

Swift Current

The official publication of the
Swift Boat Sailors Association

Second Qtr 2013

Comments & suggestions to-
dc.current2@gmail.com

Reunion Homestretch

Our 2013 San Diego Reunion is fast approaching. Details have been provided separately and are posted on the SBSA Website. PCF 816 will be available at the Maritime Museum each day. Daily Highlights include:

Wednesday, 8 May: Hospitality Room Opens 1000. Tours.

Thursday, 9 May: Tours. Maritime Museum of San Diego Pizza Party/Cambodian Dancers

Friday, 10 May: Members' Business Meeting & Board Elections. Tours. Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer (NILO) in Vietnam & Covert Ops in Cambodia. Cambodian Food in Hospitality Room

Saturday 11 May: Memorial Service at Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument. Banquet & 60s Dance Band

Sunday 12 May. Happy Mother's Day. Hospitality Room Closes 1200

See you in San Diego!



Coming in through San Diego Airport: Look for the White Wyndham Hotel Courtesy Shuttle (At Baggage Claim, look for sign to "Courtesy Vehicle Pick Up; Shuttle is on the Hour & Half Hour)

Coming by car: Look for the Star of India (Hotel Registration off Harbor Drive)

Hotel Parking off Pacific Highway at A Street)



Hospitality Room Open for Business Wednesday 10 AM Through Sunday Noon



President's Corner

Hotel reservation has been made and my air travel arrangements are in order....are yours? Next month we'll all be enjoying some Team SDGO hospitality at the 2013 SBSA Reunion. I'm certain that I share the excitement with all that have plans to attend. I look forward to seeing many of my old friends there and meet up with some new Swift Boat brothers.

One quick reminder, reunion attendees who will be participating in the Saturday Memorial Tour need to contact Jim Deal ASAP. A Drivers License or DoD ID number for each visitor must be sent to NAB, Coronado in advance of our visit.

High on the list of things to do is a visit to the Maritime Museum San Diego and its new in-the-water exhibit, PCF-816. Bob Shirley's dream of getting a retiring Malta Swift Boat has become a reality. He and our good friend Maj. Ivan M. Consiglio – The Cons – struck up a great friendship over the years and it was through that friendship between International Swift Boat Brothers that the idea of getting a working Malta Swift Boat back to the states was born. I still have hopes that The Cons will be able to attend one of our future reunions, perhaps in 2015. Until then, BRAVO ZULU, Ivan!!!

SBSA Hats Off to Dave Wallace, Virgil Erwin, Don Farrell, Dave Bradley, Mike Solhaug, and Jim Deal for all the hours of personal commitment they unselfishly gave toward the Malta P 24 Project. We are grateful to you for the extensive work that you put into making Bob Shirley's dream come to fruition....BRAVO ZULU. Hats off also to those who met P 24 along the way from Norfolk to San Diego.

Reminder – the Ship's Store will be up and running at the SDGO Reunion. Be sure to bring extra funds so that you can take advantage of the great item close out sale. We will be taking a very close look at what items we will be offering in the future. More details on this matter will be covered at the Friday morning business meeting.

Five Director positions will be voted on at the business meeting this year. Mike Solhaug and Van Odell are coordinating the election. To date, the current Director slate consists of: Terry Boone, Virg Erwin, William D. Kelly, Terry Vander Molen, Francis X. Dufner, Bob McCredie, Donavon Current, Mike Solhaug and Jim Deal. I'm glad to see such a large slate of candidates willing to give of their time for the future of our association....thank you gentlemen!

I am confident that the Swift Boat Sailors Association will continue to do well under new leadership. As many of you all know, I'll be handing over the leadership gavel at this year's reunion. It's been a long ride, but one that I'd do all over again.....no regrets! My sincere appreciation goes out to all the Officers and Directors that have helped me along the way. Additional thanks go out to SBSA members who also supported my efforts over the years. Thank you all for your support and allowing me to serve.

In brotherhood,

Raul Herrera

Jean-Pierre Benoist will be at the reunion!! WHO IS HE??

Paraphrased from his first person account by DC Current

He was born in France on the 10th of May 1936. He will celebrate his 77th birthday at the reunion.

He went to so called "Indochine Française," now Viet Nam, at age 6 months.

His father, Lucien BONSON, was a captain of the French army and stayed from 1936 to 1945, when on March 9, the Japanese army suddenly attacked all French garrisons from Saigon to Chinese border.

His father was made a prisoner in Lang-Song on March 9, 1945, tortured to death, and his corpse thrown in the river—no grave for him! His father was only 35 years old.

Jean-Pierre spent the war years in Shanghai, China, with his grand parents. They had been ready to go to Australia when Pearl Harbour broke out on December 7, 1941. On the December 8, 1941, Japanese troops blocked any ship or plane in Shanghai. They were stuck until liberated by US forces in September 1945. He was 9 years old and has clear memories of all the novelties brought by US Navy, US Marines, and US Army Air Force.

He ate his first cake with ice cream in a "Catalina" all black "black cat" flying boat.

He rode in a USMC Officer's JEEP with chauffeur, during which time the officer was invited to have a French lunch prepared by his grand mother, and many other memories.

As an adult, he became a merchant marine engine officer on a white passenger ship called Viet-Nam. He traveled from Marseille to Japan for 18 months and then was nominated to be a duty officer on a large cargo ship in Saigon. The company was a state owned one called "Messageries Maritimes." It later merged with La Transatlantique,

Then in 1960, he was drafted for military Naval duties and was sent to Algeria, until France lost the war. He came back home in July 1962, like 400,000 other French soldiers and sailors!!!! as many as US forces in Viet Nam!!!

At the time, Algeria was considered as a French territory, like Alsace, Normandie, etc. and managed with French administration. Algeria was the end of the French colonies. De Gaulle was then the French President, who organized this leaving Algeria to Algerians. It was an awful period, with explosions, sabotage, civil war, etc., in the streets of Oran, Algeria.

He stated that "I stop here these memories, but veterans like those of SBSA can understand that such periods on young unprepared soldiers and sailors is an ear mark with many stories."

He is excited to be our guest at the reunion and is looking forward to visiting the Maritime Museum.

PCF816/P24 ARRIVAL IN SAN DIEGO





Swift Boat Sailors Reunion

Keeping the Memories Alive

San Diego May 8 – 12, 2013

Holiday Inn On The Bay (new name—Wyndham Hotel)

1355 North Harbor Drive San Diego, CA 92101

Reservations: (888) 233 9527 (619) 232 3861

The **Wyndham Hotel** SBSA Room Rate is \$119. Be sure to ask for the Swift Boat Sailors Reunion price. Standard rate is \$220. Every room has a balcony.

Reservations at this rate until our rooms are gone. We have a limited number of rooms reserved for the Reunion. Two other conventions are being held this same week. Please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

Your credit card **will not be charged** until check-out. Hotel Cancellation Policy is 24 hours before arrival.

Airport Shuttle Pick-up is 10 & 40 minutes past the hour all day - *No Charge*

Reunion Registration and Tour information has been mailed to all members in May. Swift Boat rides on the San Diego Bay will depart from the Maritime Museum across the street from the Wyndham Hotel from Tuesday 7 May to Monday 13 May.

Deceased Swifties 2011 forward

Kenneth F. Tryner	Virginia Beach, VA	2011
Gary Blinn	Norfolk, NE	2011
Franklin Henry Carpenter	Columbus, GA	2012
Clair "Pete" Schrod	Pocatella, ID	2012
Ronald L. Ashley	Searsport, ME	2012
Jessie Carmicheal	Orange Park, FL	2012

Change of Address? Need new membership card?

Stay in touch with your shipmates!

Membership card replacement fee \$5.00.

Contact DC Current, Secretary
Email– dc.current2@gmail.com



Swift Boat Sailors Association
3220 Estate Golden Rock#324
Christiansted, VI 00820

Don't Even Think of Moving Without Telling Us!

Email - Letter - Telephone - Just DO IT!

DC Current:(603) 918-0992:dc.current2@gmail.com: 3220 Estate Golden Rock, Christiansted, VI 00820