

River Patrol Force
Brown Water Log
Gamewardens of Vietnam



GAMEWARDENS OF VIETNAM ASSOCIATION INC.

Phone : (307) 237-5755

Volume 1 No. 1

Editor: W.W. Cater:

W.W. Cater : 3510 E 8th ST : Casper, WY. 82609 - 2708 or E-Mail to wwcater@bresnan.net

National Newsletter

Material for inclusion should be submitted to:

President's Corner

John Woody, Spring 2009

State of Gamewardens

2008 again found Gamewardens moving in several directions in support of its membership and active Navy units. Again, National supported other events in the cause and promotion of Navy Vietnam Veterans. In January, I attended the retirement of RADM Bullard in Norfolk VA., with the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. Ralph Christopher and I attended The Vietnam Center Sixth Tri-Year Symposium in Lubbock, TX as the Tet 1968 offensive was the main topic. In April, I traveled again to Melbourne, FL to participate with other members and veterans at the Vietnam & All Veterans Reunion. Larry Bissonnette, Ralph Christopher, Vaughn Shuler, Bob Tipton, Al Billings and I supported the local members as they organized themselves around the Bunker group from Orlando. In July, I supported the NW Chapter at Sea Fair 2008. In early August, we all attended the National Reunion at Norfolk. Coop did a masterful job in organizing and running this reunion. **WELL DONE, Coop!** In August, Mid-Atlantic hosted the Second Annual Gamewarden/Riverine Group One Leadership awards. In October, I visited Suisun City, California, site of our next National Reunion with Ken Delfino to survey the city and our arrangements there.



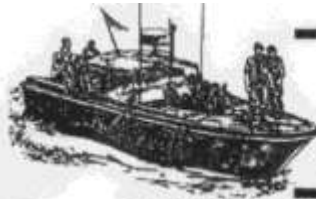
Day trip to Tide Water Veterans monument

The Sea Wolf Gunship addition to the NAB Little Creek PBR memorial has been started as mentioned at the National Reunion.

We have 1076 active members as of January 2009.

RADM Bullard Retirement

Mid Atlantic Chapter hosted Gamewardens from all over the East Coast to attend the retirement of RADM Don Bullard, Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC). RADM Bullard has been one of our greatest supporters as we were involved in the new Riverine Group and Riverine Squadron stand-ups. He considered us as his Graybeards. He fully supported our pioneering Brown Water combat experience and developed the new Riverine forces to build on that experience. He looked on us as the keepers of the Brown Water heritage. RADM Michael Tillotson relieved him as the temporary NECC until RADM Carol Pottenger would take over as NECC in September 2008.



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RADM and Mrs. Don Bullard at the retirement ceremony

RADM Bullard is a Life member of Gamewardens.

The Vietnam Center – Sixth Tri-annual Vietnam Symposium

Ralph Christopher and I traveled to Lubbock, TX in March to attend this Vietnam Center Symposium. This meeting concerned the 1968 Tet Offensive and its effect on the outcome of the Vietnam War on the United States and its ally, the Republic of South Vietnam. Much discussion in the sessions concerned how the media had been instrumental in turning the United States public against the war and the troops who fought there. Ralph C. was on top of questioning the media types who were presenters about their role in the war reporting.

The Navy was not represented in the major battles fought during Tet in the discussions. Later sessions did feature some Navy coverage. This will be the subject of more of our involvement at the Center in the future. I will discuss with the personnel of the Center about more papers and discussion sessions by Navy historians and persons.

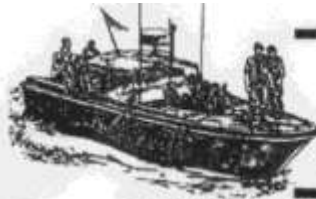
I did meet with Dr. Kelly Crager, Head, Oral History Project, about Gamewardens training in collection of oral histories from our membership. This will be a central theme in my return to this year's conference in March.

I also met with Dr. Larry Berman, History Department, UC Davis, CA. about his research into ADM Zumwalt's life. Dr. Berman is doing a biography of ADM Zumwalt. We have supplied some information to Dr. Berman.

Vietnam & All Veteran's Reunion, Melbourne FL

In April, several members from National again gathered in Melbourne, FL for the 21st Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion. Larry Bissonnette, Supply Officer, again brought Ships Store products for sale in our booth. Ralph Christopher, Vaughn Shuler, Al Billings, Bob Tipton and I manned the booth and recruited local PBR veterans into Gamewardens. Charley White, Orlando re-joined and is assisting in the re-organization of SE Chapter. Again, this is a big gathering with over 10,000 participants. Harry Scholer, member and participant of the Bunker Group from Orlando was again there. The Bunker Group has a NHC Mk II PBR that they show each year.

This group and its NHC PBR may be an avenue for SE Chapter to build projects around. We will explore further relationships with them this April when I return to assist SE Chapter reorganize.



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Gamewardens at Melbourne

Bob Tipton represented the SE Chapter and provided our booth. **Thanks Bob!**

I will be traveling once again to Melbourne this April to assist SE Chapter as it convenes its new officer slate and brings the group around the Bunker into a Gamewardens relationship. We will have a Chapter meeting during the reunion. SE Chapter is in the process of getting its officer election completed.

I am staying at the La Quinta Inn and Suites at 7200 George T. Edwards Drive, Melbourne, FL, phone (321) 242 9400. I will arrange for a meeting room for the Chapter meeting on Friday afternoon starting at 1300 until SE Chapter finishes its meeting. The meeting site will be the Holiday Inn at Melbourne-Viera at 8298 North Wickham Road, Melbourne FL 32940.

For all SE Chapter members, this Veteran's reunion is a must see at least once. I hope that we have a large turn-out.

Seattle Sea Fair

At the end of July, I traveled to Seattle in support of NW Chapter's event at Seattle

Sea Fair. NW Chapter again displayed the operational PBR on Navy Pier 91 with the Navy Fleet ships. The PBR is a great crowd draw any time it is shown in a public venue.

NW Chapter has become expert in displaying the PBR in these venues and has full Navy support. This is a great event to join them in displaying our heritage to the general public. Everyone who

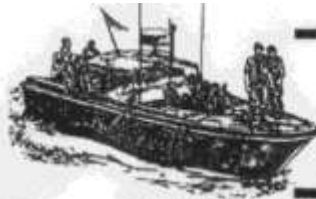
has had a turn in support of the PBR has a great time. Plan now to turn-out in support of this year's event.

National Reunion, Norfolk

Coop provided outstanding leadership in his coordination of the 2008 Norfolk National Reunion during July 16 thru 20 2008. Mid Atlantic Chapter hosted us and provided assistance to Coop in the smooth functioning of the reunion happenings. His arrangement with the Airport Norfolk Hilton met our every need. He was assisted by Sue Chiumatto in our check-in and reunion services. Rebecca Smith, Hilton Manager, was on hand to meet our hotel needs. In fact, Rebecca is assisting us in our planning and hotel arrangements for the Suisun City 2010 Reunion.

Coop had arranged for day trips to downtown Norfolk and the surrounding area that included the Battleship Wisconsin, The Naval Museum, and the MacArthur Memorial, Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, the Norfolk Tidewaters Memorial, a dinner cruise on the Spirit of Norfolk, and NAB Little Creek for our Memorial Ceremony.

Well done, Coop, Sue, Rebecca and the Mid Atlantic Chapter for outstanding service during the Reunion. Coop and his



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reunion volunteers did an excellent job raising money through the auction and 50/50 raffle. The raffle raised \$3,200.00 of which **Bill Straight** donated his half (\$1,600) to the Scholarship Fund in the name of SM1 McCafferty of RIVDIV 593. **Bill, we all thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this donation.**

BOD Business Meeting

A Board of Director Business and General meeting were held on Friday afternoon for the purpose of completing corporate business.

In the business meeting, the BoD accepted an Informal Request to form a Midwest Chapter to be presented to the General Meeting. Also, it was noted that the Scholarship Fund, now granting four \$500.00 scholarships is not a good way to cover costs as the \$500.00 amount really does not cover school cost well. The BoD considered keeping the \$2,000.00 annual Scholarship Fund and splitting it into two \$1,000.00 scholarships to be awarded annually. The BoD accepted this to be voted on in the General Meeting.

It was noted that John C. Williams had offered to resign from Gamewardens due to health and age reasons. A Letter of Appreciation was presented to John during the Reunion. As part of the organization's appreciation of John's service, it was discussed and passed to have a General Meeting vote to recognize that service by naming one of the new \$1,000.00 scholarships as the John C. Williams Scholarship.



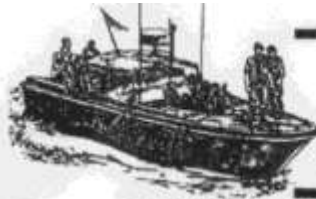
John Williams Retirement at Norfolk Reunion

The Board considered the fact that the East Coast and West Coast Vice Presidents were needed for communication in the 1968 beginning of Gamewardens. This need is no longer a requirement because of instant communications such as e-mail. It was decided and voted on by the Board

that the position of East Coast and West Coast Vice President should be eliminated and a position of First Vice President and Second Vice President should be created. First Vice President would be the next in command. The By-Laws of the Association shall be amended to reflect this change.

It was noted by me that we are in the heritage business. We leave our image in the form of our effort in our memorials. Our PBRs are the most visible images in that legacy. We have done an outstanding job in that image building with our East Coast and West Coast memorials.

I then pointed out that we need to enhance that image by completing our memorials with the Seawolf image by installing UH-1 helicopters at each of the monuments. The Mid Atlantic Chapter has started such a



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project by including a gunship at the new memorial location on NAB Little Creek.

General Meeting, Norfolk 2008

At opening of the General Meeting in Norfolk, the minutes of the Denver General Meeting were approved as written.

It was noted that the Notice program of instant e-mail had been a great success. Some ISPs tended to block coverage, namely Earthlink, Yahoo, MSN and other large scale Internet carriers.

The Treasurer's Report provided details as to the Association's financial status which is very good. The Association has approximately \$61,000.00 in CDs and approximately \$10,000.00 in operating cash. The Scholarship fund is holding its own. The primary money comes from the Ships Store and website. The Treasurer stated that we owe Larry Bissonnette a debt of gratitude for working so hard in selling the Associations products. The Treasurer also noted that the Bi-annual dues process was working well. The 2008 Treasurer's Report was approved as submitted.

I reported on the state of our Bi-annual membership renewal program. It is working. However, there are many yearly members who do not keep their membership up to date. We are working on a means to send dues letters to remind everyone to renew.

It was noted in the General Meeting that John C. Williams had greatly contributed to the welfare of the Association and that it was fitting to name one of the scholarship awards to him as the "John C. Williams Scholarship Award".

The General Meeting then adapted the Board recommendation that the Scholarship Awards be made as two \$1,000.00 awards

instead of the four \$500.00 awards. It was voted and passed.

James Morgan was assigned the task of seeing that the Association Charter filings in the Commonwealth of Virginia be filed each year to maintain our charter. Jim will see to the filings and fees and be reimbursed each year.

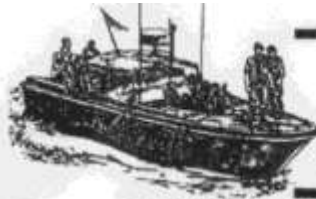
The General Meeting next adapted the Board recommendation that the East Coast and West Coast Vice Presidents be eliminated and a First Vice President and Second Vice President are created. The By-Laws were amended to reflect this General Meeting vote.

I next brought up the idea of adding UH-1 gunships to the NAB Little Creek and VUMM memorials to complete the visual heritage of Seawolves and Black Ponies as part of TF 116. Mid Atlantic Chapter will take the lead in getting the first aircraft into the memorial at Little Creek.



General Meeting Attendance Norfolk Reunion

I next talked about our TF 116 heritage of getting our oral histories of our service and experience into a lasting venue. The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University is



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in the forefront of memorializing the Vietnam experience. This organization will take oral and written artifacts to digitalize them for their archive and return a digital copy to every veteran of the Vietnam War. We are in the process of training several members to conduct our own histories to be filed there.

The General Meeting then turned to the election of Officers for the upcoming term through 2010. The following were nominated and elected:

John Woody President
Charles Benninghoff Secretary
Herb Stephan Treasurer
Don Stiegel Assistant Supply Officer
Vaughn Shuler First Vice President
Jim Davy Second Vice President

And the following were nominated and elected to the Board of Directors for 2008-2010:

Ken Delfino
Larry Weatherall
Steve Summerall

Richard Cragg is leading the organization of a Mid States Chapter with a focus of Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. The General Meeting agreed that a letter of authorization be forwarded to Richard to begin forming a Mid States Chapter.

The General Meeting then turned to the 2010 National Reunion whereby Ken Delfino presented his preliminary plan to hold the reunion in Suisun City, CA location of our training.

Next the General Meeting determined where the 2012 Reunion would be held. Cities considered were Seattle, Branson, Pensacola, and Kansas City. It was voted that Branson Missouri would be the 2012

Reunion site. James Renick will be the 2012 Reunion coordinator.

The 2008 Business Meeting and General Meeting minutes are available on the www.tf116.org website.

Norfolk Leadership Annual Award

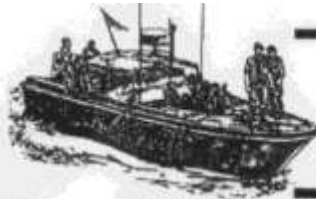
Also in August 2008, we presided over the second annual Gamewarden/Riverine Group One Leadership Awards. On the Thursday before the Leadership Awards, Riverine Group One hosted a "Riverine Round-Up" to provide an opportunity for all Riverine Sailors to meet one-on-one with the Vietnam era Gamewardens and talk about experiences. Mid Atlantic Chapter, Ralph

Christopher and I participated. Jim Morgan came from Alexandria, VA as well as part of this meeting. We met with the Riverine Group One staff as part of this meeting.

On Friday, Mid Atlantic Chapter and Riverine Group One hosted the second GAMEWARDENS OF VIETNAM LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD to a selectee from each Riverine Squadron. QM3 Caleb Murray, Squadron One; EN1 Christopher Honza, Squadron Two; and EN1 Carlos Tuggle, Squadron Three were each presented their deck plate leadership awards in accordance with COMRIVGRUONEINST 1650.5. Riverine Group One sponsored a bar-be-que to follow the Presentation.

2010 Reunion Meeting at Suisun City

In October, on a trip to San Francisco, Ann and I visited with Ken Delfino at Suisun City about his plans for the 2010 Reunion. There have been many changes to the area where we trained in the slues before going to



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Vietnam. There is a new small boat harbor, park area and facilities all planning on hosting our 2010 Reunion. Ken showed us the framework of the hotel we will hold the reunion in. We met with a city councilman who stated he was looking forward to our reunion.

Ken has the reunion well in hand. He has made contact with the hotel management and is in the process of finalizing the hotel arrangements with Suisun City Hampton Inn Suites. Ken and I will work closely to provide reunion arrangement information as it becomes available. All of the meeting, eating, and hotel services are within walking distance.

Ken broached a project during our meeting about placing a memorial monument on the pier that would identify this area as our training ground. It is envisioned as a granite foundation with a brass plaque. Gamewardens would commence a fund raiser to cover part or all of the cost to have it in place at the reunion for us to dedicate it to the township in our memory.

I suggest that we look at Ken's ideas for its shape and wording. I suggest something in the form of the Mid Atlantic Tide Water monument and plaque.

Ken has a tentative plan to hold the 2010 Reunion during roughly September 28 thru October 4, 2010.

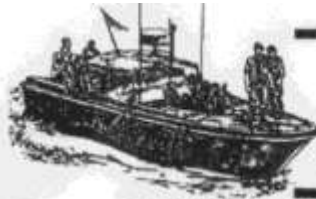
We also need to thank Rebecca Smith, Norfolk Airport Hilton Sales Manager, for her assistance in working with the Hampton Inn Suites staff to get things rolling. **Thanks again, Rebecca!**

Membership

As noted above, we currently have **1076 members**. We also lost eleven members in

2008 and five so far in 2009. Again, I am requesting that every member keep track of your shipmates and let me know when someone dies. Our Memorial Ceremony at each National Reunion includes all who served in TF 116 regardless if they are members of Gamewardens of Vietnam. That is the reason that we identified thirty-one deaths at the 2008 Norfolk Reunion. I send a letter to each family I know about. The Ceremony List always contains names of shipmates who have died earlier than the last two years because we find about their passing later. We have lost 59 members since our record keeping commenced counting.

The Bi-annual dues fees seem to be working. However, we have many "Yearly" memberships that are past due, some from 1998 or earlier. Glen Fry, membership Chair, and I are working down the list of past due members. In the beginning of Gamewardens, renewal of membership was voluntary and that system worked well for the early core membership. Over time that renewal process sort of broke down. Current membership has always been a basic tenet of attending our reunions. Member renewal and the Ships Store are our two main sources of income. As the reunions started moving around the nation, members started renewing only when they wanted to go to the next reunion. This practice happened more than once. In 2005, I conducted an extensive analysis of our membership and found that at \$30.00 per year, Gamewardens had given up \$32,160.00 in dues revenue from 1998 thru 2005. The primary members who remain out of renewal status are members who registered in the Year '97 thru '00 time frame, about 121 totals for that year and 93 totals for the period from '00 thru '06. We may never get this renewal problem completely under control as these non-



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current members may not want to be members.

This problem is not entirely a member's renewal problem, as Gamewardens did not have a good means to: 1. send dues letters and; 2. did not take action because of the varied dues dates and a real lack of mailing capability. This let members who voluntarily renew each period off the renewal hook. We changed the By-Laws at the Denver 2006 reunion to make all "Yearly" memberships due at the time of the next National Reunion by changing to a Bi-Annual renewal. This means that if a member did not renew by 8/30/2008, he is not a current member. The Bi-Annual renewal has helped us get the membership back under control.

This does not mean that Gamewardens has or is dropping any non-current member from its muster database. It does mean that we all have to step up to the plate and renew when the time comes.

It is expensive as Gamewardens does not have a mail and supplies budget for whoever is doing the renewal process. My mail and supplies cost from 2002 thru December 2008 has been \$1,932.01, a donation to Gamewardens and personal IRS deduction as president of a non-profit organization. This is not a request for reimbursement, but a fact of the office of president in running a non-profit organization.

We do have a bulk mail capability to get Chapter and National notices and newsletters out. These expenses are covered by sending the invoices to the National Treasurer. And this brings up the next membership problem. National recently assisted the SE Chapter in getting a Notice to SE Chapter members about an upcoming Chapter Officer election. We

mailed 136 letters to registered SE Chapter members and seventeen of them were returned as non-deliverable. That is 13 percent of the mail out group. Using a 13 percent bad address number against our current membership, it would mean that 82 member addresses may be bad for future newsletter and other mailings. It means a cost to Gamewardens and the member loses out in keeping up to date with the happenings of shipmates and the organization. I know there are more than 82 bad addresses in the database due to lack of current information.

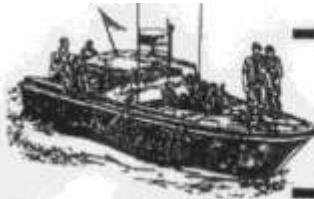
Thirty dollars was not an outlandish cost of membership and was the full amount of a Yearly membership since the beginning of Gamewardens. The fifty dollars for two years is an even better deal of renewal since 2006. **SO, GUYS GET YOUR DUES CAUGHT TO DATE AND RENEW NOW.**

Donations for 2008

We continue to be a very generous organization. We collectively donated \$5,526.00 to various organization projects and causes in 2008. In addition to our \$1,600.00 scholarship donation, we had at least one other \$1,000.00 donation. Thanks again to everyone who donated.

2009 Plans

This March, I will again attend a Vietnam Center Conference in Lubbock, TX, on Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand and the Vietnam War. In April, I will again go to Melbourne, FL to attend the 2009 Vietnam Veterans and All Veterans Reunion. This will also be support trip to assist SE Chapter re-organize itself. The NAB Little Creek Sea Wolf Gunship addition to our Memorial is under way. I am going to propose the VUMM that they consider adding a Sea Wolf Gunship to the NAB Coronado memorial as well. WC Chapter is organizing a Chapter reunion in



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San Diego. The database is as in as good shape as we can make it, given our known member information. We will need to look at least two find raisers this year and next, one for the 2010 Reunion monument and the other for funds to assist in the helo addition to our East and West Coast monuments.

2009 Vietnam Center Conference

I am going to this year's conference to do one-on-one training in collecting oral histories as was presented by Dr. Kelly Crager at this year's General Meeting at Norfolk. The Vietnam Center has been developing a means to record the results of our collecting of the oral histories on its website. I will know more about how this training and the techniques of taking oral histories is done after the meetings.

2009 Melbourne Vietnam Veterans Meeting

The focus of this year's trip to Melbourne is to assist the SE Chapter in getting restarted. We will hold a SE Chapter meeting during this gathering. The Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion will be held at Wickham Park, Melbourne, FL April 23 thru 26, 2009. It is a large gathering of about 10,000 to 12,000 visitors and vendors. We participated as vendors in 2007 and 2008. We recruited about 10 members in 2008. This is the location where Ralph Christopher found the group supporting the NHC PBR known as the "Bunker". They are the Vietnam and All Veterans of Central Florida National Vietnam War Museum located in Orlando. Harry Scholer, President, of the Bunker is a member of Gamewardens. It is around this group that we have a good potential of supporting them and their NHC PBR. The Bunker group does not have any direct TF 116 members with the exception of Harry Scholer. With the recruiting we accomplished in 2008 and other SE Chapter

members we may be able to bring validity to their effort.

SE Chapter

SE Chapter is in the process of re-organizing and electing new chapter officers. National assisted the chapter by doing a nomination letter to SE Chapter members requesting names to be included in the above mentioned mail out. The original officers elected in 2004 were: President, **Ron Laratta**; Vice President, **Jerry Hammel**; Secretary, **John Malovic**; Treasurer, **Rick Foster**; Communications, **Richard Cragg**. This was the occasion of the commissioning of the USS Williams, DDG 95 and was a re-chartering of SE Chapter. National assisted in the re-charting and raised funds for the chapter at that time. The chapter really did not get re-started as was hoped.

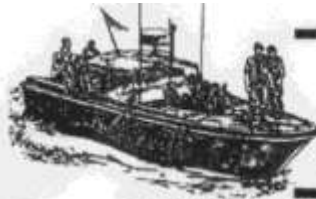
To date, the following nominations have been submitted:

1. The current list of officers be nominated again:
 Laratta, President
 Hammel, Vice President
 Malovic, Secretary
 Foster, Treasurer
 Cragg, Communications

(Please note, Dick is fully involved in Mid States Chapter and is not running.)

2. All officers move up one position
3. President, Laratta
4. Vice President, Charley White

Please send your vote to rflaratta@embargmail.com, cwhite5095@cfl.rr.com, and jwoody@texas.net. **All SE Chapter members and/or if you think you are in SE Chapter, please vote!**



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The election will be held in Melbourne on Friday, April 24th. The meeting room will be at the Holiday Inn as noted above. I am arriving in Orlando at approximately 2:30 pm. I will rent a car and travel to Melbourne to check into the La Quinta Inn and Suites Melbourne that evening. The hotel address is 7200 George T. Edwards Drive, Melbourne, FL 32940. The hotel number is (321) 242 9400. I am departing on Monday, 27 April the day after the Reunion ends.

Mid States Chapter

Mid States Chapter is planning a kick-off meeting in Minneapolis or surrounding area in June. I will be sending a letter to the mid states members soon to detail these plans. This chapter has been organized by Richard Cragg, James Wood, and Jack Carlson. Its informal charter was granted officially at the Norfolk reunion and I issued the charter in October 2008. Their plan is to cover an area initially about 300 to 400 miles in all directions from Minneapolis. They are open to any one who wants to join. Let Richard Cragg, rjc29339@aol.com or me president@tf116.org know by e-mail if you want to join. You can also call me at 1 (866) 220 7477 about membership or anything else you want to talk about.

West Coast Chapter

There will be a West Coast Chapter Reunion during July 30 thru August 2, 2009 in San Diego. Second Vice President Jim Davy and West Coast Chapter President Gene Glasco are handling the details. They have arranged to hold the reunion at the Holiday Inn San Diego Bayside, 4875 North Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92106. The hotel phone numbers are 619 224 3621 or (800) 650 6660. Reunion registration fee is \$15.00 per person. Preliminary planning for events includes Thursday Evening, USS Midway Friday (\$24.00), and picnic Saturday

afternoon (\$15.00). A Dinner Banquet is planned for Saturday Evening (\$33.00) with choice of two entrees, tri-tip steak and Grilled chicken and salmon. The WC Chapter reunion reservation form is attached to this newsletter. Fill in the blanks and register.

NW Chapter

The NW Chapter again has a full schedule displaying the operational PBR. One of the major events will be Seattle Sea Fair at the end of July. It is the same time as the West Coast Chapter Reunion. As West Coast and NW Chapter members are the same, members will have to make a decision as to what event to attend. I am attending the West Coast Chapter reunion.

Notice Program

I am rebuilding the mailing list on the Notice Program. It did not make the computer rebuild that I recently went through. I will have the notices up and running again soon.

One Last Reminder

This reminder is about keeping the National Office up to date about physical address and e-mail changes. We need to know when your address, phone number and e-mail address changes.

John Woody
President
1 (866) 220 7477
jwoody@texas.net

spring2009.doc