



The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 10 Issue 2

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Oct., Nov. Dec., 2017

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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 Brave, The Lonely and the Dry

The 20th Reunion of the ARA September 13—17, 2017 Williamsburg, VA



President's Corner

All I can say is, “Wow what a reunion”. From the Historic Area, Merchants Square to Jamestown and Yorktown, we were overwhelmed with history, great food, and the wonderful camaraderie of our members. Ever since I was elected your President, I have gained a deep appreciation for the friendliness, the fellowship, and the comradeship of the Association. I wish everyone could have attended.

The planning began back in November 2016 for this reunion. I met with Jule Szabo in Williamsburg to start looking at hotels in the area and interesting activities for the members. The variety of class restaurants, the revolutionary war history, and the natural beauty of the area made Williamsburg a natural fit.

We settled on the Embassy Suites for our lodging. Colonial Connections coordinated our bus tour of Jamestown and Yorktown. The Fort Magruder Conference Center catered our Saturday night banquet. They were all good choices.

What I didn't plan for was Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Our registration number was at 75 and the attendance at the Saturday night banquet was 41. In order to hold our reservations at the different venues, we had to make deposits and guarantee a certain amount of revenue. We are working hard to finalize our costs so we can provide some type of refund for those members that had to cancel.

The Williamsburg area is amazing. The beauty, the history, the friendliness of the local people, and the tradition of Colonial Williamsburg is very special. When you combine this with a chance to meet old friends and meet new friends, our members experienced a great reunion.

Your President
Dave Borgeson
ARA 6

Editor's Note: *When the bottom falls out of your plan, your ranks are depleted and each time you turn around a new crisis arises, you can give up, get drunk or be the leader you need to be. As the cancellations rolled in and the venue usage crumbled, Dave, Herb Hirst and Jule Szabo showed why we really did win in Vietnam. They kept a cool hand on the cyclic, maintained altitude and met each event with skill and confidence. Williamsburg was not the only smart choice—our leaders were also. From arrival to departure, the operation was under control and the Ladies (as always) were right there supporting their men.*

I am proud to be a part of the finest unit there ever was and ever will be.

The 20th Reunion of the ARA

If you have been watching the Ken Burns documentary, “The Vietnam War” you notice some important things. It is painfully accurate, graphically blunt demonstrates why generals should run wars and not politicians and that it was FUBAR from the start and ended in a disaster.. He could have said more about the role of the Army airpower and the ARA in particular but that was his loss.

The Williamsburg Reunion showed that American manpower, leadership resourcefulness, and the unflinching support of the wives and families of the U.S military will always rise to the occasion and carry the day. Three enemies, Harvey, Irma and Maria, managed to close enough airports to keep many of expected attendees from being able to get flights into Williamsburg from their homes. Some had to go to the aid of loved ones in the path of the storms. Illness struck our beloved Jesse Hobby and he had all the materials, cups, etc. He and Gloria got them on Fed Ex and to us in plenty of time. Unbelievably, Hugh O’Dell, who lives in the Needle, CA desert came back from a trip to find his house under water (don’t build on the sand or near an arroyo). Twenty –three of our aircraft took hits (with the loss of guests expected we were down 55% in attendance at the Farewell dinner. BUT OUR LEADERSHIP CAME THROUGH AND WE HAD A GREAT TIME.

For the first time in the twenty years of the ARA Board, we could do no business as we did not have a quorum. However, Pat Borgeson led her Ladies of the ARA in a powerful meeting in which they asserted their desire for their own personal edition of this humble gazette, and many efforts to establish their presence in our association. You can read “all about it” in her article on page 4.

I must report that Pat exercised her position as the ARA Mistress and a burgeoning leader by assuming “her throne” in the crowded hospitality suite on Saturday night. It did not go well as she chose a Styrofoam ice chest which resulted in a cold reception. However, she recovered with dignity and added the assaulting ice to her drink.



We really missed our friends and comrades as we soaked up the history of early colonial America and the struggles that our forefathers endured to build a new nation and then fight to win the liberty they came to achieve there. The information that was available in Jamestown, to walk the same ground as they did at the dawn of the 17th century, to tour the reconstructed streets of Williamsburg and stand where men like Washington and Patrick Henry spoke words of sedition and treason as they proclaimed our rights as free men, watching reenactments of how they fought wars and fires, made the everyday necessities of life and to converse with enactors who knew their history and played their roles, shopped, dined and travelled through a world now long gone but not forgotten was inspiring. Finally, at Yorktown we learned how the ragtag army of Washington, defeated once and for all the then mightiest army in the world gave new perspective to our own histories.

It was a planned (and re-planned) expedition but there was ample opportunity for personal exploration. Cecil and Peggy Hengeveld and Jule and Joan Szabo left no stones unturned. For those of less adventurous bent there was time to do nothing. We also had two “visitors”; Alan Klinker’s brother Henry, who added great discussions to every gathering and Dave and Pat Borgeson’s charming daughter, Bentlieth, making her second appearance at a reunion and plunging right in to help. Jule Szabo contributed a copy of the coffee table edition of The Vietnam War which Herb Hirst auctioned off with the skill of master merchant netting the Association \$210. LTC Bill Knowlton, a veteran of the 11th Cavalry Squadron in Vietnam, our speaker, gave us many insights into Strategic Planning.

As previously mentioned, the hurricanes impacted on attendance and ultimately on costs. Our Treasurer is working the problem of getting final figures from our vendors and hopefully some refunds. The Board hopes to be able to make refunds to those who were unable to come for any reason. Registration fees will not be refundable. Because of good money management the Association has been able to accrue funds which have been our seed money for upcoming reunions and backup for disasters. Nonetheless, if anyone can handle the loss donating the cost of dinners and bus fares to the Association will help to maintain our cushion. This is only a suggestion.

Our next reunion is scheduled for Ft. Sill, OK, at a date to be announced. It will be the 50th anniversary of the deployment of those elements of the ARA which came out of OK and promises to be as fun-filled as ever. We encourage all who can to attend. (See the following article for the recommended attire). Dave Cooper raised the question about having a reunion at Ft. Campbell, KY as that is and was the home of the 101st and the 4/77th. This can be discussed at the 2018 reunion when we make our plans for the coming two years. To paraphrase Billy Woods, “It is not a question of 1st Cav and 101st; it is a question of WE ARE ARA”.

Asa R. Talbot MD *Flight Surgeon, Editor and Red Baron 16.*

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ATTENTION ALL ARA MEN:

DO NOT DELETE THIS PUBLICATION UNTIL ALL SPOUSES, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AND COMPANIONS HAVE READ IT.

THE INFORMATION IS FOR ALL IN THE FAMILY.

WHAT THE WELL DRESSED ARA PERSON SHOULD WEAR

Below are the most recent offerings for reunion attire. These are high quality soft shirts with fully embroidered lettering (not print on). Tony Quesada also models the new FULLY EMBROIDERED cap. We are exploring a similar cap with a shorter bill to compliment the beautiful ladies shirt which is modeled by lovely Bentlieth Borgeson. It would be a real sight to have all the attendees at Ft. Sill in matching outfits. The cost is not in concrete yet but it is rumored that the \$20 cap and \$30 shirt may go for \$40 –45 depending on demand . The sizes shown are large for the ladies' and medium for the men's but all sizes will be available. Your opinion is sought after by Jesse Hobby and this publication



Ladies of the Association

Hello Ladies of the ARA,

It was great to see many familiar faces and welcome new ones at the 20th ARA Reunion! Irma put a bit of a damper on the attendance (we lost a third of those who had signed up) but we hope that those who had to cancel are well and safe You were missed!

I am sure you will all agree that Williamsburg was a beautiful and historical place to have a reunion! To experience Old Colonial Williamsburg and walk that mall or take a carriage ride and visit the shops of the shoemaker, silversmith, courthouse trial etc. was most impressive and allowed us to step back in time. Some experienced the Fife and Drum parade and remarked how impressive it was! Others attended the evening organ and harpsichord concert at the old church. (I don't think Peg and Cecil missed one thing). There were added pluses such as great restaurants, good shopping and the beautiful William and Mary campus all within walking distance of the mall.

Our Friday bus trip to Jamestown and Yorktown was very insightful for our country's history. Our tour guide, Rebecca, was remarkable in relaying so much history to us. How those settlers survived was shocking!!

Saturday night we had the pleasure of having Bill Knowlton, a West Point graduate, as our guest speaker at the final dinner held at Fort Magruder (hotel, not a fort). It was interesting to get his take on the Vietnam war.

I wanted to briefly recap our very productive ladies meeting:

Cindy Hirst has agreed to create a directory with photos and names so we can use as a reference. Thank you Cindy.

Cindy also agreed to do an ARA Facebook page (at first she said no but now offered to do it) Thank you Cindy.

It was suggested that the women have a Happy Hour "meet and greet" in the hospitality suite prior to the Wed night dinner.

Pat requested that happenings in the lives of all be sent to Asa so mention could be made in the Straphanger.

Pat will send out the email list to the ladies. (See below)

Pat suggested to Asa that he send the Straphanger to the ladies as well and he said he would.

A suggestion was made to invite and finance Ginny Caldwell to the reunion. This is a Board decision.

Fall is in the air even here in California as the leaves begin to change and drop as we saw in Virginia. I wish you a happy and healthy 4th quarter and look forward to hearing from all of you with exciting news to submit to the next Straphanger!

pbor12@yahoo OR pborgson@lalique.com

Cheers and Hugs to all,

Pat

ARA Mistress

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SPECIAL NOTE:

Dale and Bill Williams' nine-year old grandson is very close to death. He was diagnosed several years ago with ALD, which is a form of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) only found in children. He is now in hospice care and all members are encouraged to add them all to their prayer lists.

AS A REPEAT COURTESY TO A FELLOW VET.

One A/2/20 unit photo is showcased in *Vietnam War Army Helicopter Nose Art*, which will be released on September 28th, 2017, from Fonthill Media. The book's approximate total photo-count will likely be around 295. Let me know by email at johnmailman@yahoo.com if you would like to receive **pre-sale ordering instructions** towards the purchase of an author-signed copy of this book. Please consider offering a copy to your local library, a friend, or a relative.

Thank you,

John Brennan, former SP5, 114 AHC, 1970-71, Vinh Long AAF, Mekong Delta.

PS The author's six previously published books feature **four B/2/20 photos** and **two C/2/20 photos**. All publications are still available from the author.

BEAUTY



BEAST



Images Caught at Williamsburg by Jule & Joan Szabo



Bill Knowlton, West Point graduate, longtime survivor of the “five sided swamp”, erudite thinker and our guest speaker at the Farewell Dinner



Tony Quesada, who always wins the prize for family present enjoys the Saturday night dinner at Fort Magruder conference Center with Abilene Spurgeon (granddaughter), Nathan Spurgeon, Grandson [both well connected] and daughter Olga Spurgeon.



Rodger & Marilyn McAlister share a carriage ride with Herb Hirst around Colonial Williamsburg .



The Court House in Old Williamsburg. Look at that sky!



The Blacksmith shop—one of the many “firefox” type displays where the enactors really do what they did in 1770 and stick to their roles.



A gentleman and his lady take a ride through the streets in the glorious Indian Summer weather.

The following article is another from the files of LTC (Ret) Joseph J. Lahnstein Those of us who served with the 3/377th Arty (ARA), 11th AAD will remember that {then} MAJ Lahnstein served as Acting Battalion Commander prior to the arrival of LTC Mahone, then served as Commander, A/3/377 and Commander A/2/20/ and as XO 2/20th Arty (ARA) until his return to CONUS. This one is rather unique in that it traces our origins as Aerial Artillery back to the very beginning and establishing some dates and events for posterity. Again – a word of thanks to his son COL (Ret) Joseph S. Lahnstein for sharing these documents with us.
Jesse L. Hobby
Armed Falcon 29F1



Major J. J. Lahnstein

UNIT HISTORY

2nd Battalion (Aerial Artillery), 20th Artillery

The Army's first Aerial Rocket Artillery Battery, Battery "C" (Aerial Rocket), 2nd Battalion (Composite), 42nd Artillery, was activated 13 February, 1963 with an authorized strength of two Officers, five Warrant Officers, and twenty-one Enlisted Men. The unit was assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia and assigned as part of the 11th Air Assault Division. On 13 July 1963, the battery was re-designated Battery "A", 3rd Battalion (Aerial Rocket), 377th Artillery, with an authorized full strength of thirteen Officers, thirteen Warrant Officers, and seventy-five Enlisted Men.

Upon activation, the unit was given the mission of developing tactics and concepts for providing airborne fire support for the Air Assault Division. In addition, the unit was given the requirement to train all Division rocket helicopter pilots in aerial rocket gunnery prior to the October 1963 test period.

The unit received its first UH-1B helicopters during March 1963 and installed the first XM-3 2.75-inch rocket systems during July 1963 at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. Upon receipt of equipment and publications, unit aviators developed and presented the first formal XM-3 gunnery course given in the United States Army. In August 1965, "A" Battery fired the Division's first 2.75-inch rockets at Metz Range, Fort Stewart, Georgia.

During September, the unit moved to Fort Stewart to participate in Exercise Sky Soldier I, providing aerial rocket support for the 1st Air Assault Brigade.

In December 1963, and in February 1964, the battery trained as a separate unit, qualifying its own aviators and a limited number of other personnel on the XM-3 qualification course at Fort Stewart.

In the final phase of testing, "A" Battery was joined by two additional Aerial Rocket Artillery Batteries and a Headquarters Battery to form the initial Aerial Rocket Artillery Battalion in the United States Army, and was designated as the 3rd Battalion (Aerial Rocket), 377th Artillery on 30 April 1964.

The Battalion began its training July 1964 under the command of LtCol Nelson A. Mahone, Jr., and after four months of intense individual, unit, and combined unit training, the unit participated in Air Assault II Exercise in North and South Carolina. The training from 12 September 1964 to 12 November 1964 consisted of practicing tactics and actual participation in the exercise.

In mid-November 1964, the unit returned to Fort Benning to begin a six-month program of testing, experimentation, and evaluation of tactics, techniques, and weapons systems.

On 1 July 1965, the Battalion was re-designated the 2nd Battalion (Aerial Artillery), 20th Artillery with the re-designation of the Air Assault Division to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). In mid-August this unit, with other elements of the 1st Cavalry Division departed Fort Benning for South Vietnam.

By the latter part of September 1965, the 1st Cav had closed at An Khe in the central highlands of South Vietnam. Since that time the Battalion has been actively engaged in combat, participating in Happy Valley with the 101st Airborne Division, in the Bong Son and Tuy Hoa areas with the ARVN, and, recently, in the Ia Drang Valley in support of our troops as well as ARVN.



An Khe and the Golf Course. It was nice but the bulk of us never saw it or lived there.

The 2nd Battalion (Aerial Artillery), 20th Artillery is the only Aerial Artillery Battalion in the world. Its three firing batteries have a combined fire power of 1728 2.75-inch rockets, roughly equivalent to the fire power of 48 105 battalions or one battalion 48 rounds. Each weapons system in the battery of 12 can place 48 rounds on a target in 4 seconds. The capability and flexibility of this unique organization is unmatched anywhere. It possesses area weapons for soft targets such as personnel and lightly armored vehicles, point targets weapons for tanks and fortifications, and has a range and capability for fast reaction over great distances, limited on by its fuel load. The Battalion has demonstrated the capability of simultaneously supporting the division efforts from the China Sea to the Cambodian Border and points in between. As a general support weapons system, capable of immediate close support it has no peer in the rapid, long distance air mobile operation and is considered the most effective counter-mortar weapon available today. In addition to its organic capabilities several developments have been conducted with the unit to enhance the support for the infantry. A search light project is being conducted to provide airborne illumination for ground elements and to provide for armed reconnaissance during the hours of darkness. Illumination missions have been "fired" almost nightly since arrival in theater. To decrease the response time and provide increased fire power, a combination 2.75-inch aerial rocket/SS-11 anti-tank missile system has been fabricated and successfully employed where either or both system are required. The unit has its own target acquisition capability or can be controlled by ground or air observers. Conversely the aerial gunners are trained and often do adjust the more conventional tube artillery. It is safe to say that no other artillery organization in the world has the capability to live with and support airmobile or conventional ground operations with the speed, accuracy and fire power of the aerial artillery – it has added a new dimension to airmobile operations.

Secondary uses have also been exploited in this theater. A number of medical evacuation missions have been successfully accomplished under fire; resupply of CP's, escort for every unit in the division and counter mortar patrol nightly are others. Command and control of ground and aerial fires and target acquisition are routine, whereas armed escort for the USAF's newest jet transport, the C-141, can be classified as unusual, but "has been done".

Although hit many times (one aircraft having taken 14 hits at one time) the Aerial Artillery has to date not lost an aircraft to hostile action and only one person has been evacuated due to wounds received. The unit entered combat on the second day after its arrival in theater when only three aircraft were flyable and has continued to increase the quantity and quality of its fire support at a steady pace.

Since arrival in theater on 15 September 1965 – 31 December 1965, elements of this battalion have been engaged in every action on campaigns from Tuay Hoa to the Cambodian Border. Missions were flown to relieve the siege of Plei Mei, to break the ambush of the 7th Cav. In the Ia Drang Valley – the operation at Phu Cat and Binh Khe. This battalion had elements supporting operations from the South China Sea to the Cambodian Border, all at one time. The following statistics reflect the battalion operations to date:

Mission Flown	3408
No of 2.75 rkts fired	26303
No of SS-11 missiles fired	16
Confirmed enemy killed	177 (actual body count)
Estimate enemy killed	907
Estimated enemy wounded	743

While there is no actual date indicating when this article was written it appears to have been done in late 1965. The Command Structure at that time was as follows:

2nd BATTALION (AERIAL ARTILLERY), 20TH ARTILLERY

COMMANDING OFFICER

Lt Col Nelson A. Mahone, Jr.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Major Joseph J. Lahnstein

COMMANDING OFFICER, BATTERY "A"

Major Paul I. Smith

COMMANDING OFFICER, BATTERY "B"

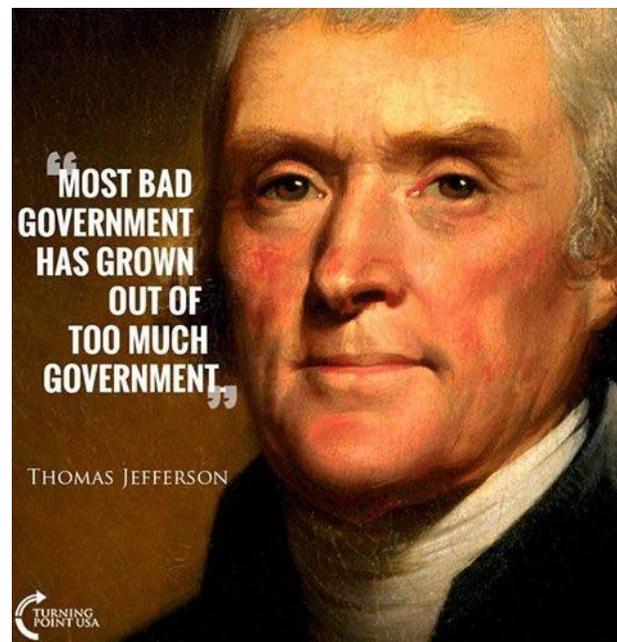
Major Dewey M. King

COMMANDING OFFICER, BATTERY "C"

Major Roger J. Bartholemew

COMMANDING OFFICER, HEADQUARTERS BATTERY

Captain Vernon M. Flynn, Jr.





Chaplain's Corner

“Come on in, the Water’s Fine!”

The one thing I have learned well, is that there are no signs in life that warn us when we are about to commit a sin or do something wrong! Take for example, when my brother (11) and I (80) were very young, we decided one day to skip Sunday school and go to Fern Lake in Middlesboro, KY. One can see from the get go that we were messing up big time. We left the church without permission with a high school student who had a driver’s license and his family’s car. We were in grade school and went to a very large and deep lake and we were not experienced swimmers. There were no life guards at the lake and we were diving off the board in the deepest part of the lake next to the dam.

I don’t know what I expected! What I do remember is that there were no warning signs of the hazard or danger of being in that lake without some evidence of safety. There was no sign saying, “Warning, the water is not safe for novice swimmers!” What I heard from a couple of friends who were already in the water was, “Come on in, the water’s fine!” Blame it on youth and immaturity if you wish, but the water was not fine. A lake fed by streams coming down from the surrounding Cumberland Mountains was cold, very cold, and it almost took my breath away as I dove in. Notwithstanding the fact that our father had to get a neighbor to drive him out to the lake to get us, that day was a day of remembrance! Dad had learned from some of the other Sunday school members who were not as “privileged” as my brother and I, that we went to Fern Lake! Discipline in the Wilder household was always swift and meaningful! Meaningful, in that you never wanted to repeat the behavior!

Years later, I learned about temptation! Then I realized that my older brother and I were tempted to take that trip to the lake, but we had no idea of the outcome and punishment to follow. I believe that all people are tempted, some more than others, in their earthly lives to do wrong things.

Even in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, early on in Chapter 3, both Adam and Eve succumbed to the temptation of the serpent to be as wise as God, The rest is history! No one put a sign out in the Garden of Eden warning them of the fall which was to come. The snake undermined God. In the Wilderness, Jesus was tempted by Satan immediately after his baptism by John. The difference in the outcome is knowing who one is. One only knows who one is when they realize whose they are. Through our baptism we are God’s. It is easy to be tempted. It is easy to join the group. “Come on in, the water’s fine!”

But God has given us a way to overcome that temptation and the criticism of friends, family, and strangers. We are made members of the family of God through our baptism. Let us all believe in that hope. “Come on in, the baptismal waters of God is fine!” Peace!

Bruce Wilder,
Chaplain

Final Flight

William Andrew McCaslin

It is with great sadness that the family of William Andrew McCaslin, announces his passing at 70, on August 23rd, 2017. A private memorial will be held at a later date.

Bill joined the Army in 1966. He served almost 3 tours of duty during the Vietnam War. He flew Cobra helicopters and was a gunship pilot. In 1970, Bill was stationed at Fort Rucker, AL, where he was a flight/gunnery/academic instructor. Bill was awarded many medals including 3 Purple Hearts, 2 Silver Stars, 3 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 108 Air Medals, and the Bronze Star. He earned the rank of Captain and obtained three Honorable Discharges,

one as an enlisted man, one as a Warrant Officer, and one as a Commissioned Officer.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 39 years, Penny, his son, Brendon, his daughter, Christie, "son," Steve and his brother, Marc. Also left grieving are his furry companions, Coco and Muffin who brought him much comfort, and his fur-grandbabies, Chi Chi, Lola, Bella and his favorite horse Ramesses, who he loved to feed carrots.

Bill was an avid Texas Longhorn fan, "hook 'em horns". Bill was our hero and will be missed greatly. His sense of humor and "Bill-isms" will never be forgotten. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the military charity Fisher House Foundation or Moffitt Cancer Center.



AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

Membership Application/Renewal Form

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 Herbert L. Hirst
P.O. Box 220
North Plains, OR 97133-0220

For Office Use Only

Check # _____

Check Date _____

Amount _____

Date Rcvd _____

Web address – www.araassociation.com