

# Swift Current

The official publication of the  
Swift Boat Sailors Association.

IV Quarter 2005

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

*Seasons Greetings to all! Keep our troops in your hearts and prayers all year round!*

**Greetings Crews!** The Officers, Directors and Staff of the SBSA wish all our members a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

**The Most Generous Veterans Day-** I was honored to have been invited to the home of Pam and James Jarvis to participate in veteran's day activities in Brooklyn, Michigan. It was a three hour ride but most worth the traveling to see what I witnessed. We had made arrangements to meet at Big Boys on the edge of town. I was told members of his American Legion Post would be present. After arrival, we sat down to breakfast and I took a real good look around. There were veterans everywhere in the seating area's. There was also a large static display set up at the back of the restaurant. I asked Jim, what's going on with so many vets being here? The real story, The Big Boy is managed by Blare Tuckey has been providing free breakfast for the entire town of Brooklyn's veterans for the last five years. It was incredible as there were vets there from every war starting with WWI. After chow, we strolled over to the display which was excellent and was provided by a Mr. Ramirez.

We left the restaurant and headed to Jim & Pam's home where we enjoyed good conversation from our Cat Lo days. Afterward, Jim took me to his American Legion Post 315 where I was introduced to Eric Johnson. I was given a tour and invited to stay for the Veterans Day Diner that would occur later in the day. With a three hour drive and the Detroit traffic to contend with, I had to start homeward.

It was a most enjoyable day and I appreciated the hospitality of Jim and Pam.

**Reaching Out as Veterans-** I have always stood fast to the belief that our job as members of the military is never really done with our discharge. Only the responsibility changes and that alone can lead you down many roads.

In April of 2005, I was approached by one of my care nurses at the cancer center where I am treated. I was informed that there was another Vietnam Veteran being treated there for some time. She asked that I speak with him. Donna introduced me to Bob Gray, who as it turns out was a three tour vet with the First Air Cavalry. Our initial conversation centered around our cancer's, treatments and how long the battle has been waged. We said our good byes & I told him I would seem him next month. In that time, I checked the VA's Holy Grail to see what diseases were listed for agent orange. I noted his so I gathered information on it, information on the senior veterans groups lodged in the Detroit Federal Building and made a file for my next meeting with Bob.

At the end of May, I saw Bob and I wasted no time in getting to the point. I asked if he had ever submitted a VA claim for agent orange exposure. His answer was no! I then asked if he were married and had children. He replied that he was divorced but had a 15 year old son from this second marriage. I then told Bob, It's not about us Bob, we are already sick and all we can do is to fight back. It's really about your ex-wife if you wish and your son. You need to think about his future. I told Bob he had to promise me he would go down to the Federal Building and file a claim for exposure which he agreed to do. I gave him the folder I prepared and asked him to read through it prior to going down.

I did not see Bob again until July due to our treatment schedules. My first question, did you file a claim and to my delight he said yes. Because his disease was progressing rapidly, he was put on the fast track.

After that, I did not see Bob for several months due to schedules. In November, I had asked my nurse Donna if she had seen Bob and she replied yes. She stated he was not doing well. As fast as the tumors on his back were being killed off by the drugs, new ones started to grow. Our Oncologist whom we both have, was calling all over the country trying to locate any new drug that could have helped Bob.

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## One Night on the Co Chien River

This story involves the crew of PCF-27 on patrol out of Cat Lo in March of 1969 as best as my CRS will recall. The date is not important to the story. Although many crews out of Cat Lo and An Thoi spent time in the Bo De, the Bay Hap and the Cua Long Rivers, this crew patrolled regularly in the Co Chein, the Ham Long, and Soi Rap Rivers. These were three and one half day patrols with a Sea Lord Raid on the first and last day using the relieving boats and the ones just finishing patrols. These patrols were also participants in Seal Team Ops and Ops with the Mobile Riverine Force and/or ARVN troops. Sometimes we inserted RF and PF forces up the small canals. I haven't heard too many stories about these operations; mostly the rivers down south got all the attention.



Typical Fish Traps scattered along the Co Chein

As I recall we were Perky Beer Hotel Two, the middle area in the Co Chein River. Our crew consisted of LTJG Bill Zondorak, OinC, RD3 Robert G. Snyder, GMG3 David A. Riley, BM2 Jackie L. Williams, BM3 Ronald L. Smith, and myself, EN2 Jim Steffes. It was during the night of the second day and my watch section and I were going off from the 0000 to 0200 watch and had awakened Mr. Zondorak, Jackie Williams and Ron Smith. I was on the helm when Williams came up to relieve me with his boots in hand looking kind of sleepy. He relieved me and I headed down below for a few Z's. During my watch we had steamed slowly down the north channel of the big island in the river and had turned northward to proceed up the south channel of the island.

This side of the island had numerous fish traps extending out from both shorelines and we had to maneuver around the ends of them to navigate this part of the river. The fish traps stood out clearly on the radar so it wasn't hard to avoid them even in the pitch-black darkness that night. We had transited up a canal earlier in the day that led south off the main river on this side of the island. There was a town up there with real brick buildings and we had dropped off an Army doctor, a medic and a Sergeant for security so they could do a med-cap operation. We would pick them up the next day. There was some local militia in the town so they should have been OK for the night.

PCF-27 was approaching the entrance to this canal when the watch was being changed. I had just settled in one of the bunks in the forward cabin when I felt a heavy jolt and the boat seemed to rise up in the air and stay there. I heard a scraping on the hull under me and leaped to my feet expecting an explosion to follow. Instead of an explosion, I heard the sound of people running on wood and shouts and yelling in Vietnamese. I came topside to see a very angry Mama san and several young men standing on the fish trap. While

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## Former Swift Boat Has Helped Students At TCC Get Hands-On, High-Tech Lesson College Has Shared Vietnam-Era Vessel With Other Schools, Science Groups

By Michelle E. Shaw *The Virginian-Pilot*

Reach Michelle E. Shaw at (757) 222-5562 or [michelle.shaw@pilotonline.com](mailto:michelle.shaw@pilotonline.com)

NORFOLK — Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a successful trip, that ended here in Norfolk, aboard a tiny ship.

In 1965, the year after "Gilligan's Island" debuted on television, small Navy ships – swift boats – were coming on the scene.

Forty years later, one of those boats is in Hampton Roads. This marks the 10th year the Research Vessel Matthew F. Maury has been a part of Tidewater Community College and its geophysical science department.

Saturday, a group of students from community colleges across the state took a ride on the boat as part of a leadership conference.

"Where did you guys get a boat like this?" Lauren Champagnie, a student at Thomas Nelson Community College, asked no one in particular as he boarded.

"I was in the Navy," he said later, "and I recognized it as a swift boat, so I was just wondering how it got here."

The boat, originally named Patrol Craft Fast-2, may be twice as old as many of the students who use it, but it helps them get a high-tech and hands-on education, all while floating in the Chesapeake Bay, said Michael Lyle, head of the geophysical science department.

"I think we've realized all of the goals we set, and I think we've gone above and beyond them too," Lyle said.

"When the vessel was given to the college, it was simply a patrol boat. There was nothing scientific about it," said Lyle, who is also the boat's captain.

PCF-2 and its sister PCF-1 were prototypes of more than 100 swift boats that engaged in combat during the Vietnam War. Their speed and firepower – twin 50-caliber machine guns, a grenade launcher and small-arms capabilities – made them a formidable fast-attack weapon.

The prototypes never saw combat in Vietnam. Instead they were used as training vessels here and abroad.

TCC's alterations to the boat include a large boom and wench anchored in the middle of the stern – or rear – deck, that allows the crew to lower and lift machinery in and out of the Bay.

There is also a dive deck on the back of the boat, Lyle said.

The 51-foot, 22-ton craft holds up to 20 passengers and is equipped with water samplers, nets, filters, microscopes and other research devices. A few creature comforts have been added as well, said Roger Harrington, an equipment technician and adjunct faculty member at TCC. "We've got a refrigerator and a microwave," he said. "We're out here sometimes for three or four hours or more, so those things come in handy." The college has classes that use the boat as part of the curriculum. The vessel is also used by other school and science groups for experiments.



BILL TIERNAN/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT John Waugh, left, second mate on Tidewater Community College's swift boat research vessel fields questions on the deck Saturday.

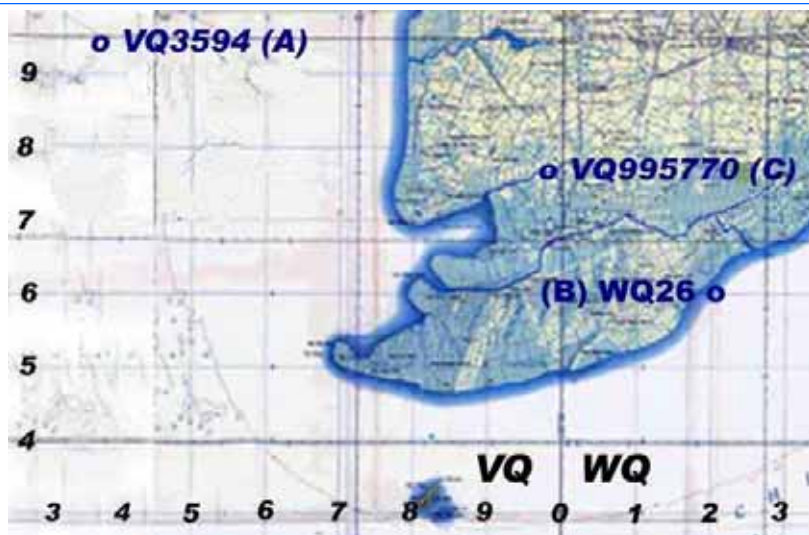
### Reading Military Maps (not charts for the QMs out there!)

The format for the digital (kilometer) grid system is: ABxxxxyy

Where AB is a two letter prefix for the map section. The "A's" increase from west to east, and the "B's" increase from south to north.

"xxx" is the distance from west to east from the west side of the section and "yyy" is the north south distance from the south side of the section. The x's and y's can be either 1, 2 or 3 digits. The difference is the scale of the location definition. eg., AB34 would be 30 kilometers east and 40 kilometers north of the section's SW corner, with a possible error of 5 kilometers. AB3243 would make the location "finer grain" down to 1 km with a possible error of 0.5 kilometer, etc

An example of this co-ordinate system is shown in this segment of the map section for the Ca Mau Peninsula, Sections VQ and WQ. The kilometer distances in each section are shown along the bottom and left side of the map segment in 10 kilometer increments. Point A is 35 km east and 94 km north of the VQ sections starting point at its southwest corner. With a possible error diameter of 1 km. Point C is 99.5 km east and 77.0 km north of the VQ corner and narrows the error down to only a 0.1 km diameter circle.



A tip of the dixie cup to Bob Shirley for his assistance putting this educational insert together—Thanks again, Bob! -ed.

*Ed. Note— we will attempt to publish information like the below article in each edition of the Swift Current in order to let the members know about developments with the VA or veterans' benefits in general. If you see something that may be of interest to the membership, send it along to me—Thanks!*

## **Veterans, Survivors Miss Out on Pensions**

### **Charlotte Observer | December 23, 2005**

Nearly 2 million poor veterans or their impoverished widows are likely missing out on as much as \$22 billion a year in pensions from the U.S. government, but the Department of Veterans Affairs has had only limited success in finding them.

Widows are hardest hit. According to a VA estimate, only one in seven of the survivors of the nation's deceased Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who likely could qualify for the pension actually get the monthly checks. What's more, participation in the program is falling, according to a Knight Ridder analysis of VA records. The reason for the lax participation, a VA study said, is that poor veterans generally "are completely unaware that the program exists."

"Veterans simply don't know about it," said Despina Hatton, who runs a senior law program for residents of Washoe County, Nev., that seeks to help veterans or their widows receive the benefit.

They're people such as Rose Davidson, a 72-year-old widow of a World War II sailor who lives in Sparks, Nev., on \$9,732 a year in Social Security benefits. Frail, legally blind, suffering from dementia and in need of regular assistance at home, she could be eligible for \$1,608 more a year under the VA's formulas. That would boost her income by about 17 percent.

But her daughter said that neither she nor her mother had ever heard of the VA pension until recently. She's working to apply.

The VA knows that many veterans and widows are missing out on the benefit.

"We obviously are here for any veteran or survivor who qualifies," said Tom Pamperin, a VA pension official. "But so many of these people -- we don't know who they are, where they are."

Indeed, a VA report from late 2004 recommended that the agency "improve its outreach efforts" with public service announcements and other pilot programs.

While it made limited efforts to reach veterans or their widows through existing channels, it is "difficult to determine" whether such efforts have been successful, Pamperin said.

The numbers don't suggest they have been. In fiscal 2005, there were fewer veterans and widows added to the pension rolls than there were in 2004, according to the Knight Ridder analysis of VA data.

World War II and Korean War veterans are dying and rapidly falling off the rolls. At the same time, the department said it's been "reasonably successful" in signing up new Vietnam vets.

Nonetheless, one VA estimate of the program shows the potential pool of poor veterans and widows without the pensions has remained unchanged the past four years. The total number of pension cases fell to 541,000 in fiscal 2005, the sixth straight year of declines.

The VA actuary's office predicts that pension participation is likely to drop further, losing between 7,000 and 8,000 enrollees a year and falling below 500,000 participants by 2012, according to a VA actuary report obtained by Knight Ridder.

At the same time, the separate 2004 report estimated that an additional 853,000 veterans and 1.1 million survivors -- generally widows -- could get the pension but don't. Of all those likely eligible, only 27 percent of veterans and 14 percent of widows receive the money.

The VA's pension program is targeted at veterans who served their country during wartime but have fallen into poverty. It's also there for the widows of veterans who have fallen on hard times.

The program provides a monthly check to bring incomes up to a certain level. A veteran can make up to \$10,579 a year and qualify for the VA pension, while veterans' widows can make up to \$7,094 a year. Those who are homebound or

in need of extra assistance can receive more.

In Reno, the reason why so many veterans are missing out on the program seems obvious to Hatton, who runs the senior law program.

VA literature lists the program among the dozens it provides. But the program's name confuses many veterans: It's called a "disability pension," but a person doesn't have to be disabled to receive it. Further, a "Summary of VA Benefits" on the department's Web site doesn't spell out a central criterion of the program: that veterans can qualify based on their age. (The age requirement is listed in other parts of the VA Web site, and the VA said it will correct the error.)

Basically, a poor veteran who's 65 or older and served during a war, in combat or not, is eligible for the program. Hatton's team, however, discovered that a majority of the poor elderly veterans in Reno had never heard of the program. Working with researchers from the Sanford Center for Aging at the University of Nevada, Reno, Hatton set out to measure how many veterans were missing out and to help them sign up.

Using a county meal-service list, researchers fanned out across the city, asking senior citizens about their involvement with the VA.

One elderly World War II vet, Merrill Robinson, invited the researchers into his small apartment, where he was getting around in a motorized wheelchair as he made breakfast.

Researcher Teresa Sacks asked Robinson if he wanted to read the consent form.

"You can probably read it to me, because I can't see," he said.

Then, after explaining that she came with no guarantees of additional benefits, Sacks led Robinson through the interview, asking when he joined the military and his familiarity with VA benefits. He was "somewhat" familiar with VA benefits and did rely on the VA health system.

But Robinson, who lived in subsidized housing and had a nurse come to help with some of his activities, wasn't familiar with the pension program.

As she walked out of the house, Sacks said, "He's almost a slam-dunk" -- meaning that he certainly should qualify for some benefits. (Robinson is now eligible for a pension benefit of \$58 a month, or \$696 a year.)

The project proceeded, door to door.

So far, the researchers have helped 11 veterans or widows get their benefits, in amounts ranging from \$144 a year to \$5,748 a year.

For Gordon Croft, being awarded the largest benefit means his income will jump from \$6,816 a year to \$12,564. Croft, a veteran of the Korean War who suffers from arthritis, emphysema, osteoporosis and other conditions, had no idea that he could qualify.

And while he does get medical care through the VA, the pension side of the VA didn't know about him. "That's something I always find kind of peculiar," said Heather Traverso, one of the researchers. "Why don't the two sides of the agency communicate?"

How to Get Help—Veterans and their widows or other dependents might be eligible for the Department of Veterans Affairs pension if they meet certain requirements.

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*\*\* Veterans must have served during a time of war, even if not in combat, and they must be either permanently disabled or 65 or older.*

*\*\* Their incomes must fall under a certain level.*

*\*\* Widows of veterans can also apply, although their incomes must be even lower.*

*If you think you may qualify for the benefit, go to: [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Milsvc/Docs/Pensoneg.doc](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Milsvc/Docs/Pensoneg.doc)*

*If you are a widow of a veteran, go here: [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Milsvc/Docs/Dpeneg.doc](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Milsvc/Docs/Dpeneg.doc)*

*The VA also has a toll-free number for more information: **(800) 827-1000**.*





## Veterans' Day Parade Auburn, WA, 2005

*Left to Right:* Jan Rogers, Gary Smith (non-swifty), Dave Stephenson, Katy Stephenson, Dan Bohnet, Monty Montonya, Joe La Voie, Bill Rogers, Monty Montonya Jr., Judith Morrison, Stephen Morrison. Andy Miller showed up a little later and rode in the lead truck.

*Submitted by Joe LaVoie*

## Faster horses, younger women, stronger whiskey, and....**RACE CARS?**

I finally got Harvey Farha EN3 to email the other picture he has about the NASCAR school and car he drove. Like I told you before, Harvey was in my crew that we went through Coronado with and were stationed together in Country in Cam Rahn Bay and Cua Viet. While in Cua Viet, he got sick and we ended up with another EN. His name was Jay Gustafson EN2. In any event, Harvey & I have remained friends and we stay in touch on a regular basis. If you're interested in a story for the Swift Current---get in touch with him. I already mentioned it to him and he said that would be okay. He can give you better info than I can. All I know is that he was in the crew headed up by LTJg Daniel Ustick going through training. I don't remember any of the other stuff. Have a good weekend.

*Received from Warren Jenny via email*



## Statistics about the Vietnam War

"No event in American history is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War. It was misreported then, and it is misremembered now. Rarely have so many people been so wrong about so much. Never have the consequences of their misunderstanding been so tragic." [Nixon]

The Vietnam War has been the subject of thousands of newspaper and magazine articles, hundreds of books, and scores of movies and television documentaries. The great majority of these efforts have erroneously portrayed many myths about the Vietnam War as being facts. [Nixon]

*Myth: Most American soldiers were addicted to drugs, guilt-ridden about their role in the war, and deliberately used cruel and inhumane tactics.*

*The facts are:*

91% of Vietnam Veterans say they are glad they served [Westmoreland]

74% said they would serve again even knowing the outcome [Westmoreland]

There is no difference in drug usage between Vietnam Veterans and non veterans of the same age group (from a Veterans Administration study) [Westmoreland]

Isolated atrocities committed by American soldiers produced torrents of outrage from antiwar critics and the news media while Communist atrocities were so common that they received hardly any attention at all. The United States sought to minimize and prevent attacks on civilians while North Vietnam made attacks on civilians a centerpiece of its strategy. Americans who deliberately killed civilians received prison sentences while Communists who did so received commendations. From 1957 to 1973, the National Liberation Front assassinated 36,725 South Vietnamese and abducted another 58,499. The death squads focused on leaders at the village level and on anyone who improved the lives of the peasants such as medical personnel, social workers, and schoolteachers. [Nixon]

Atrocities - every war has atrocities. War is brutal and not fair. Innocent people get killed.

Vietnam Veterans are less likely to be in prison - only 1/2 of one percent of Vietnam Veterans have been jailed for crimes. [Westmoreland]

97% were discharged under honorable conditions; the same percentage of honorable discharges as ten years prior to Vietnam [Westmoreland]

85% of Vietnam Veterans made a successful transition to civilian life. [McCaffrey]

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President's Corner (from page 1)

About late November, I received a letter from Bob. He had received 100% disability and also paid retro active. He thanked me from the bottom of his heart. Soon there after, Bob was moved to a Hospice and he passed shortly there after.

Marguerite and I attended the viewing which was only 6 blocks from our home. I saluted our veteran and quietly thanked him for his service. Afterward, Bob's brother came over and thanked me for all we did for the family as if we had known each other for years. He explained the funds from the VA and Bob's son being taken care of was heaven sent.

Needless to say, I had tears in my eyes.

Never forget your roots, always extend your hand to a vet in need because you'll never know the good you will accomplish for that family.

**Reunion 2007**— We've received several hotel proposals. Our representative at Military Reunions to Remember reports that none of the hotels in the bay front area have submitted proposals. After the board of directors reviews submitted information, a selection will be made giving us

**SBSA Reunion 2007**

**Will be held in SAN DIEGO in 2007! The Board and Reunion Coordinator are working on the dates now and an announcement is expected soon. Check- [www.swiftboats.org](http://www.swiftboats.org) to get the word.**

dates for the reunion. Then the local SBSA coordinator, Virgil Erwin, will make several visits to the selected hotel to coordinate food, rooms, and all activities. I'm sure Virg would appreciate the help of San Diego area Swifties!

**Medical Advisory**- This is the first time since November I have been able to write in the clear; not in pain or asleep due to drugs.

My problems began in November after my chemo treatment and my fourth shot for increased white blood cell production in my body. My body was not producing the cells fast enough. It began with stomach pain which got steadily worse. It was an exact scenario for side effects for that medication for white cell production.

I was at first treated with Vicin which gave me about 30 minutes relief. The condition began to get worse and I was not sleeping at night and it was when I got hit the hardest. My medication was changed to morphine which the dosage was steadily raised until I had relief but, I was starting to get to the point that I was high on the drug. Yet, I was making my way to the VA (driving) each week and that in itself was dangerous.

What also was taking place was my food intake & appetite started to dwindle. By December 13<sup>th</sup>, I was dehydrated & was being treated daily for it. On December 17<sup>th</sup> it happened: Marguerite found me walking around in the bathroom fully cloth looking for the toilet. I had no idea where I was and was in full delirium. She somehow got me into the car and to St. Johns Medical Center emergency room. Once in ER, I began to expel from both ends. Again, I don't remember any of it.

They took me up to medical ICU as the director of surgery at the hospital is a friend. On Monday 12/19/06 I woke up not having any idea where I was. All I did know is that I'd had a second port inserted into my right arm, a foley and drainage tube in my bottom. Marguerite came in and saw I was coherent and went over what happened. All that time I was being treated for side effects, it was not what the real culprit was that had been causing the problem all along.

A gastro-intestinal guy went in both ends after a cat scan had been done on my brain to ensure the cancer had not spread. He found an ulcer under my stomach. When they found it, the bleeding had already stopped. He came out & told Marguerite it was very large and must have had it for a very long time. I am attributing it to my working career as I had a very high pressure job when I was working.

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One Night on the Co Chien Continued from page 1

tying his shoes, Williams had veered off course and ran the boat between two of the uprights in the fish trap. PCF-27 was now sitting helpless on top of the heavy cable that supported a very large fish net that formed a pocket in the river current to catch the fish swimming down river. We had no interpreter on board so language was a problem with the Mama San yelling and making gestures in the water.

The problem was PCF-27 was so far up on the cable that it could not move in either direction. Looking down in the water with a red flashlight at the spot the Mama San was pointing we could see the heavy cable coming under the boat about even with the life rings and was very tight. The fish net was quite a ways behind us so our screws hadn't fouled in it. The cable had an eye in it and was connected to another eye of a cable attached to the wooden stilts of the fish trap and had a wooden peg holding them together. After trying several times to slide off the cable with the engines we stopped them which stopped us from making so much noise that we would draw attention to us. Also the Mama San stopped yelling when we stopped the engines. As we negotiated with her using broken English and Vietnamese we tried to get here to unhook the cable to free us. However, this would have resulted in her losing the fish in the net so she would not agree to that.

Suddenly the man on the helm, I think it was Smith, called out for Mr. Zondorak to come to the pilothouse. The radio traffic was reporting a mortar attack on the town just to the south of us where we had taken the Army troops for the med-cap. As they monitored the radio traffic, the mortar attack was followed by a ground attack by the VC and we could see the tracers flying from the direction of the town. The troops in the town called for help and it arrived in the form of two spooky gun ships. They began to circle the town firing their mini-guns. We could hear the bullets hitting the jungle and then the change in sound when the gun ships moved over the water as the bullets hit the water. It became apparent to us that we had better get out of the way. One idea was to call the gun ships and give them our position but they seemed pretty busy with their firing. Another idea was to pop a blue flare to give our position to the friendlies in the area but that would also attract the un-friendlies in the area.

RD3 Snyder went down below and came up with the bolt cutters that we carried in the main cabin. The sight of this big bolt cutter set the Mama San off again and she started yelling even louder. I had this idea and told Snyder to hold up a second. I went below and grabbed four packs of Salem cigarettes from my bag and returned topside. I pointed at the wooden peg and held out two packs of Salem's to the Mama San as a deal, the cigarettes for removing the wooden peg. She shook her head no and started yelling again. I reached out with all four packs of Salem's and again pointed to the peg holding the cables together. This time she hesitated and when Snyder picked up the bolt cutters again, she relented. She took the cigarettes and ran toward the main part of the fish trap and I thought I had been hoodwinked. However she returned quickly with two of the younger men and a big mallet. Holding the cables, they pounded out the peg and the cable dropped away. PCF-27 was now free of the fish trap and we let her drift clear before started the engines.

Amazingly, with all the noise the Mama San was making, we did not attract any attention from the bad guys; they must have been too busy with the attack on the town. PCF-27 and her crew cleared the area and continued to monitor the radio traffic from the town and the two Spooky Gun ships. Just before dawn, the VC broke contact and melted into the jungle. We heard the Spookies ask the ground forces if they wanted them to stick around for a while longer and the response came like this in the clear, "Negative on your last, the Navy will be transiting this canal up past our position with three Papa Charlie Foxtrots (PCF's) beginning at 0800 this morning."

I guess you know that when Perky Beer Hotel One, Two and Three headed up that canal at 0800 the "pucker factor" was running pretty high. The good news was we went about two miles above the town and did not see anyone or take a single round of fire. We picked up the Army personnel on the way back and they could not believe that we saw no one at all.

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As I said earlier, not everyone got to "run the Bo De River" some of us had to suffer through these kind of "routine river patrols"

Jim Steffes, LPO and Engineer, PCF-27  
Cat Lo, RVN CosDiv 13

## Statistics about the Vietnam War (Continued from page 4)

Vietnam veterans' personal income exceeds that of our non-veteran age group by more than 18 percent. [McCaffrey]

Vietnam veterans have a lower unemployment rate than our non-vet age group. [McCaffrey]

87% of the American people hold Vietnam Vets in high esteem. [McCaffrey]

### Myth: Most Vietnam veterans were drafted.

2/3 of the men who served in Vietnam were volunteers. 2/3 of the men who served in World War II were drafted. [Westmoreland]

Approximately 70% of those killed were volunteers. [McCaffrey]

### Myth: The media have reported that suicides among Vietnam veterans range from 50,000 to 100,000 - 6 to 11 times the non-Vietnam veteran population.

Mortality studies show that 9,000 is a better estimate. "The CDC Vietnam Experience Study Mortality Assessment showed that during the first 5 years after discharge, deaths from suicide were 1.7 times more likely among Vietnam veterans than non-Vietnam veterans. After that initial post-service period, Vietnam veterans were no more likely to die from suicide than non-Vietnam veterans. In fact, after the 5-year post-service period, the rate of suicides is less in the Vietnam veterans' group." [Houk]

### Myth: A disproportionate number of blacks were killed in the Vietnam War.

86% of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasians - 12.5% were black - 1.2% were other races. [CACF and [Westmoreland]

Sociologists Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, in their recently published book "All That We Can Be," said they analyzed the claim that blacks were used like cannon fodder during Vietnam "and can report definitely that this charge is untrue. Black fatalities amounted to 12 percent of all Americans killed in Southeast Asia - a figure proportional to the number of blacks in the U.S. population at the time and slightly lower than the proportion of blacks in the Army at the close of the war." [All That We Can Be]

### Myth: The war was fought largely by the poor and uneducated.

Servicemen who went to Vietnam from well-to-do areas had a slightly elevated risk of dying because they were more likely to be pilots or infantry officers.

Vietnam Veterans were the best educated forces our nation had ever sent into combat. 79% had a high school education or better. [McCaffrey]

Here are statistics from the Combat Area Casualty File (CACF) as of November 1993. The CACF is the basis for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall):

Average age of 58,148 killed in Vietnam was 23.11 years. (Although 58,169 names are in the Nov. 93 database, only 58,148 have both event date and birth date. Event date is used instead of declared dead date for some of those who were listed as missing in action) [CACF]

Deaths		Average Age
Total	58,148	23.11 years
Enlisted	50,274	22.37 years
Officers	6598	28.43 years
Warrants	1276	24.73 years
E1	525	20.34 years
11B MOS	18,465	22.55 years

Five men killed in Vietnam were only 16 years old. [CACF]

The oldest man killed was 62 years old. [CACF]

11,465 KIAs were less than 20 years old. [CACF]

### Myth: The average age of an infantryman fighting in Vietnam was 19.

Assuming KIAs accurately represented age groups serving in Vietnam, the average age of an infantryman (MOS 11B) serving in Vietnam to be 19 years old is a myth, it is actually 22. None of the enlisted grades have an average age of less than 20. [CACF]

The average man who fought in World War II was 26 years of age. [Westmoreland]

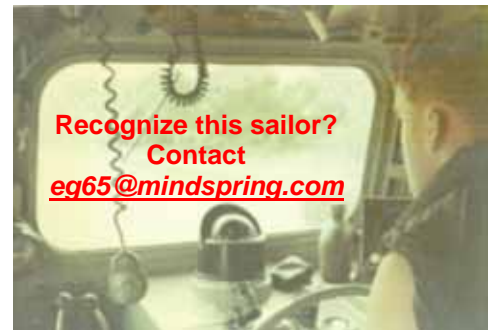
### Myth: The domino theory was proved false.

The domino theory was accurate. The ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand stayed free of Communism because of the U.S. commitment to Vietnam. The Indonesians threw the Soviets out in 1966 because of America's commitment in Vietnam. Without that commitment, Communism would have swept all the way to the Malacca Straits that is south of Singapore and of great strategic importance to the free world. If you ask people who live in these countries that won the war in Vietnam, they have a different opinion from the American news media. The Vietnam War was the turning point for Communism. [Westmoreland]

Democracy Catching On - In the wake of the Cold War, democracies are flourishing, with 179 of the world's 192 sovereign states (93%) now electing their legislators, according to the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union. In the last decade, 69 nations have held multi-party elections for the first time in their histories. Three of the five newest democracies are former Soviet republics: Belarus (where elections were first held in November 1995), Armenia (July 1995) and Kyrgyzstan (February 1995). And two are in Africa: Tanzania (October 1995) and Guinea (June 1995). [Parade Magazine]

### Myth: The fighting in Vietnam was not as intense as in World War II.

The average infantryman in the South Pacific during World War II saw about 40 days of combat in four years. The average infantryman in Vietnam saw about 240 days of combat in one year thanks to the mobility of the helicopter.





## Statistics about the Vietnam War (*Continued from page 6*)

One out of every 10 Americans who served in Vietnam was a casualty. 58,169 were killed and 304,000 wounded out of 2.59 million who served. Although the percent who died is similar to other wars, amputations or crippling wounds were 300 percent higher than in World War II. 75,000 Vietnam veterans are severely disabled. [McCaffrey]

MEDEVAC helicopters flew nearly 500,000 missions. Over 900,000 patients were airlifted (nearly half were American). The average time lapse between wounding to hospitalization was less than one hour. As a result, less than one percent of all Americans wounded who survived the first 24 hours died. [VHPA 1993]

The helicopter provided unprecedented mobility. Without the helicopter it would have taken three times as many troops to secure the 800 mile border with Cambodia and Laos (the politicians thought the Geneva Conventions of 1954 and the Geneva Accords of 1962 would secure the border) [Westmoreland]

**Myth: The American military was running for their lives during the fall of Saigon in April 1975. The picture of a Huey helicopter evacuating people from the top of what was billed as being the U.S. Embassy in Saigon during the last week of April 1975 during the fall of Saigon helped to establish this myth.**

This famous picture is the property of Corbus-Bettman Archives. It was originally a UPI photo Graph that was taken by an Englishman, Mr. Hugh Van Ess.

Here are some facts to clear up that poor job of reporting about the fall of Saigon:

- It was a "civilian" (Air America) Huey not Army or Marines.
- It was NOT the U.S. Embassy. The building is the Pittman Apartments. The U.S. Embassy and its helipad were much larger.
- The evacuees were Vietnamese not American military.
- The person that can be seen aiding the refugees is Mr. O.B. Harnage. He was a CIA case officer and now retired in Arizona.



**Myth: The United States lost the war in Vietnam.**

The American military was not defeated in Vietnam. The American military did not lose a battle of any consequence. From a military standpoint, it was almost an unprecedented performance. (Westmoreland quoting Douglas Pike, a professor at the University of California, Berkley a renowned expert on the Vietnam War) [Westmoreland] This included Tet 68, which was a major military defeat for the VC and NVA.

**Another famous picture...**



**Myth: Kim Phuc, the little nine year old Vietnamese girl running naked from the napalm strike near Trang Bang on 8 June 1972, was burned by Americans bombing Trang Bang.**

No American had involvement in this incident near Trang Bang that burned Phan Thi Kim Phuc. The planes doing the bombing near the village were VNF (Vietnam Air Force) and were being flown by Vietnamese pilots in support of South Vietnamese troops on the ground. The Vietnamese pilot who dropped the napalm in error is currently living in the United States. Even the AP photographer, Nick Ut, who took the picture was Vietnamese. The incident in the photo took place on the second day of a three day battle between the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) who occupied the village of Trang Bang and the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) who were trying to force the NVA out of the village. Recent reports in the news media that an American commander ordered the air strike that burned Kim Phuc are incorrect. There were no Americans involved in any capacity. "We (Americans) had nothing to do with con-

trolling VNAF," according to Lieutenant General (Ret) James F. Hollingsworth, the Commanding General of TRAC at that time. Also, it has been incorrectly reported that two of Kim Phuc's brothers were killed in this incident. They were Kim's cousins not her brothers.

**Myth: Air America, the airline operated by the CIA in Southeast Asia, and its pilots were involved in drug trafficking.**

The 1990 unsuccessful movie "Air America" helped to establish the myth of a connection between Air America, the CIA, and the Laotian drug trade. The movie and a book the movie was based on contend that the CIA condoned a drug trade conducted by a Laotian client; both agree that Air America provided the essential transportation for the trade; and both view the pilots with sympathetic understanding. American-owned airlines never knowingly transported opium in or out of Laos, nor did their American pilots ever profit from its transport. Yet undoubtedly every plane in Laos carried opium at some time, unknown to the pilot and his superiors. For more information see <http://www.air-america.org>

Ed. Note: This information was copied from <http://www.vhfcn.org/stat.htm> All links on the webpage are live so the sources and quotes can be seen. The name or reference at the end of each "proof" in brackets ( [ ] ) is a link.



## President's Corner (Continued from page 5)

After 6 units of plasma, 8 units of blood, and stabilizing the high ammonia levels in my body and getting my hemoglobin back up from just under 4, I was moved to a regular room where my stabilization continued for the next several days. I was discharged on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. My Christmas was spent home just being thankful to be alive.

The moral of this story is I have never had any history of having an ulcer. When my problems began, it was all in line with side effect of medication being received. To add to this, my chemotherapy consisted of being on the Folfox Regiment which is very strong and has its own full page of side effects. For all our members who may be on chemo, if you have no history of other illness, watch your body for indicators other than the side effects which you would normally be watchful. I had been passing blood for days and did not realize it but then; I was not looking for it either.

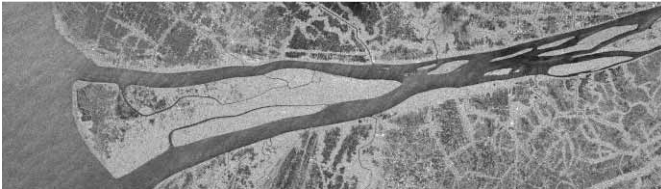
Life is only as long as the good Lord allows us to live it. Make use of each and every day.

Good news was given to the country by President Bush. Just prior to the holiday, it was announced a troop reduction of two battalions would take effect. We certainly hope that all the training given to the Iraq's police and army is finally beginning to pay off. Support our troops the way we would have liked to have been supported!

Respectfully submitted,

**Tommy "Trees" Forrest**

Pins have been ordered & will be distributed as soon as they are received



Recognize this Op-Area? Post an interesting story on Talk-05 at [www.swiftboats.org](http://www.swiftboats.org)

Do you know where the pictures in this publication come from?

**Members just like YOU!**

Contact [editor@swiftboats.org](mailto:editor@swiftboats.org) with your picture and story

## Ship's Store

Now online— [www.swiftboats.org](http://www.swiftboats.org)

*Non-paid advertisement!*



We now have the small parts accessory dress up package for your Swift Boat Model. The kit will include the following pieces:

1. One star with blue back field that goes on the roof of pilothouse.
2. One M-60 machine gun with ammo belt
3. One 55 gal fuel drum.
4. Two .50 cal ammo crates
5. One five gal oil can
6. Five 5 gal. Jerry cans
7. One Boat hook.
8. One 81mm rounds that fits inside your 81mm armored box. (May require some sanding or filing to fit in the box.
9. One extra tire for use as a fender.
10. Two mooring lines.
11. One white siren (needed with the star), as you will most likely destroy the one that is on your model when you try to remove it. (There may be some of the old siren left behind when it is removed and will require sanding or filing to remove any material left behind.

**\*\*\*If your boat did not have a star, please deduct \$4.00 from the price of the kit.\*\*\***

Price of the kit.....\$20.00.....Includes shipping.

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4370 NW 68<sup>th</sup> Street  
Coconut Creek, FL 33073  
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Fax (954) 426-5978  
Email: [sales@miniaturedreammodels.com](mailto:sales@miniaturedreammodels.com)

## This Kindly Grandfather Needs YOUR Help!

Allow me to introduce you to Gene Hart, Secretary-Treasurer of the SBSA.

Gene is very important to all members - he collects the money! If he doesn't get your money, you don't get things like membership cards, notices of reunions, the Swift Current, and - did I mention - dues notices.

If you move or otherwise disguise your home, you need to let Gene know or he will worry about you and won't have enough time for his grandchildren!

Snailmail- 3941 Laurelwood Drive  
Jacksonville, FL 32257-8926

Telephone- (904) 880-6412

Email- [ghart@lynx.unf.edu](mailto:ghart@lynx.unf.edu)

**You've been warned - the next time you hear footsteps on your porch late at night it may be Gene chasing you down!**





# Swift Boat Sailors Association



Hit the start button.



And hear those twin V12 GMC Diesels Purring!!

The Swift Boat Sailors Association is a veteran's organization created by and for the who manned or supported U.S. Navy PCFs (Patrol Craft Fast or Swift Boats) as Coastal Squadron One (COSRON One) during US involvement in Vietnam between 1965 to 1973

Swift Boats were initially used in *Operation Market Time* to patrol the coastline Vietnam to prevent enemy infiltration of troops, supplies and munitions via sea trans North Vietnam

They were recognized as the workhorses of the Navy's coastal surveillance force: *Task*

In late 1968, they joined with the PBRs (Patrol Boat River) and the Mobile Riverine Force in the pursuit of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt's successful Delta riverway interdiction strategy: *SE*

Best estimates put the number of Swift personnel assigned as crew or in a support role between 3,000 and 3,500 from 1965 through 1973 when the last U.S. Naval Advisors left



Association Officers

Memorial Projects

Reunion Informa



Membership Application

Ship's Store

Swift Current New

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On the way to your patrol area

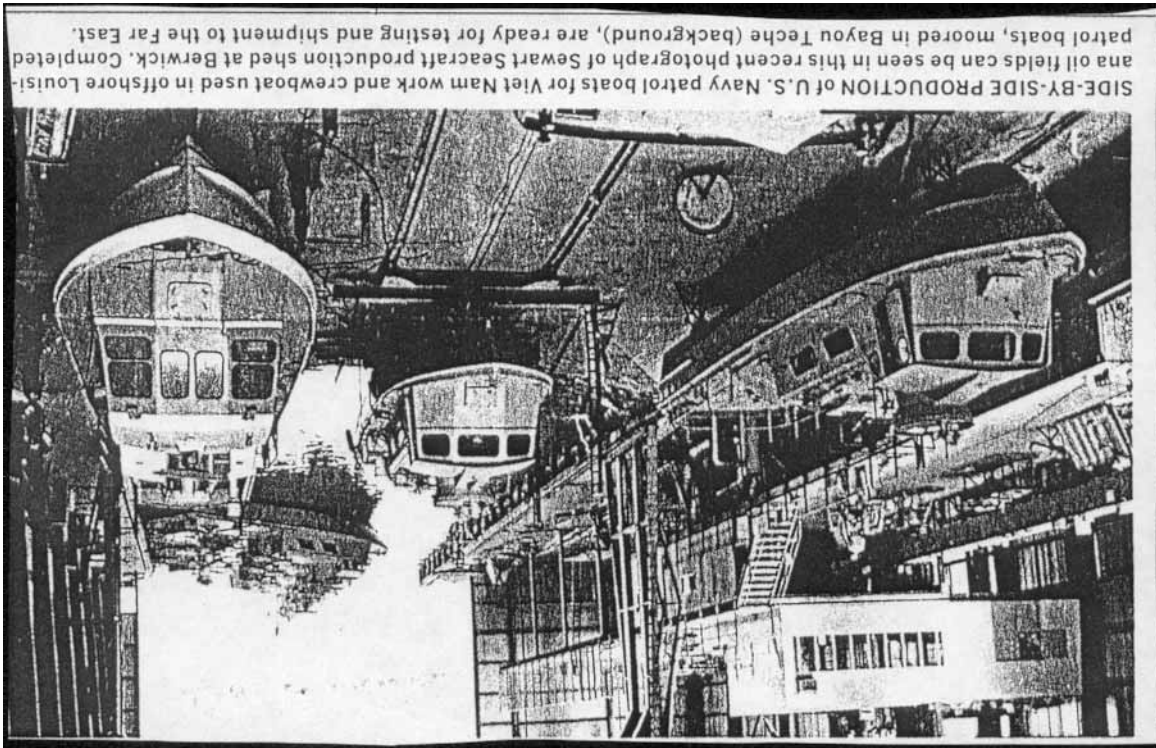
**NOW OPEN! - - [www.swiftboats.org](http://www.swiftboats.org) - - - NOW OPEN!**

If you haven't navigated to the newly re-habed official SBSA website, you need to fire up the computer or head to the library so you can see what's going on! On this page we show only a bit of the main page - there are bunches and bunches of interesting links to information you need to know!

Best news of all - some of us aren't so old we can't learn how to handle this computer stuff! Bob Shirley and Jim Deal did most of the heavy-lifting on this monumental job. Great job guys - - -



This scan courtesy of Jim Schneider who received it from a descendant of one of the original owners of Sewart Seacraft, the builders of our PCFs



From: Swift Boat Sailors Assn.  
21128 Hunt Club Drive  
Harper Woods, Michigan 48225

TO-

