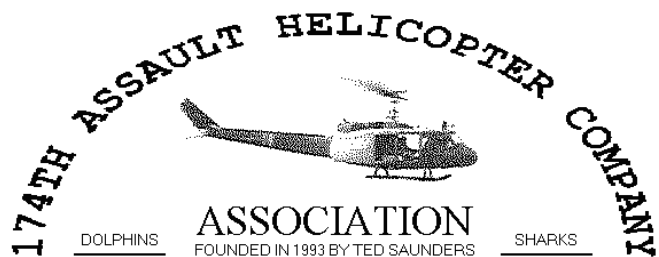


174th AHC Association
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*** OFFICERS ***

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174th AHC ASSOC. 21st ANNIVERSARY 2014 ANNUAL REUNION AFTER ACTION REPORT

The 2014 annual reunion of the Dolphins, Sharks, Witch Doctors, 452nd Signal Det., 133rd Ord. Det., and 756th Med. Det., together with a number of very special guests was once again a success! There were SIX "first time reunion attendees" at Fort Walton Beach, FL, this year, Johnny Abbe, John Cochuyt, J.M. Nichols, William "Cuz" Williams, Richard Stone and Thomas Petty, which made this reunion special. President Ron Conner could not attend due to serious heart problems, but was there in spirit. Quite a number of members couldn't attend this year, such as Bob Jones, due to schedule a "hip replacement" surgery. However several members did attend following some severe surgery or broken bones (Sam Davis & Dale Wylie). Others who couldn't make the reunion were sorely missed. 2014 Reunion attendees totaled 177 (89 members and about 88 guests (wives, significant others, sons, daughters and grandkids!).

Some very special camaraderie began one morning when two active duty military gentlemen, not of our generation, struck up a conversation in the Best Western lobby with several of our 174th guys. As it turned out, these young men were also Army aviators, but not just normal flyers – both belong to the elite, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. "Night Stalkers" CW4 Curtis Foster and CW5 Chuck Wooley, both Black Hawk guys, visited with us for hours while they waited for the Florida coastal weather to break so they could conduct some "special" aviation business. The next day they reappeared in the Best Western lobby and ask us to gather our 174th comrades in the hospitality room. We did and were quite surprised when Curtis and Chuck announced they had bought our 174th guys a bottle of "Angel's Envy" bourbon whiskey as a token of their respect for our service in Vietnam! Butch Elliott gathered up some special 174th shot glasses, which were immediately "charged," and we toasted "...those gone before us, those like us, not too many left!" We chose to honor Curtis and Chuck and gave each of them a signed copy of our "Nothing Impossible" print by Joe Kline. What a privilege to have met and visited with these two fine special ops aviators! S-A-L-U-T-E!

The hurricane-like weather in Florida's panhandle early in the week was horrific, with tons of rain and howling winds. On Tuesday we were actually stranded in the Best Western hotel on the Okaloosa Island because of flood waters. Yet by Friday afternoon it became calm, sunny and actually enjoyable. The rain

did not affect the spirit of the reunion. Contagious enthusiasm and camaraderie were evident during the reunion with EVERYONE volunteering to help with anything that was needed.

The "Hospitality Room" was brilliantly set up and stocked with the traditional tables, chairs, tons of memorabilia - scrap-books, photo albums, wash tubs full of ice for the sodas, a large tank filled with ice and three large beer kegs, all ready to go. Long tables were set up along the wall where snack food was featured. Two vendor booths were in the hospitality room. "Heliplaques," hosted by Paul Bartlett, sold VN patches and custom made wooden plaques (using cross sections of UH-1 main rotor blades). The other vendor was author H. D. Graham, selling books on VN helicopter crew member stories. Graham was also seeking stories for his next book. Thanks to Dennis Fisher, Darrell Bennett and Ted Saunders for gathering supplies at Sam's Club and keeping the room well stocked!

Once again our Ladies were a major part of the reunion. They were able to take advantage of the local shopping and visited various shops and malls to enjoy their spare time. Many were gone for hours, and we sure did miss them!

The registration/sign-up table was set up Thursday, Friday, and part of Saturday, and kept Billy & Carolyn Wood, Nancy (Reinshagen) Hype, Steve Kennedy, Cliff Stern, Sheryl Clark, Tom Reinshagen, and Butch Elliott, very involved for many hours. The Best Western Beach Front Hotel (Toni Richardson, bartenders Don Fuller, Danielle Cowart and the entire hotel staff) did everything to make our reunion a total success! The hotel provided a continental breakfast each morning that gets better each year. Since our 174th members/guests had filled the Best Western to overflowing, several Condos were rented next door at "The Breakers" for our association.

This year's members' reunion gift was a handsome navy blue wind breaker. Each jacket has an embroidered 174th AHC "Nothing Impossible" unit patch on the upper left front of the jacket. Below that "2014 Reunion" was embroidered in white. There were about ten extra jackets ordered and these are available for \$60 through the Company Store. No more will be ordered. Contact Mel Lutgring concerning sizes available and shipping costs.

Thursday evening "Social": This year the 174th AHC Assoc. Board of Directors hosted a special welcome "Social" for reunion members and their guests. The "Social" (light finger foods, not a dinner meal) was held next door to the Best Western hotel at the "Breakers Condos" activities room. Our host and hostess were the gracious and handsome Butch Elliott and his beautiful wife, Janet. Butch and Janet arranged for all the liquor, sodas, beer and ice, along with our bartender Danielle Cowart (from the Swizzle Stick) and her lively helper, "Hot Lips" Toni Richardson. Many attendees arrived early at FWB and party time started Thursday with the Board of Directors "Social" at the Breakers. Special recognition (a gift quilt) was given to Nancy Reinshagen-Hypes, daughter of Tom Reinshagen, for her special help with the Registration effort each year. Toni Richardson, Asst. Gen. Manager Best Western Hotel was given a 174th AHC Aircrew member flight jacket, with patches sewn by Mel Lutgring. Everyone had a great time. There were approximately 130 persons at the "Social."

174th Company Store: The new "Company Store" manager, Mel Lutgring, assembled a new team of helpers -- Dee Lutgring, Darrell & Nancy Bennett, and several others -- to set up their sales operation in the hotel lobby on Thursday, and perhaps did some record sales on site! Shirts, hats, unit pins, decals, patches, blankets, polo shirts, with 174th AHC unit logos, "Dolphins," "Sharks," and "Witch Doctors" embroidery were available for purchase for one and all.

Friday Fort Rucker visit: The planning for the Fort Rucker bus trip was very, very involved and took several months, many phone calls, and pre-reunion "recon" visits to coordinate all aspects of planned events. A very special thanks to Cliff Stern who had been appointed as "Mother Rucker Mission Coordinator" for this reunion. The 44 passenger bus was filled to overflowing early Friday morning, along

with three POVs. Butch Elliott was asked to be OIC of those on the bus and he rose to the occasion. Cliff juggled over 60 individuals between the U.S. Army Aviation Museum, the Bell Helicopter plant, UH-1 "Huey" rides at Ozark, AL airport, and Larry's BBQ in Daleville. Everyone was extremely pleased with the Bell tour and Huey rides. There were several complaints regarding the bus/driver, however, and these were noted.

Friday Evening "Hawaiian Buffet and DJ Dance": Some businesses are known to support American Veterans and then there are a few who go way above and beyond. This year's Friday night food was patriotically provided by David Reeves, local owner of the FWB Golden Corral restaurant. Carving tables were located through the hotel lobby area, which made getting your food easier and faster. You had a choice of finding a table either in the hospitality room, under the tent on the patio or in the lobby. David Reeves' chefs and crew, plus Toni Richardson and hotel staff made the "Hawaiian" theme buffet dinner a real treat. Everyone loved the food. Entertainment was in the form of a short "USO Show" and produced by John Stern's fiancée Ashley Miner of "Duality Dance Troop" of the greater Peachtree City, GA area. Ashley performed two special dances for the association crowd, one of them the dangerous and exciting "fire dance." Many men volunteered to be fire guards just to be closer to the stage area out on the patio of the Best Western. After dinner DJ Steve Williams entertained us with dance music from our Viet Nam days under the tent. "Doc" (Tom) Langford and J.M. Nichols showed a lot of soul and they lit up the dance floor. A good time was had by all...

Saturday's 3rd Annual Meeting of the "Patron & Pickle Juice Sisterhood" – The "Ladies Only" event was presided over by Charter member and "President for Life" Helen Davis, and "Exalted Reader of the Rules" Char McDaniel. Their famous and extraordinary pink "Patron & Pickle Juice Sisterhood" T-shirts were again visible throughout the morning as they conducted their "secret" initiation, and as they danced to DJ Steve William's lively music under the patio tent. A light lunch was provided by the association for our ladies. Apparently the ladies plan to do this event again next year, the following year, and so on...

Saturday Golf Tournament: This year was the 13th anniversary for the 174th AHC Association "Black Sam Kalagain Golf Classic." Carl Muthersbaugh presented special 174th AHC Assoc. golf balls to the players this year. There were fourteen players for this year's tournament. The rain before the reunion had played havoc with several of the local golf courses, thus it was a challenge to complete 18 holes, but they did.

Saturday afternoon Business Meeting: The official 174th AHC Association business meeting was called to order by Secretary/Treasurer Billy Wood at 3:00 pm, Saturday, 3 May 2013 with approximately 50 members in attendance and about the same number remaining at the bar...

Treasurer's Report/Minutes: Sec/Treas. Billy Wood had posted the financial report and the 2013 174th AHC Association Business Meeting minutes in the hospitality room and had asked all members to read/review the report. A motion was made and seconded to waive the reading and approve the minutes and financial report as presented.

Old Business:

1. Wood announced: "Due to unforeseen circumstances, and as the only 174th Assoc. Officer in attendance at this reunion, the Board of Directors has asked me to preside over this business meeting and the annual Saturday evening banquet."
2. 174th AHC Assoc. membership – 2013 membership was 225 and membership for 2014 was 237!
3. Planning is already underway for our 22nd Annual Reunion to be held 1-3 May 2015 at FWB, FL.

New Business:

1. First time reunion attendees will be recognized and receive a "Nothing Impossible" Joe Kline print at the Saturday evening banquet.
2. The annual FWB "Gaggle" will be Columbus Day weekend 2014, Mel Lutgring will keep everyone posted.

3. More information on the "Return Flight to Viet Nam" February 2015 tour will soon be available on the 174th website, provided by Tom Taggart.
4. In accordance with the 174th AHC Assoc. By-Laws, and due to the health issues of Pres. Ron Conner, the Board of Directors appointed Wayne Lovett as "Interim President" until such time as Ron Conner is able to return to his presidential duties...
5. 2015 Nomination Committee Chair Marty Heuer reported on the upcoming election, nominating procedure, and how it will be accomplished.
6. Best Western Hotel Room Rates have been locked in for 2015 and 2016 at the same rate as 2014.

A motion was made to adjourn; motion carried. The official 174th AHC Association business meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Saturday evening 174th AHC Association "21th Anniversary" Annual Reunion Banquet - Elks Lodge,

FWB: Our dinner banquet was once again held at the FWB Elks Club. The "Social Hour" began at 5:30 p.m. at the dining room bar. The Elks Club Restaurant is located a short distance from our Best Western Beachfront Hotel on the road to Destin. Round tables, decorated by several ladies of the 174th, made for easy eye contact with everyone at your table. This may be a small thing, but it sure makes a difference when you want to talk to someone at your table, and is much more personal.

Jim McDaniel, appropriately dressed in fine Scottish kilt and accoutrements, piped greetings to the arriving 174th banquet guests at the Elks Club entrance. Most attendees took advantage of the bus transportation provided by the association from the hotel to the banquet and a return trip back to the hotel. This has been a good addition to our Saturday night banquets!

The buffet at the Elks Club started on time after welcoming remarks and announcements. The prime rib was very delicious, as was the sliced baked ham. Our meal included salad, rolls, green beans, broccoli and delicious deserts. Tables had been patriotically decorated by our ladies and were beautiful.

Secretary/Treasurer Wood opened the banquet with a special announcement, and with a great deal of technical involvement from Bill Walzer and Jim McDaniel. Bill and Jim had arranged for Ron Conner to be "online" with us in "real-time" via Face Time. We greeted Ron and wished him well. He was able to watch and hear part of the opening banquet announcements via Face Time while he sat in Silsbee, TX.

Then Wood proceeded with the following agenda:

- Invocation by Steve Kennedy
- Pledge of Allegiance by Dennis Fisher
- Dinner Service
- Missing Man Memorial tribute (Mel Lutgring, Jim McDaniel & Henry Russell)
- Recognition and speech to the group by Fort Walton Beach Mayor, Mike Anderson.
- Recognition of First Time Reunion Attendees: Johnny Abbe, John Cochuyt, J.M. Nichols, Bill "Cuz" Williams, Richard Stone and Thomas Petty.
- Recognition of Ashley Miner, fiancée of John Stern, both of Peachtree City, GA. Ashley was present a "Balady Scimitar" sword gift for her dance performance Friday night.
- Special recognition of Bill Brown, master wood worker for his many hours of labor building the wood bases for the UH-1 models, UH-1 flight instruments & gauges and other projects for the 174th AHC Assoc. UH-1 model builder Keith Lovern was also recognized for his efforts on four beautiful models.
- Mel Lutgring was recognized for being the new "Company Store" manager and all that he does with his presentations and Vietnam memorabilia. Thanks to Tom Rodery for his service and endless hours as Company Store manager for the past year or so!
- Introduction of our guest speaker, Mark Lawrence, by Wayne Lovett. Marc enlisted in the Army Jan. 1967, then to Artillery OCS at Fort Sill. In 1969 he was assigned as an "FO"

(forward observer) with 1st Bn, 8th Inf. In Viet Nam. He spoke on his perspective as an “FO” and how U.S. Army helicopters saved their lives!

- Introduction of Ted Cocoran, Exec. Director Greater FWB Chamber of Commerce. Ted did an outstanding job of conducting our live auction.

Saturday night “Live Auction”: The Live Auction conducted after the banquet meal at the Elks Club was a most enjoyable ever, with the exception of the extremely bad audio system of the Elks Club. Below are most of the items followed by the winning bidder(s):

1. Best Western Gift Certificate: Dwight Wise
2. 174th US Army Engraved Survival Pocket Knife (by Mike Gunnels): Kath Basler (gave knife to Mel Lutgring)
3. Genuine UH-1 Instrument Panel Gauges: (Bell Helicopter/mounted by Bill Brown)
 - a. Compass: Charles Doherty
 - b. Needle & Ball: Dale Wylie
 - c. Altimeter: Andy Anderson
 - d. Jesus Nut: Dwight Wise
4. Genuine set of Texas Long Horns (donated by “Rosie” via Jim Souder): P.T. Yowell (later sold to Phil Daneau)
5. Bronze “Crew chief” statue (donated by Pete Leutik): Shirley Schumacher
6. 40mm Salt & Pepper set (donated by Shirley Schumacher): Ruth Brandt
7. 40mm Salt & Pepper set (donated by Shirley Schumacher): Tom Dana
8. UH-60 spray paint frame art (donated by Shirley Schumacher): Bill Brown
9. UH-1 Scale Models: (built by Keith Lovern/mounted by Bill Brown) 174th AHC 1st Platoon “Dolphin” UH-1D: Harry Cooper
10. 174th AHC 2nd Platoon “Dolphin” UH-1D: Shirley Schumacher
11. 174th AHC 3rd Platoon “Shark” UH-1B: Bob Gamber
12. 174th AHC “Witch Doctor” UH-1D: Dwight Wise
13. Joe Kline “Lam Song 719” print (donated by Pete Leutik): Mike Basler
14. Joe Kline “Artist’s Proof” prints (donated by 174th AHC Assoc.)
 - a. “Have Guns Will Travel”: Jan Gomes
 - b. “Riding The Storm”: Shirley Schumacher
15. Donated “Christmas Comforter” Quilt by Christine Lovett: Walter Bergman

Note: Due to the public address/audio system’s pitiful performance, we did not pay the full price for room rental, service and other charges from the Elk’s Lodge.

Next Reunion: May 1-3, 2015

Sunday Morning Devotional: A non-denominational devotional service was led Sunday morning by Steve Kennedy in the Best Western hotel Hospitality Room. Several hymns were led by Carolyn Wood. Ms. Myrtle Mainor, guest of Leroy Shelby. P.J. Roths, and Dennis Fisher sang wonderful solos. Wilma Kennedy did a special solo using what is called “Sacred Signing” to the beautiful, hallowed song “I Wonder...” A very sincere, heartfelt devotion was given by Dennis Fisher. Approximately 30-35 persons attended.

Sunday Evening Pizza: About 30-35 reunion “Hanger-on’ers” were treated to pizza Sunday night in the tent on the Best Western Beach Front patio. Many reunion members/guests continued visiting and had a wonderful time. This is a fun and enjoyable occasion.

Jim McDaniel, we are indebted to you and offer a hearty “thank you” for your efforts, time, and especially your creativity regarding the 174th Assault Helicopter Company website and the “listserv.” Thanks for

sharing the “guest book” entries and your comments. Because of your interest, and tireless energy, we can say we are part of the largest and BEST post-Vietnam, continuously meeting, aviation group of Vets, with the greatest website in existence, anywhere!

Special thanks to **Spencer Taylor** who made and brought about a dozen CDs of the 2013 Reunion. Spencer took many, many stills and videos at this year’s reunion. He has made available a set of five (5) video DVDs of the entire reunion. This set is 95% video and 5% still photos, with fabulous music. He will mail you a set for \$25.00 (postage included) and he donates \$10 of that \$25 back to the 174th AHC Assoc. Contact Spencer through email at spencertaylor@hughes.net You can’t believe how great this video DVD set really is, superb!!!

Special thanks to **Tom Reinshagen** who made a special effort to take everyone’s photo as they registered for the reunion. We’ll be looking for all of Tom’s, Spencer’s and Jim McDaniel’s photos very soon!

Also a very sincere and special thanks goes out to **James “Jim” Young**, who took time from the reunion to go over the financial records, invoices and check register for Billy Wood. This is called an “informal financial review” and I appreciate Jim doing this for me on Tuesday, 29 April 2014 at FWB.

And as always, this reunion would not be what it is today without the dedication, loyalty and desire to please from the Best Western Beach Front Hotel, FWB, FL and the entire staff. **Toni Richardson**, Assistant General Manager of the hotel deserves all kinds of “hero medals” for the hours upon hours of work, research, coordination and various “arrangements” she made and/or caused to happen on our behalf. Toni Richardson is one of the finest employees we’ve had the pleasure to work with since these reunions began in 1993. Thank you “Hot Lips” for everything...

Billy R. Wood
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