



THE HARD CHARGER

COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT - JANUARY 2016

I hope all you Hard Chargers are enjoying the new year of 2016. Reunion number 23 is shaping up nicely. We will be staying off-post, as new Army policies have put on-post accommodations very difficult to come by. Instructions can be found in this newsletter as to how to make your reservations at the Comfort Suites in Lawton. Be sure that you let us know whether or not you plan to make the group activity - the trip to the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center - as we need an accurate headcount for transportation planning as well as for meal planning and other arrangements.

The Hospitality Suite will be opened on Tuesday, the 7th, and the General Membership Meeting will take place on the next day, followed by the Memorial Service. We will be adding the presentation of Vietnam Vet 50th Anniversary Lapel Pins to this day's activity as well.

Access to the post for attendees without military or retiree I.D. will be, as we have noted before, an administrative challenge. If you are in this position, be sure to read the note from Jon Fizzell in this issue, and if you want to simplify the entry process, sending a completed Fort Sill form 118a to him will be the way to go. But even this will not eliminate a delay in gaining post access - only decrease the time needed to deal with it.

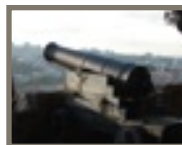
On Friday, June 10th, the bi-annual Change of Command ceremony will take place. We did not know whether or not our timing for the Reunion would coincide with this Sill tradition, but it appears that we lucked out! The Patriot Club will once more host our Annual Dinner, and of course the fun and frivolity of the World Famous Auction will follow the meal. Don't forget to bring your auction items to this always-memorable event!

Saturday will be departure day, giving everyone the weekend in which to travel safely home.

See you at Sill!

Dan Gillotti

DON'T FORGET TO



CHECK THE WEB SITE

A re-run, for those who forgot to order their patch the first time!

BE MATCHLESS - DON'T BE PATCHLESS!

A brand new item is now available, and you can get it before the 2016 reunion! Large 30th Artillery Association patches, in two versions, can be purchased now (or you can get them through the QM store at the Reunion).



These large patches, which measure 9 inches by 12 inches, can be used to dignify jackets, sweatshirts, any variety of other forms of clothing, blankets, wall hangings, and are even suitable for framing! You can get yours now by contacting John Hoetker at nywfia@aol.com. The cost is \$25 per patch, plus \$8 shipping and handling, which considering their quality, is a very reasonable charge. Be sure to indicate which one you want.

New Book on the Vietnam War from the Air

Our comrade North Flag 570, who provided us with the “can’t put it down” account of his flights over Grant and other fire bases a year or so ago (serialized in the newsletter) has alerted us to a book on the war from the air, written by a pal of his. The book is North Flag: My Service in the Republic of Vietnam June 1968 to June 1969. The author is LT John V. Rob, who served with the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion. The book is available on Amazon, among other locations.

Amazon describes the book as containing “adrenaline-fueled vignettes” of aerial action, over I and III Corps, Laos, and North Vietnam. NF 570 wrote that “John Rob taught me to fly the RVN way, saving many lives in the process.” Many of us spent a lot of time in choppers as part of a lift. However, usually we had little contact with anyone on the bird except a loadmaster. Here’s a good read that will give us “ground-pounders” a different perspective!

The Editor

use or copy this form to pay your dues

For those members who enroll as active members on a yearly basis, please complete this form and send it in with check as indicated. You can also take this opportunity to enroll as a lifetime member and end the annoyance of having to do this every year!

First name _____ MI _____ Last name _____

Address _____ City _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

Phone (H) _____ W/M _____ Email _____

\$15.00 check enclosed for 2016 dues ()

or \$99.00 check enclosed for lifetime membership ()

Contribution (\$) enclosed to assist with Association expenses

Mail form and check to: Jim Harris, 30th FAR Association Membership
212 Brittain Court, Brentwood, TN 37027

30th Field Artillery Regiment's 23rd Annual Reunion
7 to 10 June, 2016

Registration Form
Comfort Suites, 201 SE Interstate Drive
Lawton, OK 73501

Name(s) _____

_____ () [Please name all attending and total]

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Tel# _____ Email address if applicable _____

I will contact Comfort Suites at 1 580 248 2200 before 4 May, 2016 to make my room reservations and will identify myself as part of the 30th FAR Association Reunion. The standard room rate is \$63 per night (upgrades to larger suites are available) and the room rate includes a complementary hot breakfast.

I am enclosing a check to cover the following expenses:

Registration Fee \$20 per family (not required if only attending the banquet)	_____
Payment for lunch at Snow Hall (\$10.00) X attendees	_____
Plan to go on Chisholm Trail Outing (no charge), and number going ()yes ()num ()no	_____
Deposit on Chisholm Trail outing lunch charge, \$5.00 per person	_____
Annual Banquet \$25 per person, (\$13 for those under twelve)	_____
Voluntary contribution to aid a less fortunate Hard Charger	_____
TOTAL Enclosed	_____

Make your checks payable to the "30th FAR Association" and mail the form with your payment to our Treasurer:

Jim Harris
212 Brittain Court
Brentwood, TN 37027

*30th Field Artillery Regiment Association Reunion
Lawton/Fort Sill, OK 7 to 10 June, 2016*

Comfort Suites

1 580 248 2200

Our reunion home during the 23rd gathering will be the Comfort Suites in Lawton, located off I-44 exit 37 at 201 SE Interstate Drive. The amenities for this all-suite hotel include free WI-FI, a week day newspaper, complementary breakfast, a gym and an indoor pool. The standard room rate is \$63 per night (larger suites are available at extra charge). To get the reunion rate, call the hotel and be sure to identify yourself as attending the 30th FAR Association reunion. The hospitality suite will be in the hotel.

Tuesday, 7 June

Welcome and sign in at the hotel. Meet and greet folks you probably haven't seen for a while. Enjoy a cold one and visit the QM display - purchase a new shirt or cap and make yourself look suave and debonair. Enjoy a walk down memory lane through the pages of the unit histories, compiled and maintained by Dan Gillotti.

Wednesday, 8 June

The General Membership meeting will begin at 0930 hours on post. Election of new board members is a key part of the agenda, but we do have the selection of sites for 2017 and 2018 already in hand, so that will not be an issue. The Memorial Service for our Fallen will follow, and a distribution of the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration pin will complete the day's formal activities. Lunch will be served in the Regimental Room.

Thursday, 9 June

On Thursday we will depart by van to Duncan, OK, to visit the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center. Lunch will be enjoyed at the restaurant in the Center, where you may order from the menu. There is no charge for visiting the center, but you will have to pay for lunch. After our return to Lawton, all attendees are invited to the Janosko's for a pool party, beginning at 1800 hours at their home. Transportation plans will be announced later, if applicable.

Friday, 10 June

The morning will feature the bi-annual change of command ceremony, hopefully with better weather conditions than the last one! The afternoon is yours to enjoy prior to the Annual Dinner and World Famous Auction at the Patriot Club on post. Please see the changed situation with respect to post entry on the following page.

Fort Sill Visitor Access

The following valuable information comes from Jon Fizzell

In compliance with the new installation access controls, every person entering Fort Sill must have a valid military or Federal Civil Service ID card or a pass. Every person not in possession of a valid ID card must fill in FS form 118a (however, this is not the pass) and be cleared for access. If a person shows up without a pass, he/she will be directed to the visitor control center (VCC) on Sheridan Road. The VCC then performs a short background check. By submitting your form, you agree to a background check which uses the National Crime Information Center interstate identification index, an FBI database that includes criminal histories from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the VCC is crowded with families arriving for graduations and the wait time increases a lot. In order to expedite the process, those of you coming to the reunion who do not have the needed ID may send me a completed form, and I will take it to the VCC ahead of time. The personnel affected must still stop at the VCC to get their pass but the process will be much faster. Time will be reduced from 30-45 minutes to about 10. I will need the forms at least two weeks in advance of your arrival in Lawton. Remember, this is not "one per carload." Every person must have an individual pass or an ID card. A VA ID card is not sufficient.

My mailing address follows. There is much personal information requested on the form, so if you are not comfortable with me having it, don't send it, but even preparing it in advance of your arrival will save a little bit of time.

Mr. Jon Fizzell
Reunion Documents
9806 SE Coombs
Lawton, OK 73501

Editor's note: For you who get the newsletter by email, obtaining the form is very easy. Simply enter "FS form 118a" on your search line and it will pop right up - first item. But you cannot send an electronic copy to Jon. He has to have your signed original to take to the VCC. if you have questions, Jon can be reached at 580 442 5102.

If you get only the hard copy newsletter and are planning to attend the reunion, and have no access to email, call me at 970 685 9377 (my cell) and I will mail you a copy of the form.

YOUR QUARTERMASTER'S TWO BITS

HOMETOWN

While our annual reunion is several months away at Fort Sill, I am already looking forward to it. I could not make it two years ago and have missed Fort Sill. (When I departed Fort Sill in 1974, I never thought that I would ever make that statement.) I ask all to start making plans to join us at this year's reunion.

Everyone one of us had a home town, referred to as "home of Record" by the government. If you didn't, the Army gave you one. My hometown was Dothan, Alabama, which, because of nearby Fort Rucker, has a strong military presence. I was very lucky that for my first three years in the military, I was stationed a hundred miles from Dothan at Fort Benning. Columbus, Georgia, was also the home of two of my Aunts, an Uncle and three cousins. In other words, I was home the whole time I was at Benning.

In 1974 the Army decided that I needed to go to BNCOES (Basic Non-Comissioned Officers Education System) at Fort Sill and then on to Germany, where, by the luck of the draw, I was sent to Italy. I still to this day cannot believe I got sent to Italy and to the 2/30FA, the last Sergeant missile Unit in the U.S. Army. It was one of my best years in the Army.

While Vicenza was great, being away from home for the first time caused a little homesickness at times. I know that some are going "You get Italy and I got Vietnam! What did you have to be homesick about?" All that I can say is that I was. Trying not to think of home all the time, I spent a lot of time walking around Vicenza and visiting the stores. In February Of 1975 I walked into a hobby/toy store and purchased a model airplane to build. As I was about to leave, I saw it - sitting on the floor was a swing set. So what was so special about that? It was made by Hedstrom Union, DOTHAN, ALABAMA 36301. I had found "home" in Italy! Hedstrom Union was one of the largest industries in Dothan. I knew a whole list of people who worked there. After that, at least once a month I went to visit that toy store and looked for products made in Dothan at Hedstrom Union.

There was another connection with Dothan, Hedstrom Union and Vicenza. When I got back to Dothan, I went out to Hedstrom Union to visit a few of my friends. While there, I was

continued on next page

introduced to the plant manager, John Conti. John had been born in Italy and had come to the US as a child after WW I. While waiting to join his father in the US, John's family lived in Vicenza. John had gotten a job at age twelve as a copy boy in Hedstrom Union's main office. As a naturalized US citizen, he worked in the OSS during WW II. He was discharged as a major in 1947. When the Dothan plant opened in 1950, John, who had worked his way up through HU, was promoted to plant manager. I told John about my experience in Vicenza and how the Hedstrom Union connection had gotten me through it. John liked it so much that he had me write up the story and it was subsequently published in the company's national employee newsletter. The title was "John Conti Sends Love Back Home."

John was always a friend to everyone. He frequently told me after I had moved back to Dothan that he had a job for me. John would call my parents every few weeks to see how were doing and where we were located. Sadly, by the time I retired in 1991, John had departed this earth. I did make his funeral mass in Dothan and was very proud and honored to be asked to be one of his pallbearers, as he knew so many people that called him friend. I still swap Christmas cards with John Conti Jr.

That's your Quartermaster's two bits and they are worth everything you paid for them!

Charles "Comma" Causey - OUT!



A Hedstrom
Union Swing set,
circa 1950/60



Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pins to be Awarded

At the last Reunion at Fort Sill, the Association pledged to partner with a number of other organizations, both military and commercial, to assist the country in remembering the sacrifices and the dedication of the men and women who fought in Vietnam, and to sponsor, collaborate with and co-host events that would carry out this objective. As was outlined at the 2014 gathering, guidance and direction is available on line through the Commemorative Partners web site on such tips as talking points, speech templates, available materials for use, and publicity media.

During the upcoming Reunion, a Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin will be presented to all members of the Association who were on active duty during the period 1 November 1955 to 5 May 1975. The purpose of the ceremony will be to recognize, honor and show appreciation for those who served their country during that period of hostilities in SE Asia.

In spite of its small size, the pin is filled with symbols. Most prominently, the eagle represents courage, honor and dedicated service to the country. As one of the most recognizable and noteworthy American icons, it appears on numerous military insignia.

The blue circle matches the canton of the American flag and signifies vigilance, perseverance and justice. (In heraldry, a canton is rectangular area in the corner of a shield, and in this case the canton is the blue field on the flag containing the 50 stars.)



The laurel wreath is a time-honored symbol representing victory, integrity and strength.

The stripes behind the eagle represent the American flag.

The six stars represent the six allies who served, sacrificed and fought along side one another: Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and the United States.

The reverse of the pin carries the message “A grateful Nation thanks and honors you.”

At present, distribution of the pins is planned for 8 June following the General Membership meeting.



While nothing is firm as yet, it is also hoped that a live fire exercise can be arranged during the Reunion, so that all who long to hear once more the crack of the guns and inhale the smell of cordite can be gratified. For some, for instance the editor, the crack of a howitzer may be about the only thing that can be heard clearly...

While this message may be akin to the old joke about “all those who are absent please raise your hand,” if you are aware that your email address is about to change, please share your new address with us. Each issue of the newsletter brings two or three “bounce backs” for no delivery, and tracking you down again requires time and effort. Please keep your personal contact info up to date!

Dan Gillotti strongly recommends that you view the video presentation of **Vietnam, 50 Years Later**. You can reach it at <http://www.youtube.com/embed/aVeBtfnAxP8>



The **Chisholm Trail Heritage Center** is not your ordinary “stop and stare” museum. It contains a number of interactive opportunities as well as the anticipated art and statuary - paintings by famed Western artists such as Frederick Remington and Charles Russell, for example.

Our Hotel Home in
Lawton for the Reunion



5435 Cedar Valley Drive

Loveland, CO 80537

Next Issue - May 2016

Deadline for submissions - 30 April

jdynes5@comcast.net or address above

