

AVEL VIETNAM

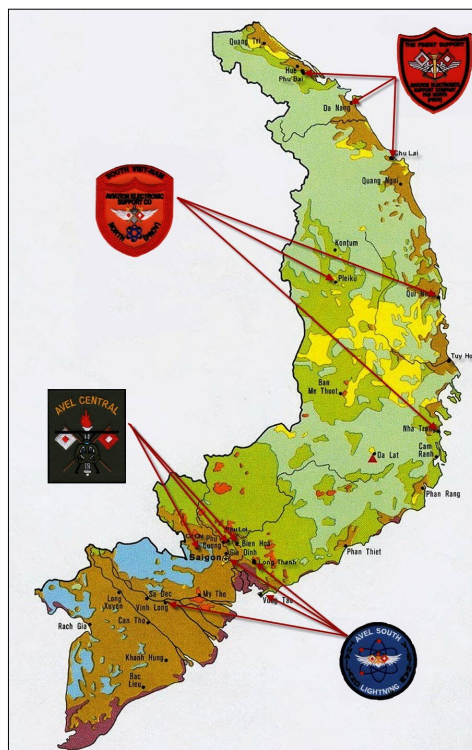
Newsletter - October/November 2017

Celebrity Vietnam Vets

Pat Sajak

Pat Sajak was born and raised in Chicago where he graduated from Farragut High School in 1964. He then went to Columbia College in Chicago while working as a desk clerk at the Palmer House hotel. Sajak won a contest on WLS radio's Dick Biondi Show to be a guest teen deejay. While at Columbia College Chicago, his broadcasting instructor Al Parker told him that a local radio station (WEDC) was looking for a newsman. Sajak applied for the job and was hired to work from midnight to 6:00 AM.

In 1968, Sajak joined the U.S. Army with the hope that he could avoid being sent to Vietnam and was trained as a clerk typist. Of course, since it was 1968, that plan didn't work out so well. Sajak was sent to Vietnam and ended up working as a finance clerk in Long Binh, Vietnam. Desperate to switch jobs, he kept applying for radio duty, but nothing happened. Eventually, Sajak hit on an idea. He wrote a letter to one of his old radio employers who had been elected to Congress. A few calls to the right people later, and Sajak became an Army disc jockey with AFVN, a job he held for 18 months.



Sajak didn't love a lot of the military's radio rules, so he circumvented them. He later told the New York Times, "If you said your name, you were supposed to say your rank - Specialist Fifth Class, which kind of ruins your patter. So on the radio I would just not say my name at all. I went for a year on radio without ever identifying myself."

On The Military Channel's program, An Officer and a Movie, Sajak admitted to botching President Nixon's 1969 Christmas broadcast to the troops; he accidentally cut the feed off prematurely. Upon realizing the error, he decided it would be best not to resume the feed.

In an interview Pat said "I used to feel a bit guilty about my relatively soft duty. After all, I was billeted in a hotel and there were plenty of nice restaurants around. But I always felt a little better when I met guys who came into town from the field and thanked us for bringing them a little bit of home. I always thought it strange that they should be thanking me, given what so many of them were going through on a daily basis.

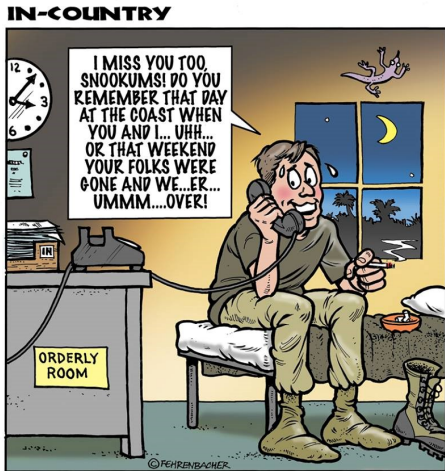
Don't forget to join us on Facebook. Search for the group: AVEL Vietnam.



But they reminded me of the importance of providing entertainment to those who serve—something the USO knows very well. To this day, my fellow vets from that era repeat those thank-you greetings and it's really very humbling."

"My respect for those who serve has stayed with me throughout my life, and my time in the military—particularly my time in Vietnam—are among those things in my life of which I'm most proud."

Welcome Home Pat!



**THE MARS PHONE CALL
AT&T FOR THE VIETNAM VET!**



MARK YOUR CALENDERS FOR 18 APRIL 2018

Good news! The Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument construction is complete, and the memorial will now be shipped to Washington, DC for installation in Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). Preparing the site requires a 3-foot deep concrete footer be poured in Section 35 to ensure the 1100-pound granite stone does not shift in the cemetery soil. The dedication ceremony will take place at the ANC Memorial Amphitheater, located approximately 150 feet from the monument site, at 4:00 PM, April 18, 2018.



Mike Blatt (Avel Central) sent these pictures with this comment: "Pics of me at Palm Springs Vietnam Air Museum this past week. Darn, no radios to fix...."



AVEL “Gathering” Update 2017

This was our first Gathering rather than a formal Reunion. Despite the fact that we did not have a banquet and guest speaker a great time was had by all. WE had a great turn out - 70 people in total!

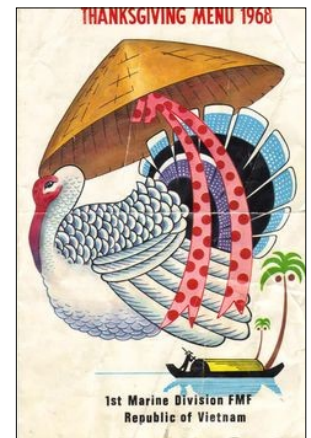
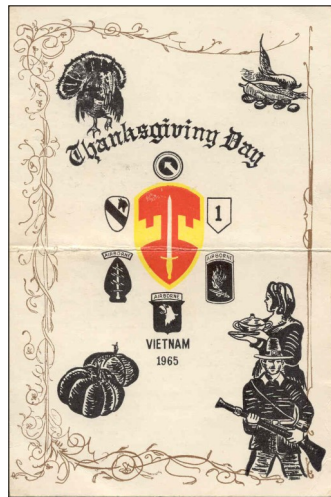
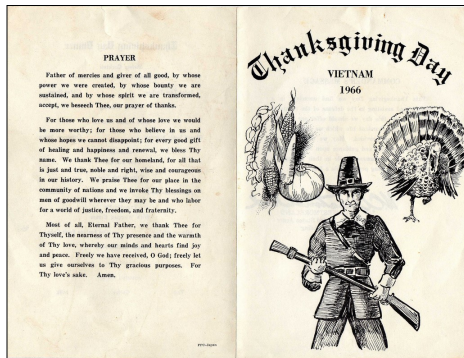
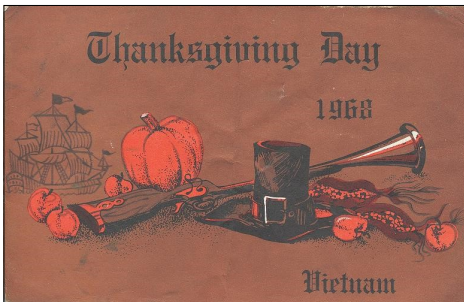
A carriage ride tour of downtown Charleston was arranged and we had a large crowd who took part. Instead of a banquet we had a group dinner in the hotel restaurant that was attended by all.

Photos will be posted to the website shortly.

We want to thank those who contributed to the reunion. WE kept the bar stocked throughout the gathering thanks to you.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO EVERYONE

I want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving! I hope you can enjoy this holiday with family and friends, surrounded by warmth, friendship and love. Remember the Thanksgivings we spent in Vietnam and give thanks we are all here but remember those we have lost over the years.



VA Veteran Photo ID Cards

It appears that the 2015 law that directed the VA to issue veteran ID cards to all veterans is actually going to go into effect in November.

Most veterans who are not enrolled in VA health care or military retirees (over half of the 22 million living veterans) – and who therefore do not have either a VA health care ID or a military ID - will soon have a federally-issued ID card identifying them as veterans. But, it appears that an Honorable discharge will be required. While few would argue that veterans with Other Than Honorable, Bad Conduct, or Dishonorable discharges should qualify for this new ID, there are quite a few veterans who have “General, Under Honorable Conditions” discharges, making them eligible for all veteran benefits [for which they are otherwise qualified] other than the GI Bill.

Therefore it is anticipated that there will be some “unhappy campers” in the veteran community if the final version of the rule excludes “General, Under Honorable Conditions” discharges. The “how, when, where” part of this program.

VA ID Cards Continued:

Originally, the thought was that the VA would issue the cards at the same locations where they currently issue VA health care IDs (e.g., the Health Care Center, VAMC, etc.). However, if 10 million veterans are potentially eligible for the new cards, well...I'm not sure that the VA health care folks are going to be prepared to have waves of veterans show up at their facilities, seeking the new cards.

I suspect that the VA will sponsor some free-standing ID card issue locations, either as part of other events (e.g., local "stand downs"), or by setting up special non-medical ID card issue locations at the VA health facilities.

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERAN REGISTEREES

Lassiter, Richard (1LT)

4070 Gov. Almond Rd

Locust Grove

540-809-2786

611th Trans. Co., Vinh Long: 1971-1972

rhlassiter@mac.com

TAPS

Jim Conway

Avel North, Pleiku 1969-1971

Jim's wife Patti reported to Jerry Hicks: HI Jerry, This is Patti Conway, Jim's wife, I thought you would like to know that Jim passed on Sept 25th 2017, he went peacefully. I don't know the cause of death as he just fell asleep, he did have type 2 diabetes, he also had bad knees and back, the dr. said he might have a stroke.



PHOTOS

None Submitted

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL

Submit changes to Jack McCabe so you can continue receiving updates and Newsletters.

Burland Brown moved, his new address is on the website

Criss Brown has a new email address, it is on the website

www.avelvietnam.com



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