

# Swift Current

The official publication of the  
Swift Boat Sailors Association

Second Qtr 2011

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

## SAN ANTONIO SBSA 2011 REUNION



Entertainment at the Wednesday Fiesta on the Patio of the hotel on the Riverwalk.

Thanks to the TEAM SATX for a great reunion:  
Chairman: Raul Herrera, AJ Martinez, Daniel Aguilar, Jack Chenoweth, Charlie Janner, David Marion, Warren Jenny, Van Odell, Bud Kittle, Jerry Henderson, Henry Inabnett, Randy Foster, John C. Miller

Judith Markelz, Director, Warrior and Family Support Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, provided a tour of the facility for a group of SBSA members including Admiral Hoffmann, Raul Herrera and his wife, Jack Chenoweth, shown here. The SBSA Board of Directors voted to provide a donation to the Center at the Reunion Banquet.



A donor wished to make a statue at the Warrior and Family Support Center but the center did not want any specific statues, so this beautiful tile emblem of the Purple Heart was created instead.



The group also toured the Center for the Intrepid which was donated by over 600,000 Americans to provide service members with severe extremity injuries and amputations the opportunity to maximize their ability to live and work productively.



Warren Jenny's daughter, Leah Haynes, along with Virg Erwin in the hospitality room. Leah was the VA rep that visited with over a hundred of the guys about filing claims and officially accepted a good number of claims. Needless to say, he was very proud of her and hope that a VA rep will be included in the next San Diego reunion. Leah has volunteered to set up one of the rating specialists in San Diego that she knows personally. After all of the feedback from our group that attended the reunion in SA—Warren was happy that she was able to help. By the way, Leah is also a disabled Navy Veteran.

On Thursday afternoon, two busloads of us visited the Rio Cibolo Ranch. They had longhorns, bison, and beefalo as well as a dance hall and BBQ facility. At right is Raul Herrera at the Cibola Ranch staring down a longhorn.



One of the activities at the Rio Cibolo Ranch was a throwing contest. Not everybody wanted to touch the dried cow chips which were the items to be thrown. The winners in the 2011 SBSA Reunion "I Flung Dung Competition" were Tom Prowley and Andrea Boggart...Congratulations!

Friday, several busloads visited the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredricksburg, Texas. The SBSA made a donation to the Admiral Chester Nimitz Foundation and dedicated a plaque in memory of PT 41 and all PT Boat sailors of the Pacific War as shown on the right



### **In Memory of the Gallant Crew of PT-41**

On March 12, 1942, LT. John D. Bulkeley and his valiant crew, along with a second PT Boat, successfully evacuated General Douglas MacArthur, his family and staff from Corregidor to Mindanao, crossing more than 600 miles of open sea to safety.

Vice Admiral Bulkeley's heroic actions in the Pacific Theatre, as Lieutenant Commander and as the Commander of Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron Three at Cavite, Philippines, earned him our Nation's highest decoration - The Medal of Honor.



### **Presented by the Swift Boat Sailors Association**

whose members proudly served on Patrol Craft Fast (PCFs), during the Vietnam War. In honor of our brave Swift Boat Sailors who gave their all, we salute those brave sailors who served on PT Boats in the Pacific Theatre during World War II.

Dedicated on May 6, 2011



The plaque shown above will join the hundreds of others already placed on the walls throughout the museum.



Senyint Chim and George Nelson, part of the crew of PCF-56 which he credits with saving his life in Cambodia.

Senyint and his family were our guests at the banquet.

His story is in the last Swift Current in detail.

SBSA Banquet Color Guard representing Southwest High School, San Antonio, Texas, Navy Jr. R.O.T.C.



Joe LaVoie and Emcee Dan Daly offering the toast at the beginning of the banquet. Major Banquet Awards were as follows: The Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. Humanitarian Award was presented to David D. Hansen; Andy Horne received the Ralph Singleton Patriot Award; and, John O'Neill was recognized for his unselfish contribution to the welfare of our veterans.



Rear Admiral William L. Schachte, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
the Banquet Keynote Speaker .



Admiral and Mrs. Hoffmann  
with four of the crew of  
PCF 35.

Back left is Chuck Rabel,  
Gary Carpenter, David &  
Kathy Stevenson, Chloe  
Dohrmann and seated with  
the Hoffmann's is Mike  
Dohrmann.

## Minutes of 2011 SBSA General Meeting

May 7, 2011 San Antonio

1. Chairman Dave Wallace called the meeting to order approximately 9:15AM and declared a quorum.
2. Gene Hart gave a membership report – 582 members plus some who joined at the reunion. 82 delinquent members.
3. Gene Hart gave the treasurer's report – As of Jan 1 \$64,786.55, income through March \$16,125.46, expenses through March \$1,477.63. He reported that the ship's store was self sustaining.
4. Dave and Raul Herrera played the video from the Warrior and Family Support Center and reported that the Board voted to donate \$5,000 and that Judith Markelz, Director, would accept the check at the banquet.
5. Dave introduced Senyint Chim who recounted his rescue by a PCF in Cambodia. Senyint introduced George Nelson who was on the rescuing boat who recounted his recollection of the event.
6. Dave gave the status of the Maltese PCF which was essentially still up in the air due to the events in Libya. Plan was to work with the San Diego Maritime Museum for maintenance and public availability. Swifties would be able to qualify as docents. How to get it to San Diego was still to be determined.
7. Dave reported that the status of PCF 104 was renewed for an additional 5 years with the Navy Historical Society.
8. Dave reported that the next reunion would be in 2013 in San Diego.
9. Board elections were held. The following were elected to the board: Dave Wallace, Robert Brant, Van Odel, Chuck Rabel.
10. Meeting was adjourned approximately 11:00AM

## President's Corner—continued

Leah Haynes, VA Veterans Service Representative, Houston Regional Office, interviewed 99 Swifties, answering claim filing questions and answered general benefits questions. She assisted with the preparation of and officially accepted 17 VA Benefit Claims from our members. Thank you, Leah, for being there for our veterans, your participation helped make our reunion a great success!

Our Reunion Banquet guests were privileged to listen to Rear Admiral Bill Schachte speak on Swift Boat Sailors – Then and Now. Admiral Schachte served as a SWIFT Boat Officer-in-Charge of PCF-45 at Coastal Division 14, Cam Ranh Bay, from January through December 1968 and also served as XO/Ops for Coastal Division Fourteen.

A special thanks goes to all those that supported the 2011 Reunion Raffle effort. Funds raised from the event helped cover Hospitality Suite costs as well as other reunion related items. Hospitality Suite Captain, AJ Martinez, did an outstanding job providing a terrific social environment for our Swifties. Team SATX was behind the success of the SBSA 2011 Reunion....Thank You!

## President's Corner

Memories of the 2011 SBSA Reunion in San Antonio, Texas last month will be long lasting. I'm certain that those that attended share my sentiment. To those of you who were unable to attend, this newsletter will hopefully encourage you to plan ahead for 2013 when we will make our way to San Diego, California.

The event got underway with a Welcome Reception – Fiesta on the Patio, complete with Mariachis and tamales! On Thursday, a number of Swifties accompanied Admiral Hoffmann on a tour to the Warrior and Support Center at Fort Sam Houston. The SBSA donated \$5,000 to this facility which cares for our wounded warriors and their families during trying times in their lives. Later that afternoon, some of our members enjoyed a Texas BBQ at Rio Cibolo Ranch, which also included line dancing, hay-rides an old fashion campfire cowboy serenade, and even a cow-chip tossing contest. On Friday, we ventured off to the Texas Hill Country to tour the National Museum of the Pacific War. The SBSA made a donation to the Admiral Nimitz Foundation and dedicated a plaque in memory of PT 41.

Board Chairman, Dave Wallace, took the membership by surprise with news of a project that has been in the works for one and a half years now. Directors Wallace, Erwin, Solhaug and LaVoie have succeeded in moving negotiations forward with the Government of Malta that brings our organization very close to becoming the recipients of Malta Maritime Squadron's P 24 (Swift Boat), now decommissioned. Tentative plans include the transfer of this craft from the east coast to San Diego possibly by an SBSA member crew sea voyage, all or part of the way. Arrangements are also being made to partner with the Maritime Museum in San Diego that will include in-the-water Swift Boat status. We are targeting the 2013 SBSA Reunion to have all plans in place.

The membership was also privileged to hear Senyint Chim's account of his daring rescue from enemy hands in Cambodia on May 10, 1970. The room went silent as he conveyed his gratitude for LT (j.g.) H. Clayton Howze and the crew of PCF-56 for saving his life. I have never FELT words spoken by anyone strike so deep as when Mr. Chim said, in seeing the American flag from the river bank, "(it) was the MOST beautiful thing that I had EVER seen!" QM2 George Allen Nelson also shared his recollections of that day. All indications are that RDSN Phillip C. Beets is the Swiftie who jumped in the river to keep Senyint from drowning, as he could not swim.

I want to thank all of those Swifties that once again answered the call to serve...as SBSA Directors. The membership elected Chuck Rabel, Van Odell, Dave Wallace and Robert Brant to serve a four year term. Dave Wallace was voted back in as Board Chair, Raul Herrera as President, Mike Solhaug, Vice-president, D.C. Current, Secretary, and Gene Hart, Treasurer. Leaving Director posts, after years of dedicated service to the SBSA, are Joe Ponder and Virgil Erwin – BRAVO ZULU gentlemen!

# Admiral Roy F. Hoffmann Foundation

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rear Admiral Roy F. Hoffmann, *Chairman*  
Larry Thurlow, *President*  
Van Odell, *Secretary*  
Weymouth D. Symmes, *Treasurer*  
Virgil A. "Virg" Erwin, *Board Member*  
Ernest J. "Bud" Kittle, *Board Member*  
Captain Charley Plumly, USN, Ret., *Board Member*



On behalf of all Swift boat and Coast Guard sailors from TF 115, we were honored to learn that one of our Admiral Roy F. Hoffmann Foundation financial award recipients, SSG Leroy Arthur Petry, U.S. Army, will be awarded the Medal of Honor (MOH) by the president of the United States on July 12, 2011, for courageous actions in the eastern Afghanistan province of Paktia in May 2008.

Shipmates Bill Rogers and Joe LaVoie on May 27, 2009 personally delivered a Foundation check from Swift boat sailors to SSG Petry for financial assistance during his stressful rehabilitation from grievous wounds suffered in the aforementioned combat action.

All sailors of TF 115 and the Foundation Board can be justifiably proud of the financial awards made to 504 serious wounded combat comrades in arms, totaling more than \$4,000,000, and that each of these awards were personally delivered by former Swift boat sailors. No financial award from the federal government nor private assistance will ever compensate for the lifelong handicap and incapacities of these courageous men and women, but a sincere appreciation from former combat veterans goes a long way toward physical and mental recovery.

Thank you,  
Rear Admiral Roy F. Hoffmann, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
"Latch"

## Deceased Swifties 2010 forward

Ronald M. "Porky" Rinehart	Dayton, Texas	2010
Ronald B. Gagnon	Cape Coral, FL	2010
Albert W. Porter	Port Hadlock, WA	2010
Virgil E. Tayler	Lynn, MA	2010
William P. Dodd	Springfield, MO	2010
Dan Field	Hinsdale, NH	2010
Joseph R. Clements	Tulsa, OK	2010
Gene L Herrera		2010
Kenneth F. Tryner	Virginia Beach, VA	2011

## Change of Address? Need new membership card?

Stay in touch with your shipmates!

Membership card replacement fee \$5.00.

Contact Gene Hart, Treasurer  
Tel. (904) 234-4278 Email- [ghart@unf.edu](mailto:ghart@unf.edu)

## Reunion SAN DIEGO in 2013

Chuck Rabel has agreed to be the next reunion chairman. All who can assist please contact him at [rabelathome@cox.net](mailto:rabelathome@cox.net)

# The Tenth Annual Gig Harbor Reunion !

My wife, Jan, and I invite you to join us on the last Saturday in July for the 2nd largest Swift Boat sailors' reunion in the country. For the tenth year in a row we are looking for as many Swifties and their families as we can fit into our house, deck, garage and lawn in Gig Harbor, Washington. There is no program or agenda, just a day-long gathering to eat, drink and share old memories. This event continues to get better every year with a mix of old friends we see every year and several newbees who have never before attended a reunion. We have had over 70 people attend but there is always room for more. So please help us spread the word to those who don't use email or who are otherwise out of touch.

Where: The home of Jan and Bill Rogers, 10909 Sea View Court NW, Gig Harbor, Washington, 98332. Phone: 253-858-3080. Email: willrogers@harboret.com GPS: 47°21'26.75"N 122°33'25.08"W

Gig Harbor is a scenic community located on the Puget Sound just west of Tacoma. It's across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge approximately 30 miles south of Seattle. I'll send you driving directions if you need them. For information on Gig Harbor and accommodations go to <http://www.gigharbor.com>.

When: Saturday, July 30, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

The last weekend in July is almost guaranteed to be warm and sunny. It's also the start of the big Seafair week in Seattle with the Blue Angels and the hydroplane races on Lake Washington. So it's a great time of year to visit the Pacific Northwest. The Olympic Peninsula is just a short drive away.

Who: This is for all former Swift Boat sailors and their wives and families. Be sure to bring the wife (or significant other) - they'll have a great time too.

Program: None planned although we're open to suggestions. Just lots of fellowship and eating. There will be a group photo taken at 4:00 p.m.

Cost: \$10 per head at the door to help offset the cost of food and drink.

Transportation: Easy access from Interstate 5. Seatac airport is 20 miles north with a good connecting shuttle service. We also have a boat dock in our neighborhood and several more in Gig Harbor.

Lodging: There are lots of motels and hotels in Gig Harbor and Tacoma. There are several places to park your RV. Gig Harbor has several marinas if you're coming by boat. If you plan to stay in a motel be sure to book your room early. This is Seafair week and rooms may be hard to get by July.

RSVP: Please let us know who's coming (including first names) so that we can accurately buy the food and prepare name tags. And please give me your email address if you have one.

Bill & Jan Rogers

## **New SBSA Members in 2011**

Woodrow Dalahite	Colmesneil, RX	An Thoi, Cat Lo	1969-1970
Daniel Ninedorf	Kewaunee, WI	USS Mark AKL-12	1970-1971
Patrick H. Stack	Dayton, MN	CTF 115	1968-1969
Michael Brophy	Sarasota, FL	NAVSUPACT SGN DET 90.2, NAVSUPACT Cam Ranh Bay	
Marshall T. Baldwin	Bullhead City, AZ	Naval Support Facility, Cam Ranh Bay	1967-1969
William G. Thomasson	Memphis, TN	Cat Lo	1966-1967
Don L. Jones	Marianna, FL	Danang	1965-1966
Robert R. Johnson	Tyler, TX	An Thoi, Saigon, Cam Ranh Bay	1965-1966
Ramiro S. Gonzales	Glendale, AZ	Qui Nhon	
Eugene Green	Philadelphia, PA	An Thoi, APL 21	1967-1968
Melvin J. Baker	Morgan Hill, CA	An Thoi, Cam Ranh Bay	1969-1970



## VUMMF

Virg Erwin participated in a 2011 Memorial Day Ceremony at NAB Coronado, complete with Bag Piper and Honor Guard. Twenty-one Veterans were honored. Senyint Chim, who attended our reunion, was invited to read the names of Swift Boat Sailors honored on this day, the memorial pictures are shown to right.



Bill Ruth, first skipper of PCF 43, penned a tribute. It will be engraved on a steel donor plaque and placed on the Memorial Wall in Coronado. Contents are shown below.

BORN ON A BERWICK BAYOU IN 1966. WHERE LOUISIANA YARDSMEN BROUGHT LIGHT METAL PLATES TO LIFE. THEN SHIPPED TO SUBIC BAY BY FREIGHTER WITHOUT CREW.

MET & OUTFITTED BY HER FIRST CREW. THEN TO MANILA BAY & CORREGIDOR FOR SHAKEDOWN OF HER EQUIPMENT & THEMSELVES BEFORE HER FINAL JOURNEY WEST.

SMALL VULNERABLE CRAFT. MADE LARGE WITH COMRADERY. WITH ENGINES OF A THOUSAND MOVING PARTS. WITH WEAPONS OF A THOUSAND ROUNDS PER MINUTE. AND YOUNG CREWMEN WITH A THOUSAND DREAMS TO SHARE.

SWIFT 43 WAS THEIR SECURITY & THEIR HOME. THEIR MOVING WINDOW ON A CONFLICTED LAND. GREAT ROCKY CAPES WITH TOWERING STONE LIGHTS. ISLANDS WITH ABANDONED FOREIGN LEGION FORTS. GIANT RIVERS FLOWING INTO SURF. RAINBOWS ABOVE THE GUN TUB AFTER MONSOON SQUALLS. BLIND CANALS WITHOUT ROOM TO TURN. SCENES NOT MENTIONED IN THE HOMETOWN PRESS.

APRIL 1969 ON A REEDY FETID SHORE WITH NEW CREW MEMBERS HONORED HERE. FAR FROM CORREGIDOR—AMERICAN SYMBOL OF DEFEAT WITH FINAL VICTORY. FAR FROM HUE, DA NANG, BINH BA & SAN JAQUES LIGHT, BOAT 43'S LAST PATROL WAS MADE.

DUONG KEO RIVER AMBUSH. BRIGHT FLASHES OF CABIN LIGHT & DIN. GROUNDED WITH ENGINES BEACHED & RUNNING WILD. VITAL NEEDS OF LIFE DENIED. SWIFT 43, HER SKIPPER, HER MEDIC, & ALL THEIR DREAMS OF DUTY & ADVENTURE DIED.

PLACED HERE BY HER FIRST CREW TO HONOR HER LAST.  
BY WILLIAM RUTH

1966-1967

William Ruth, LtJG  
Paul Frausto Jr. BM 2  
Robert Porter EN 2  
Louis Gonzales RM 3  
Keith Henriksen GMG 3  
Tim McNamara SN  
W.F. Pannett GMG 3  
C. Clark RM 3

1968-1969

Donald Droz LtJG, KIA  
Wayne Langhoffer BM 2  
Lloyd Jones EN 2  
James Dean EN 2  
Stephen Miller RD 2  
Michael Modansky RD 2  
Robert Worthington HMC (UDT 13) KIA



Swift Boat Sailors Association  
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## 2011 SBSA San Antonio Reunion Banner

**Don't Even Think of**

**Moving Without Telling Us!**

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

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