

# Swift Current

The official publication of the  
Swift Boat Sailors Association

**I Quarter 2007**

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

## President's Corner-

Shipmates –

Only a couple more weeks and a wake-up! Then, it's West Coast bound for a great many of us. Excitement is definitely in the air. Virgil Erwin and Team San Diego are busy putting the final reunion planning phase in motion. Although there are no more rooms available at the Red Lion Hanalei Hotel at the SBSA discounted price, reservations can still be made. There are many other motels in the Hotel Circle area to select from as well. See you there...

Recently, Joanne Baumberger wrote to thank the SBSA, Paul Murphy in particular, for the personal attention that he gave her and her WWII fighter pilot cousin when they visited the VUMM at CISM Field, NAVPHIB Base, Coronado. Her husband Richard, Honor Crewman BM3 Richard Baumberger's father, passed away before having the opportunity to visit the Memorial. Joanne wrote, "I want to thank you again very much for making this possible for me and I know my husband, Richard, is smiling down from heaven."

A film short titled, "REVEILLE," by actor, director James McEachin, made the Swift-L rounds a while back. The clip is a must-see. It can be viewed on the Internet at

<http://www.jamesmceachin.com/>

or via many other "Googled" sites. Mr. McEachin responded to a BRAVO ZULU message that I posted on his web site with his own Silver Star recipient salute to all Swifties for our service. He sent and dedicated his new short film CD titled, "OLD GLORY." The CD will be available for viewing in the Hospitality Room.

An SBSA Member Directory will be available upon request at our Business Meeting in San Diego. Gene Hart is preparing the list but will exclude all contact information of those individuals who have not authorized disclosure of their personal information. If interested, please contact Gene with authorization to print your contact data so that other Swifties can communicate with you.

In closing, I encourage all Swift Boat veterans who have V.A. claims on file to aggressively pursue the status of their claim. To address the VA related needs of our membership, the VA Advisory Committee has been formed. Bob Hunt chairs the committee that includes, Ken Briggs, Jerry Sullivan, Barry Boggart, Dan Aguilar, Jim Deal, and Stew Harris. If anyone needs assistance in any VA related matter, please contact Bob at [cinc@verizon.net](mailto:cinc@verizon.net) or (208) 773-1074; or any of the committee members listed. Our network of Swifties that have experienced VA claim delays, set-backs and even denials are eager to assist in anyway possible. They can assist you from the simplest "how do I get started" to "how do I know if I've got PTSD?" questions. **There will be more information available as soon as the group gets up-to-speed.**

In Brotherhood,  
Raul Herrera



Raul "Bean"  
Herrera

## A Tribute To Be Shared With All Vietnam Veterans

by Joe Ponder

Everyone during their life usually has something very special that happens to them or comes their way that they certainly would enjoy sharing with their family members and friends. I have such an account that happened to me recently that I must share with all of you who served our nation in the Vietnam War. I feel led to inform you of a wonderful tribute that was first presented to me this past January 15 in a telephone call to me from Vice Admiral Edward H. Martin, USN-Retired. Admiral Martin was acting in behalf of a very patriotic and generous couple who represent the very best of our wonderful country. This couple wishes to remain anonymous.

I never knew my name was submitted to Admiral Martin for his consideration in this matter. I didn't know a thing regarding this project and it came as a total surprise to me when Admiral Martin first called me.

I know there are thousands of other Vietnam veterans who are more deserving of this very special tribute than I, however, I'm extremely humbled and honored to have been selected the recipient of this most generous and extraordinary tribute.

The fantastic offer presented to me is more about us than it is about myself, for all of us served faithfully and honorably in Vietnam. Also, we continue to serve America today in our own various ways. We continue to give back to our great nation for the many liberties and benefits we've been able to experience by living in the land of the free and the home of the brave. I feel compelled, not by pride from within myself for anything I have ever accomplished, but rather by the pride and respect that I have for each of you who sacrificed for me, my family, and our country in a far distant land, in a very unpopular war during the prime of our lives many years ago. Therefore, I must share the tribute presented to me with each of you. Though Admiral Martin selected me to be the recipient of this very wonderful offer, which is an all expense paid vacation cruise anywhere in the world, each of you as well are truly a beneficiary of this very sincere expression of appreciation and gratitude for your military service in Vietnam.

By the way, my wife, Rebecca, and I are very excited about our upcoming vacation cruise to and land tour of Alaska starting July 12, 2007.

Also, as a result of my service in Vietnam my life has been greatly enriched and has made me a better person for it. In addition, the quality of the character of the individuals that I served with in Vietnam, can never be matched in comparison with any one civilian who has never served in defense of country, never!

I'm certain the sponsors of this very special tribute would like to thank and salute each of you patriots for your service and the sacrifices you made in Vietnam. I assure you they have the highest respect and admiration for all of us!

*Several of the pieces of correspondence are reproduced on page 2 inside—Ed.*

## REUNION 2007!

**San Diego/Coronado—where it all started**

**May 3 - 7, 2007 (Thursday-Sunday)**

Even though it's late in the game to make arrangements to attend, the reunion committee will make extraordinary efforts to try to fit you in. Visit the SBSA website to get more information:

**[www.swiftboats.org](http://www.swiftboats.org)**



Vice Admiral Edward H. Martin  
United States Navy (Retired)



15 January 2007

Mr. Joseph L. Ponder  
6996 Deer Springs Road  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656

Dear Mr. Ponder:

It was a pleasure talking with you earlier today and my heartiest congratulations for being selected as a recipient of the most generous offer being made by a very patriotic and generous couple who represent the very best of our wonderful nation. I am a close friend of, and acting in behalf of this couple who wish to remain anonymous.

Enclosed herewith is a handwritten letter from this couple which expresses their wishes far better than I can.

For many years they have maintained an abiding conviction that, in general, those who served our country so well, so bravely and valiantly in the Vietnam War returned home to an "angry" nation, a nation that did not properly receive the returning Vietnam veterans or appreciate their sacrifices, dedication and service.

Now, as an expression of gratitude and appreciation to you, as a shining representative of all Vietnam veterans who have served our country so well and honorably, this couple would like to recognize and honor your service and contributions as a Vietnam Veteran by presenting to you a significant tribute.


This tribute is envisioned to be in the form of an all expenses paid cruise or similar for you and your wife; or, should a cruise not be agreeable to you, some other venture or issue you may desire. I will effect the arrangements and modalities of this wonderful offer with you.

You were selected to be a recipient after an extensive selection process, a process that sought to identify that veteran or veterans who best represented the thousands of Vietnam veterans that served so well and who never received the recognition and appreciation so rightfully deserved. In addition, your leadership and civic contributions subsequent to Vietnam have been stellar. This offer is made in appreciation of your service, sacrifices and contributions to our nation.

It is my pleasure to represent a truly patriotic and appreciative American couple and I am looking forward to working with you to make this offer a reality.

I am also enclosing a copy of my abbreviated biography in order that you may better know with whom you are communicating.

Sincerely yours

  
Edward H. Martin  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

w/enclosures

Copies of the letters received by Joe Ponder from the anonymous benefactors who honor Vietnam Vets. Joe tried to invite Admiral Martin to our reunion, but the Admiral had to be in Washington, DC, all that week.

**"Semper Swift!" to Joe & Rebecca!**

*For some years, we have been concerned about the Vietnam veterans who loyally served their country and the shameful manner in which many were treated upon their return home. It seems that many citizens of this country tell these men and women responsible for policies created in Washington, and directed their anti-Vietnam anger at those who did their best to carry out orders and serve their country. Instead of seeing the thanks and recognition they deserved for performing their patriotic duty under very difficult circumstances, many returning citizens were poorly treated by ungrateful.*

*For some time we have wanted to find a way to express our thanks to a Vietnam veteran who returned to this great country and didn't receive the appreciation he so richly deserved. We would like to fund a vacation such as a cruise, a trip to Europe, or any number of personal choices.*

*It is our great pleasure to express our appreciation for the service and sacrifice made by you. We do this anonymously as it is our interest to express our thanks as U.S. citizens, and the thanks should flow from us to you, not the other way around.*



## Naval Academy Cares for Fallen Warriors

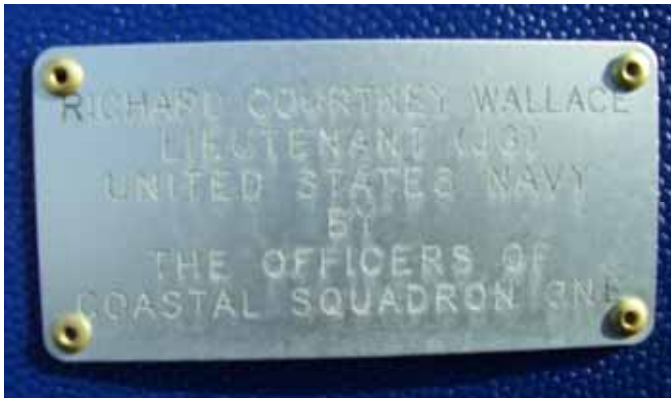
Ed. - Received the following email exchange from Mrs. Diane Wallace, widow of LTJg Richard C. Wallace, KIA

[Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium] at the U. S. Naval Academy was completely renovated. I asked a colleague here at Norfolk Academy what they had done about the memorial stadium seats given in the past. He called the Naval Academy and here's their reply with PHOTO-GRAPH. The Swift boat men who served with Dick gave this in his memory in 1968.



I did not ask the Naval Academy to go to all this trouble, but here's what they sent. Like they say, **THE NAVY TAKES CARE OF ITS OWN...even after these many years!**

Diane Wallace



Sent: Friday, February 16, 2007 9:31 AM  
To: Diane Wallace  
Subject: LTJg Wallace - memorial seat inquiry

Ms. Wallace,

Greetings from Annapolis! On behalf of our President/CEO George Watt, I write in response to your inquiry regarding a memorial seat in memory of your late husband, LTJg Richard C. Wallace. I confirm that there is a seat designated in his memory at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis.

Attached please find a photo, taken very recently by our staff, of the seat plate at the Stadium. The location of the seat is: Section 28, Row 11, Seat 22.

The Naval Academy has completed the renovation of the Stadium, with a rededication taking place in the Fall of 2005. As its name implies, we believe that this facility is truly a memorial that happens to be a stadium and that it honors appropriately those who have served our Nation in uniform.



Mickey Walker sends this picture of CosDiv 14's "taxi" in 1969-70 - thanks to both Mickey and Lew Holley!

## Special Extra Earnings For Military Service



Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1940 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

Special extra earnings are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra earnings are not granted for inactive duty training.

Note: If your active military service occurred

- After 1967, you do not need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record
- In 1967 or earlier, we will add the credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits

### How You Get Credit For Special Extra Earnings

The information that follows applies only to active duty military service earnings from 1940 through 2001. Here's how the special extra earnings are credited:

- **Service In 1978 through 2001-** For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.
- **Service In 1957 Through 1977-** You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.
- **Service In 1940 Through 1956-** If you were in the military during this period, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, your Social Security record may be credited with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940, through December 31, 1956, under the following circumstances:
  - You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service;
  - or, you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty;
  - or, You are still on active duty;
  - or, You are applying for survivors benefits and the veteran died while on active duty.

You cannot receive credit for these special extra earnings if you are already receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service. There is one exception: If you were on active duty after 1956, you can still get the special earnings for 1951 through 1956, even if you're receiving a military retirement based on service during that period.

From: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

## Change of Address?

**Stay in touch with your shipmates!**

**Contact Gene Hart, Secretary/Treasurer-**

**Tel. (908) 880-6412 Email- [ghart@unf.edu](mailto:ghart@unf.edu)**

## Membership Notes From the Secretary/Treasurer:

Since Jan. 1st through [March 2, 2007] we have 545 members who have paid dues for 2007. Several have renewed for more than 1 year. With multi-year renewals from previous years we have 586 current members.

Of the 545 members 51 were AWOL during the previous 1 to 5 years. (9.4%)

Eleven new members have joined since Jan. 1, 2007.

The AWOL list numbers 142. 137 of these we have not heard from since 2003 or earlier. At least 25 of the 144 have moved with no forwarding address. Seven members have notified me that they have resigned from SBSA or asked to have their membership cancelled or refused to renew membership. That is about 1.2% of the current membership and renewals are still coming in almost every day [as of March 2, 2007].

The following numbers represent those who are now on their last patrol (that I [Gene Hart] have been made aware of):

2004 – 5      2005 – 5      2006 – 5      2007 – 2



## Look What They've Done Now!

The guys at VUMM in Coronado never seem to sit around waiting for someone to suggest a project to improve the memorial. Ken McGhee sent this picture taken in early January 2007 of Paul Murphy standing on the new pavers that have been laid. Paul is between our PCF-104 on the left and the PBR on the right.

*Thanks, Ken, for the pic! - Ed.*

## Last Patrol Notice

BMC William T. (Tommy) Langham, USNR, Ret. died on January 12, 2007, in Beaumont, Texas, at the age of 79. He was an active member of SBSA. Chief Langham served over 30 years in the Reserves and had active duty tours in both Korea and Vietnam. In Korea, he served aboard the USS Blue (DD-387).

For both tours in Vietnam, he volunteered to go back on active duty for the specific assignment. His first tour was as the Boatswain's Mate on PCF-18 in Chu Lai and his second tour was with the Riverine Forces in the Mekong Delta where he received the Purple Heart. Subsequently, he was a member of Special Boat Unit 22, a reserve unit based at the Pearl River in Louisiana. (Those who attended our New Orleans reunion may remember the outstanding boat operations demonstration conducted by members of that unit.) Chief Langham was a PBR Captain and was in charge of training. He served on a number of training missions to several Central and South American countries, including Panama, Honduras, and Colombia.

Military honors for his funeral service, conducted by a military association of retired veterans, were very impressive, and were concluded by the placing of three spent cartridges, representing Duty, Honor, and Country, in the folded flag presented to his family. The writer, as his former OINC, was privileged to serve as a pall bearer. Also present was SBSA President Raul Herrera and his wife, Luz. Rest in peace, "Boats."

*submitted by Bruce Wentworth*



Just in case you've forgotten what NAB looks like! If you go on your own (not on the official SBSA tour) you will need an armed forces ID card or someone with a card will have to escort you - **PLAN AHEAD!**

## Reunion Attendance Update

Bob Shirley, Reunion PAO, offers the following report on sign-ups as of March 20th. The hotel is sold-out between our group and others as well. If you haven't signed up yet, better get on the horn or start emailing NOW and you may still be able to get some confirmed reservations.

It is official! This is gonna be a *super* reunion!

<i>Tour 1</i>	<i>Tour 2</i>	<i>Tour 3a, b</i>	<i>Pizza Party</i>	<i>Banquet</i>	<i>Room Nights</i>
164	42	262, 45	234	<b>321</b>	645

What can I say? You guys are *TERRIFIC!!*

**Great job by Virgil Erwin, Reunion Coordinator and his bright and energetic gang in San Diego!**



Swifties at Walter Reed to cheer up the troops! "Boats" Turley, Ken Briggs, Rich O'Mara, and Terry Boone (along with two new-found Army vets at either end) outside Walter Reed in mid-March in Washington, DC.



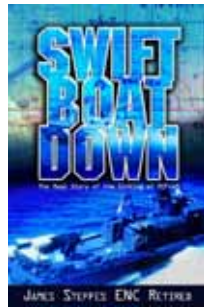
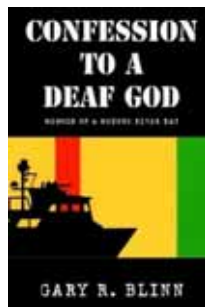
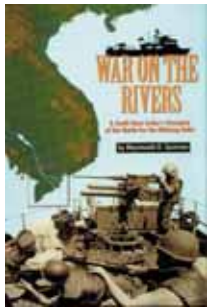
## SBSA Ship's Store Notes

Greetings!



The Ship's Store will be closed from April 15, 2007 till May 15, 2007 due to reunion. All major credit cards will be accepted (I hope!). A few new items are coming, so check them out. Our three famous authors will be on hand for a book signing and discussion. Be sure to thank the volunteers working the Ship Store. See 'ya in San Diego!

Ken Briggs  
SBSA Ship's  
Store



Our very own published authors will be available throughout the reunion to autograph copies of their books

## Riverine Warriors On TV!

The TV show "PBR Rescue" will be shown on April 21<sup>st</sup> on the Discovery Channel. For more details visit:

<http://www.tf116.org/pdf/ReenactmentNews.pdf>



Warren Jenny reports via email on something new in his life -

"Well, I got my "new car" day before yesterday and had to show it off to you. Being a "car guy", maybe you can appreciate it. Trying to figure out how to take it to the reunion now:):):) Just kidding."

## VA Reaches Out to Veterans and Spouses "Aid and Attendance" an Under-Used Benefit

WASHINGTON (Dec. 19, 2006) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans about an under-used, special monthly pension benefit called Aid and Attendance.

"Veterans have earned this benefit by their service to our nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "We want to ensure that every veteran or surviving spouse who qualifies has the chance to apply."

Although this is not a new program, not everyone is aware of his or her potential eligibility. The Aid and Attendance pension benefit may be available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care or who live in nursing homes or assisted-living facilities.

Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self support and in need of regular personal assistance.

The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one's own bodily needs. People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment.

For a wartime veteran or surviving spouse to qualify for this special monthly pension, the veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Wartime veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, (October 16, 1981, for officers) must have completed at least 24 continuous months of military service or the period for which they were ordered to active duty.

If all requirements are met, VA determines eligibility for the Aid and Attendance benefit by adjusting for un-reimbursed medical expenses from the veteran's or surviving spouse's total household income. If the remaining income amount falls below the annual income threshold for the Aid and Attendance benefit, VA pays the difference between the claimant's household income and the Aid and Attendance threshold.

The Aid and Attendance income threshold for a veteran without dependents is now \$18,234 annually. The threshold increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent, and by \$1,866 for each additional dependent. The annual Aid and Attendance threshold for a surviving spouse alone is \$11,715. This threshold increases to \$13,976 if there is one dependent child, and by \$1,866 for each additional child.

Additional information and assistance in applying for the Aid and Attendance benefit may be obtained by calling 1-800-827-1000. Applications may be submitted on-line at-

[www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp](http://www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp)

Information is also available on the Internet at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or from any local veterans service organization.

*Tip of the hat to Jim Deal for forwarding this to the Swift Current - Ed.*

# Navy's Riverine Force Leaves On Its First Deployment To Iraq

By LOUIS HANSEN, The Virginian-Pilot

© March 8, 2007



*Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Waters arrives at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base early Thursday with his wife, Rachael, holding their 3-month-old son, Nicholas V, for Waters' deployment with Navy Riverine Squadron One.*

Stephen M. Katz / The Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA BEACH - Corpsman Kyle Bailey loaded his gear aboard a bus Thursday morning at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, leaving for his second combat mission to Iraq.

Bailey went over with a Seabees unit in 2003 but, he said, "a lot of things are different now." This time, Bailey joins 120 sailors from a new unit, Riverine Squadron 1, with a new Navy mission to patrol Iraqi waterways. Before he boarded the bus, Bailey repeated advice from recent combat vets about Iraq: "Don't get lazy."

The riverine sailors will join a Marine Corps unit patrolling the Euphrates River. It marks the first time an active-duty Navy riverine unit has deployed since the

Vietnam War more than 30 years ago.

The new generation of brown-water sailors will work side by side with the Marines to provide maritime security. Eventually, the Navy will take over the task, patrolling in 30-foot fast boats with crews of four or five sailors.

At their Little Creek home base on Thursday, sailors huddled against frigid early morning winds and said final good-byes before their long flight.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Waters cradled his 3-month-old son, Nicholas V, and waited to leave. The 30-year-old Texas native joined the riverine squadron shortly after the squadron formed last year because, he said, "it was the way the Navy was going."

Waters deployed earlier to the Middle East, but the master at arms expects to be closer to combat during this mission. His wife, Rachael, gave him a simple command. "I just want him to be strong," she said, and "stay alive."

The sailors were the second of three groups from Riverine Squadron 1 to deploy. About 60 sailors assigned to logistics support arrived in Iraq last month, and another 50 sailors will follow in the coming months.

Cmdr. Bill Guarini, the squadron's commanding officer, said the deployment continues the Navy's historic mission: maintaining safe seas and waterways.

The squadron leaned heavily on the advice of Vietnam veterans, known as river rats, for advice on equipment, training and tactics, he said.

The new river rats will have more advanced equipment, however, including unmanned aerial vehicles, infrared sensors and other electronic, data-gathering devices, he said.

"Little expense has been spared," Guarini said.

He added that the Marines' mission has been relatively safe. So far, insurgents have not been planting deadly improvised explosive devices along the waterways.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua Lipstein joined the Navy 15 months ago, straight from high school. So far, the 19-year-old has loved his training and he said he is ready for a real mission. Lipstein has been assigned to perform camp security. His nervous parents in Delaware offered advice: "Be safe. Be aware of what's around you."

*Reach Louis Hansen at (757) 446-2322 or [louis.hansen@pilotonline.com](mailto:louis.hansen@pilotonline.com).*

## Reunion Tidbits From the Reunion Committee—Good Stuff to Know & Take With!

**VUMMF Team**, led by Ken McGhee, puts up new State, Navy and National Flags on the Memorial, 62 new flags each year. We will have two sets of these flags by the Reunion date. If you want your State Flag or some other one that has flown for a year over the Memorial, they will be available for \$5 in the Hospitality Room or the Ship's Store. Proceeds will go to the Memorial Fund.

**Working Party** at the Memorial on Friday 4 May will be preparing for Saturday. So if you are bored or just want some extra time aboard PCF 104, check in at the Hospitality Room for advice on Base Security and Transportation.

### NAB Base Security

Remember to bring your driver's license or government ID and your Reunion Badge on Saturday, 5 May. Your ID gets you on the base, your badge gets you lunch.

**The San Diego Union Tribune** produces a web site that lists damn near everything you will want to know, including the Weather, the tides and a forecast.

**What to wear?** Expect 69 degrees during the day, 58 at night. Bring sunglasses and a sweater, a bathing suit for the pool and sun lotion for your winter white skin. [www.signonsandiego.com](http://www.signonsandiego.com)

**Old Town** has shops and great Mexican restaurants, five minutes from the Hanalei Hotel. Free shuttle from the hotel begins at 8:30 AM until 3:30 PM, every 30 minutes. The weekend of May 5 is Cinco de Mayo so expect large crowds.

[www.oldtownsandiego.com](http://www.oldtownsandiego.com)

[www.oldtownsandiego.org](http://www.oldtownsandiego.org)

**Old Town Trolley** offers narrated tours of San Diego and Coronado. This departs from Old Town. You can jump off at any of their stops and jump back on the next trolley. They come by every 30 minutes. Cost is \$30.

[www.historictours.com](http://www.historictours.com) 619 298 8687

**USS Midway** is anchored at the same dock we practiced docking our Swift Boats. If you didn't sign up for the tour and harbor cruise, you can still see her.

[www.midway.org](http://www.midway.org) 619 544 9600

**Maritime Museum** is a short walk from the USS Midway. Check out the Russian Submarine and models of a Swift Boat and PBR. [www.sdmartime.org](http://www.sdmartime.org) 619 234 9153

**San Diego Harbor Tours and Dining Cruises** [www.sdhe.com](http://www.sdhe.com) 619 234 4111

**Seaport Village** has shops and restaurants, the first stop for the Ladies Luncheon.

[www.gothere.com/sandiego/seaport/](http://www.gothere.com/sandiego/seaport/)

**The Gaslamp Quarter** has great restaurants and almost all have seating next to the sidewalk as well as indoors. This web site lists all the restaurants and shops with phone numbers and maps. [www.gaslamp.org](http://www.gaslamp.org)

**La Jolla**, is my favorite town [says Virg Erwin], the part that is next to the ocean. Great restaurants and shops and you can walk to everything. This web site lists all the restaurants, menus and shops. If you go there, my recommendation is

*Cont. on page 7*



Roppongi Restaurant and Sushi Bar with indoor and outdoor dining. From 4 to 6 PM, a large selection is half price. [www.lajollabythesea.com](http://www.lajollabythesea.com)

Riverwalk Golf Club is 5 minutes from the Hanalei and the hotel offers a free shuttle. [www.americangolf.com](http://www.americangolf.com) 619 296 4653

SeaWorld is about 15 minutes from the Hanalei. [www.seaworld.com](http://www.seaworld.com)

Airport transportation to the Hanalei Cloud 9 Shuttle is about \$11. There is no extra charge for wheelchair accessibility. [www.cloud9shuttle.com](http://www.cloud9shuttle.com) 800 974 8885

Hotels. Still don't have a reservation? Contact Military Reunions To Remember

and Terry or Amanda will try to help you find something close to the Hanalei. There are many motels in this area. [www.mrtr.com](http://www.mrtr.com)

Raffle - Miniature Dream Models has donated a Swift Boat, completely assembled and waiting for a hull number; Ken McGhee has donated a Revell Swift Boat model, hull number 10 in its original box, unassembled and also a plastic survival chart of Vietnam, all to be raffled off. Tickets will be sold in the Hospitality Room, winners announced at the Banquet.

Your San Diego 2007 Reunion Committee: Bob Brown, Dave Bradley, Tom Edwards, Neil Geis, Bob Bolger, Gary Carpenter, Chuck Rabel, Ken McGhee, Lou Hanh, and Team Leader Virg Erwin.

## SBSA Directors, Officers, & Staff



Bob Ankenbauer  
Florida



Ed Bergin  
Florida



Robert "Tuck" Brant  
Virginia



Jim Deal  
New Mexico



Gene Hart  
Florida



Raul "Bean" Herrera  
Texas



Joe Ponder  
Florida



Jim Schneider  
South Dakota



Larry Wasikowski  
Nebraska

*Each of these guys volunteers for some kind of job with the SBSA and does it well! It takes hours away from wives, leisure time, and (sometimes!) jobs. Here and on the website are the only times they get recognized.*



Ken Briggs  
Pennsylvania  
Ship's Store



Terry Boone  
Kansas  
Membership

*Take a few minutes of your time while you're enjoying your self in San Diego and say, "Thanks, shipmate, Well Done!" to a couple of these guys - it's all the thanks they'll ever want!*



## Need Directions?

To get around San Diego, which I'm told has changed since the 1960's, you need some directions and we on the Swift Current staff are not in the map/chart printing business. Fortunately, Bob Shirley has given some much needed assistance on his terrific website:

<http://pcf45.com/dedication/vumdirections.html>

## Armed Forces Language Conversion Chart

NAVY / USMC	ARMY	AIR FORCE
Head	Latrine	Powder Room
Rack	Bunk	Single w/ ruffle and duvet
Mess Deck / Chow Hall	Mess Hall / Mess Tent	Dining Facility / The Cafe'
"Cookie", stew burner	Mess Cook	Contract Chef
Coffee / Mud	Cup of Joe	Vanilla Skim Latte'
Bug Juice	Kool-Aid	Shirley Temple
Utilities / Digitals	BDUs / ACUs	Casual Wear
Seaman / Private	Private	Bobby / Jimmy
Chief / Gunny	Sergeant	Bob / Jim
Captain / Skipper	Colonel	Robert / James
Captain's Mast	Article 15	Time Out
Berthing / Barracks	Barracks	Apartment
Skivvies / U-Trau	Underwear	Undies
Thrown in the Brig	Put in Confinement	Grounded
Zoom Bag	Flight Suit	Business Casual
Cover / Head Gear	Beret	Optional
Ship's Store / BX	PX (PX Trailer)	AAFES Shopping Mall
TAD	TDY	PCS with family
Cruise / Afloat	Deploy	Huh?
Ground Grabbers	Athletic Shoes	Flip-Flops
Die for your Country	Die for your Battle Buddy	Die for Air Conditioning
Shipmate / Marine	Battle Buddy	Don't Ask, Don't Tell or Honey
Terminate / Kill	Take Out	Back on Base for Happy Hour
Boon Dockers	Jump Boots	Birkenstocks
Low Quarters	Low Quarters	Patent Leather Pumps
SEAL	SF/Ranger	Librarian
Shore Patrol / MPs	MPs	SF
Outh-Rah!	Hoo-ah!	Hip-Hip hurray!
MRE	MRE	Happy Meal To Go
Salute	Salute	Wave
Obstacle Course	Confidence Course	Class VI Parking Lot
Grinder / Drill Field	Parade Field	What?
Ge-Dunk	Snack Bar	Chuck E. Cheese
PT Test	APFT	"No conversion available"
Dept. of the Navy	DoD	DoD Lite
Midshipman	Cadet	Debutant
Hard-Core	Strak	"Way Too Serious"

### MEMBER DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

An SBSA Member Directory will be available upon request at our Business Meeting in San Diego. If you wish to have your name and contact information included in the directory we must have the following signed statement on file:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, authorize the release of my name and contact information to other Swifties to aid in communications between former shipmates, the formation of committees, and to enhance the general camaraderie of the Swift Boat Sailors Association.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

We will exclude all contact information of those individuals who have not authorized disclosure of their personal information; only their names will be listed. If you are not sure you granted SBSA permission to release your contact information, please contact Gene Hart at:

3941 Laurelwood Drive  
Jacksonville, FL 32257-8926

Phone: (904) 880-6412  
ghart@unf.edu

*Ed. Note*— the SBSA attempts to guard the membership's private information at all times.

Don't know who wrote this, could have been a Swiftie.....enjoy!

*Around the corner I have a friend,  
In this great city that has no end,  
Yet the days go by and weeks rush on,  
And before I know it, a year is gone.  
And I never see my old friends face,  
For life is a swift and terrible race,  
He knows I like him just as well,  
As in the days when I rang his bell.  
And he rang mine but we were younger then,  
And now we are busy, tired men.  
Tired of playing a foolish game,  
Tired of trying to make a name.  
"Tomorrow" I say! "I will call on Jim  
Just to show that I'm thinking of him."  
But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes,  
And distance between us grows and grows.  
Around the corner, yet miles away,  
"Here's a telegram sir," "Jim died today."  
And that's what we get and deserve in the end.  
Around the corner, a vanished friend.*

Sent by email from Tom Martin to the Swift-L mail reflector—**are you signed up?**





## Swift Boat Sailors Association - the Founding



Most "Swifties" who are members of the SBSA have probably wondered from time-to-time just how a group like ours got itself formed. I decided to try to make some sense of this and contacted a number of guys who I knew had a direct part in putting together various parts of the organization we now call the Swift Boat Sailors Association.

In the early 1970s I was contacted by Bill Lannom who asked if I'd be interested in joining a new group called the Swift Officers Association (SOA). It was run by a former OinC in State College, PA, and had a mailing list and newsletter. Unfortunately, it didn't survive and the treasury was donated to a new project being constructed on the Mall in Washington, DC; The Vietnam Memorial. So Swifties had a part in funding the most visited site in Washington!

There followed a hiatus of nearly twenty years with little or no activity of a formal nature between Swifties. I've learned from Albert Owens, leader of the MRFA, that several Swifties were extended memberships in that organization during this period. For several, like Wey Symmes, it was the first contact they'd had with crew mates and other Swifties since leaving Vietnam. These early veterans' get-togethers with MRFA and Gamewardens also put together the right people to make something wonderful possible.

Fortunately, during that period many other shipmates also stayed in touch with each other. One of these shipmates was the guy to whom we all owe our memberships: Joseph "Doc" Quartuccio. Retired Navy Corpsman Doc was a plank-owner of the first Swift Boat Division at An Thoi, RVN. Starting in December of 1994, Doc planned a get-together in Scottsboro, AZ, on Memorial Day in 1995. Doc contacted Wey Symmes and got him and Jim Thomas together to work on formalizing an organization. In December 1994 Wey and his wife, Terry, put out what would become the first ever newsletter, "Attention: Swift Boat Sailors" with a mailing list of fifty names. Fittingly, Admiral Zumwalt was among the first who responded to the enclosed questionnaire! Twenty-one Swifties attended and, along with a bunch of sea stories, they cobbled together a charter which first approved the name, Swift Boat Sailors Association. Jim Thomas, who later became the first President of the SBSA, wrote this charter and the Swifties present approved it and agreed to form an organization.

In January 1995 while the early organizational activity was taking place, two PCFs were discovered in Panama in a warehouse. When it was sure they could be available, Wey Symmes contacted Gary Blinn to exchange names and addresses so as many as possible could be notified of this second get-together to be held in Washington, DC, when PCF-1 was to be dedicated to the Navy Museum on June 17, 1995 (in the Washington Navy Yard). Wey and Terry published another newsletter in March 1995 advising the growing mailing list of this new development. Bill Lannom and his company were busily making the original "Swift Boats - Vietnam" ball caps and Larry Wasikowski took on the project of ordering golf shirts for attendees. PCF-2, discovered along with the "1 boat" was later donated to Tidewater Community College in Norfolk, VA. Both boats were made sea-worthy in the Norfolk area and then driven to the Navy Yard in what was to become "The Last River Run". This get-together was quite a bit larger than the Scottsboro meeting with several hundred Swifties and families showing up. Rides on PCFs 1 & 2 were featured, a visit to the Marine Corps 8<sup>th</sup> & I Silent Drill Team was scheduled, there were cocktails hosted by Congressman Jim Colby, and the usual Navy speeches of acceptance and recognizing the

efforts of all concerned. Admiral Zumwalt gave a memorable talk in which he noted that he didn't own a set of tropical whites any longer, explaining why he was in Blues in spite of the heat of Washington. Senator Kerry gave a superb speech which left not a dry eye in the crowd. That Saturday evening started the tradition of the Swift banquet with open mike session afterwards. Throughout the weekend, Jim Thomas manned a table recruiting members. He was assisted in this by a lady we've all come to know and love, Marguerite Forrest, wife of our own Tommy "Trees" Forrest. I was privileged to attend this affair and to this day it remains one of the most memorable events of my life: seeing shipmates who I hadn't seen in over 30 years and riding those magnificent boats one more time (even though it was driven by a guy young enough to have been my son!).

Meanwhile, there was furious activity in electing the first officers of the newly formed group: Jim Thomas as President, Harry Creamer as VP, Ed Munday as Secretary, and Wey Symmes as Treasurer. Wey and Terry Symmes became the *de facto* Membership Committee, the Ship's Store operators, and assisted Gary Blinn in sorting the membership lists so more Swifties could be recruited.

Thanks to Wey and Terry Symmes, the association was incorporated in Montana on August 25, 1995. In January of 1996 the association was approved as a Veterans Organization by the IRS with the name "Swiftboat [SIC] Sailors Association" (this "edit" was later corrected). Keep in mind that all this paperwork was done by a very few people in a very short time! Volunteer labor and mooching from friends and acquaintances was then, and remains, the order of the day! Terry Symmes was also convinced by Jim Thomas to become the official newsletter editor – do we see a trend here with Terry?

Jim Thomas took on a very large part of the early responsibilities: setting up the first newsletters, planning the first "official" reunion in San Diego in 1996, and getting the membership cards. By-Laws (which now supersede the early charter and purpose statements) had to be written by a friendly attorney and a board of directors formed. Jerry Leeds, in Gerard, KS, was instrumental in setting up the membership cards with Jim. He thought Jim's design was a bit "in your face" but liked it – you have one in your wallet right now! Jim also traveled to Grinnell, IA, to work with Bill Lannom on hats and jackets. Last, but not least, he arranged for a vendor to reproduce the blue oval Swift Pin as an exact replica of the Coastal Division One pin we all wore in-country.

It's easy to forget how much effort it must have taken to get a bunch of independent-minded Swifties together and then get them to agree on almost anything! There must have been times for each of our early organizers when it was tempting to just lay it down and walk away. Fortunately for all of us, they didn't do that and today we have this terrific organization that is one of the most respected veterans' organizations around. From these humble beginnings we now have a solid financial position, excellent leadership, and the ability to serve our members. None of our early leaders have ever asked for any kind of recognition from anyone that I know of or have heard of. Wouldn't it be a great use of your time in San Diego next month to take 5 minutes, shake their hand, and say, "Thank you, shipmate!"



*This brief history was put together by Dave Wallace, editor, with the help of Raul "Bean" Herrera, Jim Thomas, Bob Elder, Wey (and Terry!) Symmes. There is much, much more to be written— watch for more! If you have additional information or just want to help with writing this history, please contact the editor.*

***Well, DivCom, we may have bumped the  
bottom a little as we exited the river.....***



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

***TO-***

