

# Swift Current

The official publication of the  
Swift Boat Sailors Association

**IV Quarter 2006**

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



## SBSA Donates Wreaths To VUMM

From a practice seen at the National Cemetery at Arlington, the SBSA has donated a group of large wreaths to VUMMF to decorate the memorial site.

*See more pictures inside!*

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, Seasons Greetings, to Swift Boat shipmates everywhere!

## Presidents Corner

Shipmates-

The Holiday Season is once again at our doorsteps. It is a time for celebration, a time for family. My heart is filled with the Spirit of the Season. This past Thanksgiving, I focused on the gifts that I have been given, a beautiful and supportive wife, a handful of children and grandchildren, and shipmates spread all over the country.

My Decembers, however, always open with a somber tone. During that first week, the loss of "Boats" (Bobby Don Carver, KIA December 6, 1967) weighs heavy on my heart. Such must be the case for the crews, friends and families of Carl Raymond Goodfellow, Steven Ralph Luke, John Raymond Hartkemeyer, and Martin Stephen Doherty, who also made the ultimate sacrifice in a war zone Holiday Season, nearly four decades ago.

With permission from the VUMMF Board of Directors, and the presidents of the Gamewardens of Vietnam and the Mobile Riverine Force Association, traditional Christmas wreaths were placed on the Wall and on the bows of each of the three boats at CISM Field. Bob Bolger is coordinating the wreath placement effort. Bob and Ken McGhee placed the wreaths on Dec. 7th.

We also honor our fifty shipmates still on patrol, all other veterans whose names appear on the VUMM Wall, as well as those Swifties who have since joined that elite crew. In particular, we salute Carl "Hank" Hanker who passed on November 2, 2006. Our deepest and most sincere condolences go to Dolores Hanker and family. We owe a great deal to Hank for the fantastic job that he did as PCF-104 Maintenance Officer. We also thank Dolores for being at Hank's side during the countless hours spent in maintaining the 104 and the VUMM grounds in top shape...Bravo Zulu! In Hank's memory, the VUMMF placed a wreath at the Wall.

Virtual Wall - I extend an invitation to all of our members and friends, to visit any of four Internet web sites that contain tributes to our Honor Crew. Over several years, Terry Boone, Joe Ponder and Joe Muharsky worked together collecting pictures of these brave sailors and the stories that tell of their tragic loss. Recently, John Hecker received a letter from Pam Morris, daughter of BM2 Raleigh Lee Godley, KIA May 22, 1966. She wrote John, thanking him

*Cont'd on Page 3*

## How About Running For Office?

In the SBSA, that is. Remember that the Directors are elected by the membership and then the officers are elected/selected by the Directors. Directors serve a four-year term. Candidates should be able and willing to:

- engage in the often daily discussions over the Officers' mail reflector on the internet (email)
- attend the off-year Director's meeting as well as each SBSA reunion
- present a two minute "speech" to the membership prior to the election at the Friday SBSA Business Meeting
- become the "owner" of a project or projects to better the SBSA

You'll need to have some time and the desire to pitch in and do things for your shipmates. No prior experience is required!

Contact Jim Schneider at- [Michael@rushmore.com](mailto:Michael@rushmore.com) for details or to volunteer.

## Special VA Guest Speaker!

Arrangements have been made to have a guest speaker, immediately following the SBSA Business Meeting on Friday. A highly respected Veterans Administration representative, Mr. Mike Schuster, will address our membership. In addition to answering questions from the floor, Mr. Schuster will respond to questions submitted in advance. If you have a specific VA related question or want to hear more details on a given topic, please forward your request (in writing) to Virgil Erwin at 11134 Papoose Ct., San Diego, CA 92127, or by email at [VirgErwin@aol.com](mailto:VirgErwin@aol.com). All inquiries received will be forwarded to Mr. Schuster prior to our reunion next May.

## Swift Boat Sailors Supporting PCF 104 and the Vietnam Unit Memorial (VUMM)

*from Ken McGhee, President of VUMMF*

Next year, the SBSA will be sponsoring a visit to the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument and PCF-104 as an activity in connection with the annual SBSA reunion.

Members of the SBSA have been very generous over time, in support of acquisition, transit, refurbishment and maintenance of PCF 104 and construction of the Memorial Monument. Tom Forrest, even through the difficulties of fighting cancer, organized raffles, encouraged donations and participated in the formulation of the current Memorial.

A smaller group of dedicated ex-Swift Boat Sailors have performed the restoration work on PCF 104. Many have been involved "since day one." Eleven of the Fourteen members of the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument Fund (VUMMF) are ex-Swifties.

**Historical interest-** In late 1997 Neil Geis' son, a Lieutenant, USN (now in command of an F-18 Squadron deployed to the Middle East) spotted a PCF in a Navy salvage yard in Bangor, Washington. He called his Dad and told him about the boat. Neil was in the area two weeks later and viewed the boat and took some pictures. The boat was in VERY rough shape (see following pictures) having been used as a range boat on a underwater range in Puget Sound. The boat had been gutted from its combat configuration and the main cabin windows changed. The engines had been stripped of most of their exterior parts. Radar, weapons, bunks, reefer counter and aft ammo box were gone. Nonetheless, Neil took pictures and forwarded them to Jim Steffes with thoughts of the boat being some kind of Memorial in San Diego. Jim then contacted Ken McGhee and asked help in getting the boat to San Diego and finding a place for it.

**Neil Geis, LT, USN**, assigned as the Maintenance Officer of Coastal Squadron One in Cam Rahn Bay from May 1969 to May 1970. Neil retired from Naval Service as a Lieutenant Commander. It should be noted that he took over developing the Memorial picture board inside PCF 104 after John Branca's passing. He finished the project.

**Jim Steffes, EN2/EN1, USN** served in CosDiv 12 on PCF 12 and 75 in Da Nang and Chu Lai and PCF's 27 and 25 in CosDiv 13 in Cat Lo. He served under OinC Bill Zondorak on PCF 12. Jim retired from Naval Service as ENC.

**Ken McGhee LCDR, USN**, ComCosDiv 12, August 68-August 69. Ken retired from Naval Service as a Captain and is President of the VUMMF.

**Restoration of PCF 104-** After months of haggling with the salvage people in Bangor, the boat was finally released to the Naval History Museum with sub custody to the SBSA. After attempts to get PCF 104 shipped to San Diego on an opportune sea lift failed, the SBSA provided almost \$10,000 to truck the boat to San Diego. While it was enroute, we still did not have a confirmed place to put the boat on arrival. In the nick of time, the Ship's Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA) stepped up and allowed the boat to be placed at their Boat Repair facility at the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, just steps away from where the Swift Boat crews trained in the 60's. Jim Steffes became the crew chief on the boat restoration and was assisted by Swifties John Branca, Carl Hanker, Danny Reynolds, John Howell, Al Smith and Neil Geis. Putting the boat back in "fighting trim" took several months of hard labor, midnight requisitioning and creative procurement. The SBSA paid for the acquisition and shipping of an 81mm Mortar and for the procurement of three replica .50 caliber guns among other things.

### Restoration Crew:

**John Branca, EN1** (deceased 29 November 2003) Qui Nhon, 1/66-1/67. Engineman on PCF 63.

**Carl Hanker, MR3/MR2**, 12/65-12/66, PCF outfitting teams in Subic, then transferred to Vung Tao where he became the engineman on PCF 68 under LT(jg) Jack Ziekler. Retired from Naval Service as MA1. Deceased 2 November 2006.

**John Howell, LT(jg)**, 12/66 to 12/67, OinC PCFs 32 and 37, CosDiv 13 Cat Lo.

**Danny Reynolds, BM2**, 1/66-1/67, Qui Nhon, PCF 63 with John Branca.

**Bill Zondorak, LT(jg), USN**, OinC PCFs 80 and 27 out of DaNang, Cua Viet, Chu Lai and Cat Lo, 23 May 1968-25 May 1969. Bill has been the Memorial Project Engineer from the beginning of the project.

**Ben Cueva, EN2**, CosDiv 12, Da Nang and Chu Lai, CosDiv 11, PCF 23,

## Thanksgiving at VUMM



Mekong Delta.

**Tom Mason, LT(jg), USN**, OinC PCF 49, CosDiv 16 out of Chu Lai. In country Feb 1967, wounded 20 June 67 and medevaced to CONUS. Returned to duty in Vietnam and served with CTF 117 and CTF 116 until 1970.

**Construction of the Memorial-** PCF 104 arrived at NAB 24 January 2000. Several months of dealing with Commander Navy Region South West (CNRSW), Naval Air Station Coronado and Naval Base Coronado during 1997, 1998 and 1999 resulted in being allocated the current grounds where the boats and Memorial Wall now rest. The Navy also authorized the inclusion of the Memorial Wall and the CCB.

Construction began on 11 September 2000 with the site and PCF 104 dedicated 11 November 2000 in a formal ceremony. The excavation, forming, tying rebar and site preparation was accomplished by most of the Swifties named above.

**Continuing Care-** We have been very fortunate to have additional Swifties to come forward and join in the maintenance and upkeep of PCF 104:

**Paul Murphy, LT(jg), USN**, OinC PCF 17 1/66-12/66 with CosDiv One in I Corps. First Vice President of the VUMMF. Worked with the group since 2002. Retired from the Navy as a Captain.

**Don Farrell, LT(jg), USN**, April 70 to December 70. OinC PCF's 63 and 93. An Thoi, Ha Tien, Vinh Te Canal, Cau Mau peninsula, Cat Lo. January 71- April 71, Coastal Flotilla Three senior advisor assistant. He was instrumental in coordination of an exhibit at the San Diego Maritime Museum aboard the SS Berekely. Models of the three boats at the Memorial will be contained in the display

**Louis Hahn, ET1**, AnToi 4/68-4/69, CosDiv 11, mobile maintenance team and other special operations. Retired from the Naval Service as a Master Chief Electronics Technician.

**John McKinley:** no information available at press time - sorry! Editor

**Virgil Erwin, LT, USN**, OinC PCF 67 Sep 68-July 69 Cat Lo. OinC Swift detachment in Binh Tuy July-August 69. Virg recently joined the VUMMF and is the coordinator for San Diego activities for the SBSA reunion.

**A true team effort-** It should be noted that there are many others from CTF 116 Game wardens and CTF 117 Mobile Riverine Force Association and other Brown Water Navy service who have participated in the construction of the Memorial Wall and, at times, in restoration of PCF 104. This article is intended to recognize those Swifties who have participated in the Memorial project.







### That "Ken McGhee" Guy Stays Busy!

"I was contacted by email last year by Bruce Linder, a retired Navy Captain who had been brought on to the Maritime museum staff to put together a display that depicted the Navy in San Diego during the various wars. Ours was the Vietnam war. He originally wanted material that specifically showed what the Navy did in San Diego for each war. Linder contacted me having seen the Memorial at Naval Amphibious Base. I enlisted Don Farrell to do the coordination work with Bruce Linder. Don willingly took on the task and performed what would be termed in the Pentagon as "completed staff work." Assorted useful and extraneous un-useful material came trickling in to Don.

The Maritime museum provided the display cases. We were to provide objects/models to fit into the theme. We contacted Gamewardens and MRFA to see what they could contribute. I donated the model of the PCF 104 and Gamewardens donated a model of the PBR (which was made specially for the display. The CCB model will be displayed when the MRFA can find/build one which is proportional to the two boats now in the case."

Ken

Don't have Special Talents? Don't Have Much Time? [Want To DO Something FOR Your Shipmates?](#)

Here's the **BEST** SBSA volunteer opportunity ever - created just for you! Help out at the Hospitality Suite during the reunion. Meet actual, exciting, combat hardened veterans of the Swift Boat Navy up close and personal. Pour them a beer and say, "Welcome home, shipmate!" Contact Dave Bradley at [Bradsmgtd@msn.com](mailto:Bradsmgtd@msn.com) or go to- <http://swiftboats.org/reunion/hospitality.html> to sign up on-line. You'll have the best seat in the house and get to meet everyone!

Presidents Corner

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for the recognition that he gave her father on one of the web sites. The web site links are as follows: <http://www.virtualwall.org/u-navy/tf115.htm> <http://www.thewall-usa.com/> <http://swiftboats.org/memorials/kias/kiaphotos.html> and <http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm>

**Operation Christmas Care Package 2006-** Remember how great it felt to receive a "care package" from home when we were in Vietnam? The SBSA is sending a Christmas Care Package to the men and women of MIUW 105, currently deployed in Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi / Enduring Freedom. LCDR Andrew Cameron, the unit's XO, told us that his crews "ha[ve] expressed interest in learning more about the past history of Swift Boats, Riverine and Coastal Warfare." Our Ship's Store package will include a VHS tape set of "our" home movie history, "Swift Boat Operations In The Rivers" DVD, CosRon1 Division patches, the three books authored by SBSA members, coffee mugs, pins and a variety of edibles. Individual care packages are encouraged. LCDR Cameron has suggested the following: candy, beef jerky, power bars, general sundries, and magazines of any type from "home." Packages can be mailed to: LCDR Andrew Cameron, Executive Officer MIUW 105, NCWRON 334 - MIUW 105, APO AE 09337. SBSA members wishing to communicate with MIUW 105 crews can do so by sending an email message to LCDR Cameron at [gsobblue@yahoo.com](mailto:gsobblue@yahoo.com). He will, in turn, pass your email address to his group. Let's all actively support these naval warriors!

"Swift Boat Operations In The Rivers" - The Ship's Store is now carrying an extraordinary PCF Delta Photo Collection, a personal photo history of riverine operations, circa 1968-1969, taken and donated by Gerald P. Cook, PH1, USN (Ret.), COMNAVFORV Photographer. Operations include: Sealords, Silver Mace II, and Nam Can. Price: \$10. Hats off to Joe Ponder and Ed Bergin for bringing this project together.

**San Diego Reunion 2007-** Four months and a handful of wake-ups are all that remain until we muster at the Red Lion Hanalei Hotel in San Diego. Military Reunions To Remember reports that registration forms are coming in at a brisk pace. Reservations at the Hanalei are filling up rapidly. Forty percent of our "blocked" rooms have already been taken. With a 48-hour cancellation policy and no credit card charges until check-out, there is no reason to delay making

your reservation. Call (800) 733 5466. ACT NOW, if you haven't already called in your hotel reservation and mailed in your reunion registration. DO IT ASAP!!! You won't want to miss out on this fantastic reunion.

Virgil Erwin (Reunion Chairman) and Team SDGO continue doing an excellent job. Please contact Gene Hart at [ghart@unf.edu](mailto:ghart@unf.edu) if you have not received your reunion registration packet. Heads up: Please take note that the Registration Fee is required for each registrant and not just for SBSA members.

Thanks to Jim Steffes for suggesting that reunion registration packets be sent to the families of fifteen of our KIA brothers as well as to the families of Swifties who have recently passed away. If you know of someone who should have been included, please contact any officer right away.

**Oral History Project** for our reunion- Please contact Bob Bolger at [robert.k.bolger@ec.ipsice.com](mailto:robert.k.bolger@ec.ipsice.com) if you are interested in participating. It's a great opportunity to record Swift Boat history and share our individual stories. It will be an open forum and all are invited to listen in on the discussions / interviews. Topics scheduled thus far include: Duong Keo; Skunk Alpha; Cua Dai; NCWS 5 (Sailors recently returned from the tip of the spear); Ha Tien; Early Swift Boat Experiences (1965 & 1966); VNN Liaison Crew Members; VNN Turnover; Swift Boat History Web Sites; Sea Float; and the Cambodia Incursion. Additional details will appear on the SBSA web site, Internet forums and via direct email to those participating.

**Elections for Directors-** Four Director terms will be filled at the SBSA Business Meeting. Tuck Brant, Ed Bergin, Larry Wasikowski, and Joe Ponder's terms are completed. Members who are interested in taking an active role in the SBSA leadership are invited to contact Jim Schneider, Director, Candidate Slate Committee Chair at [Michael@rushmore.com](mailto:Michael@rushmore.com), or any of the other committee members: Jim Deal [JamesD8860@aol.com](mailto:JamesD8860@aol.com); Curt Hatler [cdhatler@yahoo.com](mailto:cdhatler@yahoo.com); Burke Salsi [bsalsi@triad.rr.com](mailto:bsalsi@triad.rr.com). If you want to recommend someone, please ensure the person you're nominating wants to serve!

On behalf of the Officers, Directors, and Staff of the SBSA, I extend a warm and sincere Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our SBSA Family.

**Raul "Bean" Herrera**





## All boats dressed out in **Christmas Cheer!**

*Pictures of the decorated boats and VUMM are courtesy of Bob and Val Bolger.*

### **Carl "Hank" Hanker**

Carl "Hank" Hanker went into the hospital this week from a massive seizure and never regained consciousness. He passed on this morning (11/2/06) at 3:20 am. For those of you who may have not known Hank, he was a real gentleman. He had a great sense of humor and was always joking or poking fun at something. Hank was a part of the original work party here in San Diego that was responsible for the building of the Vietnam Unit Memorial and the restoration of PCF-104. He truly had more hours of sweat equity in on the memorial than anyone else involved. He loved to keep up the landscaping around the memorial as well since the Navy's contractor always fell short in doing its job. He was extremely proud of his role in taking care of the memorial and it really showed.

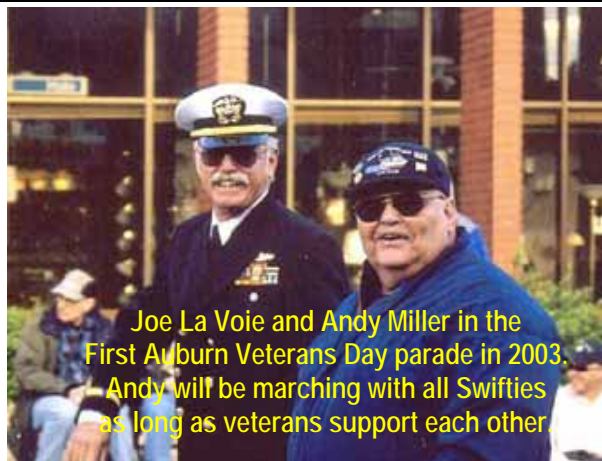
Hank served from 12/66-12/67 in Subic outfitting Swift boats and at Cat Lo, BoatDiv 103, on PCF-68. I believe Hank was a MR3/MR2 when in Vietnam.

Hank will be really missed by all of us who got the chance to work with him over the last 7 or 8 years.

*by Don Blankenship*



## **More of the SBSA-provided Christmas cheer!**



Joe La Voie and Andy Miller in the First Auburn Veterans Day parade in 2003. Andy will be marching with all Swifties as long as veterans support each other.



Auburn, WA, Veterans' Day Parade 2006 - Joe LaVoie, Steve Morrison, Bill Rogers O. P. Lent, Monty Montoya, Bob Hunt, Dave Stevenson, and Mike Lohnes



Florissant, MO, Veterans' Day Parade - Stephan Taylor, Jerry Files, Tom Martin, Charles Florence, Bill Lannom, Terry Boone and Steve Vogt (look to left).

The banner is shown being put in place by sailors from the Inshore Boat Unit 14 who also participated (look to right).

*pictures by Stephan Taylor  
descriptions by Bob Shirley*



**Make a copy of this page, fill it in, and mail to Military Reunions to Remember at the address below!**

**2007 SWIFT BOAT SAILORS ASSOCIATION REUNION REGISTRATION FORM**  
**RED LION HANALEI HOTEL, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

Listed below you will find all of the Dinner and event costs for our **2007 Reunion**. Please enter the number of people that will be participating in each event, and total that amount. All **Reservations and Payments must be received on or before March 23, 2007**. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. At the bottom, add up the **TOTAL AMOUNT DUE** for all events and send this form and a **check made payable to Military Reunions to Remember to:**

**Military Reunions to Remember**  
**Swift Boat Sailors Assoc. Reunion**  
**1673 Kilt Street**  
**Virginia Beach, VA 23464**

OFFICE USE ONLY			
Check #	_____	Date Received	_____
Inputted	_____	Name Tag Complete	_____

**SBSA PIZZA PARTY**

	Price Per Person		Number of People	Total Amount
Friday Night Pizza Party in the Hospitality Room (Under 6, Free) -----	\$ 6.00	X	_____	= \$ _____

**SATURDAY BANQUET DINNER**

# 1 London Broil -----	\$34.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
# 2 Lemon Pepper Chicken -----	\$34.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
# 3 Baked Mahi Mahi -----	\$34.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
# 4 Vegetarian Platter -----	\$34.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
Children's Menu, Chicken Fingers (Ages 2 - 10) -----	\$15.00	X	_____	= \$ _____

**TOUR SELECTIONS**

(Please see newsletter for description of tours)

TOUR #1 - THURSDAY - USS Midway, Harbor Tour (Lunch included) -----	\$44.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
TOUR #2 - FRIDAY - Ladies Shopping Spree and Luncheon -----	\$39.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
TOUR #3A - SATURDAY - Vietnam Memorial and PCF-104 (Transportation and Lunch) --	N/C	X	_____	= N/C
TOUR #3B - SATURDAY - Vietnam Memorial and PCF-104 (Lunch Only) -----	N/C	X	_____	= N/C

*Tour #3 sponsored by SBSA at no cost to registered members and guests. Select Option B if you are providing your own transportation to NAB. Government Issued Photo ID and SBSA Reunion Badge required for both tour options.*

REGISTRATION FEE, PER PERSON -----	\$25.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
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Registration fee covers administrative costs and hospitality room expenses. Registration Fee is not required for children under 6 years of age.

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE TO MILITARY REUNIONS TO REMEMBER ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU COMPLETE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.**  
**IT WILL BE USED FOR REGISTRATION PURPOSES AND NAME TAGS.**

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (as you want it shown on your Name Tag)  
(First) (MI) (Last)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Personal Nametag Information: \_\_\_\_\_

(Call Sign, Nickname, PCF Number, etc)

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you staying at the Hanalei Hotel? Yes ☐ No ☐  
 Are you Flying? ☐ Driving? ☐ RV? ☐ Is this your first SBSA Reunion? Yes ☐ No ☐  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (For last minute announcements or changes only)  
 Special Limitations or Requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list First and Last Names of Spouse and all Guests (excluding yourself) so that we can make Name Tags.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**FULL REFUNDS WILL BE SENT FOR THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES IF CANCELLATION IS RECEIVED BY MARCH 23, 2007. AFTER THAT DATE, REFUND AMOUNT WILL DEPEND ON VENDOR POLICIES. PLEASE CALL US AT (757) 479-0849 (Monday - Thursday). YOUR CANCELLED CHECK WILL SERVE AS YOUR CONFIRMATION. CANCELLATIONS AFTER THE PUBLISHED CUT OFF DATE ARE SUBJECT TO A \$3.00 ADMINISTRATIVE FEE.**



It's up to you, shipmate. Do you want to spend some quality time with old friends, meet new friends, enjoy a ride on some terrific new boats, and pay your respects to those still on patrol? You can even walk the decks of PCF-104 and show the wife, kids, and grandkids exactly what you did for that one great year. You have to act soon to get a room and register with MRTR - DO IT!

# Three Days in May



## Swift Boat Sailors Reunion May 3-5, 2007

Red Lion Hanalei Hotel on Hotel Circle in San Diego  
Toll free reservations at 1-800-882-0858



Hospitality Room and the SBSA Ship's Store will be open all three days



Thursday: Three hr. guided visit to the USS Midway (CV-41) and harbor tour  
Friday: Ladies shopping tour. Business meeting. Oral History. Pizza Party



Saturday morning: VUMM ceremony. Coastal Warfare patrol craft  
Saturday night: Formal banquet. Keynote speaker Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr

Prepared by Bob Shirley

## Seahawk 2006 Drill Held in San Diego



This past August, 850 Navy sailors, Navy reservists and Coast Guard personnel participated in Seahawk 2006, a coastal warfare training exercise held in San Diego Bay and the surrounding area.

"The mission of the inshore boat units is a force-protection mission," explained Lieutenant Commander Quincy Milton, who provided an introduction to the four Inshore Boat Units participating in the exercises. "That includes protection of amphibious anchorages; protection of harbors—things that are of high value to the United States Navy." Pointing to the unit's modern patrol craft, he continued, "These boats are well suited for that mission. The 34-foot Sea Ark Navy patrol craft were designed specifically for inshore boat unit use," he said. "They weigh about 10 tons apiece with two turbo-diesel engines aboard. We can drive them up to speeds of approximately 40 knots. There are four weapon stations on board." Typical armament would be three machine guns: a heavy machine gun forward and then two medium machine guns aft—at either side. Designated as the Dauntless NCW-34 by Sea Ark Marine, each of the new patrol craft are powered by two Cummins 6BTA5.9M-3 diesels rated at 370 horse power each with Twin Disc MG5075 gears and Konrad 520 drives. They also include the latest digital electronic communications and Global Positioning Satellite navigational equipment.

This summer's drill had a great sense of urgency and relevance for San Diego's Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron 5. The group is scheduled to deploy to Kuwait and Iraq in the first half of next year. "We're training at a higher level," Milton said as the squadron's boats rocked pier side at the Naval Amphibious Base in Coronado. "The more the war on terror grows, the more important units like ours become."

Seahawk 2006 was the first significant exercise for the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, which was established last winter to oversee coastal warfare and riverine forces as well as units focused on disposal of explosive ordnance and construction. The simulation involved, besides Squadron 5, a Navy construction battalion, a bomb-disposal unit, riverine forces and logistics

units from as far away as Portland, Ore., and Norfolk, Va. The Navy and Navy Reserve each provided 400 sailors for the training, while the Coast Guard fielded 50 participants. The groups lived in makeshift camps at the Coronado Naval Amphibious Base, Silver Strand Training Complex and North Island Naval Air Station.

"This exercise brought in all the elements of" the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command," said Commander Joseph Bell, who heads Squadron 5. "It's one of the few times you can get all the units together." Bell indicated the participants practiced escorting ships, guarding piers, and spotting and catching potential terrorists. Dolphins were also used to detect swimmers.

Since the Vietnam War, the Navy had relegated most of its coastal warfare and riverine duties to Naval Reserve units. But naval officials decided to beef up their harbor defenses after al-Qaeda suicide bombers exploded a weapons-laden boat next to the U.S. destroyer Cole six years ago while it was anchored in Yemen. The attack killed 17 sailors.

The expeditionary command is one response to the terrorist threat. It includes Squadron 5, which was created in February, Squadron 4 in Norfolk, a number of separate boat units and a Riverine Force Group. Many of the command's members are sailors from other units who volunteered for the new organization. They liked the idea of working with small, tight-knit crews.

"I'm used to serving on smaller ships," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Bill Bates, 44, of Marshfield, Mass. "Once you get on something small, you don't want to go back." "I spent 20 years over there on the gray-hulls," he said while pointing at a line of cruisers, destroyers and amphibious assault ships across the bay. Bates isn't bothered at the prospect of venturing into a war zone so late in his Navy career. "Any time you get a bunch of sailors on fast boats," Bates said, "it's a good time."

SBSA attendees will have an opportunity to share Bates' enthusiasm by taking rides on NCWS's Sea Arks.

*prepared by Bob Shirley*

## Detroit Diesel 12V71N

*by Bernard Wolff*

I'm among those who've always had an interest in engines. When I was nine years old, my Father removed the cylinder head of our lawnmower's Briggs & Stratton engine & explained the basics of 4 cycle engine design. A few months later, we overhauled the 4 cylinder engine on our Farmall Cub tractor & I first experienced grease under my fingernails.

Swifties have a passion for the sound of a Detroit 12V 71N engine. The lovely, melodious exhaust note exudes raw power, complimented by the "bucket of bolts" diesel rattle in the background that stirs our senses. It melts away the years and brings us back to the time in our lives when the sound of the 12V 71N was constantly in the background. Those who took the short Swift Boat harbor tour during the 2004 Norfolk Reunion wandered to the stern to again relish the exhaust note.

During Swift training in Coronado, we were told to warm up the engines slowly, carefully, under load to prevent destroying cylinder sleeves, and make throttle changes gradually. We were given the impression that the 12V 71N was delicate, needing a gentle hand on the throttles.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The 12V 71N would rise to the challenge under the most trying conditions. Those who served in An Thoi recall the engines chugging along with muddy water coming from the cooling water discharge while we were "churning mud" near the shore, looking for action. The engines didn't skip a beat while our boats were slammed around by gigantic waves during the monsoon season.

We all remember the endurance of the 12V 71N during the PCF 43 tragedy. After being severely damaged by rocket attacks, the out of control boat beached itself. Deprived of cooling water, the engines continued to run at full speed until they melted, igniting the explosives and ammunition she was carrying to other Swifts involved in her Mission.

Most problems that arose during patrol were minor. Most of us had the unsettling experience of opening the Engine Hatch cover to be confronted by a spray of fuel from a broken fuel line connection. This was sometimes preceded by a sudden surging of the engine, sometimes without warning. The forgiving nature of diesel fuel was again demonstrated.

I recall one particularly embarrassing episode with a broken fuel line. I was driving the boat at the aft helm, bearing down at full speed on a junk near a restricted area north of DaNang. At the last second, I dropped the Morse throttles in full reverse, expecting to stop suddenly beside the junk with its crew off balance and frozen in fear. This time, only the port engine responded, causing the bow to swing around toward the junk. Fortunately, we avoided hitting and wrecking the junk. The junk crew broke all records for producing their *Can Cuoc's* for our inspection.

Turns out that the starboard engine had a ruptured fuel line and lost power when I dropped the throttles into full reverse. Besides my red face, no other damage was done. The junk crew was placated by several fresh eggs from our reefer.

Occasionally, the cooling water flow through the exhaust pipes would be improperly adjusted, causing the rubber "boots" at the stern to melt & fail. If not detected quickly and rapid action taken, disaster could result.



Early in my crew's tour, I recall an episode on October 9, 1967 in Area 4C near Nha Trang. We were relieved by PCF 49, manned by Lijg "Buddah" Dunlap's crew. As we departed for home, we received an urgent radio call from PCF 49 to "come back" as soon as possible. PCF 49 was rapidly settling by the stern as the Engineman hurriedly jumped into the engine room. One of the exhaust boots was broken, causing water to pour into the engine room. Since the rear of the boat was rapidly submerging, it was difficult to determine which engine had the torn exhaust boot. Lijg Dunlap shut down both engines to reduce internal flooding (from the cooling water), but this of course also shut down his bilge pump as water continued to flow in from the submerged stern. As we came alongside, our engineman, EN2 Goin, was able to rig a hose to our bilge pump and begin pumping water from the engine room while PCF 49's crew groped around to identify and seal the tear in the boot.

Soon, PCF 49 was able to get their engines and bilge pump restarted to pump out the flooded engine compartment and return to Cam Rahn Bay for repairs. PCF 49 came close to sinking during this episode.

This happened to my boat, PCF 52, one afternoon in An Thoi. Fortunately, we caught the problem soon after the boot failed, and were able to shut down the engine with the faulty boot, and keep the stern above the water line by staying underway with our remaining engine while repairs were completed.

Several problems could be jerry rigged to keep an engine on line to bring us back home. I recall one incident that occurred on May 11, 1968, while we were patrolling Area 1C on the DMZ in PCF 12. Our regularly assigned boat, PCF 69, was in port having its radar repaired.

QM2 David Barthelmeh was shutting down each engine for "engine checks" early in the morning. When he completed his check of the starboard engine, it would not restart. The engine had lost pressure in its

fuel supply line. This was confirmed by the odor of fuel on the oil dipstick.

Since we were in an "uncomfortable" position --- the North Vietnamese occasionally used a cannon just above the DMZ to shoot at the Swift on patrol in --- we didn't want to be limping along on one engine should they decide to use us for their morning amusement.

At first, we did not see how we could pressurize the fuel oil lines with the engine inoperative. Then we noticed the fuel line plumbing for the port engine. It was long enough to allow the fuel return line from the port engine to be redirected to the incoming fuel line of the starboard engine.

Over the next 30 minutes, we were able to rig the port engine's return lines to the starboard engine, restoring fuel flow to the dead engine. Next, we bled the rearmost fuel injector until fuel seeped from the line, indicating that air had been removed.

The starboard engine immediately started, and ran without problems until our Relief arrived & we returned to port.

As suspected, one of the fuel injectors had a difficult to detect cracked fuel line, causing air to enter the fuel supply line when the engine was shut down.

The flexibility of the engine fuel flow system allowed us to jerry rig our way out of the problem.

It is truly amazing how the 12V 71N endured all of the abuse it suffered during our patrols. Some of us are still around because of the engine's toughness under severe conditions.

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