



In Service to America

THE OUTPOST

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Fl.



NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2001, FLORIDA STATE COUNCIL, CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, CHAPTER STATE NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR 2007, FOR INFORMATION CALL BOB SILMSER (813) 220-7246 OR (813) 685-3483. WEB SITE: WWW.VVA787.COM



Chapter 787 Annual Election of Officers

During the April meeting, those members in attendance elected the current administration for another year. President **Tom Hall**, Vice-President **Carl Harris** and Secretary/Treasurer **Bob Silmsler** will remain in their respective positions. While they all deserve a rest from the work load they carry for this chapter, we thank them for stepping up again to run for these very important posts and their commitment to chapter 787.



Pictured above, L-R, Tom Hall, Carl Harris and Bob Silmsler,

Chapter Officers

President: Tom Hall
 Vice President: Carl Harris
 Secretary: Bob Silmsler
 Treasurer: Bob Silmsler

Board of Directors:

Jim LaGarde
 Kevin Ruhl
 Dave Braun
 Jon Mueller

State Council Delegate:

Kevin Ruhl

Newsletter Editor: Jon Mueller, E-mail: ParaSF68@aol.com

Meetings

Chapter Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month.

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Veterans Memorial Park & Museum
 3602 Hwy. 301 N.
 Tampa Fl. 33619. See Map on last page.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl.

The World Famous Chapter 787 annual Car Show to be held on Saturday May 30th, at Hillsborough Veterans Park & Museum



Chapter President Tom Hall and his able crew, always put on a terrific event which becomes bigger and more respected each year. Bring your family and friends for this very enjoyable show. There will be lots of food, drinks and fun!





Medal of Honor recipients of the War in Vietnam

Sgt. John F. Baker Jr.



Rank and organization: Sergeant (then Pfc.), U.S. Army, Company A, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, November 5, 1966. Entered service at: Moline, Ill. Born: October 30, 1945, Davenport, Iowa.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. En route to assist another unit that was engaged with the enemy, Company A came under intense enemy fire and the lead man was killed instantly. Sgt. Baker immediately moved to the head of the column and together with another soldier knocked out 2 enemy bunkers. When his comrade was mortally wounded, Sgt. Baker, spotting 4 Viet Cong snipers, killed all of them, evacuated the fallen soldier and returned to lead repeated assaults against the enemy positions, killing several more Viet

Cong. Moving to attack 2 additional enemy bunkers, he and another soldier drew intense enemy fire and Sgt. Baker was blown from his feet by an enemy grenade. He quickly recovered and single-handedly destroyed 1 bunker before the other soldier was wounded. Seizing his fallen comrade's machine gun, Sgt. Baker charged through the deadly fusillade to silence the other bunker. He evacuated his comrade, replenished his ammunition and returned to the forefront to brave the enemy fire and continue the fight. When the forward element was ordered to withdraw, he carried 1 wounded man to the rear. As he returned to evacuate another soldier, he was taken under fire by snipers, but raced beyond the friendly troops to attack and kill the snipers. After evacuating the wounded man, he returned to cover the deployment of the unit. His ammunition now exhausted, he dragged 2 more of his fallen comrades to the rear. Sgt. Baker's selfless heroism, indomitable fighting spirit, and extraordinary gallantry were directly responsible for saving the lives of several of his comrades, and inflicting serious damage on the enemy. His acts were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

JROTC Awards

Pictured left, L-R, chapter 787 Board Member and former chapter President **Jim LaGarde**, presents an award and medal to cadet **Sean Moore**.

This presentation was performed at Newsome High School on March 31st 2009.

A special Thank You, goes out to chapter Secretary, Treasurer and all around veteran work-horse, **Bob Silmsler** who coordinates the JROTC awards, ceremony's and presentations.

This is no easy task. Chapter 787 performs 15 award presentations each school year.



Symposium to illuminate Vietnam rescues

By Jeff Carlton - The Associated Press Posted : Tuesday Apr 14, 2009 17:53:55 EDT

DALLAS — Now 71 and a retired rear admiral, Don Boecker isn't too proud to say he was "scared out of my wits" on that July 1965 day in Laos when he dangled by one arm from a helicopter while enemy soldiers took aim below.

Boecker had spent the longest night of his life in the thick jungle, evading capture and certain execution while awaiting rescue. The Navy aviator had ejected after a bomb he intended to drop on the Ho Chi Minh trail exploded prematurely.

His rescuers that day, however, weren't from the American military, who couldn't be caught conducting a secret bombing campaign in Laos.

They were civilian employees of Air America, an ostensibly private airline essentially owned and operated by the CIA.

Boecker plans to tell the story of Air America's heroics on Saturday at a symposium to be held at the University of Texas at Dallas. The conference should present a fuller account of the role played by Air America, an outfit whose alumni say is still misunderstood by the American public.

It coincides with the CIA's release of about 10,000 previously classified Air America records, which will be turned over to UT-Dallas' aviation collection.

Paul Oelkrug, a coordinator at UT-Dallas' special collections department, said the documents speak to "the covert side of the Cold War."

"These Air America documents are essential to understanding a large untold history of America's involvement in Southeast Asia," Oelkrug said.

The records consist mainly of firsthand accounts of Air America missions and commendation letters from government officials, said Timothy N. Castle, a historian who works at the CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Included are accounts of the chaotic evacuation of personnel in 1975 after the fall of Saigon, details of an investigation into a mysterious 1964 plane crash apparently caused by sabotage and a letter from President Richard Nixon commending Air America employees for their bravery in Laos.

Another series of documents details the Air America-led rescue of wounded soldiers from a mountainous Air Force radar station in Laos known as Lima Site 85 and, for the first time, publicly names the CIA officers stationed there. One of those CIA officers will be at the Dallas conference.

A North Vietnamese raid on Lima Site 85 in 1968 killed 11 Americans, the largest single loss of Air Force personnel on the ground during the Vietnam War, Castle said. The survivors were rescued — by Air America, of course.

21 pilots rescued

Such operations were the norm for Air America pilots, and the inspiration for the title of the symposium: "Air America: Upholding the Airmen's Bond." Between 1964-65, Air America personnel rescued 21 downed American pilots. Strict records weren't kept after that, but if you "extrapolate and anecdotally, we know there were scores and scores more through the years," Castle said.

"They weren't required to do it," Castle said. "These folks were just doing their normal jobs flying around.

"That's the airman's bond. There is another airman who is down. Everything stops until you try to rescue them, because if it were you, you knew they would do it for you, too."

Air America's public face was that of a passenger and cargo airline that operated in sometimes dangerous places. It formed after World War II under the name Civil Air Transport, and did contract work for the Chinese Nationalists.

Continued on page 6 under Air America

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time
<u>May 2009</u>		
14th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
25th Monday	<u>Memorial Day</u>	
28th Thursday	Chapter 787 Meeting, Veterans Park & Museum	6:30 PM
30th Saturday	Annual Chapter 787 vintage <u>Car Show</u> , Veterans Park & Museum	10:00 AM
<u>June 2009</u>		
11th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
25th Thursday	Chapter 787 Meeting, Veterans Park & Museum	6:30 PM

Check out our EVENTS page on the chapter web site: www.vva787.com, click EVENTS then click Calendar of EVENTS



Chapter 787 steps up for Vietnam Memorial

V.V.A. chapter 787 members are bringing their ideas and skills to the front of the War Memorials line, at the Veterans Park & Museum.

When the word was put out that the design work has started by the Hillsborough County engineering company PBS&J, and the county will begin funding their side of the Veterans Park Project by the end of 2009, Vietnam Veterans jumped in to begin work for the Vietnam Memorial. Pictured at left, L-R, **Jim Basta, Jim LaGarde, Dave Braun, Bob Silmsler, Gerard Abbett, and Glayron Faries.**

Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of April 2009

Total \$11,116.11 (Moving Wall Fund..\$6,663.82, AVVA \$220.36, General checking \$2,689.53, Holiday Meals Fund...\$1,346.40).

Total \$2,185.72 (Household Goods.....\$329.17 Convention Fund.....\$1,855.55)

All Accounts Total: \$13,301.87

Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmsler

Thank You chapter 787 Fund Raisers



Pictured above, L-R, chapter members **Art Jorgensen**, **Glayron Faries** and **Herman Rainey**. This fund raiser was held at Publix in Lithia on April 4th. Also, thanks to **Jim LaGarde** for his help. Without our fund raiser volunteers, chapter 787 would be unable to meet the needs of our local veterans and their families.

Submitted By: Carl Harris

Vietnam Era Female Pilot



March 30, 2009 Army News Service

FORT MYER, Va. - Members of "Freedom Team Salute" honored retired Col. Sally D. Murphy, (at left in picture) the Army's first female helicopter pilot, Wednesday at Fort Myer Spates Community Club.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of Murphy's graduation from the Army Aviation school at Fort Rucker, Ala., when she became the Army's first female helicopter pilot. She joined the Army's Women Army Corps in 1972, and entered the aviation school when women were first allowed in.

Murphy flew helicopters for the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kan., and commanded the 62nd Aviation Company in Germany and the 78th Aviation Battalion (Provisional) in Japan.

Col. Laura J. Richardson, Fort Myer Military Community garrison commander, is one of thousands of women who have followed in Murphy's footsteps as a female aviator. She spoke at the event about how Murphy's shadow loomed over her during aviation training.



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Quote

Peace: In international affairs, is a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

The Devil's Dictionary by Ambrose Bierce 1911

Continued from page 4.....Air America

Control of Air America eventually shifted to the CIA, which set up shell companies to disguise its true ownership. Planes kept flying scheduled passenger flights out of Taiwan, but they also began flying covert missions in Laos and South Vietnam to supply anti-communist forces. Air America also had numerous government contracts, and was involved in humanitarian work though a deal with the State Department.

Fall of Saigon

One of Air America's finest moments — and its most iconic — was evacuating American and Vietnamese civilians after Saigon fell in 1975. A famous photograph shows an Air America helicopter atop an apartment building as a long line of people wait to board it.

Brian K. Johnson, a former Air America helicopter pilot and past president of the Air America Association, said flight crews would race to be the first to pick up downed military personnel. These untold stories of the Vietnam War, he said, could help change Air America's image.

Johnson laments that the perception of Air America is more about heroin than heroism, due largely to the 1990 movie "Air America," starring Mel Gibson and Robert Downey Jr. The film depicts the company as corrupt and its pilots as drug runners. It remains a sensitive topic among former employees.

"We have done everything we can to change that perception, and I think we are getting there," Johnson said. "The liberal Air America radio station — that didn't help, either."

The CIA declassified the documents following a Freedom of Information Act request by UT-Dallas. The school's library has an extensive aviation collection, and was chosen by the Air America alumni group as the site of a Vietnam Wall-style plaque listing the names of the roughly 240 fallen employees.

"Most people don't even know it occurred. It was a secret society," said Boecker, who has six children and 11 grandchildren. "They flew in all sorts of danger, ... flying every day in terrible wartime conditions. They did a beautiful job."

POW/MIA

Remains of 3 returned to U.S. from Vietnam The Associated Press Posted : Monday Apr 6, 2009 10:58:16 EDT

HANOI, Vietnam — A U.S. official in Vietnam says that the apparent remains of three American soldiers killed during the Vietnam War have been sent back to the United States.

U.S. official Ron Ward said Monday that the remains were recovered over the past month from sites in central and southern Vietnam. They were flown aboard a military transport plane to Hawaii on Saturday for identification.

Nearly 1,800 U.S. servicemen are still unaccounted for throughout Southeast Asia since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, when communist North Vietnamese forces overran Saigon, the capital of U.S.-backed South Vietnam.

An estimated 58,000 Americans and 3 million Vietnamese were killed in the war. Washington established diplomatic ties with Hanoi in 1995.

Chapter 787 fund raiser volunteers needed!

If you can spare a few hours of your valuable time, please consider volunteering for one or more of our on-going fund raiser projects. You will be amazed as how rewarding it can be to meet with fellow veterans and the general public who really appreciate your service. Please contact **Jim (Rambo) LaGarde** on his cell phone (813) 758-4547 for details.

Membership Application

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28th 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.



Vietnam Veterans of America

Send to: VVA Chapter 787, P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404

Name: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ Apt. # _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work or Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____ Chapter #787 Sponsor _____

Membership Type:

Individual: 1 year _____ \$20 3 years _____ \$50. Associate: 1 year _____ \$20 3 years _____ \$50

Life Member Options: _____ Life Member Ages 49 and Under: \$250, _____ Life Member Ages 50-55: \$225, _____ Life

Member Ages 56-60: \$200, _____ Life Member Ages 61-65: \$175, _____ Life Member Ages 66 +: \$150

_____ I am already a V.V.A. member and want to become a life member. My V.V.A. Member number is

_____.

Optional Time Payment plan: \$50 down, and \$25 per month until paid in full.

Payment Method: Check _____

Money Order _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ If using a credit card: Card

Exp. Date: _____ **Signature** _____

This newsletter is not the official publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Chapter 787, Tampa Florida. All articles, and opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Chapter 787, the VVA State Council, the VVA National or the Chapter members.

You can receive a copy of the OUTPOST each month at no cost. Contact Jon Mueller via e-mail at ParaSF68@aol.com and provide your e-mail address. You will need to have an Adobe Acrobat Reader on your PC to open the newsletter. You can also receive it by US mail. The cost is \$12 per year. Make your check payable to V.V.A. Chapter 787 and mail it to P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404. Make sure you identify the payment for the OUTPOST.

THE OUTPOST

Help Your Chapter Grow
Bring a New Member to the Next Chapter Meeting.
Come and Join Us. Give us your Ideas.

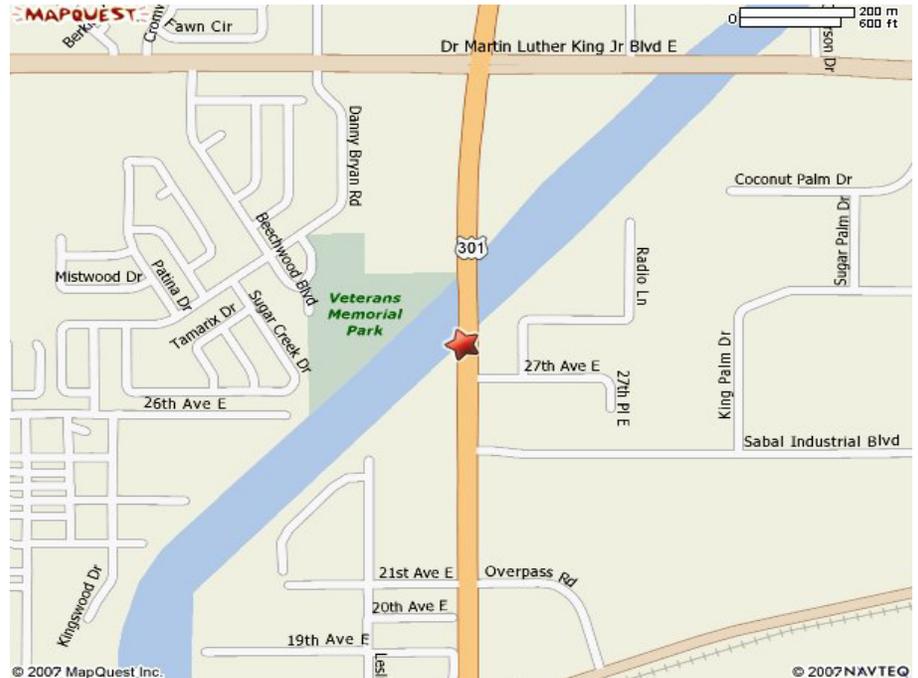
Chapter meetings are held at the Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, 3602 Hwy. 301 N. Tampa Fl. 33619.

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Rafkirk64@tampabay.rr.com
State Council Delegate Kevin Ruhl:
MSgtMCRet@aol.com

Board of Directors

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Jim LaGarde: clagarde@tampabay.rr.com
Dave Braun: Prowler143@aol.com
Jon Mueller: ParaSF68@aol.com



Important Web Sites

Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida..... <http://www.vva787.com>
Vietnam War Statistics.....<http://users.dishmail.net/cmart/vietwarstats.html>
Vietnam, Yesterday & Today.....<http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm>
Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation.....www.vvlf.org
National League of Families of American POW's/MIA's.....www.pow-miafamilies.org
V.V.A. National Office on the World Wide Web.....www.vva.org
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.....www.va.gov
OPM Veterans Hiring Preference.....www.opm.gov/veterans
Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP).....www.usfhp.com
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.....www.vetapp.uscourts.gov
Children of Vietnam Vets.....www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125
The Center for Women Veterans.....www.va.gov/womenvet
Vietnam Women Memorial Foundation, Inc (formerly "Project").....www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org
The Moving Wall—Vietnam Combat Veterans LTD.....www.themovingwall.org
The Virtual Wall.....www.virtualwall.org
Get a Copy of your DD-214 on-line.....<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html>
Florida State Council web site.....www.vvafsc.org