

Swift Current

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Official Website: www.swiftboats.org

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President's Corner

Greetings, Crews!

We are happy to announce that our reunion committee in Hampton Roads, Virginia has completed the planning phase of our March 2003 reunion. The entire association extends its compliments to a job well done to the members of the HRRC. **Dr. Michael Solhaug**, chairman, and the entire team have completed a complicated process with various organizations, which will insure success for our reunion. Thank you, **Hampton Roads**.

Reunion!

The registration forms for the reunion have been mailed out, not only to our paid dues members, but also to our entire database. We are at the ages now where even we are beginning to fade away. Who knows, will this reunion be your final meeting with your shipmates?

Ralph & Sherida Singleton

To date, there has not been an arrest made for this crime. The police continue to search for the youngest

son in the Montana area.

Treasurer

The SBSA has appointed Gretchen Hart as temporary treasurer. The staff decided to make this appointment in order to begin the task of getting our accounts reopened with the bank, dues handled in a timely fashion, the reunion funds deposited and checks issued to our hotel and other vendors involved.

A search of past records turned up our original authorizations to Ralph. A special board of directors meeting was held and recorded, changing those authorizations. Also put into place is the new **Financial Committee**. We will have three staff members on that board, Director Dave Wallace, Treasurer Gretchen Hart and Vice President Raul Herrera. There will also be two non-directors nominated to this committee. This selection will be made at the SBSA business meeting in Norfolk.

In that end, I am grateful to report that through the efforts of **Andy Horne**,

Dave Wallace, Raul Herrera, Gene Hart, Robert Shirley and Stacy Acord, a VP of Bank of America, the accounts of the Swift Boat Sailors Association have been reopened. We learned a very hard lesson with the sudden loss of our Treasurer. The new Finance Committee will ensure smooth transitions in the event of another tragedy.

Membership Chairman,

Our past chairman has resigned his position to return to his studies. We commend **Robert Franson** for a job well done. He steadily pursued every lead to former crewmen and introduced him to our association. It never fails to amaze me how many former crewmen did not know there was an SBSA. In his tenure, Bob developed the new member package and the official SBSA bereavement card. The board has appointed **Terry Boone** as our new membership chairman. We thank the staff in advance for their help in assisting

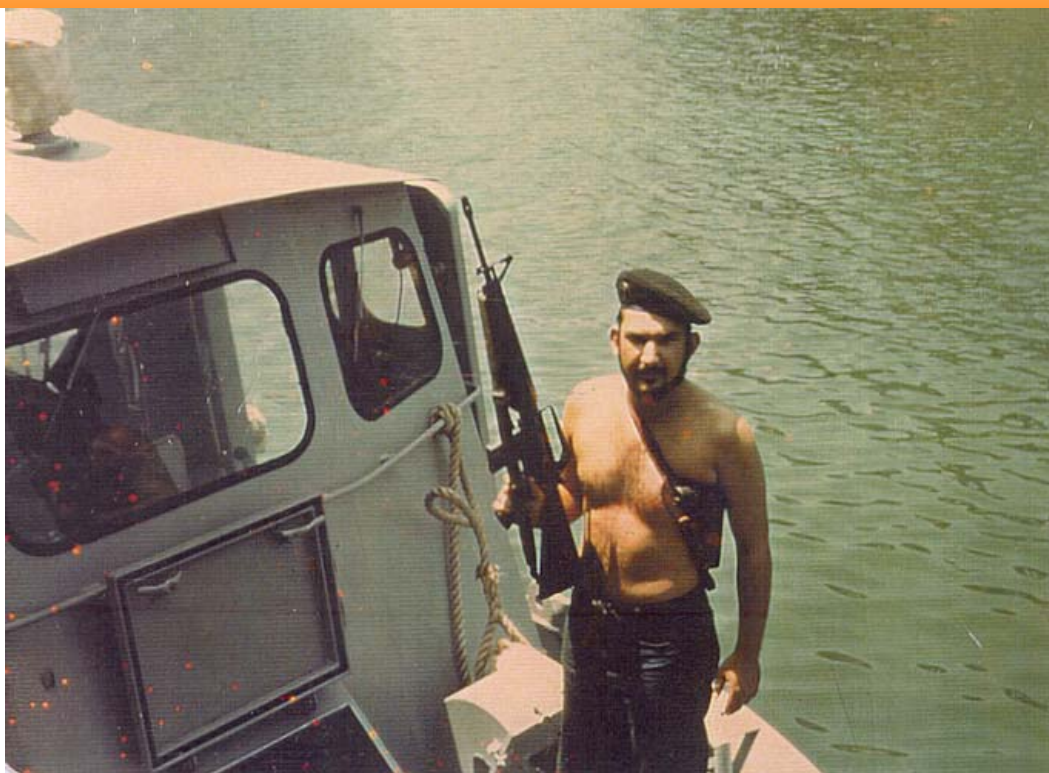
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JOSEPH (DOC) QUARTUCCIO

JANUARY 2, 1940 - NOVEMBER 12, 2002



Joe Quartuccio, 62, passed away Tuesday Nov. 12, 2002. He was born Jan. 2, 1940 in Madison, WI to Jenny and Nicolas Quartuccio.

Joe joined the United States Navy in 1956 at the age of 15; he was a medic on swift boats and submarines. He did a tour in Vietnam in 1966 and was even awarded a purple heart. Joe was honorably discharged in 1974 with the ending rank of E6 (First Class Petty Officer).

Joe worked civil service for the United States government for 23 years. He was working at the Sacramento Army Depot in Sacramento, Ca. until he was transferred to Raymond W. Bliss on Ft. Huachuca, AZ in 1993. He retired from civil service in 1997; he had been a resident of Sierra Vista for almost 10 years.

He was extremely dedicated to his brothers of service so much so, that to honor their memories and keep them alive in our hearts with his fellow Swifties he founded the Swift Boat Sailors Association.

He is preceded in death by his parents, and one sister Florence. He is survived by his wife of 27 years Mary Louise, His four sons Nicolas Quartuccio of Arkansas, Rick Driver of Schaumburg, IL. Robert (Becky) Driver of Hoffman Estates, IL. And Chris Driver of Hoffman Estates IL. His three daughters Sydney Jolly of Chino Valley, Az. Giovannina (Jay) Kovich of Sierra Vista, and Dorothy (Andrew) Bridges of Sierra Vista. He is also survived by his

brothers John Quartuccio of Waupan, WI. And Tony Quartuccio of Marshall WI. And his two Sisters Rose Staggs of Fresno, CA and Mary Jane Quartuccio of Marshall WI.

He left behind 3 grandsons Matthew Stanley of Sierra Vista, Robert Driver Jr. of Hoffman Estates, IL. And Jesse Barber of Chino Valley, AZ. His 5 granddaughters Nicole Quartuccio of Evansville, IN. Rosanna Driver of Hoffman Estates, IL. Maria Nelson of Sierra Vista, Megan Elaine Kovich of Sierra Vista and Jessica Lynn Driver of Hoffman Estates, IL.

Also surviving him are his 2 great-grandchildren Devon McCraw and Justine Maggard of Evansville, IN.

Anyone who knew Joe loved him, he was a loving husband, a great father, and he loved his grandchildren like you wouldn't believe. He was his happiest when he was spending time with the little ones.

Funeral arrangements are being made by Jensen's Funeral home here in Sierra Vista. The Funeral is being held on December 10, 2002. The Viewing will be held from 10 to 12 followed by his burial with honors at 1pm at Southern Arizona's Veterans Memorial Cemetery. There will be a gathering following the graveside service at the VFW Post 9972. Anyone wishing to join us in honoring our dad will be more than welcome to attend.

"Dad you will be deeply missed by all, we love you."

Just A Simple Sailor



He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast	The politician's stipend and the style in which he lives
And he sat around with his buddies telling stories of the past,	Are sometimes disproportionate to the services he gives,
Of a war that he had fought in; and, the deeds that he had done	While the ordinary sailor, who offered up his all,
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.	Is paid off with a medal, and perhaps a pension small.
And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke	Its so easy to forget them, for it was so long ago
All his buddies listened, for they knew where-of he spoke	That our Nick's and Jim' s and Johnny's went to battle for one and all
But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Nick has passed away	But we know it was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,
And the world's a little poorer, for a sailor died today.	Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys.
No, he won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,	Should you find yourself in danger with your enemies at hand
For he lived an ordinary ... and very quiet sort of life,	Would you really want some politician with his ever waffling stand?
He held a job, and raised a family ... quietly going on his way;	Or would you want a soldier/sailor who has sworn to defend
And the world won't note his passing; 'tho a sailor died today.	His home, his kin, and country, and would fight until the end?
When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,	He was just a common sailor and his ranks are growing thin
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great,	But his presence should remind us, we may need his like again.
Papers tell of their life stories from the time that they were young,	For when countries are in conflict, then we find the serviceman's part
But the passing of a sailor goes unnoticed, and unsung.	Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.
Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land	If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,
Some politician broken promise and cons his fellow man?	Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Or the ordinary fellow who in times of war and strife	Perhaps a simple headline in the paper that might say:
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?	OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING, FOR A SAILOR DIED TODAY.

North Vietnamese Trawler Incident, March 1968

By Bernard Wolff, former Lt
PCF 52 & 69, July 67 to 68

Four North Vietnamese trawlers were sunk in early March, 1968 while trying to smuggle large quantities of arms and ammunition to the Viet Cong in the south. One of these engagements involved an unusual act of heroism by a Swift Boat crew member. This is my recollection of this action:

On the night of February 29, 1968, while assigned to Coastal Division 11, my crew and I were one of 4 Swift Boat crews operating off of the USCGS WINONA (WHEC 65), a Coast Guard ship acting as Mother Ship for two Swift Boats operating in Areas 9C and 9D, the two southernmost areas of the West Coast of Vietnam.

The four crew contingent alternated 24 hour patrols with the two Swift Boats, PCF 72 and PCF 92.

The Swifts would rendezvous with the WHEC each morning for refueling, provisioning, and crew change. This was a time of excitement and interest as the Coast Guard crew members would line up on deck to watch the Swifts approach and come alongside for fuel and resupply. The arriving Swift crew members would break the monotony with their stories from the just completed patrol.

The crews of Ltjg Bob Finley & myself were off patrol on February 29th, enjoying the excellent food and warm hospitality of the Winona's crew.

The crews led by Ltjg Dale Barnes and Ltjg Ron Schookner were on patrol.

In view of the meager rations we received at the remote An Thoi Swift Base of Coastal Division 11, the excellent food and comfortable living quarters aboard the Winona were a welcome treat for us Swifties.

At 1630 of February 29th, a P-3 Orion surveillance plane spotted and tracked a suspicious trawler in international waters off of Vung Tau, heading south. Beginning at sundown, the Winona was ordered to track and shadow the trawler, staying unseen just over the horizon. At midnight (March 1), the trawler turned toward shore and the Winona immediately closed and set General Quarters as the trawler entered South Vietnamese Waters.

When the Winona sounded General Quarters, Ltjg Bob Finley & I were ordered to remain in the Ward Room, our crews in the Crew's Quarters. Bob & I sat with a Filipino Steward's Mate at the Ward Room table while the action developed.

The Winona closed with the trawler and fired a warning shot with its 5"/38 gun across the trawler's bow. The trawler immediately answered with the 12.7mm machine gun mounted on its foc'sle. The 5"/38 began steady fire at about 1 round per 10 seconds.

Three .50 caliber machine guns were mounted amidships on either side of the Winona to provide supporting fire. We heard the starboard .50's fire a few rounds, then suddenly and strangely fall silent.

Bob & I listened to the steady booms of the 5"/38 gun and the more distant return fire of the heavy 12.7mm machine gun. Loud "whacks!" were audible as the 12.7mm rounds struck the hull of the Winona. The 12.7 mm reflected a sound of desperate determination in the distance.

In my nervousness, I was unable to sit at the table, but paced around the Ward Room feeling helplessly uninvolved. Bob remained at the table, and the Steward's Mate remained calm and reserved as bullets drummed against the bulkheads.

Presently, we heard a sole .50 caliber begin firing in steady bursts from the starboard side of the ship. Almost immediately, the "whacks" from returning fire increased, and were concentrated at the vicinity of the .50 caliber. The .50 caliber bursts and returning "whacks", interrupted by the 5"/38 fire, continued for what seemed like an eternity. Suddenly, a huge explosion erupted and the Winona shook from the shock wave.

The Captain came up on the 1 MC and jubilantly announced that the trawler had been engaged and destroyed "without any casualties---at least on THIS ship!".

From conversations with crew members, we quickly pieced together details of what happened during the desperate minutes when the trawler and Winona were exchanging fire:

When the trawler responded with its 12.7mm to the shot across its bow, the situation became unstable as the Winona's crewmembers tasted their first experience of being under fire.

An 81mm mortar was mounted on an upper deck just forward of the bridge of the Winona. This was used to fire star shells for target illumination. When the incoming return fire began to be received from the trawler, the unseasoned mortar crew panicked, and while scurrying for cover behind the nearby mortar ammunition storage box, someone kicked overboard the wrench needed to set the star shell's fuse.

Without the wrench, the star shells were rendered inert and useless.

In absence of the illuminating shells from the 81mm mortar, the Fire Control Director Operator had no visual target for the 5"/38 gun, because the trawler soon stopped firing to hide its location.

The 5"/38 continued its aimless fire into the darkness.

As previously mentioned, there were three .50 caliber machine guns mounted amidships on the main deck railings on each side of the Winona. When the trawler returned fire with its 12.7mm gun, the Coast Guard crew manning the starboard guns panicked and deserted the .50s', fleeing below to safety.

This explains why we heard the .50's fire a few bursts,

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Politics, Religion, and Sex

One of the really important things all junior officers learn quickly is to avoid talking about politics, religion, and sex while on duty. It's not only an important Navy tradition, but it's good advice for living and maintaining friendships and important associations - like the Swift Boat Sailors Association.

As most of our members know, there is a presidential election coming up in 2004. Many of you also know that a former shipmate, John Kerry - US Senator from Massachusetts, is making a lot of early signs that he will run for this important office. Several other Swifties have run for and been elected to important offices. I expect that some of our members may participate in elections in many and varied ways.

The Board has asked me to try to clearly state our position as regards political involvement:

The association must protect its tax-free status which prohibits its involvement in political campaigns. We also have a tradition of avoiding "politics" in our dealings with each other and the running of the association. To this end, the Board of Directors reminds the members that the association is NOT involved in any aspect of any political campaign. The directors and officers are prohibited from making statements to anyone IN THEIR OFFICIAL CAPACITIES about any aspect of any political campaign.

Neither I nor any member of the Board of Directors would presume to tell any member how to respond to the inevitable inquiries we expect will be made of our members by the ever-inquisitive press. I would hope that any member so approached will remember that our association was formed to meet the needs of a brotherhood of guys sharing a common experience under incredible conditions. A misquoted remark or misunderstood quote by anyone can cause a firestorm within our group. It would be the ultimate dishonor for someone exercising a right we all respect (free speech) to cause our group to splinter or be torn apart. Please remember that not one of us can speak for another or for the group in any authoritative way. Use your best judgment and think carefully before responding to any questions by even your local media about any of our members.

The association strongly supports the efforts of our members in exercising their individual rights in the political process.

Thanks for your understanding.

Dave Wallace
SBSA Director

Brown Water Men

(Submitted by Bud Skuce)

The story grows old
Has scarcely been told
Of men from the fleet
Who together did meet
The brown water men of Nam.

They served on strange craft
Some were slow some were fast
There were PCFs and PBRs too
Zippos and Tangos, to mention a few
The brown water men of Nam.

While no two types were alike
They joined in a fight
River warfare so new
Ground rules for it, few
The brown water men of Nam.

From Hue to An Thoi
These boats did deploy
Canals and rivers their home
Across the country they roamed
The brown water men of Nam.

They patrolled, searched, and raided
In night ambush they waited
Troops and SEALs to be carried
The VC to be harried
The brown water men of Nam.

On patrol they did ride
With no place to hide
Like ducks in a row
Up the rivers did go
The brown water men of Nam.

On canals they sped
Filled with excitement and dread
Fire fights like a storm
Proved courage the norm
The brown water men of Nam.

With streams ever narrowing
Conditions were harrowing
Victor Charles sat tight
Till the time was right
The brown water men of Nam.

From bunkers dug in
They engaged boats with thin skin
Though some fights were brief
There was plenty of grief
The brown water men of Nam.

While Charlie struck with surprise
To this, the boats did arise
They stood toe to toe with that lot
And gave as good as they got
The brown water men of Nam.

Some sounds of the fight
Won't from memories take flight
A main one that stays
Those distinctive AKs
The brown water men of Nam.

While these men did their best
And all met the test
Vietnam is not free
Place the blame in D.C.
The brown water men of Nam.

All the crews paid a price
Both in blood and in life
The wars outcome don't lie
That price was too high
The brown water men of Nam.

All our dead now at rest
No question, the best
Their names on the wall
Will forever stand tall
The brown water men of Nam.

Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument (VUMM) Status

By Ken McGhee

The Memorial at the Naval Amphibious Base, in which PCF-104 plays a central role, is alive and well.

After a turbulent period last fall during which the conceptual originator of the VUMM disassociated himself from the project, the "Working Party" has regrouped, and is moving forward. The photo shows the backside of the wall with the flags flying during a fitting out 14 January 2003.



The surface of the wall has been finished and awaits the finalization of the layout and production of the memorial plaques. Production of the entire range of information to go on the wall will require significant additional funds.

The "Working Party" has incorporated the Memorial in the State of California as the **Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument Fund**. The VUMMF has a board of directors of eight members with representation from the SBSA, the Gamewarriors of Vietnam and the Mobile Riverine Force Association. The VUMMF is a membership organization which is free to all Veterans who may have an interest in the project and submit application. Papers have been submitted for Califor-

nia Tax Exempt status and are in the process of submission for Federal Tax Exempt status. This incorporated status will allow a coordinated effort of fund raising and will provide for continued maintenance of the Memorial.

A new Memorial website has been established as www.VUMMF.Org and is currently in an "under construction" status. A web designer who visited the site last year has volunteered to her time to develop the site. That work should be posted sometime in the near future. An email address for the Memorial is VUMMF@aol.com. A post office box will be established soon where donations to the VUMMF may be sent.

Currently no estimate is made as to when the Memorial will be dedicated.

Come visit the site when you are in San Diego.

Their website is up at:

<http://www.vummf.org/>



North Vietnamese Trawler Incident, March 1968 (cont)

(Continued from page 4)

then fall silent.

In the Crew's Quarters, Bob Finley's Gunnersmate, GMG3 William C. Lockerman, was disturbed to see the Coast Guard gunners fleeing to safety shortly after the .50's fell silent. Sensing what was happening, Lockerman ran topside, manned one of the abandoned .50 caliber mounts on the starboard side, and commenced firing in the direction of the trawler. The trawler immediately returned fire, concentrating on the muzzle flashes and tracers emitted from Lockerman's gun. A firefight raged between Lockerman and the trawler as the 5"/38 cannon continued firing into the night.

Soon the muzzle flashes from the 12.7mm gun caught the attention of the Winona's Fire Control Director Operator. Provided with a visible target, the Fire Control Director quickly directed a well placed 5" round into the trawler, destroying it in a massive explosion.

The next morning's sunrise revealed a mass of bullet holes in the bulkhead behind Lockerman's position during the fire fight. Somehow, Lockerman was untouched.

During the morning announcements on the 1 MC, the Captain thanked the crew for a job well done, and added his thanks to "our Swift Boat guests" for their involvement in the action.

A quiet, competent man, Lockerman never discussed this engagement during the remainder of the time I knew him. He eventually was assigned as my Gunner's Mate—a real pleasure to have on my crew. He is, in my mind, a genuine hero.

Lockerman's gallantry, and the pivotal role he played in this engagement, was never acknowledged by the Coast Guard, the Captain of the Winona other than during his morning announcement on the 1 MC, or by USCG CDR Norman C. Venzke, who commanded the An Thoi area operations during my assignment there.

GMG3 Lockerman deserves a medal. To my knowledge, he has not received this deserved honor and recognition for the key role he played in the sinking of the trawler, and the gallantry he displayed under fire.

The Coast Guard crew should not be faulted for the panic that gripped certain of their members during this engagement. This was their first taste of combat. Most had not anticipated being caught up in direct hostile fire. Other crew members acted coolly and professionally during the engagement.

I recall the events of this evening from time to time. Each time I do, I have a gnawing sensation that the matter is not finished. It will not be brought to completion until GMG3 Lockerman's bravery and initiative under fire, and the key role he played in this engagement, are officially recognized and rewarded by his Country.

Bernard W. Wolff/Lt (while at DaNang)/754
Sharpshooters Ridge/Marietta, Ga 30064



GMG3 William C. Lockerman is the blonde crewman standing, second from the right. This photo was taken just north of Da Nang, about 5 months after this event. Above, Trawler Winona.



Reunion Notices



REGISTER NOW for the upcoming reunion.

The New Norfolk is the site for the **March 20 - 23, 2003 Reunion**. It ain't t that old drab place, so come and view Norfolk's amazing waterfront transformation in person. We need you at the reunion, so REGISTER NOW.

With our headquarters at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside and a terrific agenda that takes advantage of Norfolk's rich Naval heritage and harbor front location, this is shaping up to be the best-ever Swift Boat Sailors Reunion. REGISTER NOW to take advantage of the great room rate we have at the waterfront Sheraton.

Highlights include a Friday evening reception at Nauticus (the National Maritime Center), the Saturday Banquet (featuring speakers and the "open mike session") and a moving Sunday Memorial Service on the USS Wisconsin. Several items for raffle at the banquet include "virgin" Swift Model kits, a beautiful Swift painting, and other Swift Items. Waterfront fun includes tours and rides on PCF-2, still afloat as a marine research vessel for the local Tidewater Community College, and an assortment of Special Warfare Craft from Little Creek Amphibious base.

To REGISTER NOW, down load the registration form from the Official 2003 Reunion Web Site <http://swiftboats.org/reunioninfo.htm>

The Registration Form has a sign-up sheet for the reunion and activities that you need to complete.

Send in your Registration Form Today!

Useful Links:

Hotel www.sheratonwaterside.com

Norfolk www.norfolk.va.us www.norfolkcvb.com

Official 2003 Reunion Web Site

<http://swiftboats.org/reunioninfo.htm>



Swift Boat Sailors Association, Inc.

Officers

Thomas G. Forrest, President

Raul Herrera, Vice-president * Gretchen Hart, Treasurer * Gene Hart, Secretary

Directors

Edward J. Bergin, Chair

Robert Brant * Bob Franson * Jim Schneider* David B. Wallace * Larry Wasikowski

Barbara Babb, Editor *Swift Current*

REUNION NOTICE

The March 2003 reunion will be dedicated to the Memory of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr. and Treasurer Ralph Singleton. In that end, the Swift Boat Sailors Association has created two awards (presented at reunions) to non-Officer or Director. They will be presented to members of the association who have distinguished themselves in providing a service to the association and to its crews living or deceased.

Swift Current will request from our membership for persons deemed eligible the year of the reunion. Your reasons for the nomination will be included. The final selection will be made by the full board of directors.

They will be know as:

The Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr. Humanitarian Award and the Treasurer Ralph Singleton Patriot Award. The recipients will remain classified until the reunion banquet when they will be presented. This years nominees have been selected by the board due to the proximity of the reunion.

ADMIRAL ELMO ZUMWALT JR. and TREASURER RALPH SINGLETON, AN OFFICER AND AN ENLISTED MAN. TWO WHO CONTINUED TO GIVE AFTER NAVAL SERVICE.

Got Skills? Talent? Time?

The SBSA is always in need of a few good men (and definitely the women behind them!) to help the association. The needs run the gamut from lawyers & sophisticated investment advisors, to guys who can paint & scrape a boat's hull, to folks who have the time to make a couple phone calls each week, to building & maintaining a web site, and on & on...

One of the problems we seem to run into constantly is finding people who have the skills we need for a specific project. To address this, the Board of Directors has decided to assemble a database of folks who want to help the association – and make this info available to committee heads or others in the association who need help from time-to-time.

If you are interested in helping out (strictly on the basis of what's convenient to you and when a suitable project comes over the horizon) please contact me, Dave Wallace, at eg65@mindspring.com or 770-395-9547. I need to know:

Your name*

Where you are *(this may make a difference!)*

How to contact you *(phone or email work best)*

What skill or talent you're offering *(more than one is great!)*

How much time you can spare

*** NOTE: The association doesn't ever sell or distribute this information to outsiders and we try our best not to harass our members when they politely say, "No thanks on this project, but call me next time!"**

Got Pictures from Viet Nam? Want to share them? Here's how.

HEY, ya got pictures from your tour in the Nam? Share them with others who have compiled over 60 pages of their SWIFT experience. Ask to be let into this password protected site, you may see yourself or some guys ya know already posted there. Contact Steve Renfro at SWIFT47@cox.net for the password to get in.

MOVING??

KEEP YOUR ISSUES COMING.

If you move, don't forget to notify the Swift Boat Sailors Association of your new location. This will keep the newsletter coming and reduce mailing costs for misdirected mail. It will also allow you to continue to receive those rare special bulletins that sometimes are mailed. The reunion is coming and information may be mailed. Don't miss out!

Email notification is available.

Email addresses:

Gene Hart (Secretary) ghart@lynx.usf.edu

Tom Forrest (President) tompcf102@aol.com

Barbara Babb (Editor) swiftcurrenteditor@hotmail.com

SWIFT BOAT

Many of the Heroes of Swift Boat Sailors Association and the Mobile Riverne Force Association are interested in having a replica of those amazing PCF's on their mantle or desk. Although each and every one of you is an American Hero, you may not be good at constructing a model of a Swift, even an easy one.

Lets face it; we all have our talents. You are our Heroes and we are Master Builders!

American Precision Models is working closely with SBSA officers to bring about your dream model. We have built these in the past and as a matter of fact are currently working on one for your reunion coming up in March, 2003, as a raffle give-a-way.

We are a Professional Model Building Company that does only that. Your model will be exact and perfect for you. You will not have to worry about making a construction mistake, or using the wrong paint, etc. Leave that to us.

HAVE YOUR VERY OWN SWIFT MODEL

The price for this is currently \$1,200.00 (we make the hull from fiberglass. It is NOT a plastic kit.)

We have provisions to supply you with a wooden (oak) base and an acrylic cover to protect it. The cost for that is \$200.00. You can have your dream for \$1,400.00 (inclusive of a plaque on which we will engrave anything you wish and shipping and handling from us to you).

You can also make payments if you choose at 0% interest. We are proud of you and happy to do this for you.

God bless each and every one of you.

You can reach us at: American Precision Models (718) 415-9862 or talk to Karen, our marketing director, via email @ Energ9830@aol.com.

Karen is committed to helping each one of you satisfy your dream. Again, God bless you, God bless America. Some of us in this Country remember you and thank you!



AMERICAN PRECISION MODELS



Collectors! Sailors! We talk your language. Fletchers, Subs, Battleships, Destroyers, A/C Carriers, Wooden Tall Ships.

Pilots! We will build your Aircraft or Helicopter precisely as you remember it!
Platoon Leaders! We build all armor, tanks, jeeps, vehicles!

Joe Tepedino, Master Builder **Arthur Weiner, Master Builder**
(718) 415-9862

Veteran's Day Parade

This Veterans day the wife and I went to the parade in Auburn, Wa. It is one of the largest in the US and this year had almost 200 entries. Next year it will have a representative of Swiftboats. I am planning on being in the parade. It's still in the early planning stage right now, but I hope to have my black pickup with it's Swiftboat sticker, flags and banners of Swifts. I'll be towing a flatbed trailer with an large poster of the memorial in San Diego. Any Swifties in the northwest who thinks they might like to join me just let me know. My wife is planning on driving and I'll be walking. I'll have chairs on the trailer for those who can't walk. Like I said it is just in the early planning stages right

now and hopefully will evolve thru the coming year. The parade will be held on Saturday 8 Nov. 2003.

Would like to hear any suggestions.

Yours in Brotherhood, Always

Joe La Voie, Cosdivs 13&14, 1967,68&69

Reunion 2003 Raffle

The following items will be raffled off at the reunion in Norfolk during the banquet Saturday evening, March 22, 2003:

- **Two Revell KIT 5104 - Swift Patrol Boat; 1:48 Scale model. It has decals for PCF-10; moveable .50 cal. machine gun with 81mm mortar.**

- **A painting of a Swift Boat by artist Ian Hall donated by Ann and John Bruce. The artist will put the winner's COSDIV patch, name, rank and year(s) in country and also his boat number on the print. You can view a sample painting at this web site:address: <http://members.aol.com/ihall59972/pcfc.jpg>**

- **A Swift Boat model that is professionally built by master modelers at American Precision Models. The model is of museum quality about 30 inches long in a Plexiglas case. The winner will be able to specify the boat number and a plaque engraved to the winner's specifications. You can view photos of a previous model on the SBSA web site under Upcoming Reunion at this address <http://swiftboats.org>**

The raffle tickets are priced as follows:

Plastic boat model kits (2)	\$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00
Painting (1)	\$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00
Professionally built model (1)	\$6.00 each or 3 for \$15.00

Tickets will be available for purchase at the reunion. If you are unable to attend the reunion but would like a chance to win one of the great prizes please complete a ticket for each chance and drawing you wish to participate in. Make copies of the tickets as needed.

Send completed tickets (please print and include area code) and a check made out to:

Swift Boat Sailors Association
 3941 Laurelwood Drive
 Jacksonville, FL 32257.

All tickets must be received at the above address by midnight March 7, 2003. Any entries received after that date will be returned to the sender.

<p style="text-align: center;">American Precision Model Swift Boat \$6.00 ea. or 3 for \$15.00</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>PH (____) _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Plastic Boat Model Kit \$2.00 ea. or 3 for \$5.00</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>PH (____) _____</p>
<p>Swift Boat Painting by Ian Hall \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Ph #_(____) _____</p>	

President's Corner (cont)

(Continued from page 1)

Terry in his new position. At this writing, Terry is now revisiting Vietnam with **Toi Dang** the "brownwater man", as some know him.

Election Process

Due to the number of our members who are involved in the political process, the staff found it necessary to make the official SBSA statement that is posted in this edition of the Swift Current. To maintain our status as a 501-(3) c non-profit organization, there are rulings that must be followed as set down by the IRS. (See page 5 for this statement)

Gary Blinn's Reunion Chat Session

Although several Swifties have written about their experiences, Gary Blinn may be one of the first in our association to get a book in print. During the reunion, he will be hosting a one hour chat session for those of you who are writers and those who are considering writing a memoir or novel. The time and place to attend will be announced at the reunion.

Gary has studied with three nationally known writing teachers, and will share his experience (and his many mistakes!) with those who would like to discuss the craft of writing. The session will be open to spouses and will not focus on just war stories, but memoir and fiction writing in general. The theme will be on writing for the joy of it, and the therapy of putting pen to paper, not on how to get published. However, for those interested in E-publishing, Gary can give guidance on that subject, too."

All Unit Navy Memorial

To my disappointment, it is my duty to announce the resignation of **Ralph Fries** the project's coordinator and visionary from day one. I have pondered this resignation for the last month and even attempted to talk Ralph out of it via e-mail, which was never answered.

There are numerous reasons for this action on his part, of which the SBSA has no responsibility. However, to answer the many questions that have been asked, I feel obligated to review the problem areas.

There had been in fighting amongst the working party and Ralph. After that started, there had been a major falling out between Ralph and TF-116. Later, the West Coast Chapter of TF-116 sent a callused letter to Ralph. After a period of time, this problem between them grew even broader, with both sides contributing to the problem.

This activity gained the attention of the Navy on board Coronado Amphibious Base and they called a meeting. In the meeting, we were all told that in fighting has no place on board, that we are tenants and were expected to maintain a business atmosphere in regards to the ongoing

construction of the "All Unit Navy Memorial".

In my opinion, the swaying factor in Ralph's resignation was that he was asked to provide written documentation for his role in the project, and accountability for the funds raised in the project name. I personally spoke with Ralph at the site, and pointed out that a project having the scope of this one required documentation, and that he should audit himself, if only to protect his own credibility. Later, an audit was done, but at that point in time, damage had been done to Ralph's integrity.

Officially, the memorial is continuing to be finalized. The working Party, along with Capt. Kenneth McGhee USN (ret), the MOU coordinator with the Navy, are forming a legal organization to insure its completion in the original projected time frame. We assure all of our members who have contributed to this monumental task, that all funding has been accounted for in the audit that was eventually done. A new WEB site is being constructed and can be found at <http://vummf.org>

Finally, the Swift Boat Sailors Association continues its full support of this project. We also acknowledge Ralph's vision to remember our shipmates, his countless hours in the project and his personal finances expended getting the project started. His character is above reproach and with his resignation, we all are the losers.

Ships Store

The SBSA Ships Store will be officially reopened at the Norfolk Reunion. The Board of Directors decided that it was time to lighten the load on the Treasurers responsibilities. We have created a Ship's Store Manager position on the staff. The duties will be to oversee sales and purchases of merchandise of the SBSA Ship's Store. Our new manager, Kenneth Briggs will report directly to the Treasurer. All ships store merchandise will be located at Ken's Store at 225 Mill Street, Bristol, Pa. 19007. We thank the staff in advance for any assistance provided to Ken.

Shipmate Recalled

The SBSA has lost one of its plank owners. The year before the Washington, DC reunion, there was a meeting in Texas by a handful of PCF vets with the sole intention of forming the SBSA. Joseph "Doc" Quartuccio was a driving force at the meeting. Joe, at 62, passed in November. To honor his spirit and drive behind the SBSA, Joe will be amongst his crews on board PCF-104.

Holiday

The officers and directors sincerely hope all of our SBSA families had a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

Reunion Information

Trip to the Wall in D.C

A trip to the Wall in DC is being planned. If you would like to attend, plan to arrive either Tuesday or early Wednesday before the reunion. The trip will take place the Wednesday before the reunion. If you have made your reservations, you may need to change them to include the extra days. Point of contact is Terry Boone. Please contact Terry for additional information..

Terry L. Boone RD2
PCF 90 Qui Nhon 68-69
Mtboone@aol.com

REUNION INFORMATION HOTEL RESERVATIONS

There has been some unfortunate confusion by Sheraton Central Reservations about the reunion room rate.

1. The Sheraton reunion room rate will be available for all the dates of the reunion. This includes March 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Other dates will be available at the reunion rate as well. Any information to the contrary is INCORRECT. If anyone is informed that the reunion rate is not available, c o n t a c t m e i m m e d i a t e l y .
2. Anyone who has been told to pay a higher room rate, this problem will be CORRECTED! If you have had to pay any rate other than the reunion rate, contact me, and I will make sure you get the CORRECT rate.
3. To avoid confusion for reservations, call the Sheraton directly at 757-622-6664.

Mike Solhaug
email solhaumj@evms.edu
phone 757-422-0514
beeper 757-475-7530

PCF-1 Trip Visit

Jack Shamley has talked with Sheila Brennon. Sheila is the receptionist at the U.S. Navy Yard where PCF 1 is located. She has advised that visits to the base is open. The only requirements are a picture I.D. and an advanced reservation. The reservation can be as late as the day before the visit. If there are any questions please contact S h e i l a a t 2 0 2 - 4 3 3 - 6 8 2 6 .
Jack Shamley PCF 31 68-70

QUOTE of the Quarter

"It takes a little courage, and a little self control, and some grim determination, if you want to reach the goal. It takes a great deal os striving, and a firm and stern-set chin. No matter what the battle, if you really want to win. There's no easy path to glory. There is no road to fame. Life, however we may view it, is no simple parlor game; But its prizes call for fighting, for endurance and for grit; For a rugged disposition that will not quit.

REUNION SPEAKER ANNOUNCEMENT

The SBSA is pleased to announce that through the efforts of the HRRC we have the following speaker committed for Banquet Evening. ** Secretary of Veterans Affairs the Honorable Anthony Principi will speak at Saturday's Banquet. ** CINCLANTFLT Admiral Robert Natter has been invited to make "Welcoming Remarks" at the opening of the banquets festivities. ** Commander, Special Boat Squadron 2 will speak at our business meeting. ** PCF-2, will be made available at pier side along with possibly two SPECBOATRON 2 Craft. ** We also announce there will be an election to the board of directors. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board, please send a resume to Secretary Gene Hart. The election will take place at the business meeting.

Taps

Herman Lavinghouse	1999	Larry Wolpert	5/ 2002
Gary Erlandson	2000	John Cox	2002
Virgil Ray	9/2000	Ralph Singleton	Aug 2002
Larry Benson	9/2001	Joe (Doc) Quartuccio	Nov 2002
Kent Coombs	4/2002		

Informative URLs

If you have internet access, the following URLs may provide some missing information, interesting reading, reference material, etc. (ensure you get the entire link or type the entire link)

<http://gunplot.net/vietnam/hobartvietnam.html>

Some veterans have had trouble finding the new website for ST Louis military records center

http://www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st_louis/military_personnel_records.html

http://www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st_louis/military_personnel_records/overview_of_records.html

http://www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st_louis/military_personnel_records/alternate_record_sources.html

Tactical maps

<http://www.marzone.com/7thMarines/Mp0004.htm>

Statistics of Vietnam

<http://www.vhfcn.org/stat.htm>

Dennis Ray Puckett Remembered

By Ken McGhee

His sister walked on the same decks on which Seaman Dennis Ray Puckett served and looked out from the pilothouse.

Kathryn Brandt, sister of Dennis Ray Puckett, visited PCF-104 with her husband and children during the recent holidays, while visiting from Dallas, Texas. The nostalgia of visiting the Swift Boat on which Dennis trained was an emotional time for Kathryn. She and her family viewed the gallery of pictures of Swifties who died in Vietnam. The tour was arranged by the PCF-104 Working Party. She provided additional pictures of Dennis, one of which showed him relaxing on the deck of PCF-104 above the hull numbers.

Dennis Ray Puckett was a crewmember of PCF 63, operating out of Qui Nhon when he was lost overboard 29 March 1967. Kathryn has been able to obtain only limited details of the circumstances of his death and would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who may have more information. Send such information to VUMMF@aol.com.



Swift Boat History Tapes

All hands that still have film in either 8mm or put these tapes will be for tape number 3 of the history tapes and you will be given the credits at the beginning of your segment of the tape. I need your Name, Rank, Rate, and Cosdiv # and tour years.

Jim Schneider

3003 Wisconsin Ave.

Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

Thanks

Jim Schneider

Swiftboat Sailors Association

Swiftboat Sailors Association
21128 Hunt Club Dr
Harper Woods, MI 48225

What to expect at the airport if you haven't flown in awhile

Editor's Note:

To make your flight to/from the reunion more enjoyable, I have compiled a synopsis of what to expect at airports, this is directed more towards those who haven't flown for sometime.

First off, have a government issued photo ID readily available. You will need it a minimum of three times: when you go to the ticket counter to check in (or to show to someone if you use an e-ticket dispenser), 2, just before you pass into the metal detector security area you will need your ID and your ticket available, and 3. When you board the plane with your boarding pass you will show it again. NOTE: Some flights also require you to show your ticket and ID again when you get on the plane (American Airlines has done this to me.)

DO NOT pack using those cool vacuum bags. I guarantee if your luggage is searched, they will be opened, and then nothing will fit back in your suitcase. If you must, pack a few extra suitcases to hold your stuff if they are opened (it has happened.)

If you lock your suitcase, TSA (security at the airports) can and will cut them if they decide they want to look inside. It is recommended you leave your checked bags unlocked (careful what you pack in them). Security says you may use locking ties (zip ties, wire ties, etc) to hold your suitcase secure, and they supposedly will reseal with tamper indicating seals if they open them (they did not with my luggage, though) Don't put

anything in there you don't want to lose. Consider shipping items you would like to keep when you leave.

Norfolk International currently hand searches luggage and "swipes" checked bags and some carry-ons to determine explosive presence. Any items that "alert" even falsely requires searching. However, the good news, you can relock your luggage after they have searched. Those airports that do not hand search do not allow this service. (Houston Hobby does not.)

Norfolk does not currently possess checked baggage X-ray machines. Current procedures are for you to check in and then either take or follow (skycap checking) while your luggage is taken to a security check point. While security is checking your luggage at this point, YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH IT OR THE TABLE. When they finish, if you desire to lock it, at this point you may. Indicate your desire while they are searching.

IF YOUR LUGGAGE alerts (even falsely) for explosives (as mine have done) you will be required to furnish ID so they can log who owned the suitcase and the outcome of the hand search.

*Most of the security agents in Norfolk are extremely accommodating and polite. Other airports aren't quite so accommodating. Enjoy your flight, see you **HERE IN MARCH!***