



AFTER ACTION REPORT OF THE 174 AHC ASSOCIATION 2006 REUNION

Our 2006 reunion was a great success. While our numbers were less than last year, 89 to 120, the comradeship was outstanding. Many of us had the time and the opportunity to talk to members that, previously, we had not time or opportunity to get to know them better. For me, in any event, it was most enjoyable and I now have expanded my list of friends.

While the reunion was scheduled for May 5 thru 7, 2006, a few arrived early, on Wednesday, others, Mary and I included, checked in just after noon on Thursday, and others signed in up through Saturday morning.

The official start was Friday and the social hour and bar-be-que buffet merely added to the day-long socializing. We owe big thanks to Ted Saunders for his work in arranging, not only the Friday night buffet, but also the Saturday dinner and a ton of snack and soft drinks that lined our private meeting room. Peggy, our supporting angel, arranged for three kegs of beer, iced down and ready for business. The beer, together with our soft drinks and the patio bar, saw considerable activity.

Before our buffet, we enjoyed yet again, the clams supplied and grilled by Bruce Marshall. Great snacking, great taste. Thanks for your devotion to duty including hours of grilling out in the hot sun.

The weather was outstanding. Ok, a small shower early in the day, but beautiful sun, clear skies, and just the right amount of breeze from the Gulf to keep us cool and active. No hurricanes in sight and none planned for during this time of year. We hated to change to May from our traditional October date, but hurricane damage was too big a challenge.

I really sweated out last year as the hurricane that did such great damage, especially to New Orleans and other coastal areas in Louisiana and Mississippi, plus other areas, passed us by. I should add that after returning home just after our 2005 reunion, I experienced hurricane Wilma close hand as the eye went directly over our house. I feel most fortunate to have a house to live in, not like so many on the Gulf Coast who have trouble even finding the foundation of their homes.

The first weekend in May was great. In an effort to help some of long time reunion attendees, we now have moved the date up to the last weekend in April. We hope that meets your approval.

Saturday found the group headed out to various activities. The golf meet had a relaxing start at 11: a.m., while shopping and other activities headed out much earlier.

Our meeting room was well attended Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, with a batch of new photo books to pour through, as well as “chat” groups everywhere you looked. Lots of time to really enjoy old and new friends and it worked for me as I had time to talk to lots of people, all informative and interesting.

Around 5:20, the move to the Two Trees Country Club Restaurant was in full swing. We had a social hour, lubricated by the fancy bar, and followed by a great buffet. Wally Nunn called the business meeting to order at 6:45 PM, and conducted a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The first order of business was the financial report by Bob Jones, who reported a balance of \$21,149.74. This balance did not include the expenses of the current reunion, which are estimated to be \$6,810.46

The meeting date was discussed. It was decided that the last weekend in April 2007, would be a better date for most members. We plan on keeping April’s date, provided the last weekend does not conflict with Easter on some future date. If there is a conflict, we will revert to the first weekend in May with announcement well in advance of that date.

Mel Lutgring did his usual outstanding job handling the memorial service. Adding to the occasion was **Jim McDaniel**, wearing his full kilts

and honored us with a rendition from his bagpipe. Mel then read the list of the fallen whose names are etched on the Vietnam Memorial and finished by reading a touching poem.

Jim ended the memorial service by playing a traditional retreat. The sound of bagpipes during a memorial service touches the soul, about the same as our more traditional taps. Thanks Mel and Jim for your presentation.

Wally introduced several honored guest. First, **Allen Weamer's** mother, **Mrs. Dorothy Weamer and her daughter, Ann Jones.** Next, **Major Wheat's daughter, Rebecca Townsend, her husband Tim and their two Sons joined us.** It's a pleasure and honor to have you all join our family.

Wally and Mel presented special awards. The First to Register award went to **Jonathan Olson.** First to Arrive was **Dennis Fisher,** who also brought some great tasting cheese and sausage from Sauk City, Wisconsin. (Al and Ruth Sarnecki also brought great German styled sausage).

The next award was to **Bruce Marshall,** from Cedar Key, Florida, who brought thousands of clams and barbequed them for our Friday and Saturday consumption. A few thousand thanks to Bruce for his dedication to duty and outstanding tasting clams. It is rumored that Bruce has sold his business, so perhaps this will be the last year for this treat (he said it was not though).

Peggy Mahone, Director of Sales, Best Western Hotel, for her continued outstanding coordination and support of our reunion, plus her great smile and enjoyable laugh, was awarded a special gift, the presentation unit pins featuring the Sharks, the first and second Platoons and the Witch Doctor. As a note to our current members of the 174th AHC Association, a set of the pins will be mailed to those that could not make the reunion.

Ted Saunders was awarded for his long time support and dedication to the association. Ted works with the local suppliers, arranges the Saturday dinner and Friday night buffet. In addition purchasing and bringing in a short ton of snacks and soft drinks for our meeting room at

the hotel. We all owe a very special thanks to Ted for his “above and beyond the call of duty” in support of our organization.

Wally thanked **Jim McDaniel** for the bagpipe music and creation of our Website, **Warren Hewetson** for the Website assistance and maintenance, as well as his continued support of the organization. Wally also thanked **Bob Jones** for his hard work and years of service as Secretary/Treasurer for the association. Wally made special note and thanked **Chas Simmons** for his photo work. Wally said Chas’s photography made even him look great.

Wally bought an original panting from Ben Kennedy and had it signed by our members. The signed art was purchased as “thanks” for Mark Klindt’s mother, who made the very impressive quilt.

Our new slate of officers for the next three years, include: **Marty Heuer as President, Marty Wifholm as Vice President and Bob Jones, re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer.** Marty could not be with us as his family was holding a special 90th birthday party for his mother. Bernie Cobb read Marty’s letter to the group, expressing his regrets. Marty accepts the position of leadership. He intends to seek out former members of the 174th and invite them to participate and feel welcome in an environment that fosters good will, camaraderie, and great memories of our time in Vietnam, no matter what year it was. Marty thanked the wives and sweethearts for their long term support of our members, both during the war in Vietnam and after, and thanked Wally, Mel and Bob for their outstanding leadership and hard work resulting in the successful and well-attended reunions we have enjoyed over the past three years.

During the social hour and dinner, special tickets for a raffle, costing five dollars each were sold to those attending. A total of \$1,265.00 was collected from this drawing. This money was to be donated to a special cause, to be announced later.

The items donated include a hand made quilt by **Mark Klindt’s** mother. **Jim Yocum** had the winning ticket.

The original shark patch enclosed in a nice frame was donated by **Dennis McCabe** (’70-’71) and was the second drawing. The patch was won by **Walt Bergman**.

Our third drawing was the “Medal of Honor” book, donated by **Wally Nunn** and won by **Carol Bergman**. Carol had announced earlier that she really wanted that book. A few of us began to wonder if the drawing was rigged since Walt won the second drawing and Carol the third. Since we had two nice young children doing the drawing, the idea of a rigged selection was discarded. The fourth drawing was a set of commemorative pins was won by **Tom Caponetto**.

Next was our regular auction. Our auction was lively and lots of fun. Some of our members really let go of their billfolds and pocketbooks. Wally announced that the results of our auction would be for a most outstanding cause, but did not announce until after the action was over that he recommended that we give the results of the auction to **Hal Koster’s** special fund for treating our disabled veterans and their families to a top notch dinner in his restaurant. Checks totaling \$2,015.00 were mailed to Aletia Foundation to be used in support of Hal’s outstanding support of our wounded veterans and their families.

First item auctioned was a bottle of California wine having a special label with a picture of the Shark gunship donated by **Larry Lapidura**. **Jim Young** won the bottle.

Second item was a commercial quilt with a picture of a Huey going into a LZ with dates of 1959 – 1975 below the picture. **Ken Johnson** won the quilt.

Third item included five sets of the original air mail tablets featuring the 174th AHC, plus a CD of the “High Priced Help” and a Vietnam veteran hat. **Walt Bergman** won the bid.

Sam Davis donated a case of outstanding “rare beverage” for the auction. These bottles were sold individually. **Bob Shoe and Kathy Basler (Mike’s Wife)**, each purchased a bottle. It’s not clear who purchased the remaining bottles, but a few of our members were seen enjoying the “kool-aid” on the patio later.

An original painting by **Ben Kennedy** of a huge Eagle surrounded by all the named locations the 174th operated from in Vietnam. This beautiful painting was won by **John Bond**.

Before closing, **Al Sarnecki** thanked all the members for the many cards and flowers sent to them following the death of his son, **Timothy**, who worked in the Targeting Center of Homeland Security in Rustin, VA.

Wally ended the meeting and we all adjourned to the hotel for continued partying.

Saturday's partying ended sometime in the early hours. A really great time was had by all. It was reported the next morning that some more than others, really enjoyed the evenings activities. No harm, no foul.

Sunday morning saw an extended breakfast with goodbyes from those leaving. Sunday afternoon saw more "chat" groups and Monday's breakfast saw the departure of most of the remaining group.

In summary, we had a great reunion. Less numbers attended, but an it gave those attending more time to spend with friends, old and new, that we'd not had before. It's not a recommendation for smaller reunions, merely a comment on what happened.

Remember the date, *April 27 through April 29, 2007*. That's the date to mark on your calendar, with time to plan your trip and join us for our next outstanding reunion.

Submitted with thanks to all,

Robert "Bob" Jones
Secretary/Treasurer
174th AHC Association