yet half of the population is subsidized.
2. Half of the population is subsidized - yet they think they are victims.
3. They think they are victims - yet their representatives run the government.
4. Their representatives run the government - yet the poor keep getting poorer.
5. The poor keep getting poorer - yet they have things that people in other countries only dream about
6. They have things that people in other countries only dream about - yet they want America to be more like those other countries.

**Think about it! And that, my friends, pretty much sums up the USA in the 21st Century. Makes you wonder who is doing the math.**

**These three, short sentences tell you a lot about the direction of our current government and cultural environment:**

1. We are advised to NOT judge ALL Muslims by the actions of a few lunatics, but we are encouraged to judge ALL gun owners by the actions of a few lunatics. **Funny how that works. And here's another one worth considering.**
2. Seems we constantly hear about how Social Security is going to run out of money. But we never hear about welfare or food stamps running out of money ! What's interesting is the first group "worked for" their money, but the second didn't.

**Think about it.....and Last but not least :**

3. Why are we cutting benefits for our veterans, no pay raises for our military and cutting our army to a level lower than before WWII, **but we are not stopping the payments or benefits to illegal aliens.**

**Am I the only one missing something?**

**If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools.- Plato**



**AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION**

**Membership Application**

This form may be used for Applying for New Membership or for Renewing Existing Membership. Please circle that which is appropriate.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Wife's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_  
(At time of service in ARA) (If known)

Retired Rank (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Service Number \_\_\_\_\_

**List all ARA Units that you served in.**

<u>Battery/Battalion</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>
_____	From mo/yr to mo/yr	_____
_____	From mo/yr to mo/yr	_____

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street or PO Box  
City State Zip Code

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Work (if okay) Cell

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Association membership is on an annual basis (unless member opts for life membership) running from January 1 to December 31 and is past due on January 31.

Annual dues are **\$25.00** regardless of when submitting.

Life membership (if paid in full) is **\$250.00**. Life membership may also be paid in **\$50.00** installments on a quarterly basis until paid in full.

Total amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (Please indicate in remarks section of check whether this is Initial Membership, Membership Renewal, Life Membership in full, Life Membership payment #.

Mail completed application to: Aerial Rocket Artillery Association  
C/O Jule Szabo  
5118 Brentwood Farm Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22030

**For Office Use Only**  
Check # \_\_\_\_\_  
Check Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Rcvd \_\_\_\_\_

Web address – [www.araassociation.com](http://www.araassociation.com)