

Knights of the Roundtable
Lancers

Volume 6 Issue 1

B Co 158th Avn Bn 101st Abn Div

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David Mussey displays the Lancer banner that will be used at our reunions. See the table flag on page 16

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Editorial

by Lance Ruck President and David Mussey Secretary Treasurer



President's Message

We are off and running into 2005 and it seems like yesterday when I joined the group in 1999. A lot has happened since 1999 but the Lancer Association continues to grow and improve. We have seen the reuniting of the Vietnam Lancers with the Modern Day Lancers, which has had some very memorable reunions. Our ties are strong with them and they need to be as it is very likely that some units of the 101st will be returning to Iraq in June. My information is that it won't be the whole Division but we shall see and I'm keeping my fingers crossed that it won't be B Co 5 - 101! If it is, we will give them whatever support we can, both at the front and at home.

This will be the fifth year I will be attending both the VHPA and 101st Reunions. Any non-members of the VHPA who wish to attend this year as a guest need to contact me fairly soon as I am figuring I need to pay registration before April 1st to have any shot at attending the 4th of July cruise/dinner and possibly the Eric Burden Show. Picturing 800 mildly inebriated helicopter pilots signing along with "We Gotta Get Outa This Place . . . If it's the last thing we ever do . . ." seems like a real good time to me?

I just returned from the 101st Snowbird Convention in Orlando and met with Harold and Dennis Smith (Brothers of Rootbeer - Arthur W. Smith). We exchanged some gifts, went to dinner at Joe's Crab Shack, and attended the Saturday night Reunion Dinner (see pictures in reunion section). I deeply regret my pms . . . ah . . . crs . . . kept me from getting a picture with our table flags, which were in my golf bag in the parking lot. I did remember them when packing to go home. Well, we will do better at the upcoming reunions and I hope we can use all 5 at Tampa Bay, meaning a turnout around 50 or 60. In the past, we have skipped the Awards dinner on Saturday night but we may want to reconsider that this year as they are going informal with Hawaiian shirts (completely casual) and a much lighter program?

Richard Bittle, the other Aviation Governor and a Comanchero (A-101), has requested to know if any of our guys picked up two of their pilots on Lolo; they believe it was a Lancer bird and they would like to thank them . . . albeit somewhat belatedly (hehe). Any information would be appreciated. I think one of them may be in Tampa? I hope all of you will be in Tampa! Hang in there and always have a nice day.

Lanny Ruck - Lancer 13



From the Secretary-Treasurer

Flight,

This issue is a snail mail to everyone. This is a quick issue from the last in order to get some important information out to the entire flight and to get updates from all of you. We're hoping to get an updated directory out this year and are asking everyone to please take the time and fill out the enclosed questionnaire and mail it back to the association quickly. You'll also find questions about the upcoming reunions and office nominations for the association.

I'd like to ask all that they consider making a reunion this year. The three major reunions are spread out across the country and one should be fairly close to you. The VHCMA is in San Antonio this June, the VHPA, San Francisco in July and the 101st Abn. in Tampa this August. As always, our annual business meeting will be at the 101st reunion. I'm hoping to see many of you in Tampa for the reunion. It could be our biggest turnout of Lancers yet.

Don't forget to cast your nominations for association officers as well. And please remember that I will not be running for re-election. The job of Secretary-Treasurer is a big responsibility but can be managed efficiently with just a little time each day. I will be available to provide advice to the new S-T for most of the time. I do have a big family project that I expect to spend some time out of the country for and that is one of the reasons for my departing the office.

As of 12 February 2005, our fund stands at \$787.98. This last quarter saw expenditures for the last newsletter, a contribution to help the Tsunami victims, purchase of Lancer flags for the association and flowers to our brothers who have had illnesses and lost loved ones. Any donations are always welcome.

Bless you all and I hope to see many of you this year,
Dave Mussey

A Poem

Veteran

Author Unknown

A protest raged on a courthouse lawn,
round a makeshift stage they charged on.
Fifteen hundred or more they say,
had come to burn the Flag that day.

A boy held up the folded Flag,
cursed it and called it a dirty rag.
A man pushed through the angry crowd,
with an old gun shouldered proud.

His uniform jacket was old and tight,
he had polished each button, shiny and bright.
He crossed the stage with military grace,
until he and the boy stood face to face.

Then the old man broke the silence.

“Freedom of speech, is worth dying for,
Good men are gone, they live no more.
All so you can stand on this courthouse lawn,
and ramble on from dusk to dawn.

But before the Flag gets burned today,
this old veteran is going to have his say.
My father died on a foreign shore,
in a war they said would end all wars.

Tommy and I weren't even full grown,
before we fought in a war of our own.
Tommy died on Iwo Jima's beach,
in the shadow of a hill he couldn't reach.
Where five good men raised this Flag so high,
that the whole world could see it fly.

I got this bum leg that I still drag,
fighting for this same old Flag.

There's but one shot in this old gun,
so now it's time to decide which one.

Which one of you will follow our lead,
to stand and die for what YOU believe?”

The boy who had called it a dirty rag,
handed the veteran the folded Flag.

The crowd got quiet as they walked away,
to talk about what they heard that day.

So the battle for the Flag this day was won,
by a loyal veteran with a single gun.
Who for one last time, had to show to some,
That these colors will never, never run.

It is the veteran, not the preacher,
who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the veteran, not the reporter,
who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the veteran, not the poet,
who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the veteran, not the campus organizer,
who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is the veteran, not the lawyer,
who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the veteran, not the politician,
Who has given us the right to vote.

It is the veteran, who salutes the Flag,
who serves under the Flag,
whose coffin is draped by the Flag.

I wish I knew who wrote this so I could shake his hand.

On the Ground

Stories, history and tactics of the ground troops.



History of the 101st during the Lancer period Part XVII

**Reprinted with permission from:
101st Airborne Division Screaming Eagles
Turner Publishing Company**

The Final Days

When LAM SON 719 ended on April 6, 1971, the hand-writing was on the wall. The war—at least the U.S. military's part in it—was over. The Fifth Special Forces Group and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment had pulled out of South Vietnam during the height of the Laotian campaign. The only major U.S. forces left in Vietnam by the middle of April 1971, were the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal), the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the 1st Marine Regiment, the 5th Marine Regiment, the 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and three separate battalions; the 1/1st Cavalry, the 1/10th Cavalry, and the 3/5th Cavalry.

Every U.S. unit, with the exception of the 101st Airborne Division and the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, had already stood down from offensive action against the enemy. Assuming a defensive posture, these units went about the task of turning over their camps and equipment to the ARVN forces that would be relieving them.

The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), still in the middle of the long-running Operation JEFFERSON GLEN, began to gradually disengage from contact with the enemy. But the Screaming Eagles' "aggressive" disengagement succeeded in keeping the enemy at bay.

JEFFERSON GLEN, renamed OPORD 13-70 at the end of July, would continue to protect the coastal lowlands around Camp Evans-Hue-Camp Eagle, as the 101st began to wind down its operations and prepare to pass control to the ARVN 1st Infantry Division. When OPORD 13-70 officially came to an end on October 8, 1971, it was the last major ground combat operation of the Vietnam War. However, the Screaming Eagles would continue to take the war to the enemy with aggressive patrolling and ambushes and aerial interdiction right up until the end.

When LAM SON 719 ended, the ARVN 1st Infantry Division, still recovering from heavy losses sustained in the Laotian invasion, kicked off Operation LAM SON 720. This operation into the A Shau Valley to cut the enemy's supply routes was a four month operation that ended on August 13th and cost

the NVA 3,800 killed and 900 weapons lost. Units from the 101st did not participate in a major role, but supported the operation by providing air transportation, artillery, gunships, and aerial and ground reconnaissance. Still 700 enemy dead and 75 crew served weapons captured or destroyed were credited to U.S. forces. On April 23, 1971, a six-man Ranger team from L Company, 75th Infantry (Ranger), lead by Team Leader Sergeant Marvin Duren, was inserted on a ridgetop on the eastern side of the A Shau Valley. They were to serve as a radio relay team for a Ranger platoon laying anti-tank mines along Route 547A in the floor of the A Shau. Other Ranger reconnaissance teams and 2/17th Cav aerial scouts had for the past two weeks reported NVA tanks and tracked vehicles operating along the dirt highway. The insertion attempt at their primary LZ had been aborted due to enemy ground fire, so the team went in on its secondary LZ, in a saddle flanked by steep slopes. On the ground, Duren took point to lead the team off the LZ where it could "lay dog" long enough to determine if the NVA had monitored the insertion. They had, fifteen yards out of the LZ. Duren was cut down by a burst from an enemy AK47, that hit him twice in the right hip, chest and stomach. As NVA grenades exploded around him, and other automatic weapons joined in, Duren was hit again in the spleen, appendix, left lung, left arm and back. Firing from camouflaged bunkers, the NVA had the team pinned down in the saddle. At first, the rest of the team were unable to reach the badly wounded team leader. But a short time later, as Sergeant James Champion laid down suppressive fire with his M-203 grenade launcher, Sergeants Fred Karnes, the team RTO, and Steve McAlpine, an ex-Special Forces medic, crawled to where Duren lay. McAlpine quickly started a saline IV in his neck to prevent him from going into shock.

While preparations were being made to rescue the Ranger team, a Huey slick, flown by Captain Louis Spiedel from Bravo Troop 2/17th Cav, was inbound with Ranger Staff Sergeant William Vodden on board to take the place of the wounded Ranger team leader. As the aircraft passed over the battle torn LZ, Vodden leaped out and ran to join the rest of the Ranger team pinned down near the LZ. Enemy ground fire immediately hit the helicopter causing it to crash. Making sure that the assistant team leader had everything under control, Vodden looked up to see the door gunner from the downed Cav slick staggering across the LZ toward the Rangers' position. When the crewman fell behind a log, got up and fell again, Vodden left his position and ran out to retrieve the man. On the way back with the wounded door gunner, Vodden was hit in the leg, shattering his femur. As the NCO lay there treating his own wound, he observed a medivac helicopter from Eagle Dustoff, piloted by WO Fred Behrens and Captain Roger Madison, attempting to land amidst intense enemy small arms fire to extract Duren. McAlpine and assistant team leader, Sergeant John Sly, got up and dragged the badly wounded Ranger toward the waiting medivac. The Dustoff crew chief jumped from the medivac ship and ran to help, finally succeeding in getting



the unconscious Duren on board. While Duren was being extracted, the crew chief from Speidel's downed Huey ran across the LZ and dropped at Vodden's feet. He told him that the two pilots were trapped upside down with their legs pinned in the wreckage, then tried to make it to the Rangers' perimeter. Heavy fire turned him back, so he returned to Vodden and told him he was returning to the downed helicopter, then disappeared over the crest of the hill. Meanwhile, the Eagle Dustoff medivac, piloted by Behrens, had returned to pick up Vodden. Coming in over the LZ, the ship landed on the LZ amidst the smoke of battle.

Sp4 Issako, the Ranger team's junior scout, Karnes, McAlpine, Sly, Champion and the Cav door gunner climbed aboard. As the helicopter climbed out, it took several hits, two hitting WO Behrens in the foot and upper body, another killing the crew chief, and autorotated down on the LZ. The surviving crew and passengers spilled out opposite sides of the downed Huey, some heading for Vodden's position, Behrens dropping behind the closest cover he could find, the rest diving for a crater fifty feet away. A short while later, those at Vodden's location were joined by the crew chief from the downed Cav helicopter. During the entire operation, Cobra gunships from the 2/17th Cav had made pass after pass over the NVA positions preventing the enemy from overrunning the men trapped on the LZ. But as darkness fell, the gunships were forced to return to Camp Eagle. The heavy fire from the enemy positions ceased. The Cav crew chief reported he was going to go back to the crash site and attempt to extricate the two pilots. He took off with the surviving Dustoff crewman following behind. The two men returned a short time later, saying it would take special tools to get either of the pilots out of the wreckage.

Surprisingly, the enemy stayed put during the night. Karnes, Madison and Sly had spent a sleepless night together not knowing if anyone else was alive or dead. In the morning, the three men crawled around the ridgetop looking for a radio. A sniper killed Sly. When Karnes showed up with a radio, Madison found out that an NVA battalion had been spotted moving up to reinforce whoever they were fighting. Madison spent the rest of the day directing air strikes and Cobra gunship runs on the enemy positions, often bringing it right up to their own perimeter. Later in the day, the two men learned one or more aero-rifle troops from the 2/17th Cav had landed to the north of them, while a couple of rifle companies from the 2/502nd had also combat assaulted down in the valley. The enemy had stopped them cold. Toward the end of the second day, Karnes and Madison decided to escape and evade. As they moved to the west off the side of the ridge, they ran into McAlpine who had just left a badly wounded Isaako Malo hidden in a hole on top of the ridge. Unable to carry the hip-shot Ranger, the three men decided to leave him where he was hidden and try to make it to the Cav troops. They moved down the mountain then turned north on a secondary ridge, then swung back east until they reached the Cav's perimeter. They were shocked

to see dozens of dead and wounded in the Cav's positions. They had been mauled on insertion by the NVA, taking ten killed in as many minutes. A short time later, Madison was medivac'd out with the Cav's wounded. McAlpine and Karnes spent the second night with the survivors of the 2/17th Cavalry. Behrens, spent the second day hiding alone among the NVA positions, wounded a third time by a sniper, hugging the Thompson submachine gun he had pulled from his wrecked helicopter. He had fired up half his magazine killing the sniper who had shot him, and had decided to save the rest for when the enemy tried to overrun his position. Friendly aircraft repeatedly strafed and rocketed the area around him. He screamed to alert any other survivors he was still alive, and breathed a sigh of relief when the Cobras adjusted their runs away from his location. He watched silently as khaki-clad NVA came out of their positions and dragged off their dead and wounded. The night was especially terrifying as enemy soldiers moved around the surrounding darkness. Vodden, Champion, and the rest of the surviving helicopter crewmen tried to stay out of sight as each movement seemed to draw enemy fire.

The Cav crew chief continued checking up on the two pilots trapped in the wreckage of the Huey, giving them moisture from some pulpy roots he had found. The men were in bad shape and getting worse by the hour. The three men decided Champion and the crew chief would try to escape and evade. The crew chief was armed only with a revolver. Champion, the stock of his M-16 shattered by an NVA bullet, had lost his webgear and rucksack, so Vodden divided his remaining magazines and frags, and gave the young Ranger his map and compass. At dusk on the second day, the two men moved out. A short time later, the crew chief returned to Vodden's position, telling him he had decided to stay and look after the injured pilots. Champion had gone on alone. An hour later, the two men heard firing down in the valley below them. Vodden believed he had just heard James Champion's "last stand."

During the night, enemy soldiers moved all around them. On two different occasions, Vodden had fired at the silhouette of a man standing over the edge of the crater that hid the two Screaming Eagles. Each time, for good measure, Vodden also tossed a grenade into the brush above them. On the third day, a scout helicopter appeared overhead followed by several Cobras making their deadly passes. Low flying fighter-bombers dropped their ordnance on the dug in enemy forces. The Cav crew chief slipped down the side of the ridge again to check on his pilots, and returned to report that the co-pilot had died sometime during the night. Off in the distance the two men saw a long string of helicopters approaching. They knew help was finally on the way. For the first time in three days they began to believe that they might get out of this alive.

In the afternoon, Vodden and the crew chief heard small



arms fire and someone yelling. Then, miraculously, two L Company Rangers appeared ghostlike out of the brush. Sergeants Dave Rothwell and Don Sellner had reached two of the survivors. The Cav crew chief and Vodden were quickly medivac'd off the ridge. Karnes and McAlpine remained inside the Cav perimeter until the morning of the third day. The two men returned to the scene of the Ranger team's battle with a five-man reaction force composed of Captain David Ohle, Sergeant Dave Quigley, Sergeant Herb Owens, and two other Rangers. General Tarpley, the Division Commander, had ordered an arc-light on the ridge for that afternoon, and the Rangers had volunteered to go in and try to recover anyone who had survived the three days on the ridge. Reaching the LZ, the seven Rangers came under intense fire from NVA hidden in bunkers. Everyone but Quigley was pinned down. Quigley rushed through the bunkers alone until he reached the LZ. He found Sly's body near the downed medivac aircraft. Crossing the LZ he found many dead American soldiers from the 2/17th Cav and the 502nd who had tried to reach the trapped Rangers and helicopter crewmen. Bodies were everywhere. Then he found WO Fred Behrens, looking like a piece of Swiss cheese from all the holes in him. The NVA gunners had used him as a target for zeroing in their weapons. Unbelievably, Behrens was still alive and asked Quigley for something to eat. Quigley dropped him a can of apricots and a canteen and moved on. Captain Ohle had finally fought his way past the NVA bunkers and caught up to Quigley. The two Rangers found the Cav chopper three hundred yards down the side of the ridge, smashed flat as a pancake. Speidel was still alive, but would later lose both his legs at the hips. Owens and Quigley searched the ridge for Champion and Malo. They found Malo's weapon but no sign of either man. (Malo was released by the NVA in 1973. Champion was never seen again).

On August 3rd, the Rakkasans from the 3/187th were detached from the 101st Airborne Division and sent south to Cam Ranh Bay. The battalion would provide security for departing U.S. units by patrolling the surrounding mountains. On September 1st, LAM SON 810 began as 101st aviation units airlifted thousands of ARVN troops into western Quang Tri Province. During the months of April through October, 1971, gunships from the 2/17th Cav, 4/77th Aerial Artillery, and the 101st Aviation Battalion roamed everywhere throughout the Division's AO, destroying enemy soldiers, supply points, and fortifications. The enemy was plentiful and paid a heavy price for their boldness to the 101st aerial hunters who were getting in their last "licks" before redeploying back to the States. This type of combat, small American elements running into major NVA units, and armed aerial interdiction, typified the contact that the Screaming Eagles would see during the rest of JEFFERSON GLEN/ OPOD 13-70. For its actions from March to October, 1971, the 101st Airborne Division was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

"Ode to the Airborne Infantryman of the 1st Bde 101st"

Author Unknown

this is from the 327 Infantry Regiment web site at <http://screamingeagles-327thvietnam.com/>

This poem that first appeared in "The Vietnam Reporter," Oct.'65.

I lie in my tent thanking God for free rent
While outside the monsoon pours
And inside my buddy snores
Muddy floors and a wet cot
But still thanking God a lot.

Got hot chow every day,
Rain or shine, come what may.
Got a pup, about two months old,
Eats C-Rations-hot or cold!

Special Forces all around
Keeping safe this hallowed ground.
1st Cav in the air, landing here and
Fighting there.

Ain't got much but it could be worse,
Just ask the men in the 101st.

Author Unknown

I don't know who wrote it-sounds like a remf-but I do remember reading it in some in-country publication. We all laughed and sounded off with "don't mean nothin." We were all shocked to find out that everyone in Nam wasn't living like us. The camping alone would have killed off most of the remf's. Then came the humping...

(Submitted by Dave Cook)

Humor

The lighter side of military life.



Subject: An MRE Meal (UNCLASSIFIED)

For those of you who have suffered through C Rations and MREs - This story will have a great deal of meaning. Yes it is true that some of the meals were marked "Not for preflight or in flight use"

by Frank Rodgers

I had a date the other night at my place. On the phone the day before, the girl asked me to "Cook her something she's never had before" for dinner.

After many minutes of scratching my head over what to make, I finally settled on something she has DEFINITELY never eaten.

I got out my trusty case of MRE's. Meal, Ready-to-Eat. Field rations that when eaten in their entirety contain 3000+ calories. Here's what I made:

I took three of the Ham Slices out of their plastic packets, took out three of the Pork Chops, three packets of Chicken-a-la-King, and eight packets of dehydrated butter noodles and some dehydrated/rehydrated rice. I cooked the Ham Slices and Pork Chops in one pan, sauteed in shaved garlic and olive oil.

In another pot, I blended the Chicken a-la-king, noodles, and rice together to make a sort of mush that looked suspiciously like succotash. I added some spices, and blended everything together in a glass pan that I then cooked in the oven for about 35 minutes at 450 degrees.

When I took it out, it looked like, well, ham slices, pork chops, and a bed of yellow poop. I covered the tops of the meat in the MRE cheese (kinda like velveeta) and added some green sprinkly thingys from one of my spice cans (hey, if it's got green sprinkly thingys on it, it looks fancy right?)

For dessert, I took four MRE Pound Cakes, mashed 'em up, added five packets of cocoa powder, powdered coffee cream, and some water. I heated it up and stirred it until it looked like a sort of chunky gelatinous organism, and I sprinkled powdered sugar on top of it.

For alcoholic drinks, I took the rest of my bottle of Military Special Vodka (yes, they DO make a type of liquor named "Military Special"-it sells for \$4.35 per fifth) and mixed in four packets of "Electrolytes - 1 each - Cherry flavored" (I swear, the packet says that). It looked like an eerie kool-aid with sparkles in it (that was the electrolytes I guess... could've been leftover sand from Egypt).

I lit two candles, put a vase of wildflowers in the middle, and set the table with my best set of Ralph Lauren Academy-

series China (that stuff is damned EXPENSIVE... my set of 8 place settings cost me over \$600), and put the alcoholic drink in a crystal wine decanter.

She came over, and I had some appetizers already made, of MRE spaghetti-with-meatballs, set in small cups. She saw the dinner, saw the food, and said "This looks INCREDIBLE!!!"

We dug in, and she was loving the food. Throughout the meal, she kept asking me how long it took me to make it, and kept remarking that I obviously knew a thing or two about cooking fine meals. She kind of balked at the makeshift "wine" I had set out, but after she tried it I guess she liked it because she drank four glasses during dinner.

At the end of the main course, when I served the dessert, she squealed with delight at the "Chocolate mousse" I had made. Huh? Chocolate what? Okay... yeah... it's Chocolate Moose. Took me HOURS to make... yup.

Later on, as we were watching a movie, she excused herself to use my restroom. While she was in there, I heard her say softly to herself "uh oh" and a resounding but petite poot punctuated her utterance of dismay.

Let the games begin.

She sprayed about half a can of air freshener (Air Freshener, 1 each, Orange scent. Yup. The Army even makes smellgood) and returned to the couch, this time with an obvious pained look.

After 10 more minutes she excused herself again, and retreated to the bathroom for the second time. I could hear her say "What the hell is WRONG with me???", as she again send flatulent shockwaves into the porcelain bowl. This time, they sounded kinda wet, and I heard the toilet paper roll being employed, and again, LOTS more air freshener.

Back to the couch. She smiles meekly as she decides to sit on the chair instead of next to me. She sits on my chair, knees pulled up to her chest, kind of rocking back and forth slightly. Suddenly, without a word, she ROCKETED up and FLEW to the bathroom, slammed the door, and didn't come out for 30 minutes.

I turned the movie up because I didn't want her to hear me laughing so hard that tears were streaming down my cheeks.

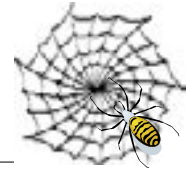
She came out with a slightly gray palor to her face, and said "I am SOOOOOO sorry. I have NO idea what is wrong with me. I am so embarrassed, I can't believe I keep running to your bathroom!!!" I gave her an Immodium AD, and she finally settled down and relaxed.

Later on, she asked me again what I had made for dinner, because she had enjoyed it so much. I calmly took her into



The Web

Interesting links and web page reviews.



the kitchen and showed her all the used MRE bags and packets in the trash can.

After explaining to her that she had eaten roughly 9,000 calories of "Army food" she turned stark white, looked at me incredulously, and said "I ate 9,000 calories of dehydrated food that was made 3 years ago?" After I concurred, she grabbed her coat and keys, and took off without a word.

She called me yesterday. Seems she couldn't go for 3 days, and when she finally did, the smell was so bad, her roommate could smell it from down the hall. She also told me she had been working out nonstop to combat the high caloric intake, and that she never wanted me to cook dinner for her again, unless she was PERSONALLY there to inspect the food beforehand.

It was a fun date. She laughed about it eventually, and said that that was the first time she'd ever crapped in a guy's house on a date. She'd been so upset by it she was in tears in the bathroom while I had been in tears on the couch.

I know, I'm a jerk, but it was still a funny night.

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

Agent Orange Website

<http://www.lewispublishing.com/orange.htm>

Webmaster: Lewis Publishing

Reviewed by Dave Mussey

The Agent Orange Website has a simple straight forward homepage. Things are laid out top to bottom making navigation very easy. The site is hosted, as a public service, by Lewis Publishing Company. The top of the page sports a U.S. Air Force picture of "Patches", The Air Force C-123 that took the most ground fire of any aircraft flying herbicide missions in Vietnam. Below that is the site's mission statement. Two links to the host company are also posted here. The link to Lewis Publishing seems to be non-functional. But if you delete the 'index.htm' from the link, the result will get you to Lewis Publishing's homepage. The other link takes you to their bookstore where you'll find a variety of books, movies, posters and other military related items for sale.

The center section of the Agent Orange Website has an overview of Agent Orange. Just below that are the links to the rest of the site. A FAQ's page link gives you the questions and answers to those questions that are most frequently asked. Another link takes you to a map of Vietnam showing the concentration of spraying in country by fixed wing missions only. As you'll notice, we were stationed in one of the most heavily sprayed areas. The next link is a list of the different herbicides used during the course of the war. With all of that spraying, I'm amazed any of us are still alive.

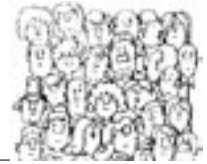
The next two links contain information on Agent Orange and the Veteran's Administration. It lists which diseases are covered under VA by presumption of exposure related to service in Vietnam. Included is a page with very good advice on how to properly file a claim with VA.

The link to the section on determining Agent Orange exposure seems to be somewhat outdated. It describes the difficulties in determining exposure and then suggests that study of the efforts in this endeavor will follow. To the best of my knowledge, these studies have been completed by VA, the military and contracted sources. The last site link is a very short list of references, too short for my liking. I would like to have seen a more extensive list for further research.

All in all, the Agent Orange Website has some interesting information and sound advice for those who are interested in knowing more about the subject.

Reunions and Events

The what, where, when and who.



VHPA™ 22nd NATIONAL ANNUAL REUNION in San Francisco: 2005

Let the good times, camaraderie, and memories of old continue!! by Joe Bilitzke and Dave Rittman

For many of us, we departed from San Francisco or the nearby military bases almost 40 years ago enroute to a conflict in a far land. Next July, 2005 we return to renew our acquaintances made in those difficult times, renew camaraderie of old, and to have a great time in a fabulous city that knows how to host a great party!

Regardless of whether you have been to a recent reunion (or not) ... this is one you have to make! While ensuring that very ample time exists for meeting that special person you haven't seen for years, telling stories of old in the lounges that get better by the year, and even taking time to just "chill out" in a great first class hotel ... this year there are many very special events and activities that will in themselves be an experience of a lifetime.

The hotel – 1st Class ... and what a rate!!!

The host hotel this year is THE San Francisco Marriott, located right downtown in the heart of everything at 55 Fourth Street. At the fabulous negotiated rate of \$109 per night plus tax, as anyone who knows San Francisco, this is a true bargain. They have even thrown in for us free use of the health club facilities for the entire membership and their guests! (Use of guest lockers is optional for \$5). However rooms are definitely limited, and this year's reunion is being held right in the middle of the most desirable tourist season. Thus space will be at a premium ... be sure you reserve your room(s) early. This year you will be able to do that through our VHPA registration system again. While last year's hotel could not technically accommodate our Internet web-based registration system, the Marriott has no such limitations, and they will be linked directly to our web-site. Thus when you complete registering for VHPA events, the software continues to accept your room reservations right on line! Simple!!

Eric Burdon and the Animals booked for the opening welcome reception

Officially the reunion starts off on Saturday, July 2nd ... although many of you will elect to arrive a day early (on Friday the 1st) to take in the sights of the City on your own. At the above rates, it is an opportunity not to be missed. On Saturday, for our first time reunion attendees, we will have a special welcome orientation at 6:30 PM, and for the general membership including our first time attendees we open up the doors at 7 PM to mingle, possibly find that special pilot you haven't seen in 40 years, and socialize in the best of company.

With the reunion being in the western time zone, our experience has been almost everyone will be checked in and ready to party when our headliner show kicks off at 8:30 PM Pacific time in the main ballroom ... non other than Eric Burdon and the Animals. We have been using his song "we've got to get out of this place" as our unofficial theme song for years ... and now's your chance to hear it live from the band who performed it originally way back when. Ticket cost ... including all taxes and gratuities is \$35 per person. What a night it will be!!

Business Meeting shifted one hour later to 10 AM July 3rd

In recognition of the very special opening night show, our annual business meeting will be conducted one hour later than normal at 10:00 AM on July 3rd, and is open to all dues current members. This event is free of charge, but will require an admittance ticket, which will be in your registration packet upon arrival, or available at the registration desk before the meeting. Your Executive Council promises it will conclude about noon.

Culinary exhibition and brunch for our spouses - 10:00 AM July 3rd

This year we have a very unique opportunity for our spouses to experience while the annual business meeting is going on in a different area. The hotel has one of the premium executive chefs in the country on staff – Jim Gemignani. In addition to a fine brunch, Jim and his group of highly talented culinary artists and co-workers will demonstrate how to prepare very unique and exquisite pastries, desserts, chocolates, and the like. Jim has promised samples of their work throughout the presentation for all. Cost, including all taxes and gratuities is \$30 per person.

Trip to Alcatraz – either Sunday July 3rd or Tuesday July 5th

This is a very, very popular tour to Alcatraz, which is on an island in the middle of San Francisco harbor. This trip, operated by the US Park service, is sold out literally months in advance. In our opinion you have little hope of obtaining tickets upon arrival, unless the VHPA sets up the reservations in advance ... which is exactly what we have done on your behalf.

The VHPA has put in reservations with the US Park Service for 800 pre-paid tickets ... 400 on Sunday afternoon July 3rd, and another 400 on Tuesday July 5th in the morning hours. That is all we can anticipate getting. In addition, tickets are limited to 100 for any one sailing, and thus the experience is truly capacity limited. When they are gone, they are gone ... and there is a possibility the Park Service may not even allocate all the tickets we have ordered.



The dock where the tour starts is right on the same trolley line that stops in front of the hotel, or you can catch a cab for about \$6-7. Thus we are leaving the transportation up to your individual convenience, so you can walk around the city, see the sights, and not be locked into a specific bus schedule. By ordering your ticket now for the day you wish, subsequently upon check in at our registration desk at the hotel you will receive your tickets that will contain your precise sailing time from the dock. The boats run every hour, and like an airplane flight, they are totally reserved. Cost including all taxes, gratuities, and administrative costs is \$22.50. You will need to specify which date you prefer, and once ordered they are not refundable.

Cabaret Theme Party Sunday 9 PM to Midnight

Planned as a free event for all registered members and guests, this is something new for this year ... but you will need your ID registration badge to gain entrance to the area. Casual in tone, set in the large 2nd floor garden Atrium of the hotel, envision mingling and socializing with all your friends and acquaintances ... while great entertainment performs almost non-stop in a interactive Las Vegas style cabaret setting. You might even believe you recognize a few of the key performers that could stop in for guest appearances. This is one not to be missed!

Golf tournament the morning of July 4th

Well it's time to think about going to San Francisco and you know that means GOLF for many of you. Again Mike Whitten is heading up our tournament, and everyone will meet at the curb at the Marriott to board buses to go to the golf course at 0600 and will tee in up in a shotgun format at 0800. We will have some food available for purchase when we get there as well as hot coffee and other things to warm you up. You may think about wearing warm clothes when you leave the hotel but by 1000 in the morning it should be above 80 at the course and reach 90 by the time we finish. Cost is \$100 per player, and includes green fees plus your cart.

Golf wise, you are going to have the privilege of playing the best golf course in Northern California for turf conditions and one of the highest rated courses overall. If you would like to take a tour of the course go to this web site. <http://stonetreegolf.com>

We are going to have some interesting things at the tournament this year, and Mike Whitten has already got sponsors to donate a case of premium wine and some other prize money. He is also working with a San Francisco car dealership to have a hole-in-one contest with the big prize being a new car.

If any of you know anyone who would like to sponsor a hole at the golf tournament to please get in touch with Mike at wrngans@aol.com

4th of July harbor dinner cruise, and weather/fog permitting fireworks

As the saying goes, "Only in San Francisco." This year's Fourth of July celebration will be like no other. We're going for a boat ride! Actually, it's a little more than that. Specifically, we're going on a Hornblower cruise on Monday evening, 4 July 2005.

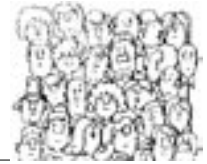
Hornblower Cruises and Events (HCE) has been a fixture in San Francisco for the past 24 years. It began in 1980 with one vessel in the Berkeley marina, on San Francisco bay. Now plying the waters in six California ports, HCE has grown to a \$30 million dollar business, featuring 25 yachts. In 2001, the San Francisco Belle, our ship, was added to the fleet. It lays claim to being the largest dining yacht on the West Coast, accommodating up to 2000 passengers.

The San Francisco Belle is a four deck, stern wheeler. During dinner cruises, the bottom three, fully enclosed decks can comfortably accommodate 400 people. The top or fourth deck is open to the elements. We have secured the uppermost, enclosed deck for VHPA. It is reserved exclusively for us and therefore, entrance is closely controlled allowing only ticketed VHPA members and guests.

Once inside you'll find linen covered tables, a dance floor, and a five-piece band with instructions to "keep the tunes in the 1960's." In addition, our Hornblower event coordinator, Betty Shea, took on our challenge to negotiate beer prices in keeping with the VHPA tradition. She did an outstanding job - domestic beer is going for \$2.00! Huge bars, one forward, and one aft, will keep the liquid refreshments available all evening.

When it comes time to chow, this is no hamburger and hot dog fare. In addition to dancing and drinking, the Hornblower offers us an outstanding buffet menu selection: Dinner Buffet Caesar Salad with shaved parmesan cheese, cracked pepper and herbed croutons Entrée Selection (your choice of entrée) Pan Roasted Salmon with Tapenade Herb Crusted Carved Sirloin of Beef with Horseradish crème Fraiche Herb and Garlic Roasted Potatoes Seasonal Vegetables Fresh Fruit Display Dessert A Selection of Tortes and Cakes Looks pretty yummy, doesn't it? From experience, we can tell you, it is. Note, wine is not part of our package price, but may be purchased during dinner.

A note on accommodations is in order. Your Reunion Committee has reserved the top, enclosed deck exclusively for VHPA. Because of the dinner and dance floor configuration, the deck is limited to 400 passengers. The first 400 members to register for the Bay Cruise will be ticketed for the top deck. If we receive requests exceeding 400, the next 400 will be seated mid-deck. Once full, the bottom deck will be used. However, we only have an exclusive buy out of



the top, enclosed deck. First come, first served. Depending on when Headquarters receives registrations, we may, or may not have the lower decks solely available to VHPA before they're offered for sale to the public. The key is to register early to be assured of seating on the VHPA deck. This is the most popular cruise of the year; tickets go fast and it's always a sell out.

Here's the flight plan for the evening. We'll leave the San Francisco Marriott and climb aboard buses for a short hop to the pier. Your ticket and reunion badge checked, you'll board the Belle and make your way to our private deck. For those who require assistance, the ship is fully ADA compliant, but please check the registration box if you need a wheel chair assessable bus so we can plan for you accordingly.

We'll shove off around 1930, still with plenty of daylight to enable you to absorb the sights. While you're enjoying your adult beverage and scrumptious dinner, we'll pass a number of San Francisco landmarks. The prison island of Alcatraz sits in the middle of the bay. You may have had an opportunity to visit the facility during a tour earlier in the reunion. But we'll pass close enough for you to almost reach out and touch the infamous grounds. The ship then passes Angel Island – the Ellis Island of the West. Here, most immigrants were confined while going through the process allowing them to remain and help build the City, railroads, and gold mines.

Continuing around Angel Island, the captain navigates Raccoon Straits, separating Angel Island from the exclusive (and very expensive) enclaves of Tiburon and Belvedere. This is the land of houses with prices in seven digits. Looking west from the Straits, you'll see the town of Sausalito. A few of our members who have lived there for twenty plus years can tell you it's a spectacular sight as the sun sets over the hills behind it. The glowing lights of the town will remind you of similar settings along the French and Italian Riviera.

Passing Sausalito, your floating restaurant hugs the coast, turns west, and directly in front of you is the structure that is San Francisco. Soon we're floating under the most recognizable landmark in the world – the Golden Gate Bridge. From here, the captain will do a 1800 turn – we don't do open ocean. Back we go to the shelter of the bay. And being the biggest dog on the porch, or more appropriately, the biggest boat on the bay, we get to choose the best spot to drop anchor for the next event. It's time for fireworks!

During the last couple of hours we've seen sights from the bay, including a spectacular sunset over the Pacific. As the lights of the city now flicker in the twilight, get set for a fireworks show to end all shows. San Francisco has the reputation for the biggest and best fireworks in the west. For those of you who know San Francisco, the fireworks are ignited in the vicinity of the old Crissy field, adjacent to the

bay. The Belle will moor as close as possible to give you a breathtaking view. Now, if the weather is cooperative, and the fog remains outside the bay, you'll have ringside seats to the display. Look around, you'll see the bay literally covered with boats of all sizes. This is a very popular spectacle!

Checking our seasonal weather for July, the average high is 710F, the average low is 560F, and the mean is 640F with very little cloud cover. (Remember, fog is not cloud cover). So, as you can see, the temperatures remain relatively cool, even in July. Dress accordingly, grab a beverage, and look up. Oooh! Aaah!

As you catch your breath, it's time to head to port. Depending on the time and traffic – that's boat traffic – the captain may return and go under the suspension portion of the bridge connecting San Francisco to Yerba Buena Island. You'll see the entire city of San Francisco on your right and the east bay cities of Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley on your left. Another 1800 turn and we're slowly approaching our berth for the final docking. It's been a fantastic four hours. The meal was stupendous. The live band kept things rocking and you danced as the ship swayed. The sights and scenes surrounding the San Francisco bay are locked into memory.

As the paddle wheel winds down and final tie downs are complete, our deluxe motor coaches are waiting dockside for the quick transfer back to Marriott. It was great bay cruise. Register early and don't miss it.

Final night banquet – Tuesday July 5th

Starting just a little earlier this year, doors open at 5:30 PM. For many of you this will be your final night to enjoy the camaraderie and friendships formed and renewed during the reunion. There is a choice of three meals ... Strip Steak, Halibut, or Vegetarian ... and the evening concludes with a great band to dance and wind up the evening in high fashion. Cost is \$60, including all taxes and gratuities.

This year your Executive Council has voted to test a concept talked about within the Association for several years. If you and your spouse/ guest would like to bring a special non-member friend, relative, or guest just to the final night's banquet, but not to any other event at the reunion, you may do so without paying the overall reunion registration fee by purchasing a ticket for that person at the same time you sign up for your final night banquet tickets. Cost is \$85 per guest (all taxes and gratuities included), a figure that covers the approximate true cost per person of conducting the banquet, including the entertainment, ceremonies, and technical support.

Post trip to Maui, Hawaii – Wednesday July 6th

After all the excitement of the wonderful reunion in San Francisco and traveling from far and wide, why not go the



next step and go on to Maui for a week of fun in the sun and surf. How many of you remember having an R&R in Hawaii (probably in Waikiki) during your tour and haven't been back?

We have made arrangements with Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) for 7 days at the Fabulous Kapalua Resort on the Island of Maui. We have reserved 45 Condos at the Kapalua Villas in the Fairway section. These beautiful one, two, and three bedroom villas range from 1200 to 2400 sq. feet. Enjoy resort charging and guest privileges at the Ritz Carlton, Kapalua and the Kapalua Bay Hotel and Ocean Villas. Three beautiful white-sand beaches and 54 holes of championship golf and just minutes away. Please look at the following web site. Kapalua Resort - Kapalua Villas - Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii

If you don't think you can take that much time off we also have a 5 day package available to you if that would fit your needs better. The prices below include the price of the condo and airfare. You will notice that the price goes down if you want to share with your friends. Remember these are condos and are fully equipped kitchens, W/D, multiple TV and telephones. All the rooms will be air-conditioned.

We have reserved 1,2, and 3 bedroom condos. The price per person is as follows and is based on double occupancy per room with airfare.

7 nights

1 bedroom condo – \$1440
2 bedroom condo – \$1316
3 bedroom condo – \$1191

5 Nights

1 bedroom condo – \$1207
2 bedroom condo – \$1055
3 bedroom condo – \$1000

Cost of Car for the 7 nights – \$345.87 midsize, \$280.71 compact. If you want larger or smaller, minivan or convertible, discuss with the travel agent. Roundtrip shuttle from the airport to the property and back is \$63.00 per person if you don't want to rent a car. Most of the activities except the trip to Hana have their own transportation to and from the condos. The insurance waiver is \$69.00 per person for the trip and is highly recommended, as any changes made to the reservation will cost the person unless they have the waiver. Deposit amount is \$300.00 per couple plus the cost of the waiver.

Air will be on United Airlines. Leaving SFO at 9:30 am arriving Maui at 11:40 am on 6 July 2005. Leaving Maui at 9:30 PM on 13 July 2005, arriving SFO at 5:18 am the following morning 14 July 2005. This gives us a full 7 plus days to enjoy Maui. We have held 1, 2, & 3 bedroom condos and the travel agent will be able to match up couples if they

request it.

Our travel agent is Bobbie Bograd at MOAA vacations. She can be contacted at the following locations. She is the only agent that has this program and is the only one that will offer this great program. 1-800-211-5107 ext. 492 bobbie@moaavacations.com We can get more room and aircraft seats if we act soon. This is the prime season of the year and these rates and room will not wait for you to decide that you want to go in March or later. The Villas will be sold out by late January at the latest as well as the airfares and seats. You must act now if you want to enjoy this unique opportunity.

Do I fly or drive to the reunion?

For many of you in the Central and Eastern US that decision will be obvious. By booking well in advance, there are many discounted airfares to the San Francisco area. Oakland is just across the bay from downtown San Francisco, and while it is about \$20 further away by cab ... Southwest and other discount airlines fly there with frequent schedules. San Francisco International is somewhat nearer to downtown, and they also host many airlines and the resulting discount fares if you purchase them early enough. Cab fare from SFO to the hotel costs about \$30-\$35, and coming in from Oakland is about \$50-55 ... although traffic can be a factor at certain times of the day.

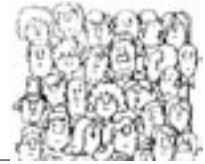
Shuttle buses run from the airport to the hotel also, but if you have two people going, a cab works out to be about the same price, and faster. If you are comfortable with public transportation, the Bay area has a spectacular rapid transit system called "The Bart". It runs from both airports to within a block of the hotel at a fraction of the cost ... and is often faster than you can drive or take a cab from the airport. Details on how to use that will follow in a later newsletter.

Vehicle Parking

If you elect to drive, parking is somewhat expensive and can be a factor. However directly across the street from the hotel lobby entrance is a multi-story parking garage called Verba Buena Garage. Rates there per day are only \$14 a day, which is relatively inexpensive for San Francisco. Important! ... the Marriott hotel garage is owned by an outside vendor, and they charge \$42 a day. Thus if you drive, our recommendation for which parking area to use is obvious. Neither area will accommodate a RV motor home. We'll publish a few recommendations for those folks separately in a future edition.

Rental Vehicles

If you are thinking about flying to the reunion, and then renting a car for a day or two ... Hertz has a counter and vehicles available right at the hotel.



Tax impact on costs associated with the reunion

Although the VHPA is a 501(c)(19) veterans organization, under California statutes, that status will not provide us with an exemption for state sales tax, which is 8.5%. In recent year's reunions, including both Dallas and Orlando, our Association was able to take advantage of a sales tax exemption, which was passed on to the members in terms of somewhat lower pricing. In addition, unlike most previous years, the tax in San Francisco applies not only to items purchased (like banquet meals, audio visual equipment, beverages, etc) ... but also to the 20% service gratuity that we are required to pay as part of the banquet set ups.

Thus our banquet meal pricing and registration fees are slightly higher this year vs. last in order to cover this added expense. But one also has to look at the value being received, which is truly significant.

Registration Fees for the reunion

Due to the extra tax that is applied in California (see above) combined with the higher cost of putting the reunion on at such a premium time of year in a first class location, we have adjusted upward per person our overall registration fees for San Francisco ... but only by \$10 pp. Similar to our practices in previous recent years, we will continue to provide a discount to encourage earlier registration. For members and guests who register on April 30th 2005 or before, the registration fee is \$55. May 1st and later the fee increases slightly to \$65, which also helps offset the additional administrative costs associated with registrations accepted closer to the reunion.

Time to act is now!!! See you there!!!

This year a number of key events and activities ... and the overnight rooms themselves are clearly capacity limited. Make your reservations now ... and plan on having the time of your life with your friends and comrades of old. See you there!!!

Note: non VHPA members planing to attend need to contact Lance Ruck ASAP.

VHCMA Reunion

The site for the 2005 VHCMA reunion is... San Antonio, TX

June 22-26, 2005

The Reunion hotel will be:

Hilton San Antonio Airport
611 NW Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78216
Tel: 1-210-340-6060
Fax: 1-210-377-4674

TOLL FREE 1-800-445-8667

Room Rates:
\$83.00 a night plus tax, up to 4 persons.

Be sure to ask for the VHCMA room rate when you book your room.

The itinerary of our annual reunion usually consists of the following:

Wednesday: Registration and getting settled in.

Thursday: Registration and organized trips during the day.
Dutch Covert Golf Classic in the morning

Friday: Organized trips during the day.
At night we have a pool/pizza/beer party.

Saturday: We have our general meeting and election of board members.
Ladies luncheon for the wives.
In the evening, we have a dinner/dance and raffle.

Sunday: Everyone heads home.

NOTE: We have planned side trips that are usually done on Thursday and Friday during the day.
This is subject to change with each reunion.

NOTE:As some of you know, 2006 will be our 20th anniversary of the VHCMA. For that reason, we will return to our birth place for our 2006 reunion. That will be in Phoenix, AZ.

Need more information on what to see and do in San Antonio? Lancers attending the VHCMA reunion are welcome to contact our very own San Antonio resident Walter White.



101st Airborne Division Association 2005 60th National Reunion

Will Be Hosted By The Florida Gulf Coast Chapter, in
Tampa Florida AUGUST 10th – 13th

PLAN NOW!!

COME JOIN US FOR "SUNSHINE DAYS AND TROPICAL NIGHTS"

For more information call or e-mail

Jim Joiner

Reunion Chairman:

junglejim101@juno.com

Tel: (813) 645-8777"

Doubletree Hotel

Tampa Westshore Airport 4500 West Cypress Street
Tampa, FL 33607

Tel: 1-813-879-4800

Fax: 1-813-873-1832

Located less than 2 miles from the Tampa International Airport, in the heart of the Westshore business district. The Hotel offers complimentary airport shuttle service, and is perfect for both business travelers and leisure guests. Nearby attractions include the International Plaza Mall featuring, Nordstroms, Neiman Marcus, Lord & Taylor as well as 30 excellent restaurants.

Room Rates Per Night for the Conference/Group
Standard Room - Single/Double 79 USD/Night
Standard Room - Triple/Quad 89 USD/Night

Reunion Dates

10 August 2005 - 15 August 2005

Check-In Dates

07 August 2005 - 18 August 2005

101st Abn. Association 2005 Reunion Tour Information

Thursday – August 11, 2005

Tampa City Tour with The Florida Aquarium

Timing: 9:30am-4:30pm

The city of Tampa comes to life as your guide highlights the area. Begin with a visit to the Florida Aquarium located in the Channelside area. Journey through Florida's aqua system from the aquifer, down rivers and streams and finally to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and a life sized coral reef.

Prior to leaving the Florida Aquarium enjoy lunch at the Cafe Ray. You will receive a luncheon coupon from your guide and be able to order off of the menu. A short time will be allowed for guests to browse the Channelside Shopping District

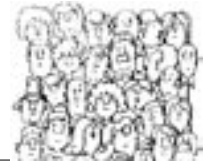
Departing the Aquarium you will travel a short distance, across the Hillsborough River, to the former Tampa Bay Hotel at the University of Tampa. At this symbol of Tampa you will be able to soak in the splendor of days gone by as you see and hear the history of this fabulous old hotel and its founder, railroad tycoon, Henry B. Plant. Upon completion of your tour of the Tampa Bay Hotel, board your motor coach and sit back and enjoy the ride as your Tour Guide highlights Downtown Tampa, Hyde Park and Bayshore Boulevard before traveling to Ybor City.

Traveling down 7th Avenue see what was once the center of life in Ybor City. See former Cigar worker's houses, mutual aid societies with your final stop being at Centro Ybor in the heart of Ybor City. Here you will have the opportunity to visit the former Centro Espanol now restored and the cornerstone to the entire Centro Ybor complex. This once thriving mutual aid society now houses restaurants, shops and Improv theatre and makes a perfect back drop to learning about life in this Latin community and the influence these valuable immigrants had on the city of Tampa.

On completion of the tour you will be taken back to their hotel passing the Buccaneers Stadium, home to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Yankees winter home, Legends Field.

Tour Cost based on a Minimum of 40 Passengers Per Coach:
\$44.00

Cost Includes: Transportation via deluxe motor coach, Bay Area Professional Tour Guide, Admissions to the Florida Aquarium, and the H. B. Plant Museum, \$8.00 luncheon coupon at the Florida Aquarium Cafe Ray and all taxes and gratuities for included items.



Enjoy some time at the Hard Rock Casino just a short distance from your hotel. Today you will be provided shuttle transportation to this recently opened 90,000 square foot casino. More than 1,500 of the latest electronic gaming machines are situated throughout the casino, which also includes 55 poker tables and a bingo gallery.

Program Cost based on a Minimum of 40 Passengers Per Coach: \$22.00 per person.

Cost Includes: Shuttle transportation to and from the Hard Rock Casino based on a specific schedule which will be set up in advance between the hours of 10:00a.m. and 4:00p.m., a Bay Area Staff person on board throughout, and all taxes and gratuities for included items.

Friday-August 12, 2005

Luncheon Sightseeing Cruise on the StarShip Yacht

Timing: 11:00a.m.-3:00p.m.

StarShip Dining Yacht, located in the Channelside District is a great place to take in Tampa's beauty and charm, all from the waters of Hillsborough Bay. Vast windows line StarShip's 180-foot vessel providing spectacular views from every seat in the house. With bay views by day and starlight by night, out-of-this worldviews await you aboard Tampa's only dining yacht. She has 2 dining levels, which are enclosed with two separate and unique dining areas on each level. The upper deck is open air for everyone on board to enjoy. Guests will have a selection of fine cuisine, live music and a captivating view of Hillsborough Bay.

Luncheon sailing schedule: 12:00noon-2:00p.m. with embarkation at 11:30a.m.

After lunch guests may wish to wander through the shops of Channelside.

Cost: \$46.00 per person based on a minimum of 40 passengers per motor coach.

Cost Includes: Roundtrip Transportation via Deluxe motor coach, BayArea Professional Tour Guide throughout, luncheon cruise as noted above, inclusive of all taxes and gratuities for included items.

Saturday - August 13, 2005

Sun and Fun Beach Trip

Timing: 10:00a.m.-4:00p.m.

Florida's West Coast boast of some of the best beaches in the world and today you are going to have the opportunity to visit one of them. Plan to set off to the beaches with your towel and sunscreen in hand. Also make sure that you bring water along! Today's beach visit will be to the white sands

of Fort DeSoto beach. This lovely beach provides plenty of sand, water, and cover if desired. A shelter has been reserved for your group today so that you have a gathering place and a lunch location. Restroom facilities are nearby for bathrooms and quick "get the salt off" shower. A box lunch will be provided for everyone.

The coach will take guests back to the hotel at 1:00p.m. and at 3:00p.m.

Cost with lunch: \$40.00 per person based on a minimum of 40 passengers per motor coach.

Cost Includes: Roundtrip Transportation via Deluxe motor coach, BayArea Professional Tour Guide throughout, boxed lunch and limited soft drinks and water, all taxes and gratuities for included items.

Hard Rock Casino

Timing: 10:00a.m.-4:00p.m.

Enjoy some time at the Hard Rock Casino just a short distance from your hotel. Today you will be provided shuttle transportation to this recently opened 90,000 sq. foot casino. More than 1,500 of the latest electronic gaming machines are situated throughout the casino, which also includes 55 poker tables and a bingo gallery.

Program Cost based on a minimum of 40 Passengers: \$22.00 per person.

Cost Includes: Shuttle transportation to and from the Hard Rock Casino based on a specific schedule which will be set up in advance between the hours of 10:00a.m. and 4:00p.m., a BayArea Staff person on board throughout, and all taxes and gratuities for included items.



101st Snowbird Reunion photos



Dennis Smith, Lance Ruck and Harold Smith. Dennis and Harold are brothers of Lancer KIA Arthur W. Smith



Governors Vacaro, Ruck, and Bittle. Meeting was Saturday and started at 9AM and concluded at 2:30 PM. Pursuant to my resolution, the Screaming Eagle Newsletter will be achieved over the next two years and become available on CD Rom. Any who are not members of the 101st can join anytime, especially if you are planning on coming to Tampa Bay? Lance Ruck



Harold and Dennis with the Honor Guard



Dennis and Harold standing when the families of KIAs were recognized.



Lancer table flag.

There will be no problem finding the Lancer tables at reunion dinners now that we have table flags. Flag holders compliments of Paul Cole.

VA News

VA Achievements in Diabetes Care

January 2005

Diabetes is a serious but common disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy. It has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. About 16 million Americans – or nearly 6 percent of the U.S. population – have diabetes, but about one-third of them are not aware of their condition. Nearly 800,000 new cases are diagnosed every year. The prevalence will continue to rise with the aging of the U.S. population, the growth in minority populations most susceptible to Type 2 diabetes and the increase in obesity among Americans. The majority of deaths and hospitalizations related to diabetes are due to cardiovascular complications such as heart attack and stroke.

Prevalence of Diabetes in Veterans

Diabetes has particular importance for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) because the prevalence among VA patients – one in five, or 20 percent – is substantially higher than in the general population. Based upon an annual VA patient population of about five million, the number of VA patients with diabetes at any time is more than one million. VA is the largest integrated health care system to provide care to people with diabetes. Nearly all veterans with diabetes are men; 2.4 percent are women. The largest group of veterans with diabetes is over 65 years of age.

With proper treatment and lifestyle changes, many complications can be prevented or delayed, including blindness, amputations, heart disease, stroke and kidney failure, as well as premature death. The two most common types of diabetes are Type 1 (previously called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or juvenile-onset diabetes), in which the body does not make insulin, and Type 2 (previously called non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes), in which the body does not react to insulin normally. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 to 95 percent of diabetes cases in the general population.

Diabetes is more common in Americans who are older, overweight, not active physically, have a family history of diabetes, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders.

VA Goals

VA works to improve the health of veterans with diabetes by identifying and treating risk factors for complications. It does this by developing and implementing clinical guidelines for treatment, mechanisms to track use of these

guidelines and assessments of their medical outcomes. VA

research supports not only these activities but also clinical

trials and basic science studies that may result in discoveries to benefit people with diabetes.

Screening Policies

The VA Diabetes Guidelines suggest testing patients at high risk, based upon symptoms or risk factors. Diabetes can be easily diagnosed with a test of blood sugar level at a routine visit or during a complete physical examination. Regular screenings reduce complications by controlling blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol.

VA uses an external peer review program to ensure that the rates of screening in VA medical programs for diabetes-related conditions are among the highest of any health care plan in America. In fiscal year 03, VA collected data from a random sample of veterans with diabetes from each VA facility. A patient must have accessed VA for any type of care at least once two years ago and at least once during the previous 12 months. The percentage of patients having chart documentation of the following measures, and the increase from 2002, is as follows:

- HbA1c test for blood sugar level, 94 percent of patients, with 81 percent having levels lower than 9 percent – 3 percent more patients than in 2002;
- Lipid profile within two years, 94 percent of patients; with 71 percent having LDL-C values lower than 120 mg/dl – 8 percent more patients than last year;
- Blood pressure control, 71 percent of patients with levels lower than 140/90 – 13 percent more patients than last year;
- Dilated retinal examination, 75 percent of patients – 3 percent more than last year.

In 1999, VA was the first national organization to mandate that all Hemoglobin A1c testing be performed using laboratory methods certified by the National Glycosylated Standardization Program. About 85 percent of all A1c testing in the U.S. is now done by this method.

VA's Clinical Practice Guidelines – developed in collaboration with the Department of Defense (DoD) – were the first national guidelines to support recommendations for diabetes treatment with graded evidence of effectiveness and to stratify preventive approaches in terms of risk. VA's national experts collaborated with representatives of other federal agencies and professional societies to develop the guidelines.

In 2003, in partnership with DoD, VA updated its Diabetes Clinical Practice Guidelines. The guidelines, covering

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outpatient management of glycemia, blood pressure, hyperlipidemia, diabetic retinopathy, foot care and renal disease, emphasize transparency of the evidence underlying clinical recommendations, as well as risk reduction and patient-clinician decision making.

In a VA study published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* August 17, 2004, researchers looked at patients with diabetes from five VA medical centers and eight commercial managed-care health plans. VA patients were more likely to receive recommended services and had their hemoglobin A1c and LDL cholesterol levels in better check. Blood pressure control was comparable for both sets of patients.

Between 1999 and 2003, the rate of total lower extremity amputations among all VA patients with diabetes decreased from 7.7 to 4 per 1,000 patients, and major amputations from 3.90 to 2 per 1,000 patients. In 2001, VA reissued a directive aimed at preserving the limbs of diabetic patients. More than 92 percent of veterans have an annual visual foot examination, and about 84 percent have a sensory examination.

Compensation

To qualify for VA disability compensation, most veterans must have a diagnosis of diabetes and evidence that it began or was aggravated during active duty or within one year of release from duty. VA currently is paying disability compensation to more than 70,000 veterans with diabetes, many of them Vietnam veterans. In 2001, veterans who served in Vietnam and later developed adult-onset (Type 2) diabetes became eligible for disability compensation on a presumption that the condition is connected to their military service. They do not have to present evidence that their diabetes began during or shortly after military service. This presumptive policy is an outgrowth of research into the potential effects of Agent Orange.

VA has made diabetes care a priority ever since it began treating chronic diseases on an outpatient basis several years ago. Its emphasis is multi-focused: 1) patient education; 2) health care provider education and guidelines; 3) epidemiological assessment; 4) quality of care; and 5) basic science, clinician and health services research.

VA Diabetes Research

- VA has funded a five-year study at 20 VA medical centers to determine if tight control of blood sugar will decrease cardiovascular conditions such as heart disease and stroke.
- VA's Medical Research Service is funding research to improve eye care and blood pressure control.
- VA established the Diabetes Quality Enhancement Research Initiative to translate research findings

into better care and outcomes for diabetic patients through aggressive treatment of risk factors that can be changed and prevention of progressive complications. Activities range from intervening to help front-line clinicians target high-risk patients to finding new ways to measure quality of care.

- In fiscal year 2002, VA physicians and scientists received \$44.5 million for diabetes research – \$13.4 million from VA and \$31.1 million from other sources.

Other Initiatives

VA is working with other federal health agencies through the Joslin Vision Network, a telemedicine demonstration program involving the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston, the Department of Defense and VA. Joslin is the only U.S. medical center devoted solely to diabetes. VA is currently developing a national plan for using telehealth technology to conduct retinal screenings of diabetic patients remotely at VA facilities.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) has given formal recognition to VA medical centers' patient self-management education programs at more than 40 sites that have a framework, informational content and implementation meeting ADA standards. The ADA is the nation's largest professional society for diabetes care.

Future Activities

VA remains committed to using performance measurement, its medical informatics system, research and patient and clinician education to improve metabolic outcomes (blood glucose level, blood pressure and cholesterol), as well as to improve chronic kidney disease as well as cardiovascular, eye and foot-care outcomes.

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Contract Awarded on VA's CARES Modernization Plan

January 7, 2005

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi today announced the award of a contract to PricewaterhouseCoopers to complete studies required by the Secretary's Capital Asset and Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) plan.

"CARES is VA's blueprint for the future," Principi said. "With this contract, we will ensure the historic modernization of our health care system includes input from our veterans and other stakeholders."

The \$9.6 million contract calls for completing studies at 18 sites throughout the country during a 13-month period.

PricewaterhouseCoopers has more than 25 years experience conducting health care delivery studies and providing implementation support.

Study recommendations, including those from stakeholders, will be reviewed by the VA Under Secretary for Health and CARES Implementation Board, consisting of senior VA officials, who will make recommendations to the Secretary. The studies will be completed no later than February 2006.

CARES is designed to provide greater access to quality care closer to where most veterans live. It allows VA to expand outpatient services and provide more of the care veterans want and use.

New Law Allows Higher Limits In VA Home Loan Program

January 13, 2005

WASHINGTON – Legislation recently signed by President Bush makes home ownership more affordable for many veterans.

Changes under the law mean veterans will be able to get no-downpayment loans of up to \$359,700. The previous ceiling was \$240,000.

"Now, more than ever, veterans will be able to make their dreams of home ownership a reality," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing part of the loan, veterans can receive a

good interest rate without having to make a downpayment.

The changes took effect Dec. 10 when President Bush signed into law the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004. The law also allows for loan limits to keep pace with rising home values.

The new law allows VA to guarantee one-year adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) and it extends, through 2008, VA's "hybrid ARM program," which allows veterans to lock in a favorable interest rate for at least three years.

Cost-Of-Living Raise Boosts Veterans Benefits

January 13, 2005

WASHINGTON – Millions of veterans and eligible family members will see their disability compensation, pension and survivors' benefits increased.

"We want all veterans with disabilities related to the defense of our country to receive the benefits they have earned," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "With this increase, we ensure their payments keep pace with the cost of living."

A recent law signed by President Bush provides a 2.7 percent increase in disability compensation and survivors' benefits.

Eligible veterans and family members can expect to see this increase in their January checks.

Under the veterans disability compensation program, tax-free payments generally range from \$108 to \$2,299 per month depending on the degree of disability. Special payments up to \$6,576 per month apply to the most severely injured veterans.



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