

# SWIFT CURRENT

The official publication of the  
Swift Boat Sailors Association

II Quarter 2009

Comments & suggestions to-  
[editor@swiftboats.org](mailto:editor@swiftboats.org)



Henry Burnevich renders a salute after placing a Swift pin on the grave of Eugene L. Self

**Terry Boone has another project!** Not content with rounding up members, finding lost Swifties, and generally helping each of us find our crews, Terry has begun to enlist the help of members from coast to coast in placing our trademark Blue Oval Swift pins on the grave site or marker of each Swiftie KIA.

## UPDATE - Reunion 2009

June 24-28, 2009

The reunion is fast approaching. The economic downturn is affecting all of us in some way. In order to avoid any penalties we have reduced the number of rooms in our room block at the hotel. If you are planning to attend the reunion and have not done so, you need to make your hotel reservations NOW. The deadline for hotel and reunion reservations is May 23, 2009.

The reunion committee, Team JAX, wanted to allow as much time as possible for old friends to get caught up so we have scheduled only two tours – Historic St. Augustine, FL and a visit to Naval Station Mayport (and possible ship visit). The Hospitality Room will provide beverages and snacks to help in the telling of many sea stories! You will be able to purchase ball caps, shirts, patches, books and more in the Ship's Store. Saturday morning we will elect FIVE Directors to fill expiring positions on the Board of Directors at the Business Meeting.

We will once again hold a raffle for a model Swift Boat made by Miniature Dream Models, Inc. The 23 inch model is of high-quality construction and is valued at \$300.00.

Saturday evening CAPT Tony Krueger, Commander, RIVGRU ONE, will give the keynote address at the Saturday evening banquet. RIVGRU ONE CMDCM Giroux will also be attending the banquet. The new Board of Directors and Officers will be announced along with the winner of the Swift Boat model raffle.

**See Inside for Information on the FIRST-EVER writers' conference to be held at the reunion. This unique get-together features Swifties who have written their stories and had them published!**

## Five SBSA Board Director positions are available

If you are interested in standing for election, please contact Virg Erwin: [VirgErwin@aol.com](mailto:VirgErwin@aol.com)

Board Directors are elected by the SBSA members attending the reunion business meeting.

The Board appoints Officers to manage daily affairs - Board members can also be Officers - The SBSA By-laws are on the SBSA web site

Two requirements of Board Directors are that they must be email accessible as well as active participants in email communication between Officers and participate in decision making correspondence in a timely fashion. Also, Directors must be willing and able to attend off-year Board Director Meetings, held usually at the following year's reunion city location. Conference calls, although infrequent, also require Board Director participation.

## The Lies of Tet

[http://online.wsj.com/public/article\\_print/SB120226056767646059.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB120226056767646059.html)

By ARTHUR HERMAN, February 6, 2008

On January 30, 1968, more than a quarter million North Vietnamese soldiers and 100,000 Viet Cong irregulars launched a massive attack on South Vietnam. But the public didn't hear about who had won this most decisive battle of the Vietnam War, the so-called Tet offensive, until much too late.

Media misreporting of Tet passed into our collective memory. That picture gave antiwar activism an unwarranted credibility that persists today in Congress, and in the media reaction to the war in Iraq. The Tet experience provides a narrative model for those who wish to see all U.S. military successes - such as the Petraeus surge - minimized and glossed over.

In truth, the war in Vietnam was lost on the propaganda front, in great measure due to the press's pervasive misreporting of the clear U.S. victory at Tet as a defeat. Forty years is long past time to set the historical record straight.

The Tet offensive came at the end of a long string of communist setbacks. By 1967 their insurgent army in the South, the Viet Cong, had proved increasingly ineffective, both as a military and political force. Once American combat troops began arriving in the summer of 1965, the communists were mauled in one battle after another, despite massive Hanoi support for the southern insurgency with soldiers and arms. By 1967 the VC had lost control over areas like the Mekong Delta - ironically, the very place where reporters David Halberstam and Neil Sheehan had first diagnosed a Vietnam "quagmire" that never existed.

The Tet offensive was Hanoi's desperate throw of the dice to seize South Vietnam's northern provinces using conventional armies, while simultaneously triggering a popular uprising in support of the Viet Cong. Both failed. Americans and South Vietnamese soon put down the attacks, which began under cover of a cease-fire to celebrate the Tet lunar new year. By March 2, when U.S. Marines crushed the last North Vietnamese pockets of resistance in the northern city of Hue, the VC had lost 80,000-100,000 killed or wounded without capturing a single province.

Tet was a particularly crushing defeat for the VC. It had not only failed to trigger any uprising but also cost them "our best people," as former Viet Cong doctor Duong Quynh Hoa later admitted to reporter Stanley Karnow. Yet the very fact of the U.S. military victory - "The North Vietnamese," noted National Security official William Bundy at the time, "fought to the last Viet Cong" - was spun otherwise by most of the U.S. press.

As the Washington Post's Saigon bureau chief Peter Braestrup documented in his 1977 book, "The Big Story," the desperate fury of the communist attacks including on Saigon, where most reporters lived and worked, caught the press by surprise. (Not the military: It had been expecting an attack and had been on full alert since Jan. 24.) It also put many reporters in physical danger for the first time. Braestrup, a former Marine, calculated that only 40 of 354 print and TV journalists covering the war at the time had seen any real fighting. Their own panic deeply colored their reportage, suggesting that the communist assault had flung Vietnam into chaos.

Their editors at home, like CBS's Walter Cronkite, seized on the distorted reporting to discredit the military's version of events. The Viet Cong insurgency was in its death throes, just as U.S. military officials assured the American people at the time. Yet the press version painted a different picture.

To quote Braestrup, "the media tended to leave the shock and confusion of early February, *as then perceived*, fixed as the final impression of Tet" and of Vietnam generally. "Drama was perpetuated at the expense of information," and "the negative trend" of media reporting "added to the distortion of the real situation on the ground in Vietnam."

The North Vietnamese were delighted. On the heels of their devastating defeat, Hanoi increasingly shifted its propaganda efforts toward the media and the antiwar movement. Causing *American* (not South Vietnamese) casualties, even at heavy cost, became a battlefield objective in order to reinforce the American media's narrative of a failing policy in Vietnam.

*Continued on page 3*

## President's Corner

Shipmates,

The Jacksonville Reunion is around the corner. I look forward to seeing many of you there. East coast Swifties - this is your opportunity to make a national gathering and see friends that you haven't seen in a good while. There is still time to make your travel reservations.

Jim Schneider & Virg Erwin are preparing the candidate slate for the 2011 Board Director elections.

The official SBSA Logo patches and stickers, design selected by our members at the San Diego Reunion business meeting in 2007, will be available in Jacksonville. Ken Briggs will be making those items available on the Ship's Store at the reunion.

SBSA will be making a substantial long-term commitment and donation to VUMMF at the reunion in a special presentation at our banquet. Without "spilling the beans" it will be impressive!

The SBSA continues its support of the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument Fund. The three Task Force veteran organizations, along with the VUMMF, made equal contributions for the upgrading of the VUMMF's web site. Part of the upgrade will include a short three minute introduction video clip to each section. This will go a long way towards hopefully locating more Swifties.

A recent medical diagnosis has moved me into learning all about the Veterans Administration claim process. I have often addressed the importance of contacting fellow Swifties who have offered their assistance in dealing with the VA. Bob Hunt, Dave Hansen, Jim Deal, Dan Aguilar, David Clayton, Warren Jenny, and many others have already gone through the VA claim process and have provided great support in the past to those of us that have questions regarding the VA.

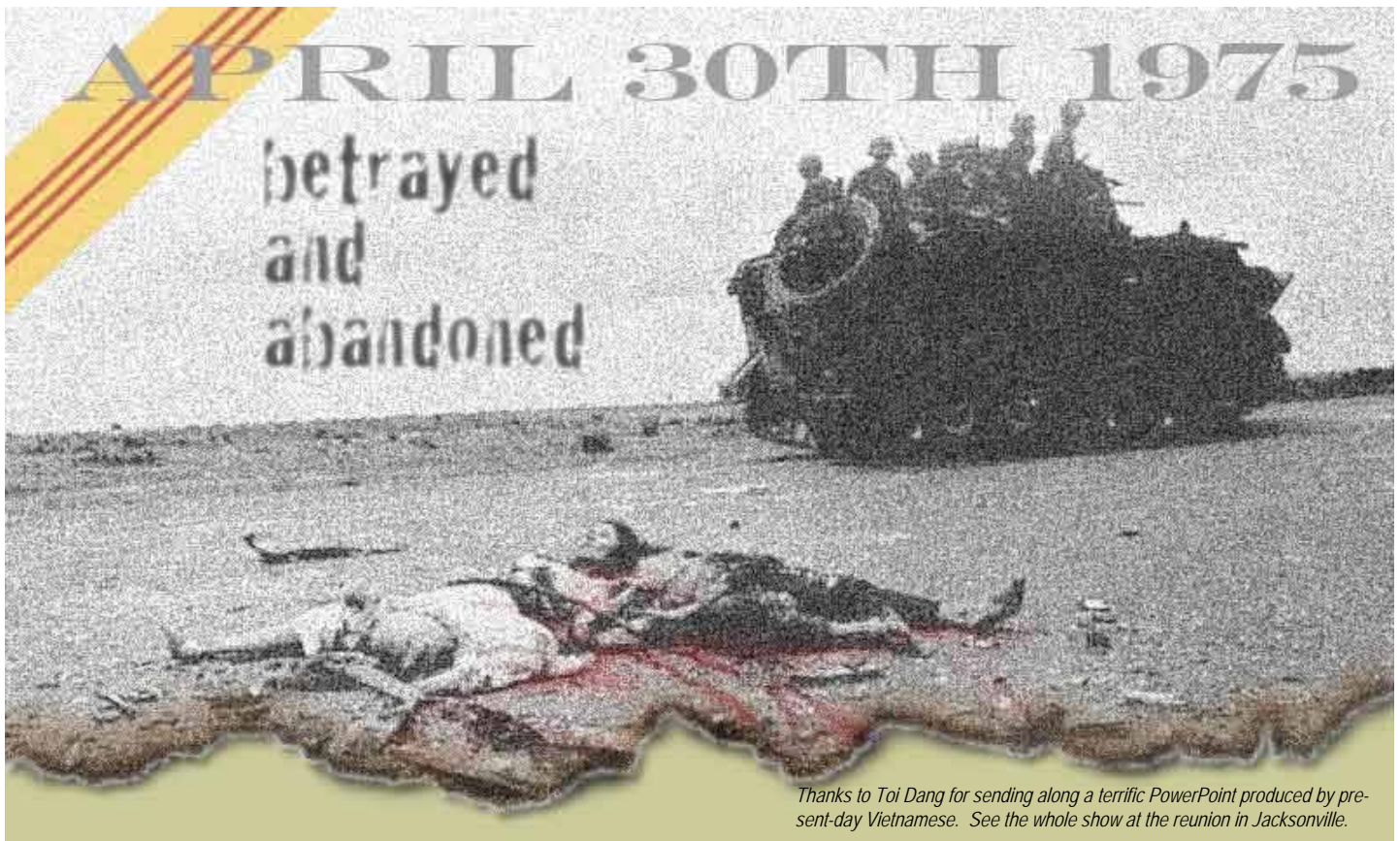
My pending claim is for Type II Diabetes, Tinnitus, Hearing Loss and PTSD. I am proof that calling on fellow Swifties to assist you with the VA related questions works. In this newsletter, you will find a section that contains helpful Internet web site links pertinent to the VA and PTSD.

See you in Jacksonville shipmates!

This Memorial Day, let us all remember not only our own special Swift Boat Honor Crew, but **all** the brave military heroes that have given their all for the freedom that we enjoy today.....REMEMBER!

Raul Herrera





Thanks to Toi Dang for sending along a terrific PowerPoint produced by present-day Vietnamese. See the whole show at the reunion in Jacksonville.

*The Lies of Tet*

Yet thanks to the success of Tet, the numbers of Americans dying in Vietnam steadily declined - from almost 15,000 in 1968 to 9,414 in 1969 and 4,221 in 1970 - by which time the Viet Cong had ceased to exist as a viable fighting force. One Vietnamese province after another witnessed new peace and stability. By the end of 1969 over 70% of South Vietnam's population was under government control, compared to 42% at the beginning of 1968. In 1970 and 1971, American ambassador Ellsworth Bunker estimated that 90% of Vietnamese lived in zones under government control.

However, all this went unnoticed because misreporting about Tet had left the image of Vietnam as a botched counterinsurgency - an image nearly half a decade out of date. The failure of the North's next massive invasion over Easter 1972, which cost the North Vietnamese army another 100,000 men and half their tanks and artillery, finally forced it to sign the peace accords in Paris and formally to recognize the Republic of South Vietnam. By August 1972 there were no U.S. combat forces left in Vietnam, precisely because, contrary to the overwhelming mass of press reports, American policy there had been a success.

To Congress and the public, however, the war had been nothing but a debacle. And by withdrawing American troops, President Nixon gave up any U.S. political or military leverage on Vietnam's future. With U.S. military might out of the equation, the North quickly cheated on the Paris accords. When its re-equipped army launched a massive attack in 1975, Congress refused to redeem Nixon's pledges of military support for the South. Instead, President Gerald Ford bowed to what the media had convinced the American public was inevitable: the fall of Vietnam.

The collapse of South Vietnam's neighbor, Cambodia, soon followed. Southeast Asia entered the era of the "killing fields," exterminating in a brief few years an estimated two million people - 30% of the Cambodian population. American military policy has borne the scars of Vietnam ever since.

It had all been preventable - but for the lies of Tet.

*Mr. Herman is the author of "Gandhi and Churchill: The Epic Rivalry That Destroyed an Empire and Forged Our Age," to be published by Bantam Dell in April.*

## Now Hear This! Fathers' Day is June 21 2009

SBSA Ship's Store - leave this page where your wife or kids are likely to see it.



<http://swiftboats.org/shipsstore/catalog.html>



**Now Available at  
The Ship's Store**

### Cat Lo, A Memoir of Invincible Youth

Cat Lo is a story of young men who volunteer for Swift Boats in Vietnam and about war's indelible lesson for those who survive: life is too precious to waste.

Thirty-six years after Vietnam, Virg Erwin sits with a disfigured marine convalescing from Iraq and asks, "Do you want to talk about it?" It is a question no one has ever asked Erwin. "It was hard to know who were civilians—who were bad guys," the marine says as he describes being caught in a violent ambush.

For Erwin, the marine's story resurrects memories of sailors patrolling narrow rivers and canals, their naïve sense of invincibility shattered by Viet Cong patiently waiting in bunkers with rockets. Cat Lo is about conflict of compassion for the South Vietnamese who are caught in the middle of war without option of neutrality, and confusion by the question: Who is the enemy and who is not?



Cat Lo Photo - 1968 ?



Google Earth Photo - 2009

And....as long as we're talking about Cat Lo -

Bill Rogers sends this comparison of modern day Cat Lo to a photo from - maybe - 1968.

#### ONE TIME ONLY!

This car and it's Swiftie driver were featured in an earlier Swift Current - **we don't usually do this kind of thing!** -Ed.



This a fiberglass 1927 Ford Roadster with a new Ford 351w motor. It has a Ford C6 transmission w/ Ford 389 gears & positrac 9" Ford rear-end. The entire car has been gone through & will gladly send pictures to anyone really interested. While engine was being built by a pro engine builder, the entire car was gone through. It is like owning a brand new car. I am asking 20k or will consider trading for a 56' Chevy, two dr. hard-top or post car.

Warren Jenny  
Lago Vista, TX  
281-382-0001  
[scuttlebutt5@peoplepc.com](mailto:scuttlebutt5@peoplepc.com)

**Don't Even Think of Moving Without Telling Us!**

**Email - Letter - Telephone - Just DO IT!**

**Gene Hart - (904) 880-6412 - ghart@unf.edu - 3941 Laurelwood Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32257**



## Monument Honors Slain Soldiers

*Helmets, different weapons commemorate three wars*

Richard O'Mara of Pacific Grove was sitting in a Veterans Administration clinic waiting for his annual Agent Orange test when he noticed "some old guys."

"Looking at their hats, they were Korea and World War II vets - Normandy, the Bulge - and I thought it was kind of sad that here we were, sitting in a VA clinic that had nothing in it that says, "Thanks a lot."

O'Mara, a Navy veteran of two tours off Vietnam, the last one patrolling the Mekong Delta on a Swift boat, started doodling a sketch of something that might get the message out.

"Every time I see a picture of a helmet atop a rifle," he said, "it's always a cruncher for me."

Temporary battlefield graves are often marked with the soldier's weapon thrust into the ground and his helmet set atop, and O'Mara said he sketched three such markers with three different weapons to commemorate the three wars that soldiers passing through Fort Ord as trainees went on to fight: an M-1 rifle for World War II, an M-1 carbine for Korea, and an M-16 for Vietnam.

O'Mara talked to authorities at Fort Ord and got permission to put his proposed monument outside the VA clinic at 3401 Engineer Lane on the former Army post.

He traced the design and brought it to Monterey Sculpture Studios, where it was cut out of sheet steel and welded. Then he took the sculpture to Salinas for a bronze powder finish.

O'Mara said he next called Granite Construction Co. to price the cost of a foundation for the sculpture "and they said they'd do it for nothing." In addition to a concrete pedestal, Granite poured a sidewalk leading to the monument, which includes the three markers and a bronze plaque that states, "For those who have fought for it, freedom has a price the protected will never know."

O'Mara said the monuments conception to completion took six months, in time for last Memorial Day.

have fought for it, freedom has a price the protected will never know."

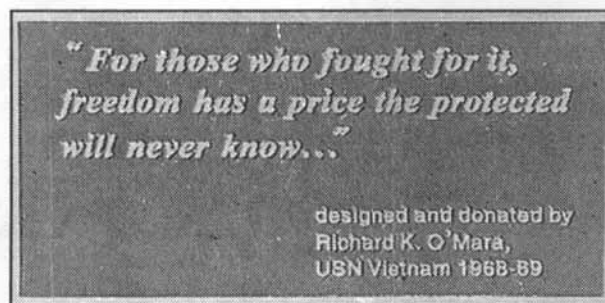
O'Mara said the monuments conception to completion took six months, in time for last Memorial Day.

The monument has taken on a life of its own, he said.

"Periodically, people leave mementos at the monument, like a can of beer, a pack of cigarettes, flowers."

"Nurses at the clinic tell me sometimes guys walk up to it and just lose it looking at it."

*[copied from the Montgomery Herald - written by Kevin Howe]*



## RADM Carol M. Pottenger

**Comander Navy Expeditionary Combat Command**



I am pleased to announce that **Captain Anthony L. Krueger**, Commander, Riverine Group ONE, (<http://www.necc.navy.mil/>) will be the keynote speaker at our reunion banquet. As of this morning the count for registering for the reunion or the hotel **or both** stands over 90. June will be here soon.

If you have not registered for the reunion and/or with the hotel, the deadline is May 23, 2009.

We are looking for volunteers for a 1-2 hour shift to help keep the hospitality room stocked with beverage & snacks. Please contact me or Lenny Pratt ([car33lap@aol.com](mailto:car33lap@aol.com)) if you can help out.

Golfers - if you wish to play a round of golf on a great course contact Jim Corrigan ([corrigan26@comcast.net](mailto:corrigan26@comcast.net)).

If you have any questions or concerns about the reunion please let me know: Cell (904) 234-4278 Home - (904) 880-6412 Work - (904) 620-2023 - [ghart@unf.edu](mailto:ghart@unf.edu)

Looking forward to swapping sea stories with each of you in June!

Gene Hart  
Reunion Chair  
Team JAX



## WRITERS' CONFERENCE

## SWIFT BOAT SAILORS ASSOCIATION

**SATURDAY  
JUNE 27, 2009  
FOLLOWING  
THE BUSINESS MEETING**

The Swift Boat Sailors Association is sponsoring a Writers' Conference after the business meeting on Saturday, June 27, 2009. This is an opportunity for Swifties and their families to listen to talks by our authors, ask questions about the writing process or about the individual books, followed by a book signing at the Ship's Store. This is the first time an event of this type has been offered at an SBSA reunion, and we hope you will attend. The participants are:

**Gary Blinn**, a Nebraska native, graduated in 1966 from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland and the Harvard Business School. He was O in C of PCF 97 in Vietnam, and is the author of *Confession to a Deaf God Memoir of a Mekong River Rat*. He is a former international banker and owns a beer distributorship in Nebraska.

**Virgil Erwin III**, resides in San Diego and is a retired Vice President of Worldwide Sales for Entegris, Inc. He comes from a career Navy family, and served as O in C of PCF 67 in Cat Lo, Vietnam, 1968-69. Virg is a Board member of the Swift Boat Sailors Association, the Vietnam Unit Memorial and the Admiral Roy F. Hoffmann Foundation, and is the author of *Cat Lo A Memoir of Invincible Youth*.

**Raul "Bean" Herrera**, is the President of the Swift Boat Sailors Association. He served aboard PCF 79 as the radarman/radioman in 1967. Raul is a design technician for Dannenbaum Engineering in Houston. He is author of "Swift Boats in Operation Market Time" (*Vietnam Magazine*) and *Skunk Alpha*.

**John O'Neill** comes from a Navy family (his father was a distinguished Naval aviator in World War II and retired from active duty as an admiral). John is a 1967 honors graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, received his J.D. from the University of Texas in 1973, and clerked for Justice William H. Rehnquist on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1974-75. John was the O in C of PCF 94 at An Thoi in 1969. He is in private law practice in Houston, Texas, where he specializes in large-scale commercial litigation. He is the best-selling author of *Unfit for Command*.

**Lynn Salsi**, is the wife of Swiftie (1969-1970) Burke Salsi. Lynn has a B.A. in journalism and an M.A. in writing. Lynn has an extensive background in writing (20 books to her credit thus far), including *Firefight on Vietnam Brown Water*. Lynn was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for biography in 2008. Lynn's web site is [www.lsalsi.com](http://www.lsalsi.com).

**Weymouth Symmes** is a Montana native who served on PCFs 56, 93 and 6 from 1969-70 as a radarman second class. He holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Montana and is a retired banker. He currently serves on the Board of the Admiral Roy F. Hoffmann Foundation. He is the author of *War on the Rivers A Swift Boat Sailor's Chronicle of the Battle for the Mekong Delta* and

## Swift Boat Postage Stamp

Barbara Brant recently shared information on the availability of a Swift Boat postage stamp. She purchased a quantity for Tuck as a gift. Check out the site at [zazzle.com](http://zazzle.com) and link into the Postage section, followed by Cards + Postage and then do a search of "Swiftboat." Thank you for the lead, Barb!



## Interim Report of the 2011 SBSA Reunion Site Selection Committee

**Note:** Comments on competitive room rates means that in February 2009 they were at or below \$125 based on arrival Thursday June 18 and departing Sunday June 21, 2009. Hotels were selected based upon location and convention/banquet space for 500 people except Memphis. It is assumed Group rates would be less than above quoted rate, but it is still two years away.

This Summary was sent to MRTR on 9 March. I've not yet received any feedback from MRTR on Request For Proposal that they sent to these six cities.

### Austin

Airport is 11 miles from downtown.

41 cities have non-stop flights

12 major airlines

Ground transportation – Super shuttle \$25

Desired area: Downtown within walking distance to shops and restaurants

Target hotel: Sheraton, downtown with competitive room rates and has ample convention space

Attractions:

Music (Austin City Limits) – 1 mile

Barton Springs – swimming sans swimsuits – 1 mile

SoCo District - Boot shops and restaurants walk or short taxi ride – 1 mile

Canoeing on a downtown lake – 1 mile

LBJ Library – 1 mile

Salt Lick, 10 miles from downtown, an indoor/outdoor restaurant famous for ribs & brisket

### Chicago

O'Hare airport is 18 miles from downtown

Second busiest airport in US, all major airlines and non-stop service too numerous to mention.

Ground transportation – free shuttle to major hotels in Rosemont

Desired area: Rosemont, 1.5 miles from O'Hare

Target hotels: Sheraton, Wyndham, Hyatt, all with competitive room rates and ample convention space.

Attractions:

Navy Pier – boardwalk, boat tours, dining and shopping – 15 miles

Millennium Park – 15 miles

Little Italy

On and Off Tour bus to downtown - \$25

Alternate area: Rolling Meadows (Schaumburg area) – 9 miles from O'Hare

Target hotel: Holiday Inn, competitive rates, convention space, complimentary hospitality space, seeking in SBSA business (contact Reyna Espinosa)

### Denver

Airport is 26 miles from downtown.

130 US and international cities have non-stop flights

All major airlines

Ground transportation - Super shuttle is \$29 one-way.

Desired area is downtown near 16<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian mall

Target hotels are the Sheraton and Marriott located on the pedestrian mall, both with competitive rates and convention space

Attractions:

16<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian mall for shopping, dining and entertainment

Denver Botanic Gardens – one of the top ten - ten minutes from downtown

LoDo District for nightlife and jazz - downtown

Molly Brown House Museum – tour of Victorian home of the unsinkable Molly Brown, survivor of the Titanic - downtown

US Mint – free 20 minute tour to watch blank ore become coins - downtown

Denver Art Museum - downtown

### Houston

Bush Airport is 20 miles from downtown

110 cities have non-stop flights

18 airlines

Ground transportation - \$30 via shuttle, \$51 taxi to downtown hotels

Hobby Airport is 16 miles from downtown

32 cities have non-stop flights

Ground transportation – same as from Bush airport

Desired area: Downtown

Target hotels:

InterContinental Houston one block from Galleria – room rate \$79, banquet capacity 960

Crowne Plaza - banquet capacity is 300

Attractions:

Galleria – shopping district – 3 miles

Space Center – 24 miles

Battleship Texas w/ BBQ lunch – 22 miles

Kemah Boardwalk – 33 miles

George Ranch Historical Park with chuck wagon BBQ and dancing – 30 miles

### Memphis

Airport is 15 minutes from downtown

30 cities have non-stop flights

9 major airlines

Ground transportation – Shuttle service is \$16

Desired area: Downtown

Target hotels: (Banquet capacity could be an issue)

Double Tree \$125 (banquet capacity is 340)

Westin on Beale Street is \$139 (banquet capacity is only 192)

Crowne Plaza is \$150 (banquet capacity is 200)

Attractions:

Mississippi riverboat tours (no guns)

Graceland

Beale Street Historic District – restaurants, nightclubs, Rock 'n' Roll Museum and shopping

Jack Daniel's Distillery – oldest distillery – tour of sour mash whiskey-making

W.C. Handy Park – Beale Street – free evening concerts

### San Antonio

Airport is 8 miles from downtown.

32 cities have non-stop flights

18 major airlines

Ground transportation – Shuttle is \$18, Taxi \$22, 15 minutes to Crowne Plaza

Desired area: River Walk

Target hotel: Crowne Plaza on the River Walk, Banquet capacity is 660, competitive room rates (contact Martha Bernal for RFP)

Attractions:

River Walk – restaurants, shops, boat rides, music

Alamo – walking distance

Japanese Tea Garden – 2.3 miles

Buckhorn Saloon & Museum – 0.3 miles – walking distance

Botanical Garden – 3 miles

Market Square for shopping & cooking classes – 1.2 miles

***An update will be provided at the business meeting and - time permitting - there will be an opportunity to voice your preferences. Virg Erwin and Joe Ponder are heading this effort. Feel free to contact them with your ideas!***

**You can get updates on lots of things about Swifties at [www.swiftboats.org](http://www.swiftboats.org) or on the MyFamily website. If you don't belong to MyFamily, contact Jim Deal at [JamesDD8860@aol.com](mailto:JamesDD8860@aol.com) and he will sign you up!**

Swift Boat Sailors Association  
3941 Laurelwood Drive  
Jacksonville, FL 32257-8926



## ALL SWIFTIES - READ & HEED THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### ***VA DIABETES MELLITUS CARE UPDATE***

The occurrence of Type 2, or adult onset, diabetes is increasing particularly for the Vietnam Era veteran. For veterans of Vietnam, there is a statistically higher incidence of Type 2 diabetes. Because of this, the Veterans Affairs Department declared a link between Vietnam service and the disease. This means that if you have served in Vietnam and now have Type 2 diabetes, you are eligible for service-connected disability compensation and health care connected with this condition through the VA. The term "service in Vietnam" means that at some time between 9 JAN 62 and 7 MAY 75, you were in Vietnam. Service in the waters offshore or in the air does not qualify you unless during that time you set foot in Vietnam. Service in the waters offshore or in the air does not qualify you unless during that time you set foot in Vietnam and have some way to prove it. For most veterans who served in Vietnam, their service is clearly shown on their separation papers, the DD-214.

If you have qualifying service, you should obtain a statement from your treating doctor that you are currently being treated for the disease. The more detail you provide, the easier it will be for the VA to handle your claim, so try to get a copy of your treatment records for the past year. A successful claim could entitle you to monetary compensation and treatment for your diabetes. The evaluation will be assessed through a VA examination, during which a VA doctor will evaluate your current condition. The VA will then assign and evaluation through the rating process. The evaluation could be as little as zero percent disabling to 100% disabling, which would result in monthly compensation for your condition. Service connection can also be granted for secondary conditions directly related to the diabetes, for example, diabetic retinopathy. Once service connection has been established, you can reopen your claim if the condition progresses or other secondary conditions are discovered. In addition, if service connection is established, you are entitled to care for this condition at any VA medical facility. Medical care includes prescription drugs required without cost for veterans service connected for the condition. If you've never filed a claim with the VA before, or you know someone who may benefit from this information, contact your local Veterans Service office. [Source: The treasure coast Palm Paul Hiott article 1 Nov 08++]

See the following link for original article: <http://www.tcpalm.com/staff/paul-hiott/>

Thanks to Ed Guzis (Can Rahn, Cua Viet, and An Thoi '67-8)

**VA Internet links** - <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526-ARE.pdf>; [https://www.va.gov/vaforms/form\\_detail.asp?FormNo=21-0781](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/form_detail.asp?FormNo=21-0781);

**PTSD related links** - <http://www.ptsdmanual.com/>; <http://www.vva.org/benefits/ptsd.htm>; <http://www.military.com/benefits/resources/ptsd-overview>; <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/ds00246/dsection=symptoms>; <http://www.ptsdsupport.net/>