



Volume 11 No. 2

# The Straphanger Gazette



October-December 2018

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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 attachment



## President's Corner

It was a labor of love to have served as Host of our 21<sup>st</sup> ARA Reunion to commemorate the 50 - year anniversary of the activation and deployment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA) of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Airmobile). As

Host I wanted everyone to be warmly received and comfortable in every way possible. Having been an original member of A Battery and serving in B Battery, 4/77<sup>th</sup> ARA; I not only wanted proper honors for the 4/77<sup>th</sup> but all for ARA units at the Home of Field Artillery.

I am confident that was accomplished as the Field Artillery Museum is seeking an ARA Cobra to be put on display in the Vietnam portion of the Museum. Michael Sloniker of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) visited to capture ARA history to be published in the VHPA magazine. Ed Miller gave a recap of ARA progression and development, Dan Petrosky spoke of the **TRUST** in Army Aviation created by the ARA through the excellent support and response provided to ground and maneuver units. Finally, by the fact that the Field Artillery Historian wants books, notes, journals, mission briefs and information, personal logs and accounts of ARA missions in written or audio recordings. Please send your written and recorded accounts of your ARA experiences to the Field Artillery Historian before December 15, 2018 as he is retiring (after 41 years) on December 31, 2018. I will give his address at the end of my message.

By all accounts the Reunion was a success!!! Special thanks to Ed Miller, Dan Petrosky, Mike Brokovich, Jim Mitschke, Gloria and Jesse Hobby, 428<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade, Air Defense Artillery Museum, Fort Sill Public Affairs Office, Field Artillery Museum, Lawton Homewood Suites, Lawton Chamber of Commerce; and all of our other supporters who made our Reunion special and memorable. Ed and Dan's speeches are printed in this newsletter for your convenience and information. Mike presented the Missing Man Ceremony and Jim Mitschke was instrumental in getting our Farewell Banquet speakers. Fortunately, we had individuals who served in all four 4/77<sup>th</sup> Batteries present at the Reunion; and special guests who are assigned to the 2/20<sup>th</sup> (MRLS).

I look forward to our 2019 Reunion in San Diego which Joe Galloway has put on his calendar to attend. Joe was invited to our Fort Sill Reunion but Hurricane Florence prevented his travel. Joe is quite familiar with missions and protection provided by the ARA during the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley.

I am honored and humbled to have been elected President of our Association and will continue to give my best efforts to reach out to all who served in all ARA units both in Vietnam and the States. It is my goal to see that the courageous, illustrious, and important history of the Aerial Rocket Artillery be documented, preserved, and correctly placed in the annals of the Field Artillery and Army Aviation history.

Please send your written or audio recordings of your ARA experiences to the Field Artillery Historian before December 15, 2018 to:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

COMMANDANT, USAFAS

ATTN: ATSF-AH (DASTRUP)

730 SCHIMMELPFENNIG ROAD, SUITE 19W

FORT SILL, OK 73503

The best, most endearing and important aspects of our Reunions are the shared experiences resulting in the laughter, fellowship, friendship, camaraderie, and honest respect we have for each other. There were two people at this Reunion that 49 years had passed since we had seen each other; yet the bond, trust, and friendship was as strong as ever. Our relationships are the unspoken magic and beauty of our Reunions. Let's continue to strengthen old friendships and to make new ones as we move through this magnificent journey we have been blessed to travel.

The BEST of ALL things GOOD and WONDERFUL to you ALL!!!

Clovis Jones, Jr.

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*Editor's Note: Since we became The Aerial Rocket Association there have been eleven reunions all over the country. Some of our readers are new to the organization and/or may have missed some of them. Dave Borgeson has compiled this list of people and places as a part of our association history.*

ARA Reunion History			
President	Host	Year	Location
Rodger McAlister	Rodger McAlister	2008	Fort Rucker
	Glen Brown	2009	Midland, TX
Hobby, Jesse	Gary Bishop	2010	Bozeman, MT
	Jesse Hobby	2011	Charleston, SC
Cecil Hengeveld	Herbert Hirst	2012	Portland, OR
	Cecil Hengeveld	2013	Hershey, PA
Larry Mobley	Wallace "Tich" Tichnell	2014	Branson, MO
	B. Wilder & J. Hobby	2015	Columbus, GA
	Larry Mobley	2016	Colorado Springs, CO
Dave Borgeson	Dave Borgeson	2017	Williamsburg, VA
	Clovis Jones	2018	Lawton, OK
Clovis Jones	Dave Borgeson	2019*	San Diego, CA
	Gerald Hibb	2020*	Savannah, GA
TBD	Dave Cooper	2021*	Fort Campbell, KY
	Jule Szabo	2022*	Fort Belvoir, VA

\*Planned events

#### **ARA Reunion 2018 FT. Sill Oklahoma**

For those of you that missed the reunion at Ft. Sill, you missed a great get together. The first two days were packed with unique events. The Training Center demonstrated trainees firing different artillery pieces on the same ranges that I trained on over fifty years ago. The contrast between twenty year old soldiers and seventy year old ARA members was notable. I really believe the trainees and cadre appreciated our presence.

The second day featured visits to the Artillery and Air Defense Museums. The Artillery Museum is in the process of completing a wing dedicated to the ARA and will house memorabilia from units that formed during the Vietnam War.

The annual business meeting was held on Saturday and considered two main items; reunion locations for the next five years and election of officers for the next two. Reunion locations drew the most heated discussion. The issue of how to be inclusive of all the ARA units at their original locations and units, alternating east coast/west coast and mid US locations and naming individuals as sponsors was hotly debated. In the end it was agreed that San Diego, CA would be next year followed by Savannah, GA, Ft. Campbell, and Ft. Belvoir, Va. One of the objectives of having the reunions at the different units is to open the ARA to more members. The impression has been that the ARA is mostly drawn from the 2/20<sup>th</sup> and it should be all who served in the different ARA units.

The election of officers saw only two changes. Clovis Jones was elected President for two years and Roger McAlister was named Secretary, All other positions: Vice President Jim Castillo, Chaplain Bruce Wilder, Treasurer Herb Hirst, Editor/Publisher Asa Talbot and Data Base Commander Jesse Hobby were extended for two more years.

Our new President, Clovis Jones, who served with the 4/77<sup>th</sup> was also the sponsor for our reunion at Ft. Sill and definitely hit a home run. Thanks from all of us.

And the ladies seemed to enjoy themselves. Guess why we are going to Savannah!

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Foreman

Cub Reporter, Straphanger

THE OFFICIAL MINUTES WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE STRAPHANGER.

THANKS JIM!

# REFLECTIONS ON REUNION 2018

Reunion 2018 is now another memory on the road of life, but what a great reunion it was. We started out with 90 registered members and guests and 87 had actually shown up by the last day. Only three cancellations – one due to weather and two due to illness.

After the meet and greet at the hotel on Wednesday afternoon we moved on to the Historic Patriots Club for the welcoming speech by our Host – Clovis Jones, followed by dinner and presentation of some well-deserved awards to members of the Association who have made significant contributions to its success over the last ten years. Deployment plaques on this night interestingly enough went to B/2/20 which had nine members present who had all deployed in 1968. With the addition of several others from other years this was the largest group from a single battery.

Thursday morning was spent on the range visiting with the young artillerymen and getting briefed on modern artillery equipment. Live fire was quite impressive. Smelling powder and hearing outgoing brought back memories of another time and place in what often seems to have been another life. Lunch with the troops in a consolidated dining facility was okay, but it did not have the same feeling as having a meal in your own battery mess, eating food prepared by people you knew and trusted to give their best. They were some of our unsung and often unappreciated heroes. Afternoon in the museums, Field and Air Defense Artillery was also interesting; seeing artillery from infancy all the way to the modern age, especially those guns that were part of our lives, long ago in a faraway place.

For me one of the highlights, on Thursday (our open day) was the opportunity to visit with the present day 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion/20<sup>th</sup> Artillery (MRLS). The Battalion is currently deployed to South Korea with an anticipated return sometime in November. The Rear Echelon Commander, Captain Russell DeWitt, welcomed us and brought us up to date on the current unit and we, in turn, filled in our history as ARA. It was both surprising and gratifying to see memorabilia of 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn/20<sup>th</sup> Arty (ARA) on display in their conference room. They have our patches (Griffins and Blue Max) on display along with an inert 2.75 inch rocket. After a slide show of our time in South Vietnam we left them more cloth patches, window patches, bumper stickers, and coffee cups. It appears that they are interested in learning more about us since we represent a chapter from the past and we have an open invitation to make a return visit next year. I am making plans to go and if anyone else is interested in making the trip please contact me.

Saturday's business meeting went well and is covered elsewhere in this newsletter. Saturday evening's spotlight was on the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA). With our Host, now the Association President, and the two Guest Speakers, and their wives, the head table was 4/77th. You may read their presentations elsewhere in this newsletter so I won't reiterate. Appreciation awards went to them and their spouses and our host. Deployment plaques went to members who made the initial deployment to RVN in 68-69. (We did not know it was an incremental deployment over two calendar years). And lastly, we made two posthumous awards to attending members of deceased comrades. One for {then} Major Joseph J. Lahnstein, who was my Battery Commander at Fort Benning and in Vietnam, presented to his son, Joseph S. Lahnstein. The other was for Chief Warrant Officer Harold "Uncle Hal" Caldwell (B/2/20-1968) presented to his widow Virginia by Johnny Grice, who served with Hal during that period.

Needless to say, we also spent a lot of time in the hospitality suite doing what old comrades do when we get together. We drank, we lied, and the more we drank and lied the better we were. As Herb Hirst said on Wednesday, the best friends you have or will ever have are in this room. The bonds that were forged in combat are greater than love and stronger than blood.

Jesse L. Hobby

Armed Falcon 29 Fox 1

## A FEMALE REFLECTION OF AN ARA REUNION

After 44 years it was exciting to return to Fort Sill, OK for a few days. We had been TDY there for 12 weeks in 1974 enroute to Alaska. A lot had changed, both the town of Lawton and the Post itself.

As usual, our vehicle was loaded with all of the stuff we lug to a reunion – banners for the hotel and hospitality suite, coffee cups for the guys and the ladies, shirts, caps, patches, stickers, etc. And once you're there, there are other things to get done. A trip to the visitor's center to pick up books and other items that they provide. We were fortunate to get a book entitled "Silent Witness", a history of Fort Sill for the bargain price of \$5.00 each and it was enjoyed by all who received a copy and those who had access to it before leaving.

We enjoyed the usual meet and greet, especially when we got to meet those we did not know and to get re-acquainted with old friends. As one of the ladies put it, "It's like discovering a family you didn't know you had."

Dinner at the Historic Patriot's Club was enjoyed by all, thanks to Clovis Jones and all of his hard work. Everything was perfect.

We all enjoyed the outing to the artillery range and the opportunity to meet the young troops of today's army. Eating with the troops was also an interesting experience for most of us. Not necessarily one we would relish on a daily basis. Museums were interesting but you can't get really excited about seeing one more item of military hardware.

While the guys had their business meeting and elected a new president we had our own social and business gathering where we commented on the reunion and its happenings and where we would like to go next. All present expressed their appreciation for the books and for the lovely coffee cup – one that indicated that "We were ARA also!"

The final banquet was also perfect. The presentations were enjoyable and some sad. There were two posthumous presentations for deceased members to family members in attendance. A final note – we took all of the leftover wine back to the hotel for consumption. And, all unopened bottles found their way into somebody's car or luggage.

In closing, I would like to thank Clovis Jones for all the hard work he put in to make this reunion a success and we can look forward to more great times under his leadership.

Gloria Hobby

Falconess 6X

*Editor's Note: Dave Borgeson is already hard at work setting up hotel and attractions for the 22nd Reunion in San Diego. More information will be available in the next issue of the Straphanger.*



Jule Szabo's pictures made the Hospitality room a place of memories



Guess who found the bar first.



The Home Room



ALL ARA—ALL THE WAY!



# The Guns of September—Live Fire at Ft. Sill, OK

It was a little eerie to be standing on the same ranges where we had been the same age as the kids we were now listening to telling us about what is now the standard in artillery. They are fine young men and women and America is safe in their hands.



A 155mm towed Howitzer and crew



Firing the Excaliber round accurate to 30,000 meters.



155mm self-propelled speaks with authority and delivers death the enemy never saw coming.



Static display at the Artillery Museum of a Coast Guard 90 mm Air Defense gun circa WWII.



In case you have forgotten the joys of sitting in the bleachers while the wind roars across the ranges.



The mighty men of the ARA with the backdrop of what will one day be an ARA exhibit—pending funding and space.

Picture by Jule Szabo



Picture by Asa Talbot

Thank heavens for the soft side.



President Dave Borgeson presenting one of the ARA plaques provided by the American Legion to the Historian of the Artillery Museum. (Pix by Jule Szabo)



Gloria Hobby was recognized for her years of devoted service as ARA Mistress, buffer and supporter of Jesse and just the sweetest person.

Actually, all the people in this picture have been critical to the success of the Association, as well as the many who remain in the shadows “doing their thing”. (Credit Jule Szabo)



M65 280mm “Atomic Annie” cannon—developed in the “50’s and the Cold War to deliver a nuclear round across Europe and deter the USSR. Doc Talbot’s brother built these at R. Hoe & Co. (picture by Asa Talbot)

# TWO GREAT SPEAKERS BROUGHT PERSPECTIVE OF THE 4TH/77TH ON WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DID.

Both speakers were introduced by Jim Mistchke, C Btry 4/77th



Ed Miller

The first speaker was LTC (ret) Ed Miller, C Btry 2/20<sup>th</sup> ARA 1966/1967 and C and Headquarters Btry 4/77th ARA 1968/1970

## A SHORT HISTORY

The 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery served in combat during WWI, WWII and in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) from 1968 to 1972.

The 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery was constituted in 1916 as the 19<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and converted, reorganized and redesignated the 77<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery in 1917. Between 1917 and 1945 the 77<sup>th</sup> was activated and deactivated several times. In 1951 it was again activated at Fort Sill, OK and deactivated in 1956.

In 1958 the 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery was redesignated the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery. In 1959 it was assigned to the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Army Reserve. In 1968 it was reallocated to the Regular Army as the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

It was assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) as the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Aerial Rocket Artillery) 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA) in 1968.

## THE TRANSITION

The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division had been in RVN for several years. The 2d Battalion (Aerial Artillery) 20<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA) 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (Airmobile) provided the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade support in 1966 near Tua Hoa RVN. When the Army identified a requirement for another Division in RVN they selected the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and designated it as an Air Assault division. I believe this was due to the successful employment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav Division (Airmobile).

The new 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne, DivArty included the 4th Bn 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA) modeled after the 2/20<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA) of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav Div. There were some structural differences in the 4/77th. One excellent one was the attachment of an aircraft maintenance detachment to each firing battery for limited 3<sup>rd</sup> echelon maintenance support. This enabled the firing batteries to maintain 85 to 95% aircraft availability.

Many of the troops who served 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tours with the 1st Cav in RVN were subsequently assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Abn Div. One of my favorites was BG Jim Smith whom I met in 1966 while he was the CO of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 9th Cavalry. I also flew several missions with and for him while he was ADC Operations for the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne.

## THE DAY-TO - DAY EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT

I was fortunate to have learned a great deal about ARA in the 14 months I served with C Battery 2d Battalion 20<sup>th</sup> Artillery (ARA) 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. I worked for and flew with Major Rodger Bartholomew the Battery Commander (BC). He gave me my first instrument orientation flight in a UH-1B model in 1966. I then used instruments frequently for GCA and ADF flights. Bob Jones and Lew Hawn were the Aircraft Commanders who provided mission training for me in the 2d platoon. Before Bart left country he moved me to the Maintenance Platoon and then his replacement appointed me Battery XO. The new BC LTC Don Ott believed when a battery platoon was detached the XO went with it. So we went South with the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon to Phan Thiet for several months. Then back to the Battery in the field near Qui Nhon and from there with an Infantry Battalion Task Force and the 3d platoon North to LZ Montezuma to replace the U.S. Marines.

Between tours in RVN I spent a short tour at Hunter Army Airfield as operations officer of the Flight Standards Division. We started with two Instrument IPs and six recent Viet Nam returned pilots. The mission was to train 500 Instructor Pilots (IP) to staff the three training divisions. All instrument instructors needed a full instrument qualification and MOI and the contact instructors needed to qualify in UH-1B, D and H models. This was accomplished in 17 months. Additionally 110 IPs were trained and retained in MOI flights for flight standards. While there I qualified as an instrument IP and a UH-1 contact IP.

My job interview with LTC Bartholomew, the Battalion Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery at Fort Sill in July 1968 was satisfactory and I was hired to command "C" Battery. Bart, Vic Hernandez (B Btry CO) and I flew to Fort Bragg for a meet and greet with the on hand troops of B and C Batteries 4/77th. The 82d Aviation Battalion was our host unit while organizing and training at Bragg.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery (Aerial Artillery) formed during two periods in 1968, first early in '68 at Fort Sill with the Battalion HQ and Hq Battery and A Battery. The formal battalion dedication was in Sep 1968. The battalion and A battery deployed to RVN from Oct to Dec '68. Then In July, Aug and Sept. B and C batteries came together at Fort Bragg, NC. Each firing battery was assigned 12 UH-1 helicopters with installed rocket systems.

Both batteries underwent extensive training from Sept. to Dec. 1968. C battery required UH-1C qualification training for 30 pilots. A 15 hour day/night qualification program was created for the transition. We borrowed two UH-1C model IP's from Fort Benning to conduct training. After qualification training live fire training (machine guns and rockets) was conducted on an aerial

gunnery range created specifically for battery pilots. Each battery had an allocation of 20,000 2.75 inch aerial rockets. Training included knowledge of organization, missions, assignments, capabilities, limitations, and communications.

Additionally battery tests were developed to evaluate the combat readiness of the units. An interesting part of the testing was administered by the DivArty of the 82d Airborne Division. They ranged and scored points of impact of rocket fire during live fire missions on designated targets (vehicle and tank hulls) during day and night missions. The 2.75 inch rocket is an area weapon. Pilots were trained to a level of proficiency to employ them as point target weapons. The objective was to enable firing danger close for troops in contact.

A final training flight consisted of ferrying aircraft from Fort Bragg, NC to Stockton CA for sea shipment to RVN. An interesting side note on aircraft performance: all the UH-1Cs were overhauled at the depot in Corpus Christi TX. During the training period including the trip to CA "C" battery experienced 5 engine failures and one hydraulic hard over. Dedicated detachment maintenance personnel had 4 of the engines replaced in 2 days. The fifth failed enroute to CA and it took an Army depot 8 days to replace it. The hydraulic hard over occurred at a hover on a cross country flight Jan 1, 1969. The aircraft damage was extensive. With the loss of those two aircraft "C" battery arrived in RVN with 10 flyable aircraft.

A battery deployed with UH-1Cs, B battery had UH-1Bs and C battery had UH-1Cs, all batteries transitioned to AH-1G Cobras in country. HQ and HQ Battery and A Battery were assigned to Camp Eagle near the city of Hue. When B and C batteries arrived B went to Eagle and C went to Camp Evans (18 miles northwest of Eagle). A Battery pilots moved the aircraft from the port in RVN to Camp Evans. As a by-product of how the Army managed personnel replacements was the demoralizing effect of the infusion program. I believe the unit replacement practiced today is much better.

C Battery flew their first mission about seven days after receipt of the aircraft. The battery flew all of the standard support missions of an aerial artillery unit. Most missions were flown from Camp Evans. Although we had sections stage at forward arm and refuel points (FARPs) to be closer to the area of operations. C Battery established a permanent presence at Fire Support Base Currahee in the A Shau Valley. ARA batteries flew artillery preparations for combat assaults, LZ cover, fire missions for troops in contact, convoy cover, base camp night mortar patrols, medevac escort, and some hunter-killer team missions.

Like A and B batteries C had the direct support missions for a brigade. C provided support to the 3d brigade. Prior to the assault on Dong Ap Bia (Hamburger Hill) ARA missions provided support for units performing RIFs and patrols in the valley. The 4<sup>th</sup> of the 77<sup>th</sup> committed five platoons to support the combat assaults on the first day of Operation Apache Snow. Four platoons from C battery and one from A battery.

In addition to spending many hours in the A Shau and missions supporting various units we had another mission. The Battalion had the contingency mission to support the long range patrol efforts of CNN of MACV- SOG. The battalion, all three firing batteries participated in a series of first light aerial artillery raids on the Ho Chi Min trail just southwest of the DMZ on the Laotian border. The objective was to disrupt the flow of arms, equipment and troops into South Viet Nam. The first raid employed approximately 30 AH-1Gs flying abreast and firing white phosphorus and flechette rockets. When the aerial cavalry unit did the bomb damage assessment they described the result as like having poked a stick into a hornets nest.

The 4/77th participated in Lam Son 719 the Laotian incursion and supported operations at Fire Base Ripcord during Mar. thru Jul. 1970. Ripcord was the last major offensive for US Troops in the RVN. There are two good books written about Ripcord; Keith Nolan's "Ripcord" and MG Ben Harrison's "Hell On A Hilltop". Rick Freeman provides a summary of an ARA support mission on page 82 through 84.

Thanks for your service.

Edward J Miller LTC Artillery (retired)

C Battery 2/20<sup>th</sup> ARA 1966/1967 and C and Headquarters 4/77th ARA 1968/1970

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Dan Petrosky

The second speaker was LTG (ret) Dan Petrosky, former Platoon Ldr C Btry 4th/77th. 1968

My talk tonight will address the Operational and Strategic aspects that ARA and Army Aviation that fought in Vietnam did for our Army. What I am about to discuss is the strategic results of the detailed work, not the detailed work itself. The detailed work (science, technology, and testing) was done by soldiers, Army civilians, and DOD industry. They developed the combat capability our warriors employ.

I will address four themes tonight:

- How your service in Vietnam established that Army Aviation has a war fighting place in our Army.
- How you taught the Army Aviation community how to fight the helicopter force.
- How you validated that Army Aviation exists solely to support the ground forces.
- How you established Army Aviation's legacy of TRUST!

## Short History

Army Aviation has passed through many gates to get to where it is today. In the beginning it was the Field Artillery that formed the requirement for the use of aircraft to observe and to adjust fire missions. And, it was the Artillery Branch that funded Army Aviation in our early days. The Field Artillery got our foot into the door.

Army Aviation's first major gate was the Howze board results which validated aviation's potential ability to give our Army a significant increased capability in future conflict. It became known as the Air Mobility concept.

And, it was your heroics demonstrated in the Vietnam War that proved the Howze Board had it right. It was the successes of the warriors like each of you here tonight, that caused the Army to ask what else can Army Aviation provide in a major decisive battle.

So, in the 70's the Army held the Army Aviation Ansbach trials in Germany to answer that question. The Ansbach trials examined aviation tactics and found by using night vision optics, Nap of the Earth (NOE) flight, and firing anti-tank missiles aviation could, in fact, defeat armor.

These test events caused the Army leadership to commitment funding for a strong aviation force with modernized equipment. As a result, the AH 64 Apache and UH60 Blackhawk were two of the Big Five high priority development programs started in the mid 70's. Think about that. Aviation had two out of the five major programs. It was Vietnam Warriors like you, in this room tonight that made this possible.

The Army's Air Land Battle Doctrine, developed from the fielding of the Big Five coupled with aviation's demonstrated excellence patrolling the Iron Curtain, operating in multiple REFORGERS and supporting NATO that won the Cold War. We call that deterrence.

Next came a major decisive War called Desert Storm. I was the Aviation Brigade Commander (CAB) for the First Armored Division. After being alerted to deploy for Desert Shield/Storm that night I stood on my Brigade tarmac, in Ansbach Germany, and thought of you. I was looking at a fully modernized aviation brigade with two Apache Battalions, a Blackhawk Battalion, a CAV Squadron, a maintenance battalion, OH58 D models, Military Intelligence Blackhawks, and multiple other combat units.

It was not lost on me that it was your heroic battle field accomplishments, in Vietnam, that were instrumental in convincing the Army to modernize aviation. **You taught the Army it could trust its aviation force.** It was soldiers like you here tonight that set up that magnificent CAB sitting on the Ansbach tarmac in 1990. Which then went to war with the First US Armored Division.

## Trust

I would like to talk about our ARA experience in Vietnam as an example of Trust. Trust, I believe, is present in every human interaction. Trust is earned, it is not just given. I submit the trust our ground forces had for ARA, and for that matter all of Army aviation in Vietnam, made us better in combat, and better in the lives we led after we returned home.

I said before that it was you who created the legacy that aviation still embodies today. That is, we exist only to support the ground force. Let me cite just two examples from my experiences in Vietnam. It is most likely the similar experiences that all ARA batteries and all of Army Aviation had supporting the Infantry in combat.

For example, once established in Vietnam, Griffin (C BTRY/4/77<sup>th</sup> ARA) quickly became the artillery support of choice for the 3<sup>rd</sup> BDE 101<sup>st</sup>. I suspect the same was true for all the ARA Batteries in country. Rather than just call in a Fire Mission the Infantry would often request ARA. The other tube Artillery Batteries would complain that the DIVRTY or the DS (Direct Support) Artillery Battalion should be the agency that determined the best way to satisfy the fires request. The Infantry always prevailed when they asked for ARA.

The reasons for ARA requests by the Infantry were numerous. Some of the reasons I heard back then was the Infantry felt they personally knew our mission leaders by voice and call sign. By the way, the ground forces in Iraq and Afghanistan say the same thing today. And, those in Desert Storm said the same. Vietnam TIC (troops in contact) knew we would stay on station and would not leave them until another ARA section came on station. Additionally, we could safely fire danger close (50 meters) compared to the tube Artillery 100 meters. And, of course we were deadly accurate. **We had the ground forces trust!**

An example of where we did not initially have the ground forces trust occurred at about 0300 one dark and scary night when I was flight lead for the two-minute hot section. We were launched and got into the air inside the two-minute requirement and copied our fire mission enroute to the TIC. The grid we received was in an area that we had never fought in before. And, the call sign was not familiar to any of us. We called the unit in contact to get their situation. Instead of the usual five W's (who, what, why, where, and when) we received a rebuttal that asked who we were and why we were responding to their request for gunship support. They wanted gunships, not artillery. They had all the artillery they needed. This back and forth occurred while we flew all the way to their location.

Once over the battle area we could see the ground troops were in a big fight. We could easily identify the enemy and the friendlies from the air. The troops were clearly in trouble yet they still refused our support. They were adamant! They wanted gunships. So, I relented and violated one of our Battery Commander, Major Ed Miller's, axioms to never say we are gunships. Once they heard we were Cobra gunships they were still concerned but reluctantly gave us their five W's. They said that they would allow

us one gun run then decide if we could continue supporting them. By the time all of this FM banter was finished, our section was ready to shoot. Our first run was on target and we were given the go ahead to keep on doing our attack. Our attacks quickly broke the enemy attack. We identified for the friendlies where we saw the routes the enemy was using to retreat. Then, Puff the Magic Dragon (Air Force fixed wing Gunship) came on the net and said he was listening to Griffin working through the support requirements and did not want to confuse the ground troops by calling earlier. Puff suggested he attack the fleeing enemy (which he had identified) and Griffin should continue the close fight over the friendlies.

At the end of this mission the ground force asked how they could get more Griffin support in the future. **We had earned this unit's trust.**

As we were transiting back to Camp Evans congratulating each other for working through one confusing fire mission a booming voice came over the net. It was Major Ed Miller. He said something to the effect that how many times does he have to tell us we are not gunships. His exact words were more forceful. At that moment I determined that Miller was everywhere and he certainly did not sleep.

These two vignettes are the only war stories I will tell in public tonight. I would now like to transition to what ARA, Army Aviation, and all Vietnam combat veterans did for our Army and our Nation.

Perhaps the toughest War our Nation fought in recent history, was the Vietnam War. I say this not because of the tough fighting. All wars have tough fights. I say this because the men and women that agreed to serve during Vietnam made a tough choice. A decision that was not always supported by their friends and neighbors. It is hard to describe how difficult it is to depart home for a war many of your acquaintances, friends, and the population of our nation did not support. Then returning home was made even more difficult by a hostile population.

The courage, candor, and commitment of our VN force was remarkable and it lives on in today's soldier. Your ARA service was important! It mattered most when you showed up quickly to support ground troops in contact. It mattered when you volunteered to fly for Command and Control North. It turned the tide in hotly contested combat. And, it mattered last night in Iraq, Afghanistan, and every where else our Aviation soldiers are deployed in harm's way.

I say that because it was you , the Vietnam Veterans, who added to our Army's roles and missions. You fought the Army's first Helicopter War. Aviator soldiers got up each day to support the ground troops as best they could. I will continue to emphasize that supporting the ground troops is the sole reason Army Aviation existed in Vietnam and why it still exists today. To be sure, that concept was tested daily in Vietnam, Desert Storm, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Levant, and North Africa. So, your ARA and Aviation legacy lives on in today's Army. It taught the Army the asymmetric value of the helicopter.

You also made a significant contribution outside of combat. Your Vietnam experience identified the need for our Army to take better care of our deployed soldiers' families.

When you think about it we took our families into the VN War environment with us. Often, they were left alone in the American community. They were surrounded by families who did not serve, nor understand what the soldier's family was experiencing. There was little if any community support. Their children were harassed at school. They had to learn to cope on their own, and they did not have structured support from the military.

So, this evening is also the time and place to remember our families, and their sacrifices and commitment to your service in Southeast Asia. These were Army families, the people who also carried the burdens of the Vietnam War. Their thoughts were how to survive the pain of separation in the coming year? Would they be the family that would know the agony of losing a father or a husband? And, the soldiers that left families alone back home worried for their family's well-being. Today, Soldiers know their families are being well supported back home. This gives them the ability to focus better on the mission at hand. You taught us that. And, our Army listened.

So, it was our family's strength during Vietnam that demanded the Army create Family support Centers and a myriad of other services for deployed families. Thank God for our strong families. They may never stand a guard mount or render a hand salute but their strength supports today's Army strength.

Vietnam Veterans did not return home to victory parades or even mild public support; and to a degree that still defines Vietnam Vets today. For many, Vietnam remains an open wound. Some of you may be re-visiting a Fire Mission or a difficult return home right now. Take comfort in knowing your service made a difference for those serving now.

It was a troubled time for our Nation. We knew the soldiers whose names now reside on the Vietnam Wall. They were our friends, our relatives, our battle buddies. We know the good they did for our Nation. They had a higher sense of duty than those who would not go. Thank God for these great Americans and all they did for us.

Today's soldiers have many more deployments than we had in Vietnam. Some have had as many as 13 or more combat tours. Yet our soldiers still go for many of the same reasons you did. They understand it is their turn to defend us. Thank God for our Vietnam veterans and those who serve today. Soldiers keep our Nation strong!

So back to your legacy. Today, in cities across this nation the vast majority of people realize that what the Vietnam Veteran did was honorable, respectful, and courageous. The Vietnam collective legacy is now understood by most Americans. To be sure, some of it is now legend. As Veterans you can be proud to say, "I am a Vietnam Veteran". However, we still have too many Vietnam Veterans who live in darkness. We should understand that and reach out to them in any way we can.

**I would like to close with this thought.**

Colonel (ret) Lewis Lee Millett was a Medal of Honor Recipient and a veteran of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. As an Infantry Captain, in the Korean War, Colonel Millett led and conducted our Army's last company size bayonet charge up Hill 180 in Korea. Colonel Millett often said (and I will only paraphrase his words);

It is the soldier that fights for our country.

It is the soldier that defends the right for our freedom.

It is the soldier that provides the strength for our politicians to negotiate.

It is the soldier that defends our flag.

And, it is the soldier who has earned the right to have his or her casket covered by our flag.

Thank you, and may God bless those who served with ARA and their families. And may God bless the USA

Dan Petrosky

*We were blessed to have these great speakers-two of our own - and their insights*

#####

*Editors's Note: We all learned that survival in the heat of battle depends on the loyalty and teamwork of the entire unit. As those who were at the Reunion are aware I became a casualty to a viral upper respiratory infection which minimized my breathing, vision and, worst of all, my hearing and talking. This issue is dedicated to my friends who made it possible by their contributions and efforts. God bless you all.*

**NEVER FORGET YOUR FRIENDS.**

Contributed by Larry Mobley

A newlywed young man was sitting on the porch on a humid day, sipping ice tea with his Father. As he talked about adult life, marriage, responsibilities, and obligations, the Father thoughtfully stirred the ice cubes in his glass and cast a clear, sober look on his Son.

"Never forget your friends," he advised, "they will become more important as you get older". "Regardless of how much you love your family and the children you happen to have, you will always need friends. Remember to go out with them occasionally (if possible), but keep in contact with them somehow."

What strange advice!" thought the young man. "I just entered the married world, I am an adult and surely my wife and the family that we will start will be everything I need to make sense of my life."

Yet, he obeyed his Father; kept in touch with his friends and annually increased their number. Over the years, he became aware that his Father knew what he was talking about. Inasmuch as time and nature carry out their designs and mysteries on a person, friends are the bulwarks of our life. After 70 years of life, here is what he, I and you will have learned:

Time passes. Life goes on. Children grow up. Children cease to be children and become independent. And to the parents, it breaks their heart but the children are separated from the parents because they begin their own families. Jobs / careers come and go. Illusions, desires, attraction, sex....weakens. People can't do what they did physically when they were young. Parents die but you move on. Colleagues forget the favors you did. The race to achieve slows. But, true friends are always there, no matter how long or how many miles away they are. A friend is never more distant than the reach of a need, intervening in your favor, waiting for you with open arms or in some way blessing your life. When we started this adventure called LIFE, we did not know of the incredible joys or sorrows that were ahead. We did not know how much we would need from each other.

Love your parents, take care of your children, but keep a group of good friends. Stay in touch with them but do not impose your criteria.

&&&&&&&&&

**A THOUGHT FOR TODAY**

I've been sick and NEEDED a doctor.

I've encountered trouble and NEEDED a police officer.

I've lived through times of war, when our nation NEEDED our military.

I have even NEEDED an auto mechanic, a plumber, a house painter and a lot of other everyday people.

But I have NEVER, not even once, NEEDED a pro athlete or Hollywood entertainer for ANYTHING.

They actually think we care what they think or how they feel.



ORDER FORM FOR APPAREL, CAPS, PATCHES, STICK-ONS

CAPS, Men's, come in one size (has adjustable headband) and will have the ARA Logo embroidered on the front and can have your name on the right side and call sign on the left side, if desired. **Cost will be \$10.00**

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Print call sign as you want it to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

CAPS, Women's, come in one size and in two (2) styles – Short brim and low profile or as a Headband (both have adjustable headband) and will have the ARA Logo embroidered on the front and can have your name on the right side, if desired. If you would like to give yourself a call sign such as **DRAGON LADY, LADY TORO, GRIFFIN MISTRESS, BLUE MAX MISTRESS, FALCONESS** that can be put on the left sign. Cost will be **\$10.00**

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Send form and check(s) made payable to **ARA ASSOCIATION** to:

**ARA ASSOCIATION**  
c/o Herbert L. Hirst  
P.O. Box 220  
North Plains, OR 97133-0220

# Ladies of the Association

Dear Ladies of the ARA,

Wow what a wonderful reunion in Lawton! What a great turn out too. How nice that we had first time attendees—keep on coming! It was so educational as well as so much fun! Plus on our free days we all found plenty to do –museums, the Holy City, wildlife, casinos and little "hole in the wall" places for lunch.

I'm sure you all agree that Ft. Sill was quite special and very informative. Going to the "hill" for the firearms demonstration and speaking to the young soldiers was special. Our husbands certainly learned how technology is playing such a huge part in combat today.

The "mess hall" was a fun and nutritional experience and gave some of us a chance to converse with the young men in a relaxed atmosphere. It was exciting to see the beginnings of the Vietnam museum

I wanted to give a brief recap on our Ladies meeting .

- Had new attendees
- Facebook page to be set up by Cindy Hirst
- Ladies only cocktail party on the first night prior to the dinner - if time allows
- Suggested to visit local American Legions while at reunions
- Beneficial to have the history of the ARA
- Lively discussion on Quad A scholarships available and who qualifies
- Discussion on veteran's benefits
- Discussion on insurance available to veterans wives if husband is 100% disabled
- Honor guards presence at funerals
- Share news in the Straphanger
- Discussion on next location of reunion and why
- List of members and wives attending reunion to be included in gift bag
- Wish list for location of next reunion submitted to men's mtg
- San Diego 2019 next reunion with Dave and Pat Borgeson as hosts

After arriving home Sun evening Dave contacted hotels in San Diego and we will visit and discuss the last week of Sept.

Wishing you all an early Happy Halloween and Happy Thanksgiving!

Cheers

Pat Borgeson

## Email addresses for the ladies

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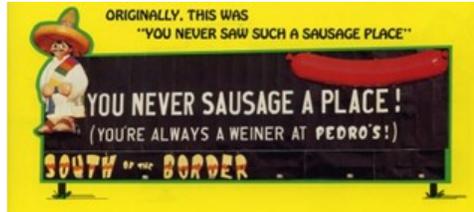


## Chaplain's Corner

### *"South of the Border!"*



Do you remember the many times you drove south towards South Carolina and Florida and when passing through several states you started noticing road signs reading, " **South of the Border?**" As you got closer to Exit 1A in Dillon, SC where Interstate 95 meets US 301 and US 501, the billboards became repetitive with nonsensical messages? I always wanted to stop just to see what the advertising was all about. We did stop and it was a blast and we enjoyed it!



I have wondered about those signs. What was it that made us want to stop? I believe it was the repetition of the message. I remember in seminary my homiletics professor suggested that I get one topic for my homily (sermon) and tell it to the congregation twelve times! He said it would be better than feeding them twelve different sermons all at once!

That proved to be good advice. Jesus used the same method of getting the message across; he repeated it! He said to his disciples, "I am the Bread of Life!" "Eat of My Flesh!" "Drink my Blood!" The disciples heard the message over and over.

Martin Luther in explaining the words of the Catechism concerning the third article of the Apostle's Creed states, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

We need to have the words repeated to us frequently to remind us that Jesus Christ died for us while we were sinners and comes to us through Bread and Wine for the forgiveness of sin! That is why we have the words of institution at the altar before Holy Communion. Let us all be attuned to the **repeated hearing** of these saving words, "This is my Body given for you, this is my Blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sin," so that we may respond in kind! That may be our chance to finally stop at our own **"South of the Border!"**

Peace,

Bruce Wilder



#### A PRELUDE TO THE ROGUE'S GALLERY

Doc Talbot and Jean -his bride of 60 years (stars in her crown)

Jesse Hobby and the indispensable Gloria

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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.**

### **Female Medical Examination**

During the medical examination of a female patient, the British doctor says,

*"Your heart, lungs, pulse and blood pressure are all fine. Now let me see the part that gets you ladies into all kinds of trouble."*

The lady starts taking off her undies, but is interrupted by the doctor.

*"No! No! ... Just stick out your tongue!"*



This applies to both genders!

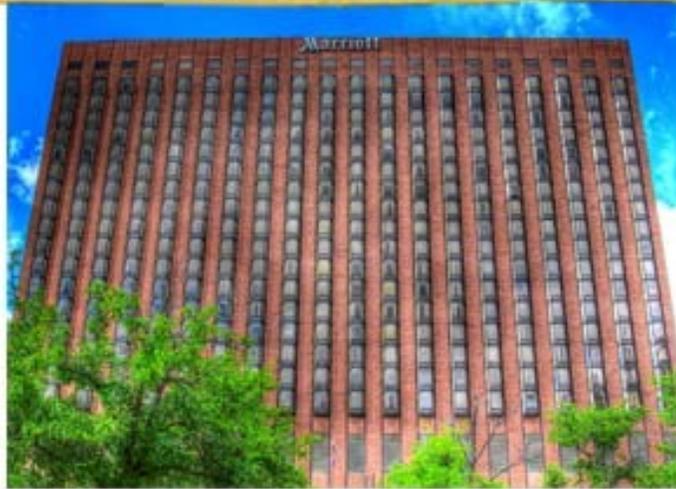
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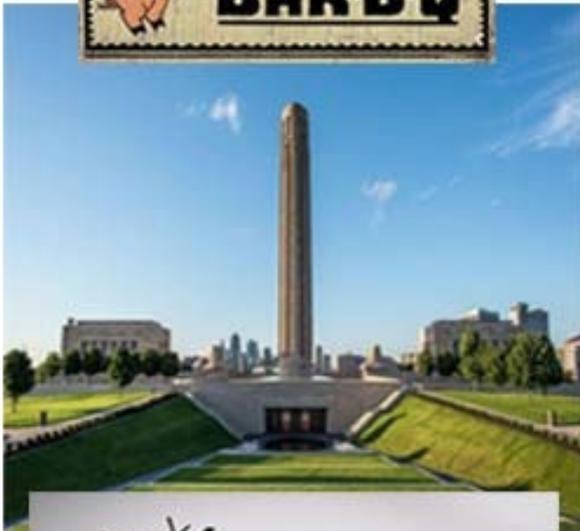
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*Cutoff date for VHPA hotel rate is 26 April, 2019*

PLEASE consult [www.vhpa.org](http://www.vhpa.org) for more Reunion information and details

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<b>Tuesday 28 May</b>	<b>Wednesday 29 May</b>	<b>Thursday 30 May</b>	<b>Friday 31 May</b>
Setup Day	USMC Breakfast	Gold Star Breakfast	Memorial Service
Fort Leavenworth Tour	Quilters Hamilton Outing	Quilters Show & Tell	Business Meeting
City Trolley	Golf	KC BBQ Lunch	Spouse Event
Early Bird Reception	WWI Museum	Independence City Tour	Gangster Tour
	Dinner Train	Welcome Reception	Closing Banquet



### **Fort Leavenworth & City Tour**

Hop on your coach bus and head to the "First City of Kansas"! We will pick up our tour guide and head to Fort Leavenworth for a tour of the oldest and continuously active fort west of the Appalachian Mountains. Then VHPA guests will enjoy lunch with "Harvey Girls" in the historic 1888 Union depot. Before heading back, enjoy a tour of the C.W. Parker Carousel Museum.

### **Dinner Train**

Kansas Belle Dinner Train is a nostalgic trip back into the 1940's era. You'll experience beautiful scenery on a 22 mile round trip train ride that will depart from the Baldwin City Depot while listening to 1940's music. Enjoy a 3 course meal on one of the several different dining cars, all of which have their own unique and distinct personalities.



### **National WWI Museum and Memorial**

The National World War I Museum and Memorial is America's only museum dedicated to sharing the stories of the Great War through the eyes of those who lived it. This museum is ranked #5 in the US and the #1 attraction in Kansas City. Interactive displays, thought-provoking films and eyewitness testimonies will help guide VHPA attendee's through one of the largest collections of WWI artifacts in the world.

### **Kansas City Trolley**

VHPA has built the perfect city shuttle route to get acquainted with the popular sights and local favorites that Kansas City has to offer. This tour is a fully narrated 90 minute tour aboard an authentic, air-conditioned trolley with brass rails, bells and all!





**AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION**

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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	_____

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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.

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