ISSUE 71

VW-1 TRACKER

JANUARY 2018

Get ready .....

One Fantastic Deal !!!

It's a done deal for Branson on April 22 through the 27th, 2019 (five nights) at the Clarion Hotel for our next reunion. Are you ready for this? The quoted base rate for a single or double is $ 69.00, including a continental breakfast. The only difference from our visit there in 2016 is that the breakfast will not be in our meeting room but in the restaurant adjoining it, which is plenty large enough to accommodate us comfortably. More good news .... Joe Cuno, the food/beverage manager, is still there and that automatically guarantees us the very best in dining. Joe goes over the top to keep his military friends happy.

We are confirmed under the name VW-1 All Hands - make sure you mention that when you make your reservation. Their number is 800-725-2236 or 417-334-7666. If you have any problem with the desk, ask for Kathy Richardson, our group sales contact. Triples are contracted for at $ 79.00; Quads at $ 89.00. The rate is guaranteed for 3 days prior and 3 days following the reunion dates, but does not include the buffet breakfast for those days. We will have the large meeting room that we had before.

Since many of you are familiar with Branson, I would appreciate your suggestions on things to do there. I won't be starting the activities planning for several months yet and your input would be appreciated. My thinking at the moment is to do the Memphis Queen Cruise lunch or dinner cruise. I would like to go back to the Passion Play ... I have now been to a few of them and the scenery and special effects always overwhelm me. Branson is the one place where there is such a variety of shows to see that it is difficult to determine what to select!

Get in the "game" with me. Take a look at the web site for Branson and look over the shows. Let me know what peaks your interest ... who knows? Maybe there will be a "consensus"! It was probably after about ten visits to Branson that I finally decided to take a look at the Titanic Exhibit/Tour. It was never on my top ten – or twenty! However, I was surprised to find it fascinating because of all the exhibits and information on the ship, it's structure, engine power, etc.; not to mention that everyone gets the name of a passenger and at the end of the tour you get to find out what happened to that particular passenger. It actually was very moving and interesting! We are fifteen months out from this reunion and there may be additional new and exciting things to see.

Whatever we find, the important thing is that we will be together again, so make a note of the dates and make sure you don't make any conflicts. How wonderful it would be if every last one of our members were able to show up for the event!

"Odds & Ends" from "Here & There"

Bud Hummel (12/21) Merry Christmas to all my fellow VW-1 members. Please say a prayer for Lorraine Myers. She did get septicemia in her blood stream. It has affected her whole body. She is in a nursing home for rehab. But, while there, she had a mini stroke. It has severely affected her left side. Her speech is weak right now and, hopefully, with time she will get much better. We are hoping she'll be able to walk again. She would like get well cards, I'm sure. The address is:
Lorraine Myers
Address Removed
Haysville, Address Removed

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Karen Eskew (12/29) Please tell all contacts in your messenger list not to accept Jayden K. Smith's friendship request. He is a hacker and has the system connected to your Facebook account. If one of your contacts accepts it, you will also be hacked, so make sure that all you friends know it.

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(FYI) Our new Facebook page is building up participation ... when I was able to figure it out, Pete told me I was #40 .... With a membership of 165, we should be able to do better than that. Maybe some of you are like me ... electronically illiterate (EI). Pete walked me through the process. Go to your search line and type in the web site:
Vw1assoc.org (all lower case)
That will bring you to several sites. Our VW-1 shows up as the first choice on my computer. Once there you just need to clickon the facebook symbol (F) and a box will come up where Pete can confirm that you are a VW1 member and put you on the site. Now that I am on it, I struggle to make the connections. So if any of you have sent me a message and I haven't responded, it is because of my EI condition, not because I don't love you!
Please help me with this new job of doing the Tracker by emailing me at
Email Removed with anything you would like to share with the group. That could be family news, interesting articles you read that would be pertinent to the group, whatever.

2017 Financial Report

Beginning Balance 1/1/17		**$ 4,474.98**
Income:		
Dues	$ 3,300.00	
Reunion	9,740.00	
Auction	1,641.00	
Hats/Pins/Patches	757.00*	
Donations	155.00	
		15,593.00
		$ 20,067.98
Expenses:		
Postage	$ 332.29	
Office Supplies	358.93*	
Reunion Refunds	1,080.00	
Reunion	12,833.74	
Computer Tech	75.00	
		$ 14,679.96
Ending Balance 12/31/17		**$ 5,388.02**

*Balances include those amounts listed for these categories in the September Reunion Report.

The SCUTTLEBUTT from the PRESIDENT

Greetings, Shipmates,

I'm writing this between Christmas and the New Year. Jane and I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and wish you a very happy and healthy New Year.

Our very capable secretary/treasurer/VW-1 Co-founder, Sally Metzger will be our temporary newsletter editor after the resignation of Chris Seal from those duties. I commend Chris for his taking on the responsibility for the past few years as editor of our newsletter. Chris went beyond the call, producing not only news of the VW-1 association, but provided with each issue insights and history of Airborne Early Warning Squadron One. On behalf of the VW-1 All Hands Alumni Assoc., "Thanks, Chris" for an outstanding job and wishing you "Fair winds and Fallow Seas".

It will be a long year ahead with no reunion in 2018. However, Sally has negotiated very special room rates, including breakfast, for our Spring 2019 Reunion in Branson. I will try and do a better job setting up the Golf outing. However, if someone would like to volunteer for this duty, please let me know and the job is yours!

Gary Oulman sent me another dozen hats with Vietnam Veteran/Navy. I had my local supplier embroider VW-1 on the back. They're on sale through "Ships' Store" for $ 20, plus shipping of $ 7.00. I will again have them available at the Branson Reunion.

Shirt sales are still slowly coming in. I will shut them off January 30, 2019, so if you would like one before the Branson Reunion, get your order in before the deadline. The price is $ 40 for small up to X-Large; additional $2.00 for each size about XL, plus 9% sales tax and $5.00 shipping charge for each shirt. Shirts come in men's or women's styles, either in Navy or Gold.

Chuck Lange has donated several dozen VW-1 decals with the association website on the bottom. We would like a donation of $ 5.00 each for each. These decals adhere to the outside of the vehicle. Chuck is checking if he can get a version that adheres to the inside of a window. Email or snail mail me if you would like any of these items. Contact info: Ralph Link / Address Removed Address Removed Bloomington, Address Removed / Email Removed / Phone Removed

We need volunteers for Ships' Store Manager, Reunion Planner and Newsletter Editor. Please help us out with your expertise and talent. These are big jobs but you may have other shipmates assist you with these responsibilities. Age and health issues are going to take their toll on the longevity of our association. So help us preserve this family for as long as possible into the future.

The following are pictures of the items listed above and the order form for shirts.

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Ralph

VA Study Shows Parasite from Vietnam May be Killing Veterans

By MARGIE MASON and ROBIN McDOWELL, Associated Press, Tuesday, November 21, 2017

A half a century after serving in Vietnam, hundreds of veterans have a new reason to believe they may be dying from a silent bullet – test results show some men may have been infected by a slow-killing parasite while fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

The Department of Veterans Affairs this spring commissioned a small pilot study to look into the link between liver flukes ingested through raw or undercooked fish and a rare bile duct cancer. It can take decades for symptoms to appear. By then, patients are often in tremendous pain, with just a few months to live.

Of the 50 blood samples submitted, more than 20% came back positive or bordering positive for liver fluke antibodies, said Sung-Tae Hong, the tropical medicine specialist who carried out the tests at Seoul National University in South Korea. "It was surprising", he said, stressing the preliminary results could include false positives and that the research is ongoing. Northport VA Medical Center spokesman Christopher Goodman confirmed the New York facility collected the samples and sent them to the lab. He would not comment on the findings, but said everyone who tested positive was notified.

Gerry Wiggins, who served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969, has already lost friends to the disease. He was among those who got the call. "I was in a state of shock," he said. "I didn't think it would be me."

The 68-year-old, who lives in Port Jefferson Station, NY, didn't have any symptoms when he agreed to take part in the study, but hoped his participation could help save lives. He immediately scheduled further tests, discovering he had two cysts on his bile duct, which had the potential of developing into the cancer, known as cholangiocarcinoma. They have since been removed and – for now – he's doing well.

Though rarely found in Americans, the parasites infect an estimated 25 million people world-wide. Endemic in the rivers of Vietnam, the worms can easily be wiped out with a handful of pills early on, but left untreated they can live for decades without making their hosts sick. Over time, swelling and inflammation of the bile duct can lead to cancer, jaundice, itchy skin, weight loss and other symptoms appear only when the disease is in its final stages.

The VA study, along with a call by Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer of New York for broader research into live flukes and cancer stricken veterans, began after the Associated Press raised the issue in a story last year. The reporting found that about 700 veterans with cholangiocarcinoma have been seen by the VA in the past 15 years. Less than half of them submitted claims for service-related benefits, mostly because they were not aware of a possible connection to Vietnam. The VA rejected 80% of the requests, but decisions often appeared to be haphazard or contradictory, depending on what desks they landed on, the AP found.

The numbers of claims submitted reached 60 in 2017, up from 41 last year. Nearly three out of four of those cases were also denied, even though the government posted a warning on its

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The Question is: Why Branson??

Note: Since some members were not pleased about returning to Branson so soon, this article explains how and why that decision was made. It is an attempt to avoid any additional dissension. Sally Metzger, Sec./Treas/Reunion Planner

Since the October issue of the Tracker came out there have been a couple of e-mails questioning why we chose Branson for the upcoming reunion when it was the East Coast time. I want to take this opportunity to explain how that decision evolved at the Albuquerque reunion to try to clear up any questions that other members might have.

If you have attended a reunion you know that our format always remains much the same. Monday is registration, and which time there is a brief meeting clarifying times, etc. and the usual reminder to start thinking of "where next" so that by the last evening, when the location vote is taken, people have some solid suggestions that they can back up with some specific things which are available to do and see at the place they recommend.

During the week there were several conversations at tables discussing location – which is what always happens as different members promote their ideas to one another. If I happened to be at the table I would ask them to consider three things before making their final decision.

1. Consider the age and mobility of our group. It was strikingly apparent at this reunion that the ability of many of our members to enjoy extended activities outside the meeting room was growing more and more difficult. Case in point was the Wednesday agenda: the Nuclear Museum – then back on the bus to the New Mexico Veterans Memorial for a luncheon – then folks had the option to either go back to the hotel directly after lunch or stay and walk the NM Memorial, where the very moving VietNam wall with personal letters from veterans from various wars was located. Of the approximate 58 folks signed up for the trip only 8 of them stayed ... the other 50 took the bus back after lunch because they needed to rest. It appeared to me that, in the future, plans should not be made that extend more than four hours due to the danger of having many of the participants sitting out and waiting to "go home" for the day.
2. Consider the traffic and population density of the place you select. My dismay at being so uncomfortable in San Antonio (2015) that I could not, in good conscious, be a party to planning a reunion there was disappointing to me. The membership had voted for San Antonio for the 2016 and I went there with good intentions. Then it became apparent to me that bringing folks there who were driving was asking for someone to have a serious accident. Those of you who know me know I have travelled – sometimes alone – many miles and feel myself a competent and confident driver. San Antonio intimidated me. At the first hotel I vetted, the group sales gal was going to show me around the morning after I arrived and to have breakfast together. At the breakfast I thanked her for letting me look at her hotel but said there was no need to show me around because of the "concrete jungle" environment and the complexity of the spaghetti-type roads. Her reply was: "I understand completely. My mother has lived here all her life and when she needs to come downtown I have to drive her." When I asked about the area near the base where we had stayed for our prior reunion in San Antonio she advised that I not even consider it because it had become "run down and unsafe" for tourists. When I looked at the River Walk area I found it to be very expensive at all the hotels in the area – both in their nightly prices and their food.
3. Consider past reunions and where we get the best participation. In doing so we found that those reunions in a more central area did better than either coast tended to do. A couple of members from the east coast said "I will go to a central area, but wouldn't go to the west coast; and a couple of members from the west coast indicated that they "would go to the central, but not the east coast". Then the question arose as to why we did the rotation of geographic areas from east to central to west. In fact,

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Why Branson (Continued from Page 5)

the first four reunions were not in any pattern. As I recall, Ed and I had a discussion about the fact that our largest participation was from three states: California, Texas and Florida. In discussing it the idea of alternating these locations came up and we decided to ask the group to do it; which was done at the fourth reunion and that routine had been followed since that time.

When Ed and I reached out to other VW-1 shipmates and floated having a reunion, we had no experience and no idea of what we were getting into. Our 1st reunion was in 1999 in Branson and we had about 40 people .... little did we know – or expect - that it would grow and continue nearly 20 years! One reunion just seemed to roll one into the next and we truthfully gave no thought of having by-laws or general rules and no member ever suggested it to us. The accusation is that this organization is "run by a few people and you don't care about anything but our dues". I myself, and on behalf of Ed, plead guilty to the first section of that quote. For years it WAS run by Ed and I... he was President and I was secretary/treasurer. He did the Ship's Store and I did the Tracker and we planned the reunions together. Guilty! As for dues, it was necessary to have postage and supplies money and, in the interest of keeping reunions and dues as affordable as possible, we only charged $ 15.00 a year. The fact is I have always been amazed (and humbled) by those shipmates that pay their dues year after year and yet never come to a reunion. They seem to care about the group and continue to stay members as a way of supporting their fellow shipmates - even when they themselves are unable to attend. It is the reason I have always felt strongly the Tracker needs to continue as it allows those individuals to be a part of the group and have a venue to share their stories and lives should they choose to do so. Over the years I have made "non-attendee friends" and what dues they pay is an infinitesimal amount compared to what they bring to the group by their support and participation on the web site, with e-mails and in contributions to the Tracker. They are greatly valued.

For 18 years we have been blessed to have these reunions and our men have had their chance to reconnect with each other and remember the comraderie of their VW-1 days and enjoy the opportunity to relive it through stories and memories. It has been great! I feel truly fortunate to have been able to be a part of it and the fact that I was welcomed to remain as a vital part of it even after Ed died in 2012. It has been a labor of love for me.

It is apparent to me that the table discussions in Albuquerque contributed to the fact that a member raised his hand at the beginning of the vote for location and made a motion to not limit the suggestions for locations to the east coast, but to allow the group to vote on wherever they wanted in the nation. The motion passed and Branson was selected. There was no scheme to make the change; there was no ulterior plot to control where the group chose to go; there has never been any attempt to run everything "our" (whoever our is) way. Like most organizations, it is difficult to find people to take on the official jobs. The fact that the same few people have kept doing things is not because we have a need to run things, it is because we have been unable to find volunteers to replace us. It was great to have Chris Seal step up and do the Tracker these last few years. He did an exemplary job and I regret he felt the need to resign. I especially regret that the VW-1 group – after 18 years – has their first "issue" that could be divisive to the group. I fully realize those points that I suggested the reunion attendees "consider" helped create this issue, but I stand by the logic of my analysis. Again, I did not have an ulterior motive – my aim was merely to try to ensure that everyone able to attend would be comfortable and relaxed and enjoy the comraderie that is, undoubtedly, the PRIMARY reason to have a reunion in the first place.

I did not solicit Branson; I did not suggest Branson – but I will admit to being happy with Branson - again for three reasons:

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VA Study Shows Parasite (Continued from Page 2)

website this year saying veterans who ate raw or undercooked freshwater fish while in Vietnam might be at risk. It stopped short of urging them to get ultrasounds or other tests saying there was currently no evidence the vets had higher infection rates than the general population. "We are taking this seriously," said Curt Cashour, a spokesman with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs, "but until further research, a recommendation cannot be made either way."

Veteran Mike Baughman, 65, who was featured in the previous AP article, said his claim was granted early this year after being denied three times. He said the approval came right after his doctor wrote a letter saying his bile duct cancer was "more likely than not" caused by liver flukes from the uncooked fish he and his unit in Vietnam ate when they ran out of rations in the jungle. He now gets about $ 3,100 a month and says he's relieved to know his wife will continue to receive benefits after he dies. But he remains angry that other veterans' last days are consumed by fighting the same government they went to war for as young men. "In the best of worlds, if you came down with cholangiocarcinoma, just like Agent Orange, you automatically were in," he said, referring to benefits granted to veterans exposed to the toxic defoliant sprayed in Vietnam. "You didn't have to go fighting."

Why Branson (Continued from Page 6)

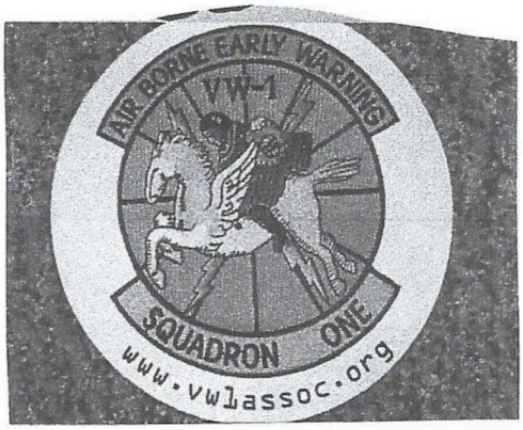
1. Branson is very compact. Time spent on a bus to go to any event will be very short. They allow you to rent buses by the half-day, rather than all day, which is the requirement in many locations. Also, the prices are lower than anywhere else (The next reunion in Branson is April 22 – 27, 2019 and the quoted rate (free breakfast in general area, not in meeting room) is $ 69.00 per night. This pricing may allow some to come that might not at $ 100+ a night.
2. It is easy to get to and from and, although the traffic can be heavy, it is slow and very considerate of other drivers in sharing the road. Someone might have a fender bender, but they aren't going to get killed on the roads around Branson.
3. There is a huge variety of shows that take minimum travelling and that can be easily reached by individuals rather than arranging for the longer day trips that tend to be harder on more of our members / and more expensive.

So there you have it. I realize this letter is too long and wordy, but I just let it pour out of me. I ask you, if you will, to send me an e-mail and give me YOUR thoughts and how to best get our beloved VW-1 through this difficult time of controversy. We all know this organization is "terminal". It cannot be otherwise since VW-1 was discontinued in 1971. But I believe that we have a few great reunions ahead of us and it is too soon to let dissension rob us of that pleasure. We aren't ready to give up YET! Mark your calendar with April 22 – 17, Branson at the Clarion Hotek at a rate of $ 69.00 (Contract is in hand). Joe Cuno is still there!

How can we pull together instead of in different directions? Your opinion and insight is important. E-mail me at Email Removed or call me at Phone Removed and let's generate some ideas of where to go from here. We do need people to volunteer as officers, ship's store, etc. We do need to make sure every member feels the sense of comraderie with the group as a whole. We do need to examine the destination procedure and determine just how we want it to be determined. But, most of all, we need to appreciate, love and care about one another..... WE ARE ALL VW-1 FAMILY!









Mens



Women



ORDER FORM FOR VW-1 SHIRT

Legend; (Style) MB=Mens Blue, MG=Mens Gold, WB=Womens Blue, WG=Womens Gold
(Logo) TRK=Tracker, VW1
VW1=Pegasas

Name on Shirt	Years Served	Style	Size	Qty	LOGO	Cost

Sub Total	
9% Tax	
Shipping	
Total Cost	

Shirt Cost= $40 per shirt Sml up to XL + $2 for XXl +$2 XXXL

Shipping = $5 per shirt