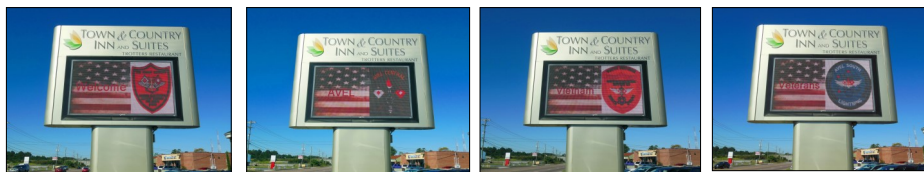


# AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - November 2015

## 2015 All AVEL Reunion After Action Report



This was a great reunion! I think I can speak for everyone that a great time was had by all. We had a total of 94 people attend this reunion. Several newcomers and many repeat attendees.



The reunion began on Wednesday with the early arrivals. Russ and Jerry setup the Hospitality Room in preparation for the pending arrivals. Needless to say, there was enough refreshments available for all!

**Thursday, 15 October 2015**

Open Registration began at 10:00 in the Hospitality Room

### Car Pool Excursion to Magnolia Plantation and Gardens

Pat Mason was able to negotiate a greatly reduced price for all who wanted to attend. Attendees assembled in the lobby at 10:30 and car pooled to Magnolia Plantation.

### Hospitality Room

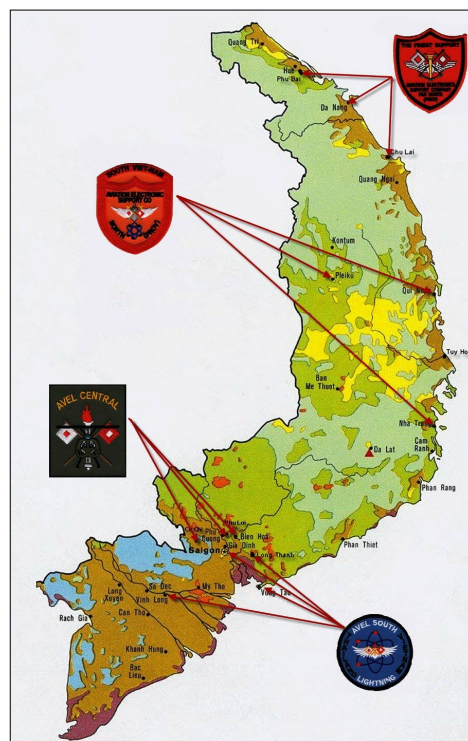
The Hospitality Room was open for general registration and socializing from 10:30-18:00. It then closed for dinner and reopened at 20:00 until 24:00. A great time was had by all.

### Charleston

Many of the group drove into Charleston to explore and enjoy the local sites.

### Dinner

Many of the attendees ate dinner at D.D. Peckers for good southern cooking.



**Friday, 16 October 2015**

### Hospitality Room

The Hospitality Room was open for general registration and socializing from 10:30-16:00. It then closed for dinner and reopened at 21:00 until 24:00. A great time was had by all.

### Marine Corps Boot Camp Graduation at Parris Island

A group of attendees car pooled down to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island to watch a graduation.

Don't forget to join us on facebook. Search for the group: AVEL Vietnam.



It was a lot of fun hearing cadence being called and the sounds of the rifle range in the background. After the graduation we mingled with the graduates and congratulated them.

### **U.S.S. Yorktown and Patriots Point**

Russ Mason was able to arrange free admission for any attendees that want to go. The group car pooled to Patriots Point. There was a large group in attendance.

The group visited the U.S.S. Yorktown, the Medal of Honor Museum and the Vietnam Support Base.

### **Dinner at Salty Mikes**

The entire group was bussed from the hotel to Salty Mikes Restaurant in Charleston. The cost of the busses and the dinner were included in the \$65.00 Reunion fee.

At Salty Mikes we started with an oyster roast. Everyone ate their fill of fresh steamed oysters. No one left hungry. We then moved inside for a pick picking! The food was delicious. Socializing followed with pool and dancing for those inclined. The buses returned the group to the hotel.



## ***Saturday, 17 October 2015***

### **Hospitality Room**

The Hospitality Room was open for general registration and socializing from 10:30-16:00. It then closed for the annual banquet and reopened after the banquet was over.

### **John Veers Martini Golf Outing**

The golfers in the group enjoyed a friendly round of golf which included an early round of John Veers' famous Martinis. John was well known throughout Vietnam for his expertise in making the perfect Martini even under rocket attack!

### **Explore Charleston**

The non-golfers in the group enjoyed a leisurely day of exploring Charleston.

### **Annual AVEL Banquet**

The Banquet began at 17:00 with a cash bar. Everyone had a good time chatting until 18:00 when Russ called the group to order.

The opening remarks were made by Pete Poirier who welcomed everyone to Charleston.

Roger Shiley spoke to the group about how we were exposed to Agent Orange and everyone needs to be in the VA system.

Pete then introduced all of the Non-AVEL Vietnam vets in attendance. They included John Bishop (147<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Co., Vietnam), Tom McCabe (Marine Vietnam Veteran, retired L. Col.), Dalton Horne (Air Force Vietnam veteran crew member on "Spooky" gun ship), Chuck James (605<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co., Sarah Chapman (U.S. Navy Veteran).

Russ then introduced out special guests. We had two Donut Dollies in attendance and what an honor it was have them at the reunion. Barbara "Bobbi" Stephens and Roseann Johnson. Bobbi served in Bien Hoa, Da Nang and Cam Ranh bay from 1969—1970. Roseann served in Bien Hoa and Da Nang from 1969-1970.





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We presented Bobbi and Roseann with a special shadow box to show our appreciation for their service. Thank you girls for all you did for us!

Pete then introduced our guest speaker Joe Lysaght. Joe is an Air Force Vietnam Veteran and a strong advocate through the American Legion for veterans benefits. His talk was very informative about disability claims and appeals.

Jack played the In Memoriam slide show then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Jerry and Jack folded the flag for presentation to an AVEL Veteran who contributed to the Esprit de Corps that exists today. The first flag was presented to Dennis Kanetake in 2013 in Washington DC. Last year it went to Pete Poirier in Colorado Springs.

This year the flag was presented to Bob Madore whose spirit and positive attitude is an inspiration to us all.



Greg Garrison led us in a prayer and then dinner was served.

After the Banquet we adjourned to the Hospitality Room. Tom McCabe set up his backdrop and took formal portraits for all who wanted them. He did this at no charge and sent everyone a disc with their formals and all the other photos he took at the reunion.

After a few more cocktail and conversation the Reunion ended until next year.



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## **AVEL Initiates Member Memorials** by Pete Poirier

The AVEL Reunion Committee has, for some time now, used surplus or personal funds to send memorial flowers if and when they are notified of an AVEL veteran's passing. This month's newsletter announces the evolution of that ad hoc practice to a more formal remembrance that intends to reach every registered AVEL veteran when taps sounds his final call. A memorial fund has been established with an opening balance of \$1,000. The fund will be used to send an avelvietnam wreath to every registered veteran's memorial service celebrating his life and honoring his Vietnam service. The wreaths will be sent in behalf of every AVEL vet in testimony to our brotherhood.

You can participate in at least two ways. First, leave instructions to your family and heirs that in the event of your death, avelvietnam.com should be notified as soon as possible so that a wreath can be timely ordered. As the program matures, additional ways to notify AVEL will be developed based on your experience and suggestions.

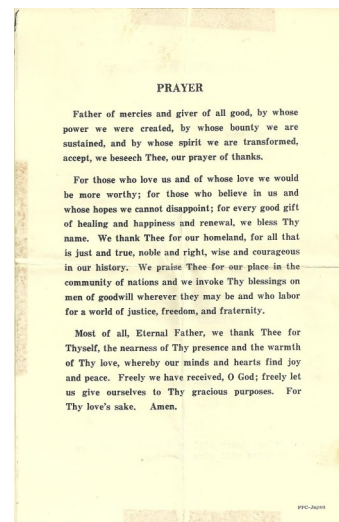
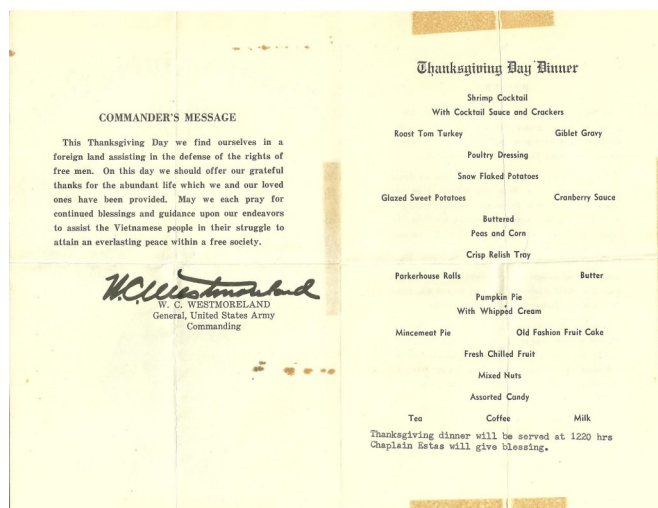
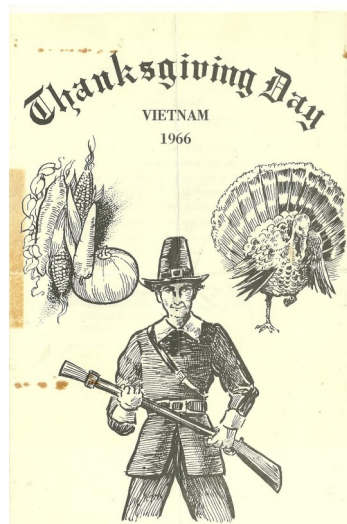
Second, the opening balance, which is a gift from an anonymous donor, is a good start but it will become insufficient as time passes. AVEL will create opportunities for each of us to participate actively and personally at reunions and other events by contributing to the fund on a voluntary basis in whatever amount and as many times as the spirit of brotherhood moves us.

It is our hope that no AVEL vet will ever leave this earth without a final salute from those with whom he served.

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## HAPPY THANKSGIVING 1966

Gene Verhulst sent this menu from AVEL South, Thanksgiving Dinner 1966



### Arlington Texas War Memorial

A Vietnam War Memorial Statue was unveiled and dedicated during a ceremony at Veterans Park in Arlington, TX Sunday, October 25, 2015. Vietnamese and American veterans of the Vietnam War joined hundreds of people Sunday afternoon to dedicate a rare joint memorial to military service members of both countries. The 8' statue depicts two soldiers — one American, one South Vietnamese — crouching cautiously, guns at the ready, on a battlefield in Vietnam.

The monument is the culmination of a project started four years ago by leaders of the city's Vietnamese community, who wanted to honor the service and sacrifice of the South Vietnamese servicemen and of the U.S. military and its allies as well.

"It's in remembrance of the U.S. and the Vietnamese veterans who fought North Vietnam," said Peter Dao, co-founder of the nonprofit Heroes of South Vietnam Memorial Foundation.

The group raised the necessary \$500,000 for the project. Arlington has one of the largest Vietnamese populations in Texas. Many of them escaped communist rule in rickety boats and arrived in the US with little more than their lives and dreams of peace and freedom.

Sculptor Mark Byrd spoke at the dedication ceremony as well as other dignitaries and veterans.



## PHOTOS

**James Chandler (SGT), AVEL Central 1970-1971**

Submitted 54 photos of AVEL Central, Phu Loi in 1971. They have been posted to the website

**AVEL Reunion 2015**

The photos have been posted to the website.

*Go to the website to see these photos: [avelvietnam.com](http://avelvietnam.com)*



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## NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

None submitted

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### TAPS

**Norman D. Ahrens**

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 25 Sept. 1983

He was 35 years old

**James Hirsch**

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1984

He was 32 years old

**Raymond Yee**

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1997

He was 49 years old

**Michael D. Miller**

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1 June 2006

He was 57 years old

**Kenneth Olvey**

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1982

He was 45 years old

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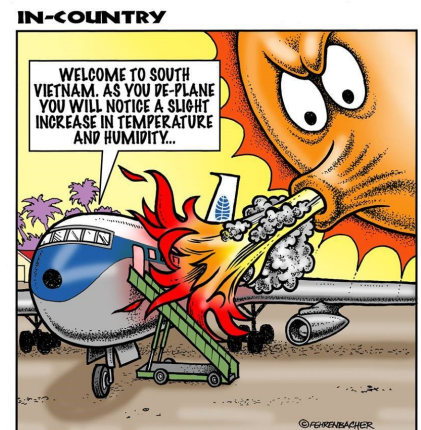


### Women Vietnam Veterans Our Untold Stories by Donna Lowery

This book chronicles the participation of American military women during the Vietnam War. An estimated 1,200 women from the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy served in Vietnam from 1962 to 1973. They served in a myriad of duties from intelligence analysts, flight controllers, clerk-typists, translators, physical therapists, dieticians and communications specialists among many others.

This book allows the women to speak for themselves about their experiences, and, for the first time ever, brings names, facts and figures together in one literary work.

I recommend it. It is available from Amazon.



THE FIRST OF **MANY** UNDERSTATEMENTS!

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## National Vietnam War Museum

The National Vietnam War Museum project was formalized in 1998 to develop a national venue that would create an atmosphere of learning about the Vietnam War era, and engage people of all ages, nationalities, and political points of view.

The museum was incorporated in the State of Texas and purchased a 12-acre site in Mineral Wells, Texas, approximately 50 miles west of Fort Worth. The museum established sponsorship relationships with a number of local and national veterans' organizations to promote the museum to their memberships.

For many Americans, Vietnamese, and others, the war in Vietnam was the defining event of their lives. It was a conflict that divided families and brought violence both to Vietnam and the United States. Whether in uniform or not, everyone who lived through this period had a Vietnam experience.

Despite its cultural and military importance, after more than 40 years, there is no national venue dedicated to examining the legacy of the Vietnam War. The time has come to examine and understand this most divisive period in our history, to allow for reflection, resolution, and healing.

From whatever vantage point one takes, on whichever side of the issues one stands, America's involvement in the Vietnam War must be seen as one of the most important events in recent history. The goal of The National Vietnam War Museum is to present an unbiased and balanced view of the events and participants of the Vietnam Era, and to allow visitors to form their own opinions based on facts.

The museum is a work in progress. As funds are available new exhibits will open.

