



The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 3 Issue 4

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April, May, June 2011



“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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – REUNION 2011

I am happy to report that forty-seven (47) Association Members and Alumni accompanied by thirty-six (36) wives, family members, and guests showed up between May 18th and May 22nd. Some of those who came, including a Medevac pilot, were only there for a day or two but they came just to be with old friends and comrades, if only for a short time. That's what reunions are about.

Wednesday was a time for reporting in, getting settled in, orientation to Charleston, renewing old friendships and making new ones. Dinner, which was supposed to be “on your own” turned in to a mass of us all going to dinner together and then adjourning to the hotel lounge or the hospitality suite for an evening of fellowship – sharing old memories of times in distant places and sharing a few drinks before calling it a day.

Thursday was a day packed with activity for nearly everyone. We convoyed to Patriots Point and spent the morning touring the USS Yorktown, which brought back a lot of memories to those of us who deployed to RVN by boat in 1965. There was also a submarine, the USS Clamagore, and those who were adventuresome and not claustrophobic toured it also. After lunch we had some time to kill before the Fort Sumter tour and a group of us went to Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. This fort, which dates back to the American Revolution, was in use until the end of World War II and boasts a large collection of Coast Artillery from all periods – Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, WW I and WW II. One of the most interesting things was to climb onto the parapet and get the same view of Fort Sumter that Confederate Gunners had on April 12, 1861, including looking along the gun-target line of a large muzzle loading cannon. Later in the day we had the opportunity to look through the gun ports of Fort Sumter, just like the Federal Gunners did on that same day. After this we returned to the hotel for a catered dinner consisting of a Low Country Boil and Barbeque and another evening of socializing in the Hotel Lounge and Hospitality Suite.

On Friday morning we convoyed to the Hunley Museum in North Charleston. This was a private tour for our group and here we saw the world's first successful combat submarine. This small vessel, about forty feet in length, had a crew compartment just large enough to accommodate seven men sitting shoulder to shoulder (turning a hand cranked propeller) and one other who commanded, steered, and controlled depth. Although they were successful in sinking one Union Navy warship, the USS Housatonic, the Hunley and its crew were also lost.

Friday afternoon was the business meeting for the Association. Minutes of the Business Meeting from June of 2010 (Bozeman Reunion) were read by Secretary Chuck Voeltz and approved with minor changes. The Treasurer's report for 2010 and year to date, was presented by Larry Mobley and approved as read. Others items of interest presented to General Membership were: Incorporation in the state of Alabama with Larry Mobley as designated agent, report on annual mail-out, report of membership (life and regular), promotion of newsletter, promotion of new web site, promotion of annual reunion and financial status of the Association. It should be of interest to everyone to know that we have reinstated the Life Membership Reserve and have put it on a drawdown schedule that should stretch to CY 2022. The Life Members are grouped into Year Groups and \$20.00 per member is withdrawn each year for years 1 – 12 and \$10.00 per member withdrawn in year 13. Assuming that Life Membership remains

the same (or hopefully increases), assuming that we have at least 50 members renewing annually, assuming that we maintain an annual budget of \$2000.00 or less, and that all unexpended funds roll back into the cash reserves it will be 2022 before our financial picture takes a down turn. This will occur primarily because our numbers will decline as time passes. It was also announced that Bruce Wilder has been appointed Staff Writer to the 1st Cavalry Division Association's newsletter "The Saber".

We then moved on to new business. Two changes to the Association By-Laws, which had been posted in the Association Newsletter in Accordance with Article IX, were approved. Herb Hirst gave overview of Reunion 15 (2012) to be held in Portland, OR. May 23 – 27, 2012. It was also announced that Reunion 16 (2013) will be held in Hershey, PA and hosted by Cecil and Peggy Hengeveld. Tom Konitzer discussed scholarships and induction of Gus Cianciolo into the Aviation Hall of Fame. Larry Mobley moved that yearly dues be increased to \$25.00 with no proration of dues. George Govignon seconded and motion was approved by General Membership. First time attendees at reunions were recognized. A request was made on behalf of Mike Pruitt, son of Jimmy Dean Pruitt of B/2/20 during 1966 -67, for information of his father's service in ARA. Anyone having information is requested to pass to me. Meeting was then adjourned.

Friday evening was dinner on your own and our members took the opportunity to enjoy the fine cuisine of Charleston. Many also took advantage of the evening tours and activities including socializing in the Hotel Lounge and Hospitality Suite.

Saturday morning and afternoon were free time for members to continue their exploration of Charleston and the surrounding areas. Many also took advantage of the shopping opportunities available. Saturday evening we convoyed back to Patriot's Point for our Farewell Dinner on board the USS Yorktown. Eighty-seven members and guests were in attendance. We had two guest speakers, the first being MG (Ret) Morris J. Brady, who served as Executive Officer of 3rd Bn (ARA)/377th Arty/11th AAD at Fort Benning, GA and Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of 2nd Bn (ARA)/20th Arty/1st CavDiv in Vietnam. He spoke of the early days of ARA – activation of units, development of weapons systems, techniques of employment, movement to Vietnam, and involvement of the ARA in the early battles of 1965 – 66. Gen Brady was followed by LTC (Ret) Larry McKay, who commanded F Btry/79th Arty during 1971 – 72. F/79 was the last ARA unit in Vietnam and played a major role in halting and then rolling back the NVA in the pivotal battle of An Loc in the spring of 1972. This was the first battle in which Attack Helicopters were employed against tanks, destroying nineteen and forcing the withdrawal of NVA armor. For this action F/79 was named Army Aviation Unit of the year (1972) by the Army Aviation Association. At the close of the evening both guest speakers received plaques from the Association and Honorary Membership was extended to MG Brady by the Board of Directors (in accordance with Article III, Section I.C. of the Association By-Laws) for his service to our Country, the United States Army, Aerial Rocket Artillery and the Association. He was also given the Honorary Title of "President Emeritus" for his service as first President of the Association.

After departure from Patriot's Point we assembled in the hotel lounge for a final time of comradeship. It was interesting to note that it was a group of wives who closed the bar at midnight. The ladies seemed to have bonded much like the old warriors and were reluctant to part company.

Sunday morning came all too early and it was time to part company. Old friends once again said goodbye and departed for home stations. Reunion 2011 was over and it is now time to look forward to Reunion 2012. Hope to see you there.

Following members were in attendance:

| | |
|---|--|
| Alexander, George & Kathy C/2/20 69 – 70 | Johnson, Erik B/2/20 68 – 69 |
| Beck, Barry Associate Member | King, Dewey & Mary Alice HQ & B/20 65 -66 |
| Bishop, Gary B/2/20 6/68 – 6/69 | Klinker, Allan A/2/20 5/66 – 11/66 |
| Borgeson, Dave & Pat A/2/20 7/66 – 4/67 | Konitzer, Tom & Kathy B/2/20 69 - 70 |
| Brown, Glenn & Linda | Krull, Jim |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| C/2/20 4/68 – 3/69 | C/2/20 67 – 68 |
| Cole, Stephen & Maxine | Mallow, Sherod |
| C/2/20 8/67 – 9/68 | B/2/20 67 - 68 |
| Cookson, Maurice “Mac” | McAlister, Rodger & Marilyn |
| C/2/20 1269 – 1270 | A/2/20 3/66 – 4/67 |
| Dauley, James & Donna | Melancon, Steve & Jan |
| B/2/20 68 - 69 | B/2/20 67 – 68 & B/4/77 |
| Foreman, James & Marguerite | Mobley, Larry & Regina |
| B/3/377 7/64 – 7/65 & B/2/20 7/65 – 2/66 | B/2/20 68 - 69 |
| Forestiere, Frank & Judy Hayes | Neal, Paul & Joann |
| B/2/20 67-68 | C/2/20 66 – 67 & A/4/77 |
| Garrity, Paul | O’Dell, Huey & Kathy |
| C/2/20 7/69 – 7/70 | B/2/20 |
| Giles, Jim & Rose | Pollard, Ray |
| B/2/20 01/68 – 01/69 | A/2/20 66 – 67 & 4/77 69 – 70 |
| Govignon, George & Sheilla | Pullano, Joseph & Arlene |
| B/2/20 7/65 – 7/66 | HB 3/377 64 – 65 & A/2/20 65 – 66 |
| Grice, Johnny & Kathy | Retterath, Bill & Carol |
| B/2/20 8/68 – 8/69 | B/2/20 8/68 – 8/69 |
| Hartley, Bob | Richardson, Milton |
| C/2/20 68 – 69 | B/2/20 68- 69 |
| Hatfield, Ray & Martha | Russell, Mike & Ellan Everett |
| A/2/20 65 – 66 & B/2/20 68 - 69 | B/2/20 11/67 – 6/69 |
| Hipp, Jerry & Ann | Szabo, Jule |
| A/2/20 7/65 – 10/66 | F/79 11/71 – 10/72 |
| Hirst, Herbert & Cindy | Talbot, Asa & Jean |
| A/2/20 5/66 – 5/67 | HB/2/20 67 – 68 |
| Hobby, Jesse & Gloria | Titchenell, Wallace & Mary Alice |
| A/3/377 11/63 – 6/65 & A/2/20 7/65 – 8/66 | B/2/20 68 - 69 |
| Hogg, Joe & Susan | Voeltz, Charles & Jean |
| A/2/20 5/69 – 4/70 | A /3/377 63 – 65 & A/2/20 65 – 66 |
| Voss, Wally & Melba Mahoney | Williams IV, William & Dale |
| B/2/20 12/68 – 12/69 | C/2/20 7/69 – 7/70 |
| Wilder, Bruce & Patti | Wood, Billy & Carolyn |
| A/2/20 65 – 66 | A/2/20 7/66 – 7/67 |

Guest Speakers

MG (Ret) Morris J. Brady/Jo Brady
3/377 64 – 65 & 2/20 65 - 66

LTC (Ret) Larry E. McKay & Fay McKay
F/79 71 - 72



**LTC Morris Brady(left), CPT Schmidt(3rd from right) , – WO Ray Hatfield (far right) .
Don’t know who the others are or who took picture**

The Vice President's Thoughts -

“Where History Was Made”

We all know that with the name, “Vietnam Era,” connected to our Association, we are a time limited organization with an end date; the date the last board holds its meeting in a telephone booth, if any exist, according to our President Jesse Hobby.

Our history is full of great accomplishments by great aviation personnel. We experienced many firsts: first armed helicopter in combat and the list grows from there. One day we experienced the end to ARA in Vietnam.

In Charleston we were able to re-live some of those combat moments. Major General (Retired) Morris J. Brady, one of our first commanders and a guest speaker at our banquet, told us of the beginnings of ARA with the formation of C Btry/2nd Bn/42nd Arty and 3rd Bn/377th Arty and the testing, qualification, and approval of the concept in the 11th Air Assault Division, formation of the 2 Bn 20th Arty (ARA) in the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile), movement to An Khe in the Republic of South Vietnam, and deployment into combat in the Central Highlands of that country. He gave an interesting overview of the highlights of those early years. His presentation was the front bookends holding the beginning of ARA.

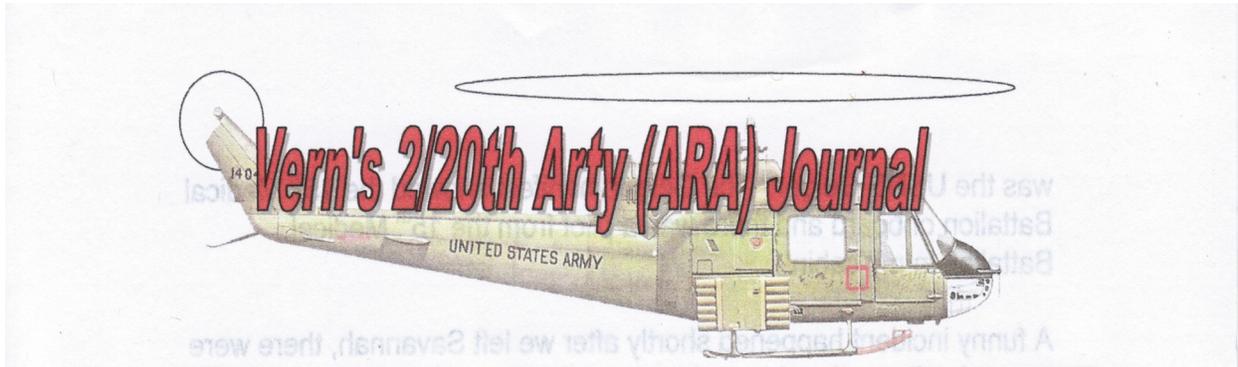
Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Larry McKay, who commanded the last ARA unit in Vietnam and led the ARA support that broke the siege of An Loc, was our guest speaker who formed the back bookends of the ending of ARA. His leadership at An Loc destroyed the enemy tanks and sent the enemy ground forces into retreat. His actions and positive influence at the Battle of An Loc is recorded in history.

This was a special time for us to learn more of our ARA history; and what better place than Charleston, SC, “a place where history was made!”

It was beneficial to hear General Brady and Colonel McKay speak of the joy and pleasure they had in commanding ARA units and their appreciation of the gallant efforts of the men who served in ARA. We thank them for their leadership.

We have a right to be proud. We did much for the war effort in South Vietnam.

“Duty, not Reward!”



Editor's Note: This article was submitted by CWO Vern Estes after the 2010 Reunion in Bozeman, MT. The Association is extreme grateful to CWO Estes for what is not a remembrance but an actual journal that he kept during his tour in 1965-1966 as a member of the First Team. Names and places are presented which are the history of one of the most unique units ever to serve in the U.S. Army. There was never one like it before and probably will never be one like it again.

If there are other journals in existence, please share these with the Straphanger and George Govignon, Association Historian.

We began this journal in the Straphanger Volume 3 Number 3 last year but have since obtained a better and more illustrated version. Therefore, we will begin again.



I transferred from HQ & HQ Company, 1st Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division to "B" Battery 37377th Artillery, 11th Air Assault Division (Test) June 30, 1965. The 11th Division was deactivated in July 1965. The 1st Cavalry Division colors were transferred from Korea and reactivated at Fort Benning, Georgia as the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) (commonly referred to as the Air Cav Division) in July 1965. The Division consisted of 16,000 personnel and 434 aircraft. The Division reached REDCON-1 within 3 and half weeks and became the only Division in history to be combat ready and deployed within 90 days after being formed.



My unit became "B" Battery 2/20th Artillery and I remained in the unit until April 1966. The unit call sign was "**Armed Falcon**" and the aircraft nose art was a yellow Griffin with silver wings holding a red lightning bolt and a 1st Cav Div patch in its paws. The Griffin is a mythical beast that is known to protect precious materials; I thought that I qualified as precious material so the description seemed appropriate to me.

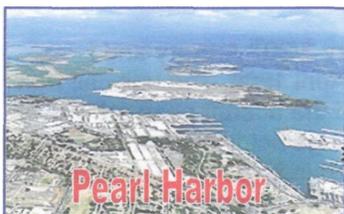
The entire Division deployed to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in August, 1965. The troops, aircraft, and material departed from several ports along the Atlantic coast. There were six troop ships,

seven cargo ships, and four aircraft carriers used to ship nearly 16,000 troops, 434 aircraft plus 1600 vehicles and several tons of support material. My ship departed from Savannah, Georgia and did not arrive at Qui Nhon, RVN until 20 September 1965. I believe that the ship I was on was the USNS Geiger. The Geiger manifest showed the 15th Medical Battalion onboard and there was a pilot from the 15th Medical Battalion in my cabin.

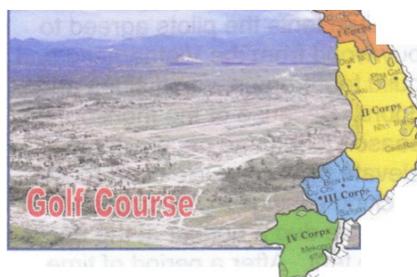


A funny incident happened shortly after we left Savannah, there were several units on the ship, and personnel were assigned to a cabin without regard to unit assignment. There was a young red headed Medical Service Corp lieutenant (I think he was assigned to the 498th Medical Battalion) in our compartment (can not recall his name) and he slept for days. All personnel were required to report for roll call each morning on deck. The first few mornings a Lieutenant was absent... after about four days our compartment mate was present for roll call. When his name was called he shouted present the Major conducting the roll call said; LT I have been reporting you AWOL, then ask him, where in the hell where you hiding? He replied that no one had told him there was going to be a roll call.

The float plan was to sail through the Panama Canal to Hawaii, Guam and then to Vietnam. During the stop in Hawaii a "**drunk front**" moved through the area resulting in a few of us almost getting thrown into the Brig at Pearl Harbor. There were four of us who wanted to take a midnight cruise on an admiral's launch that was tied up at the same pier as our ship. The Navy petty officer on the boat showed us the error of our ways and we only suffered hangovers the next day.



During the 30 days enroute to RVN I gained several pounds. When it came time to disembark my web belt could not be fastened but this condition was soon to be corrected; "C" rations were probably the most effective diet I have ever experienced. In fact, after a couple of months I had lost so much weight that the platoon leader was worried that I had contracted some kind of weird Vietnamese bug.



Before leaving the ship everyone received "Gamma Globulin" shots (increases a person's immunity against diseases) ; boy was that a real treat.

The Division base camp was located at An Khe (An Tuc), RVN which was in the II Corps Tactical Zone. The advance party was commanded by Brigadier General (BG) John Wright. He assembled the troops and told them that the base camp would be cleared by hand. He stated that heavy earth moving equipment would destroy all of the grass and other vegetation which would cause the area to become a dust bowl or a quagmire during the monsoon season. His instructions were "the area should be as clean as a Golf Course hence the name "Golf Course". In 1966 the camp would be named **Camp Radcliff**; named after Major Radcliff, the Division's first fatality however the heliport (largest in the world in 1965) would always be known as the Golf Course.



Our unit was transported by CH-47 (Chinook) helicopters to the "Golf Course". Upon our arrival my first question was; where are the general purpose (GP) medium tents we were expecting to be set up by the advance party.

The sad fact was that we were packing our immediate housing called "Pup Tents" and would remain in these fine military shelters for approximately 90 days. I am sorry that I did not take photos of the area after that good old American ingenuity surfaced ... the area looked like a somewhat organized gypsy or hobo camp. I believe that in my 26 year military career this was the only time I observed two story pup tents.

We were sent to Qui Nhon to pick up our aircraft and while we were there a CH-47 landed inside of a large equipment area and loaded some unauthorized material on board the aircraft. The Support Commander was not happy and wanted to file charges against the crew. The Division Command Group had to intervene and placate the Support Commander.

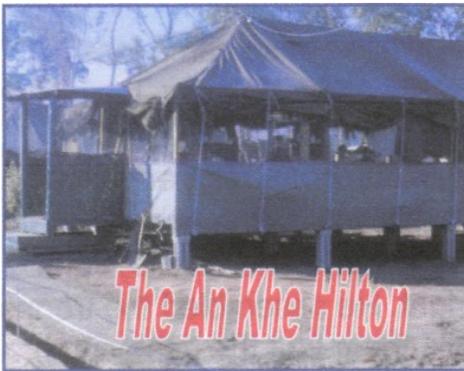
After the unit received the GP medium tents the pilots agreed to buy wood from the Vietnamese and build tent frames, wood sides and floors. Because of monsoon season it became necessary to elevate the the floors of the tent. We used rocket packing casings to accomplish this. Also, we dug a bunker



at the back After a period of time we had added creature comforts like electricity which leads to a humorous story.

I decided that I would like to have a wall plug for my stereo system.

Working from a base of ignorance I wired a direct short into the system; when I plugged the stereo into the wall socket all the lights in our area went out. I heard yelling and suddenly Bob Maxwell appeared and asked me what the hell I had done, I told him and he took one look at my work, then he corrected my mistake and said; if I needed any more plugs to make sure that I call him first.



A few days after arriving some of the unit's crews were sent to Qui Nhon to pickup our aircraft and ferry them back to An Khe. Most of the aircraft were on board a jeep carrier the USNS Kula Gulf. The aircraft had been cocooned in a white plastic material (*Spraylat*) when they removed it part of the paint came off. The aircraft looked like they had some weird camouflage scheme or a bad skin disease. On the trip back we flew through An Khe Pass and there was

aircraft wreckage on the north side of the pass; later I found out it was a French airplane from the first Indochina war.

Unit pilots had not flown for approximately 45 days; after getting the aircraft air worthy the unit started training missions. I remember that firing my first pair of rockets was a disaster in that I missed the mountain I was trying to hit; maybe they fell on a VC after the fuel was expended.



The missiles were originally designed to be fired from fast moving aircraft. They were classified as air-to-air missiles; however, because of their lack of accuracy they were modified to be used as air-to-ground weapons; in that role they did a good job. The rockets were dubbed "Mighty Mouse" after the cartoon character whose motto was; **"Here I come to save the day."** One of the modifications was the exhaust ports had been cut at a 45 degree angle known as a scarf cut on each of the tubes which made them more stable after being fired from slow moving aircraft.

2.75 Folding Fin Rocket



Early in October 1965 we started receiving fire missions and then the fun began. Unit aircraft were placed on alert standby next to the An Khe Airport runway; we responded from that position until I transferred in 1966.

While we were standing by on 4 November I observed a flight of Hueys returning from picking up troops. The flight was landing just northeast of our location when two of the helicopters had a mid-air collision. Some of the troops onboard one of the aircraft jumped out of the ship at an estimated altitude of 60 to 100 feet before the aircraft crashed into the trees.



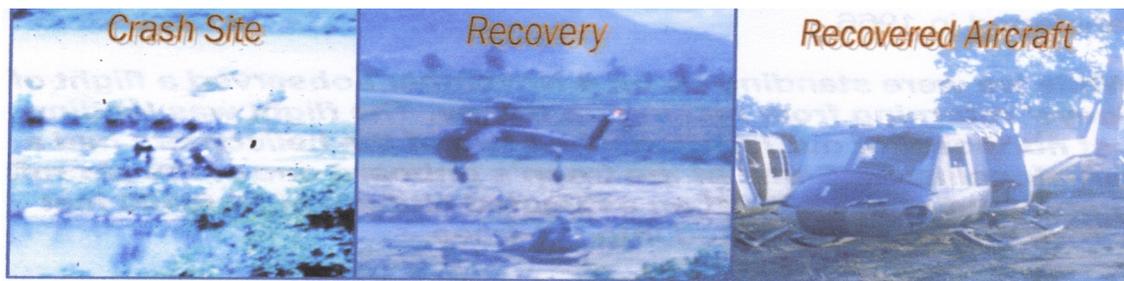
The unit's first causality was the Battery Commander Major Norman Leikam. He was killed on 23 October 1965. We were operating near Pleiku, when Major Leikam approached a 52nd Aviation Battalion guard, (the guard was either stoned or drunk) the guard shot and killed him. The guard later said he thought that Major Leikam was a VC.

52nd Aviation Bn

On 6 October 1965 Captain Ken Williams and I were flying aircraft 64-14053 escorting an un armed aircraft. During the mission we needed to refuel. After refueling we began a take-off. Captain Williams (aircraft commander) decided that we would take-off over a 15 foot river embankment instead of our normal departure path. It was around noon time and the density altitude was high which reduces the aircraft's usable power therefore, maintaining engine RPM was a problem in a hover.

When we flew over the embankment we lost the benefit of being in ground effect; which reduces the power required to hover. The RPM began to decay resulting in a forced landing on a sand bar in the river. The touchdown was smooth; however, the left skid settled into an erosion ditch running across the sand bar causing the main rotor to hit the ground. After the dust settled the aircraft was lying on its left side and the engine was still running.

Captain Williams was in the left seat and had to break out the windscreen to exit the aircraft; when he was clear I released my safety harness and the armored seat (150 lbs) fell crashing into Captain William's seat. I exited the aircraft and discovered that the door gunner had disregarded his emergency training and released his seat belt prior to impact; resulting in major injury to his right arm ... no one else was injured.



On 2 November 1965 our unit had another accident; a UH-1B (64-14038) flown by Captain Gus Cianciolo and Captain J. W. Hood.

Shortly after my accident another of our aircraft flown by Lt. Govignon experienced an engine failure and crashed into a stand of trees. The pilot and crew chief were taking the aircraft to the river so it could be washed. When the aircraft was brought to a hover we observed smoke coming out of the exhaust stack and the aircraft could hardly hover. The pilot elected to perform a running takeoff. Shortly thereafter we were told that the helicopter had crashed near the outer perimeter of the base.

To Be continued in the next Straphanger.

The Awesome Power of Nature versus the Skill and Determination of Man

It is said that weather is the mortal enemy of the aviator—right after the medical profession. Recently our country has been ravaged by natural disasters in frequency and magnitude never before seen. Our own Glen Brown shared some information about recent fires in the Midland Texas area where we held our 12th ARA reunion in 2009. The editor would like to give some insight into the terror of the tornado in Joplin, MO and what it is like to try to stem the tide of human tragedy from a medical viewpoint.

On April 9, 2011, while wildfires were cropping up in many parts of the country, and particularly in west Texas, one was ignited south of Midland by a spark from three pieces of metal which had fallen off a vehicle at one place and a carelessly disposed of cigarette at another. This is codenamed the Hickman fire.

As you recall, Midland-Odessa is flat and never a lush rain forest. However, 2010 was a good year for rainfall and the prairie grass thrived. Subsequently, the three-foot high grass died in the extra hard freezes of the west Texas winter and became brittle. Finally, Midland County suffered the worst drought since 1918. The period of no or less rain than 0.1 inch before April 9 was 244 days. Prior to that there 6 days of measurable rain and 9 days of trace rain

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index, is used to determine fire potential, and maxs out at 800. It averaged 600 before April 9 and was 723 that day. The stage was set for disaster. Fire was already ravaging nearby Fort Davis and Rock House and would claim 314,000 acres over the next three weeks.

To compound the problems there were winds gusting 30-50 mph. These winds not only fanned the flames and drove them along, they prevented aerial water drops.

In spite of the nearly insurmountable odds, firefighters from surrounding cities and counties battled the blaze, striving to attack it from the front and prevent it from moving past them. Braving seven foot high flames and using every piece of equipment and great skill they firefighters were able to contain the blaze with only the loss of 19 buildings, no lives and 18,000 acres charred.

The fire teams learned a great deal from the Hickman fire and on May 24 another blaze, called the CEED fire for the building where it began, broke out and in the four hours it took to fight it claimed another 5,000 acres. Again, no lives were lost due to quick response and great skill. DC-7 size aircraft were able to dump water on the fire this time while high winds prevented helicopter flying.

Needless to say, Midland and all of Texas are looking to add more equipment and training to their armamentarium because TEXAS NEEDS RAIN.

45 Seconds: Memoirs of an ER Doctor from May 22, 2011.

I was one of two emergency room doctors who were on duty at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Joplin, MO on Sunday May 22, 2011.

You never know that it will be the most important day of your life until the day is over. I drove to the hospital, mentally preparing for my 4 PM shift as I always do, but nothing could ever have prepared me for what was going to happen on this shift. Things were normal for the first hour and half. At approximately 5:30 pm we received a warning that a tornado had been spotted. Although I work in Joplin and went to medical school in Oklahoma, I live in New Jersey, and I have never seen or been in a tornado. I learned that a "code gray" was being called. We were to start bringing patients to safer spots within the ED and hospital..

At 5:42pm a security guard yelled to everyone, "Take cover"! We are about to get hit by a tornado. I ran with a pregnant RN, Shilo Cook, while others scattered to various places, to the only place that I was familiar with in the hospital without windows, a small doctor's office in the ED. Together, Shilo and I trembled and huddled under a desk. We heard a loud horrifying sound like a large locomotive ripping through the hospital. The whole hospital shook and vibrated as we heard glass shattering, light bulbs popping, walls collapsing, people screaming, the ceiling caving in above us, and water pipes breaking, showering water down on everything. We suffered this in complete darkness, unaware of anyone else's status, worried and scared. We could feel a tight pressure in our heads as the tornado annihilated the hospital and the surrounding area. The whole process took about 45 seconds, but seemed like eternity. The hospital had just taken a direct hit from a category EF-4 tornado.

Then it was over. Just 45 seconds. 45 Long seconds. We looked at each other, terrified, and thanked God that we were alive. We didn't know, but hoped that it was safe enough to go back out to the ED, find the rest of the staff and patients, and assess our losses. Like a bomb went off. That's the only way that I

can describe what we saw next. Patients were coming into the ED in droves. It was absolute, utter chaos. They were limping, bleeding, crying, terrified, with debris and glass sticking out of them, just thankful to be alive. The floor was covered with about 3 inches of water, there was no power, not even backup generators, rendering it completely dark and eerie in the ED. The frightening aroma of methane gas leaking from the broken gas lines permeated the air; we knew, but did not dare mention aloud, what that meant. I redoubled my pace.

We had to use flashlights to direct ourselves to the crying and wounded. Where did all the flashlights come from? I'll never know, but immediately, and thankfully, my years of training in emergency procedures kicked in. There was no power, but our mental generators, were up and running, and on high test adrenaline. We had no cell phone service in the first hour, so we were not even able to call for help and backup in the ED.

I remember a patient in his early 20's gasping for breath, telling me that he was going to die. After a quick exam, I removed the large shard of glass from his back, made the clinical diagnosis of a pneumothorax (collapsed lung) and gathered supplies from wherever I could locate them to insert a thoracostomy tube in him. He was a trooper; I'll never forget his courage. He allowed me to do this without any local anesthetic since none could be found. With his life threatening injuries I knew he was running out of time, and it had to be done quickly. Imagine my relief when I heard a big rush of air, and breath sounds again; fortunately, I was able to get him transported out.

I immediately moved on to the next patient, an asthmatic in status asthmaticus. We didn't even have the option of trying a nebulizer treatment or steroids, but I was able to get him intubated using a flashlight that I held in my mouth. A small child of approximately 3-4 years of age was crying; he had a large avulsion of skin to his neck and spine. The gaping wound revealed his cervical spine and upper thoracic spine bones. I could actually count his vertebrae with my fingers. This was a child, his whole life ahead of him, suffering life threatening wounds in front of me, his eyes pleading me to help him.. We could not find any pediatric C collars in the darkness, and water from the shattered main pipes was once again showering down upon all of us. Fortunately, we were able to get him immobilized with towels, and start an IV with fluids and pain meds before shipping him out. We felt paralyzed and helpless ourselves. I didn't even know a lot of the RNs I was working with. They were from departments scattered all over the hospital. It didn't matter. We worked as a team, determined to save lives. There were no specialists available-- my orthopedist was trapped in the OR. We were it, and we knew we had to get patients out of the hospital as quickly as possible. As we were shuffling them out, the fire department showed up and helped us to evacuate. Together we worked furiously, motivated by the knowledge and fear that the methane leaks could cause the hospital to blow up at any minute.

Things were no better outside of the ED. I saw a man crushed under a large SUV, still alive, begging for help; another one was dead, impaled by a street sign through his chest. Wounded people were walking, staggering, all over, dazed and shocked. All around us was chaos, reminding me of scenes in a war movie, or newsreels from bombings in Baghdad. Except this was right in front of me and it had happened in just 45 seconds. My own car was blown away. Gone. Seemingly evaporated. We searched within a half mile radius later that night, but never found the car, only the littered, crumpled remains of former cars. And a John Deere tractor that had blown in from miles away.

Tragedy has a way of revealing human goodness. As I worked, surrounded by devastation and suffering, I realized I was not alone. The people of the community of Joplin were absolutely incredible. Within minutes of the horrific event, local residents showed up in pickups and sport utility vehicles, all offering to help transport the wounded to other facilities, including Freeman, the trauma center literally across the street. Ironically, it had sustained only minimal damage and was functioning (although I'm sure overwhelmed). I carried on, grateful for the help of the community. At one point I had placed a conscious intubated patient in the back of a pickup truck with someone, a layman, for transport. The patient was self-ventilating himself, and I gave instructions to someone with absolutely no medical knowledge on how to bag the patient until they got to Freeman.

Within hours I estimated that over 100 EMS units showed up from various towns, counties and four different states. Considering the circumstances, their response time was miraculous. Roads were blocked with downed utility lines, smashed up cars in piles, and they still made it through.

We continued to carry patients out of the hospital on anything that we could find: sheets, stretchers, broken doors, mattresses, wheelchairs—anything that could be used as a transport mechanism.

As I finished up what I could do at St John's, I walked with two RNs, Shilo Cook and Julie Vandorn, to a makeshift MASH center that was being set up miles away at Memorial Hall. We walked where flourishing neighborhoods once stood, astonished to see only the disastrous remains of flattened homes, body parts, and dead people everywhere. I saw a small dog just whimpering in circles over his master who was dead, unaware that his master would not ever play with him again. At one point we tended to a young woman who just stood crying over her

dead mother who was crushed by her own home. The young woman covered her mother up with a blanket and then asked all of us, "What should I do?" We had no answer for her, but silence and tears. At about midnight I walked around the parking lot of St. John's with local law enforcement officers looking for anyone who might be alive or trapped in crushed cars. They spray painted X's on the fortunate vehicles that had been searched without finding anyone inside. The unfortunate vehicles also wore X's and sprayed-on numerals, indicating the number of dead inside, crushed in their cars, which now resembled flattened recycled aluminum cans the tornado had crumpled in her iron hands, an EF4 tornado, one of the worst in history, whipping through this quiet town with demonic strength. I continued back to Memorial hall into the early morning hours until my ER colleagues told me it was time for me to go home. I was totally exhausted. I had seen enough of a tornado.

How can one describe these indescribable scenes of destruction? The next day I saw news coverage of this horrible, deadly tornado. It was excellent coverage, and the Weather Channel did a great job, but nothing that pictures and video can depict that compares to seeing it in person. That video will play forever in my mind.

I shall always be grateful for the wonderful people who sacrificed and risked themselves to care for the injured and the distraught. The firefighters, EMS, fellow doctors and nurses and the law enforcement personnel made more difference in the lives of those walloped by Mother Nature than they perhaps will ever know.

For all of the injured who I treated, although I do not remember your names (nor would I expect you to remember mine) I will never forget your faces. I'm glad that I was able to make a difference and help in the best way that I knew how, and hopefully give some of you a chance at rebuilding your lives again. For those whom I was not able to get to or treat, I apologize whole heartedly.

Kevin J. Kikta, DO

Editor's Note: This article has been included because it demonstrates the valor of those who must "pick up the pieces" after catastrophe strikes. This scene is, for me, a replay of the times in the casualty hospitals of South Vietnam. There were never enough supplies, time, personnel, always there were more patients. This story is dedicated to the brave souls who stood for long hours, far beyond anything resembling a duty shift, in OR's and who flew the countless missions to bring in the wounded—Medavac, Dustoff, the Jolly Green Giants and our own insane, but dedicated rocketmen who defied the enemy in hot LZ's and saved lives.

Expend Rockets

Empty the Ammo Drum

Pick Up the Grunts

Another day;
another life

Going where
and when no one
else will go.



FINAL FLIGHT

Lieutenant General August (Gus) Cianciolo, U.S. Army (Ret) died on April 4, 2011 from complications related to injuries sustained in an automobile accident. He was born on March 11, 1936 in Covington, KY and graduated from Xavier University in 1958. He went on to earn his master's degree from the University of Southern California.



LTG Cianciolo was our guest speaker at the 11th ARA Reunion at Ft. Rucker. This is how we remember him and always will.

Gus was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army in 1959 where he spent 33 years serving his country. Gus graduated from flight school with Flight Class 60-63 and served two tours in Vietnam, both with B Battery, 2/20th ARA where he flew under the call sign Armed Falcon 47Bravo and Blue Max 46. Gus was a Life Member of the VHPA.

Gus culminated his service as the Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development and Acquisition. Upon his retirement from active service Gus settled in Alexandria, VA. Gus worked with Cypress International and later joined The SPECTRUM Group where he served as the Vice Chairman of the Board.

Gus is survived by his wife of 52 years, Sheila; one daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, one brother, four sisters and numerous nieces, nephews and other extended family members. Gus enjoyed all aspects of life, including his friendships, golf, aviation, and spending time with grandchildren. Gus never lost his positive outlook on life.

Services were held on April 11, at St. Louis Catholic Church in Alexandria, VA, and again with full Military Honors at the Ft. Myers Memorial Chapel; interment followed at Arlington National Cemetery. The family requested that donations in his name be sent to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund of New York City, NY. Published in the Washington Post on April 11, 2011.

Additional notes: Gus also served in B Battery, 3/377th ARA at Fort Benning, GA and was a Life Member of the Aerial Rocket Artillery Association. Final interment in Arlington National Cemetery will be on August 31, 2011.

In the last issue of the newsletter we also reported the death of CW4 Gary S. Arnold, who served with A Battery, 4/77th ARA, 101st Airborne on February 16, 2011. We have received no other details from the family.

Do One More Roll For Me

Capt Jerry Coffee, USN (Ret) [a Vietnam POW] wrote:

One night during a bombing raid on Hanoi, I peeked out of my cell and watched a flight of four F-105s during their bombing run. As they pulled up, it was obvious that lead was badly hit. Trailing smoke, he broke from the formation and I watched the damaged bird until it disappeared from sight. I presumed the worst. As I lay there in my cell reflecting on the image, I composed a toast to the unfortunate pilot and all the others who had gone before him.

On New Year's Eve 1968, Captain Tom Storey and I were in the Stardust section of Hoa Lo (wa-low) Prison. I whispered the toast under the door to Tom. Tom was enthralled, and despite the risk of terrible punishment, insisted that I repeat it several more times until he had it committed to memory. He then promised me that when the time came, and they were again free men, he would give the toast at the first Dining-In he attended. For you civilians, a Dining-In is a dreary formal affair with drinks, dinner, and forced joviality and comradeship where officers get to dress up like the head waiters in "The Merry Widow" -- that's the American version; I've heard that the Brits, who created the damn things, have a rollicking good time. Tom's first assignment following release in 1973 was to the U.S. Air Force Academy. During that same year the Academy hosted the Annual Conference for General Officers and Those Associated Dining-In. The jovial clinking of glasses accompanied all the traditional speeches and toasts. Then it was Tom's turn. Remembering his promise so many years earlier, he proposed Jerry's "One More Roll." When he was finished there was total silence.

We toast our hearty comrades who have fallen from the sky, and were gently caught by God's own hands to be with him on high.

To dwell among the soaring clouds they have known so well before, from victory roll to tail chase at heavens very door.

And as we fly among them there, we're sure to hear their plea: Take care, my friend, watch your six, and do one more roll for me.

A toast to all our comrades -- POWs, missing in action, living or dead, whatever their duty, whatever their war, whatever their uniform. Bless them all.



MG Morris Brady *Photo by Billy Wood*

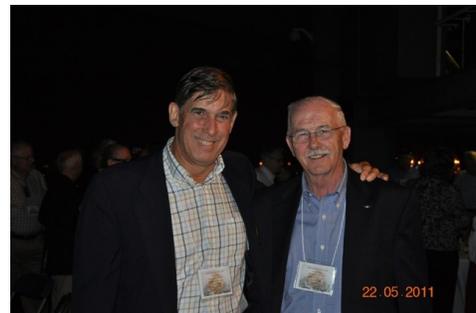


LTC Larry Mc Kay *Photo by Tom Konitzer*



Photo by Jule Szabo

Mandatory morning formation before boarding the Yorktown.



Tom Konitzer and Gary Bishop who surprised us by coming to the reunion.
Photo contributed by Tom Konitzer



Chuck Voeltz in the Hunley mockup –he can always fit anywhere. *Photo by Gloria Hobby*



Photo by Dave Borgeson

Dave Borgeson, Billy Wood and Rodger McAlister
Miraculously taken and contributed by Dave Borgeson



The Courts Martial of CW2 Charles Gossett

This is a true story. I haven't added any Salsa, Bull, Don, Don or any other spices to it, as it is plenty salty enough! This happened when I was a new CW2 and a

pilot with the Blue Max 220th ARA, 1st Air Cav in 1970. I considered myself is just a regular guy like all the other pilots and shared the same emotions, good and bad. I did worry I was maybe a little more afraid than others, things could get scary in a blinding flash, pun intended!

OK, this is what happened on the first day. A fire-team of 2 Blue Max Cobras were scrambled to an area of the AO where contact had already been broken but an unknown number of enemy forces were still in the area. We made contact with the friendlies. Lead (our Mission Commander) introduced us to a captain who was in the Command & Control (C&C) Huey orbiting below us. Turns out the slick pilot was waiting for us as he needed a Cobra to follow him down while he landed to take a look at an arms cache in the LZ close to where the bad guys were busted by the Cav's Blues. I dont remember why it was me that locked onto the Huey's 5 o'clock and followed him down, but there I went. Suddenly, the Huey was flying over numerous small explosions. I told him it looked to me like they were flying too close to where mortars were exploding in the tree tops. A minute later I heard the pilot say he was taking fire from the right side so I fired a pair of rockets (only one left the tube) and it impacted a 100 meters to the right side and rear of the slick. The C&C Huey climbed up, turned and then told us that that was enough for him, he wasnt going back into the area; and we could go on home. We did just that, put the cobras to bed and went to drink some beer as it was tea time.

A few hours later, I was told to go to our Battalion Commander's



office with no reason given. I didnt know him well and couldn't think why he wanted to see me. When I went in to his office, there, sitting in his chair was a Full Bird Colonel. This was the 1st Air Cav's Division Artillery (Div Arty) Commander and the man wasnt smiling! My Commander told me I was there to answer some questions. I dont remember all the dialogue but do know the Div Arty Cmdr said things like, "Trying to shoot a Huey down" and "Was I on the side of the Communist?" and "cowboy Loch and Cobra pilots!" After an eternity of verbal pounding, he asked me if I had anything to say. In a daze, all I could come up with was, "I'm sorry Sir, and it wont ever happen again!"

He jumped up out of the chair and with shouting that hurt your ears and with words that would tear your heart out, he started in again. He said (something to the effect), "You damned right because you will never fly for the Cav again because I'm putting you up for a Flight Evaluation Board (FEB)!" "No, better still I am going to have you Court Martialled!" "Now get out of here and think about that!" I was numb. I walked like 'The Mummy' back to my hooch, barely able to move my feet. My mind was a whirlwind of

jumbled thoughts.

The walk back to my hooch gave me too much time to think before I could find a friend to tell what just happened. The most terrible thought was going home to my family in total disgrace; thank God for friends and beer that night! The next day my BN CO called me in and had me sit down and tell him about the fight. He told me it's a good time to go on R&R and not to worry. I went to Hong Kong with a friend but I couldnt stop worrying. A couple of days after getting back from Hong Kong I was told to report to the 1st Cav Commander's (a Major General) office. After cooking for an hour in the outer office, I was sent in. The General had me sit down and he told me what the DIV ARTY Commander had reported and what was being recommended. The General then asked me



to tell him about the fight. He hadnt looked at me yet and I was sitting perpendicular to him on his right side. I told him everything that happened that day and I even admitted that Max pilots didnt have as much experience at low level flying and shooting as did the escort gunships. The two big black stars on his collar had gotten enormous by the time I finished, I know because I had been staring at them for what seemed to be hours.

Turns out it didnt matter, the General said that an investigation revealed that the Huey was damaged by mortar shrapnel, the unit's maintenance people had ruled out all chance of rocket damage. For the first time, the General looked over at me and said not to be concerned about the DIV ARTY Commander as the man had been in country for 18 months, desperately needed to rotate

stateside and in fact was soon going home. He told me to get back out there and put some rockets on the bad guys for him! "Yes, Sir!" I answered and when I left, there was no walking out of there like The Mummy, I was dancing an Irish jig and whistling "Leaving on a Jet Plane" all the way home!

Amazing story isnt it? I mean had it happened to you it would be amazing, but "that's not all the story" as the saying goes. A few weeks after this life's crisis, I was to be at the Blue Max operations at 1500 for an awards ceremony. Turns out the medals were to be given by the aforementioned DIV ARTY Commander. I was second man in the first row and the Colonel in question stopped

directly in front of me and we stared at each other while the citation was read. The DFC I received that day was for another operation and the supporting verbiage was just beautiful, but I didnt hear a word of it. I was sweating bullets the entire time wondering if the Colonel, locked into attention not 6 inches from my nose, remembered me. Well I guess he did as he just put the medal in my hand and didnt pin it to my shirt. As he moved down the line continuing to pin on medals I could see my Battalion Commander smiling, he then gave me a quick wink! Once the ceremony was over, without another word the Colonel climbed on a Huey that took him to Bien Hoa to catch his own "Jet Plane" stateside.

I dont have any ill feelings about the incident and being an old guy now, it makes for a good war story! At least it does to me and hopefully you will enjoy it too. A true story - from disgrace to honor in just a couple of weeks.

Charlie Gossett

Adapted from VAHP Aviator

THE LAST OF THE TRUE MEN AND MACHINES OF FLIGHT



This is the speech given at Ft Rucker when they retired the last Huey:

By CW4 Lawrence Castagneto, 17 May 2011

(Editors Note: CWO Castagneto has an Armed Falcon call and may be one of our own.)

Article contributed by Larry Mobley

"Thank you Sir"

As a Vietnam Veteran Army Aviator, I would like to thank everyone for coming to this special occasion, on this to be honest...very sad day, the end of a era. An era that has spanned over 50 years. The retirement of this grand old lady "OUR MOTHER" ... the Huey.

I would like to thank, MG Crutchfield for allowing me to speak at this event and try to convey in my own inadequate, meager way ... what this aircraft means to me and so many other Vietnam veterans.

First a few facts:

It was 48 yrs. ago this month that the first Huey arrived in Vietnam with units that were to become part of the 145th and the 13th Combat Aviation Battalions; both units assigned here at Ft Rucker today. While in Vietnam, the Huey flew approximately 7,457,000 combat assault sorties; 3,952,000 attack or gunship sorties and 3,548,000 cargo supply sorties. That comes to over 15 million sorties flown over the paddies and jungles of 'Nam, not to include the millions of sorties flown all over the world and other combat zones since then ... what a amazing journey ... I am honored and humbled to have been a small part of that journey.

To those in the crowd that have had the honor to fly, crew, or ride this magnificent machine in combat, they are the chosen few, the lucky ones. They understand what this aircraft means, and how hard it is for me to describe my feelings about her as a Vietnam combat pilot ... for she is alive ... Has a life of her own, and has been a life long friend.

How do I break down in a few minutes a 42 year love affair; she is as much a part of me, and to so many others,, as the blood that flows through our veins. Try to imagine all those touched over the years ... by the shadow of her blades.

Other aircraft can fly overhead and some will look up and some may not; or even recognize what they see but, when a Huey flies over everyone looks up and everyone knows who she is ... young or old all over the world she connects with all.

To those that rode her into combat ... the sound of those blades causes our heart beat to rise ... and breaths to quicken ... in anticipation of seeing that beautiful machine fly overhead and the feeling of comfort she brings. No other aircraft in the history of aviation evokes the emotional response the Huey does ... combat veteran's or not

... she is recognized all around the world by young and old, she is the ICON of the Vietnam war, U.S. Army Aviation, and the U.S. Army. Over 5 decades of service she carried Army Aviation on her back, from bird dogs and piston powered helicopters with a secondary support mission, to the force multiplier combat arm that Army Aviation is today.

Even the young aviators of today, that are mainly Apache pilots, Blackhawk pilots, etc., that have had a chance to fly her will tell you there is no greater feeling, honor, or thrill then to be blessed with the opportunity to ride her thru the sky ... they may love their Apaches and Blackhawks, but they will say there is no aircraft like flying the Huey -"it is special." There are two kinds of helicopter pilots: those that have flown the Huey and those that wish they could have.

The intense feelings generated for this aircraft are not just from the flight crews but, also from those who rode in back ... into and out of the "devils caldron". As paraphrased here from "Gods own lunatics", Joe Galloway's tribute to the Huey and her flight crews and other Infantry veterans comments:

“Is there anyone here today who does not thrill to the sound of those Huey blades? That familiar whop-whop-whop is the soundtrack of our war ... The lullaby of our younger days it is burned in to our brains and our hearts. To those who spent their time in Nam as a grunt, know that noise was always a great comfort ... Even today when I hear it, I stop ... catch my breath...and search the sky for a glimpse of the mighty eagle.

To the pilots and crews of that wonderful machine ... we loved you, we loved that machine.

No matter how bad things were ... if we called ... you came ... down through the hail of green tracers and other visible signs of a real bad day off to a bad start. I can still hear the sound of those blades churning the fiery sky ... To us you seemed beyond brave and fearless ... Down you would come to us in the middle of battle in those flimsy thin skin - chariots ... into the storm of fire and hell, ... we feared for you, we were awed by you. We thought of you and that beautiful bird as " God's own lunatics" ... and wondered ... who are these men and this machine and where do they come from ... Have to be "God's Angels".”

So with that I say to her, that beautiful lady sitting out there, from me and all my lucky brothers, that were given the honor to serve their country, and the privilege of flying this great lady in skies of Vietnam - Thank you for the memories...Thank you for always being there ... Thank you for always bringing us home regardless of how beat up and shot up you were ..., Thank You!

You will never be forgotten, we loved you then ... we love you now ... And will love you till our last breath ...

And as the sun sets today, if you listen quietly and closely you will hear that faint wop wop wop of our mother speaking to all her children past and present who rode her into history in a blaze of glory ... she will be saying to them: I am here ... I will always be here with you.

I am at peace and so should you be ... and so should you be.

Ladies of the Association

Painting Charleston Artillery Red

I hope that those who attended Reunion 2011 in Charleston, SC enjoyed it as much as I did. Most people checked in on Wednesday and it was good to see old faces from past reunions and new ones at this one. There were thirty six wives and guests in attendance and it appeared that all were as enthusiastic as the guys. The first day of any reunion is a time for renewing old friendships and making new ones. Our meeting room, hospitality suite, and the hotel lounge provided ample room for all to gather, or spread out, and catch up on what had happened since the last reunion. Since we were reluctant to part company and since our hotel had a small dining area most of us walked to the Marriot next door for dinner. When we got back to our hotel most of us gathered in the lounge for socializing before retiring.

After breakfast on Thursday we made our way to Patriot's Point and spent the morning touring the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown. Since a lot of our guys went to Vietnam by boat when the 1st Cavalry Division deployed in 1965 it was interesting to see how they lived on Navy ships. I have to say that it was a far cry from the luxury of cruise ships. The USS Clamagore was one of the last diesel powered submarines and touring it was like walking through a large pipe that someone had crammed full of engines, living, cooking, eating, sleeping quarters, control/operational and weapons spaces. It was only about 16 feet wide at most. Sort of like a tight fighting RV that goes underwater. Certainly not a place for people like me. No windows! Also interesting was the re-created naval support base from the Vietnam Era. After seeing it, it was very easy to imagine what the accommodations for our guys were like once they were in-country.

We were on our own for lunch and a number of people ate in the CPO mess on the Yorktown while others made their way to various eating establishments in the Mount Pleasant area. A large group went to RB's (not to be confused with Arby's), one of the many waterfront restaurants and enjoyed a fine seafood lunch in a dining area overlooking Shem Creek. After lunch some of us went to Fort Moultrie and had a Confederate view of Fort Sumter. Then it was back to Patriot's Point to catch the ferry to Fort Sumter. Touring Fort Sumter gives one a sense of the most momentous conflict in American History for it was here that the American Civil War began 150 years ago. After completing this tour we made our way back to the hotel for some Low Country Cuisine – Frogmore Stew and Barbeque. For those who may not know, Frogmore Stew (so named because it

originated in the town of Frogmore, SC) is a dish consisting of shrimp, sausage, potatoes, corn, onions, and lots of Old Bay seasoning). It is also known in some circles as a "Low Country Boil." It is a traditional seafood dish in this part of the country. After dinner most of us gathered in the lounge once more. It was small and our group pretty much filled it up – sort of like having a private club. It also allowed one to observe how our guys were bonding together, much like they had done in Vietnam.

Friday morning was our group tour of the "H.L.Hunley" Museum. Built in 1863, the "Hunley" was a Confederate submersible that demonstrated the advantages and dangers of undersea warfare. While it was not the first submarine, the "Hunley" was the first to engage and sink an enemy warship. Following its successful attack on the "USS Housatonic", the "Hunley" was also lost and was not recovered until the year 2000, when it was raised and brought back to Charleston where it now resides in a fresh water tank at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center. While it is interesting to read about and see this vessel it is also quite sobering to realize that you are observing what was the tomb of its last crew for 136 years.

The annual business meeting for the guys was scheduled for Friday afternoon. They went to lunch in groups and I understand that some of them straggled in throughout the entire meeting. I guess they found places of interest just like we did. Anyway about 25 of the women took the trolley downtown for lunch at "Hyman's." This place is an institution, featured in Southern Living and other publications that tell you where to eat. It is family run and they welcome you as if they had known you all your life. They easily managed to accommodate our group and brought complimentary appetizers like Fried Green Tomatoes, Crab Dip, Calamari, and Hushpuppies. For some this was their first experience with the Fried Green Tomatoes. Everyone agreed that the food was delicious and that it was a memorable dining experience. After lunch we then proceeded to the Old City Market and other shopping areas of downtown Charleston. Some of the group broke off and went sightseeing. You are never far away from something of historical significance in Charleston.

Friday evening was dinner on your own and most of our folks took advantage of the many fine dining establishments that Charleston has to offer. Some also took advantage of the evening tours that are offered. Saturday was free time for everyone and many used this time to explore Charleston. A lot of what you could and should see was listed in the "Reunion Extra" and in the Charleston Area Visitors Guide, but you have to actually get out and see it to appreciate it. There are

beautiful houses and plantations that pre-date the Revolution, scenic gardens, museums, theaters, art galleries, etc. There are so many sights that it would take days to really take in Charleston. Saturday evening was our Farewell Dinner on the “USS Yorktown.” The catering company did a magnificent job on decorations and table layout and served an outstanding meal. The setting was almost perfect – there was a fine evening breeze and a beautiful sunset over Charleston harbor. There were a couple of humorous events that kept it from being absolutely perfect. The fire drill for the Cub Scout troops that were holding a sleepover in the forward part of the ship, the outbound vessel that sounded its horn during General Brady’s speech, and music from a hotel about a half a mile down the beach that was quite loud. It was loud enough so that you would have to wonder about the hearing of the people who were actually there. All in all, it was a great gathering and everyone appeared to enjoy themselves immensely. We are happy to report that the silent auction brought in \$715 for the Association. Back at the hotel we gathered in the lounge and hospitality suite one last time. As time passed the groups got smaller until we were finally down to one group of wives and a few husbands and singles. We were having too much fun to part company but finally had to when they closed the bar. I think we all agreed that the Ladies of the Association had bonded and were all looking forward to the next reunion. Sunday morning there was one last gathering at breakfast and then most departed for home. There were very few goodbyes. On departure the comment that was heard most often was “See you next year in Portland.” And with that Reunion 2011 was over.

Gloria J. Hobby
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Touristas observe famous artists demonstrating their craft at Battery Point.
Picture by Jean Talbot



St. Phillips Church
Photo by Billy Wood



Sidewalk basket stall at Battery Walk
Photo by Billy Wood



Sweetgrass basket maker at City Market
Photo by Billy Wood



Carolyn Woods checks the defenses of Ft. Sumter.
Photo by Billy Wood



Cindy and Herb Hirst at Fort Moultrie
(Photo by Gloria Hobby)



Carrie (Konitzer) Hutto, Kim Mock and Judy Konitzer add class to the Farewell Dinner on the Yorktown.
Photo by Tom Konitzer

Chaplain's Corner



“The Table is Set”

At our 14th Annual Reunion in Charleston, SC, May 18-22, 2011, we were introduced to *The Missing Men Table Ceremony* by the director of catering services, Christina Jordan, on the USS Yorktown. This honors ceremony is from the POW/MIA organization. As we arrived on the fan tail of the carrier on Saturday evening for our reunion banquet, members noticed a table set with three place settings, reserved for the three members who died since our last reunion: GARY ARNOLD, A Btry, 4/77th, Feb 16; FRED BECK, A Btry 2/20th, Feb 21; and GUS CIANCIOLO, B Btry 2/20, Apr 4.

I would like to explain why we did that and the meaning of this special table. The table is set to show our everlasting concern for those we lose. A white tablecloth symbolizes the purity of their motives when answering the call to duty. The single rose, displayed in a vase, reminds us of the life of each, and the loved ones and friends who keep the faith. The vase is tied with a ribbon, symbol of continued determination. A slice of lemon on the bread plate is to remind us of the bitterness of their loss. A pinch of salt symbolizes the tears endured by those remain. The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to those who served our country, founded as one nation under God. The glass is inverted to symbolize their inability to share this evening's toast. The chairs are empty – they are missing. The lit candle says that we will never forget them.



Our Lord told us that he goes to prepare a place for us and that where he is we may be also. That is our hope. We hold annual reunions with banquets to be with those still with us here on earth. The final banquet feast will be with all those who have gone before.

My prayer is this, “Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servants, Gary, Fred, and Gus. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, sheep of your own fold, lambs of your own flock, sinners won by your redeeming. Receive them into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.”

Peace to all.

Bruce Wilder
Chaplain

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Jesse Hobby
ARA 6



Aerial Rocket Artillery Association

Membership Application

This form may be used for New membership or for Renewing existing membership. Please circle that which is appropriate.

Referred by: _____

Name _____ Wife's name _____

Rank (at time of service in ARA) _____ Membership Number _____

Retired Rank (if applicable) _____ Service # _____

Btry & Bn in which you served (list all assignments in ARA)

Date of Service - From _____ To _____ Call Sign in ARA _____

2nd Tour _____ To _____ Call Sign in ARA _____
mo/yr mo/yr mo/yr mo/yr

Current Address: _____

Street or PO Box

_____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: _____ Home _____ Work (if OK) _____ 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 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 Larry Mobley
779 County Road 106
Ozark, AL 36360

For Office Use Only
Check # _____
Check Date _____
Amount _____
Date Rcvd _____