



Message from the President;

First I would like to thank our most recent donors J T Daniels and Mike & Judy Malone. We hope to have the reunion activity options finalized for you to pick and choose from, and distributed in January 2016 (right after the holidays). However, many of you stated you will attend, but have yet to make your hotel reservations. Please do so ASAP, to lock in the room rate and room availability, before we lose the opportunity to keep rooms reserved for our group. I would like to thank Ron Doughty for organizing the 12 TFW Memorial re-dedication ceremony in Canon City, CO this year. A recap of that event and the local news article will be sent out separate from this newsletter.

Claude "Skip" Blanchard

1. 2016 Reunion Update for Charleston, SC - Bill Cathey, Treasurer and Reunion Coordinator

We have a Group Code for making reservations at the Crowne Plaza Charleston Airport-Convention Center.

A. Room Rate of \$128 per night with two (2) Breakfast Buffets, \$118 per night without breakfast.

1. Call IHG Central Reservations at 800-439-4745 and use Group Code TFW or
2. Copy and Paste this link:

http://www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/us/en/north-charleston/chssc/hoteldetail?qAdlt=1&qBrs=6c.hi.ex.rs.ic.cp.in.sb.cw.cv.ul.vn&qChld=0&qFRA=1&qGRM=0&qGrpCd=TFW&qIta=99801505&qPSt=0&qRRSrt=rt&qRef=df&qRms=1&qRpn=1&qRpp=12&qSHp=1&qSmP=3&qSrt=sBR&qWch=0&srb_u=1&icdv=99801505

B. Call Crowne Plaza Charleston Sales, Ms. Nadean Schnaible, 843-266-2110 between 9-5 M-F to make a reservation.

If a handicap room is needed, request it. You may cancel any time before the 24 hour period of the date of the reservation, so make the room reservation now to get the special rate.

2. News from the VA:

A. AO Update - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published a new regulation that expands eligibility for some benefits for a select group of Air Force and Air Force Reserve veterans who were exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange through regular and repeated contact with contaminated C-123 aircraft that had been used in Vietnam as part of Operation Ranch Hand. This regulation is an interim final rule so VA can immediately begin providing benefits to eligible Airmen who submit a disability compensation claim for any of the 14 medical conditions that have been determined by officials to be related to exposure to Agent Orange. The decision to expand benefits was made following publication of a 2015 report, "Post-Vietnam Dioxin Exposure in Agent Orange-Contaminated C-123 Aircraft," by the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine. The interim final rule can be found on the Federal Register. Individuals with specific benefit questions related to herbicide exposure on C-123s may call VA's special C-123 hotline at 800-749-8387 (available 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. EST) or e-mail VSCC123.VAVBASPL@va.gov.

B. Burial and Memorial Benefits overview: Burial in a VA national cemetery is available for veterans, spouses and dependents at no cost and includes the gravesite, grave-liner, opening and closing of the grave, a headstone or marker, and perpetual care as part of a national shrine. Honorably discharged veterans and retirees are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker for their unmarked grave at any cemetery at no cost. United States burial flags are generally furnished by the VA by completing VA Form 21-2008. For information on Internment at Arlington National Cemetery, call 703-607-8000. And, military funeral honors are available on request. Funeral directors can call 1-877-MIL-HONR (645-4667) to request honors. For more information, visit the VA National Cemetery Administration webpage at www.cem.va.gov/

C. It takes all kinds to make our world: Kevin Maynard, 59, of Charlestown, R.I., an employee at the Rhode Island Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, R.I., has agreed to plead guilty in federal court to stealing granite gravestones and other items from the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery for use at his home as garage and shed flooring, announced United States Attorney Peter F. Neronha; Jeffrey Hughes, Special Agent in Charge. According to court documents, it is alleged that over a lengthy period of time Maynard removed worn or broken grave markers from the cemetery and brought them to his Charlestown residence. On April 23, 2015, a VA-OIG agent and Rhode Island State Police detective accompanied Maynard to his home where investigators discovered at least 150 veterans' grave markers being used as flooring for a shed and two make-shift garages. Investigators also located additional markers on the property and a box of American flags allegedly stolen from the Veterans' Cemetery.

3. Military News;

A. The early History of Memorial Day - Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans — the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) — established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers.

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Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day should be observed on May 30. It is believed that date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country. (*Military.com May 2015*)

B. USS Arizona Memorial Struck by Ship - A U.S. Navy ship struck part of the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor in late May, according to a woman whose husband witnessed the accident. Photos submitted by the woman, who declined to be identified because her spouse serves in the Navy, show the naval hospital ship USNS Mercy sailing dangerously close to the USS Arizona Memorial. Her husband took the photographs from nearby Ford Island. "It went right over the dock," she told Military.com. "You could hear the metal crunching. My husband said you could see mud and water being kicked up. It backed up to within feet of hitting the white memorial building." Tug boats were guiding the hospital ship from its port at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam at around 7 a.m. local time. Bill Doughty, a spokesman for Navy Region Hawaii, said that while the dock sustained significant damage and was later separated by workers from the memorial structure, "there appears to be no damage to the vessel." Navy divers continue to inspect the memorial, the front of which sustained "minor damage," and the sunken ship, he said. Tours of the memorial were suspended until repairs could be made. (*Military.com May-2015*)

C. Another Tibbets Takes Command - A grandson and namesake of the man who piloted the massive B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, during World War II is taking over leadership of the United States' aging fleet of nuclear-capable B-2 stealth bombers. Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets IV takes command of the 509th Bomb Wing during a ceremony Friday at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, replacing Brig. Gen. Glen VanHerck, who has led the wing since February 2014. Tibbets, 48, was previously deputy director for nuclear operations for the U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. (*Military.com June 2015*)

D. Rules for Saluting the Flag - Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag only while wearing their organization's official head-gear. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 contained an amendment to allow un-uniformed servicemembers, military retirees, and veterans to render a hand salute during the hoisting, lowering, or passing of the U.S. flag. A later amendment further authorized hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel. (*Military.com June 2015*)

E. New Head of POW/MIA Office - The head of the Pentagon's new agency in charge of recovering and identifying remains of U.S. war dead said he will push for more partnering with private groups that have resources and interest to help reinvigorate a troubled POW-MIA accounting mission. Michael Linnington, a recently retired three-star Army general and veteran of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, took over the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency in late June and intends to complete its top-to-bottom reorganization by the end of the year. His agency was created by merging the two offices that had previously been in charge. He has little experience in the MIA mission, but told The Associated Press last week that he knows its history is riddled with controversy as well as criticism from Congress and groups that advocate for families of the missing. (VVA July)

F. Another ID Card? The U.S. Congress has approved a bill allowing all veterans in America to receive an official identification card. The bill was signed by President Obama. The card allows veterans to document their service without carrying around sensitive personal information, and should be available in late September. A form currently used by many veterans to prove their veteran status contains Social Security numbers and other details that advocates warn could put veterans at risk of identity theft. (This would be in addition to VA & Retired Military ID Card – *Military.com July 2015*)

G. The F-35 – Test pilot said that it could not match up to an F-16 in a dog-fight. The USAF disagrees and defends the plane. The DoD is rethinking how many F-35 Joint Strike Fighter jets it plans to buy as part of its most expensive weapons acquisition program. The Pentagon officially plans to purchase a total of 2,457 F-35s, including 14 development aircraft, at an estimated cost of \$391 billion, according to documents published in December and released in April. Italy reduced its planned purchase of 131 aircraft to 90 aircraft and the Netherlands cut its order of 85 aircraft to 37 aircraft, according to a 2014 Congressional Research Service report. Canada is reconsidering whether to even buy the F-35 and Australia this week reportedly nixed its plans to purchase the F-35B jump-jet variant of the aircraft because doing so would have required too many modifications to its two largest assault ships. (*Military.com July 2015*)

H. Benefits Legislation in the works - The U.S. House of Representatives has approved legislation that would increase rates of benefit compensation for veterans with disabilities caused by their military service. Cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' disability benefits must be approved by Congress each year. Another provision based from legislation authored by Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.), would require the VA to pay any accrued benefits to a deceased veteran's estate. The VA currently pays accrued benefits to a deceased veteran's family members, such as spouses or dependent children. But the VA keeps the benefit payments if the veteran dies without surviving qualifying family members. (*Military.com- Aug.*)

I. More on PTSD - New research has found that four decades after the Vietnam War ended, more than 270,000 veterans who served in the war zone suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The study, published online in JAMA Psychiatry, also found that at least one-third of those veterans exhibiting symptoms of PTSD suffer from major depression, as well. The study is available on the JAMA Psychiatry website at archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2398184. (*Military.com – Aug 2015*)

J. F-35 has wide range of problems that need fixing - Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James has admitted to a wide range of past and present problems with the F-35 while maintaining that the fifth-generation will eventually guarantee the U.S. continued air supremacy over rivals. "The biggest lesson I have learned from the F-35 is never again should we be flying an aircraft while we're building it," James said at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado last week. In development stages, "People believed we could go faster, cheaper, better" by designing and building the F-35 concurrently, "and that the degree of concurrency would work. Indeed it has not worked as well as we had hoped and that's probably the understatement of the day," James said. "It has taken us too long, it has cost us way more money than we ever imagined possible," James said of the most expensive weapons program in Pentagon history. "We're very focused from now on to driving the cost down per unit and they are coming down."

James also agreed that an F-35A "didn't do so well" in mock dogfights with an F-16 last January. The test pilot's assessment, first reported by the "War Is Boring" blog, said that the F-35 lacked the maneuverability to keep up with the F-16 and the F-35 pilot's helmet cut down on his vision. However, she noted that there were additional challenges to making the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II operational. "I would sum it up in one word – software," James said, noting the 24 million lines of code in the aircraft. (*Military.com Aug 2015*)

K. Boeings new KC-46 Tanker suffers a set-back - Just weeks before the planned first flight of a fully outfitted KC-46 Air Force tanker, the Boeing plane's fueling system has been damaged by a chemical mix-up, temporarily grounding the jet. The jet -- the first test plane outfitted with working air-refueling systems and designated as a tanker -- was at the fuel dock on Paine Field last week when mechanics used the wrong chemical during a test of the fuel system, according to people familiar with the details. The chemical, supplied by a vendor and mislabeled, caused corrosion and damaged the fuel system, including the advanced new fuel boom designed to offload gas to fighter aircraft, the sources said. The fuel boom, as well as the auxiliary fuel tanks in the fuselage of the airplane, have been removed from the aircraft for inspection and any necessary repairs. No recovery time has been given yet. (*Military.com Aug. 2015*)

L. B-52 Upgrade Program - Port San Antonio, formerly Kelly AFB – Boeing completed its first B-52H repair on 23 July and returned it to Barksdale AFB. (*Extract - Military.com Aug. 2015*)

M. F-16's moved to southern Turkey — The U.S. has now launched airstrikes by Incirlik, Turkey-based F-16 fighter jets against Islamic State targets in Syria, marking a limited escalation of a yearlong air campaign that critics have called excessively cautious. Operations in Iraq will be included in the plan to turn the tide. (*Extract - Military.com Aug. 2015*)

N. U.S. Army Chief of Staff goes out with a bang - Gen. Ray Odierno headed into retirement amid controversy over his recent remarks on Iraq that were challenged by the Baghdad government and the State Department. In his final Pentagon news conference, Odierno riled the Baghdad government of President Haider al-Abadi by suggesting the possibility that the sectarian rifts at the root of Iraq's political divides might lead to the partition of the country into Sunni, Shia and Kurdish sectors. "I think we have to deal with ISIL first, and then we have to decide what it will look like afterwards," but "that is something that could happen," Odierno said of partition. "It might be the only solution, but I'm not ready to say that yet." Abadi's office on Thursday put out a statement calling Odierno's comment on partition "irresponsible." The statement added that "Iraqis are making sacrifices to strengthen the unity of their country and defend it." (*Extract - Military.com Aug. 2015*)

O. Islamic Threats - The Air Force is taking seriously the latest threats by the Islamic State group against U.S. airmen in the United Kingdom but has not issued any travel restrictions or raised force-protection levels, officials said Wednesday. A group calling itself the "Islamic State hacking division" has singled out U.S. assets and military and diplomatic personnel serving in the U.K. for apparent retaliation for U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, according to a report in London's Sunday Times. The group allegedly posted personal information online of more than 1,400 people, including 16 Air Force personnel who have worked at bases in England, the newspaper reported. (*Extract – Military.com Aug. 2015*)

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P. ISIL Militant thwarted - PARIS -- Three Americans and a Briton who tackled an attacker loaded with guns and ammunition prevented carnage on the high-speed train carrying 500 passengers to Paris, France's president said Monday as he presented the men with the Legion of Honor and praised them as an example of the need for action when faced with terrorism. President Francois Hollande said the two Americans who first tackled the gunman were soldiers, "but on Friday you were simply passengers. You behaved as soldiers but also as responsible men." Hollande then pinned the Legion of Honor medal on U.S. Airman Spencer Stone, [National Guardsman](#) Alek Skarlatos, and their longtime friend Anthony Sadler, who subdued the gunman as he moved through the train with an assault rifle strapped to his bare chest. British businessman, Chris Norman, who also jumped into the fray, also received the medal. (Extract – *Military.com* Aug. 2015)

5. Please Welcome our Newest Members since June 2015;

Charlotte Burrous; Associate member, has provided press coverage for the 12 TFW Memorial re-dedications in Canon City, CO since 2001.

Elwin “Walter” Cox; 12th FMS, AGE Section, Dispatcher, CRAB, Feb. 1967 – 68.

Roger Halterman; 12th Supply Sqd., Personal Equipment Sect., Phu Cat Jul. 1970 – 71.

Gary L. Kaplan; 12thFMS, Mechanical Accessories Shop, Environmental Sys., CRAB Mar. 1967 – 68.

Ed Sexton; Associate member, friend of 391st & 558th TFS Pilot, David A. Hamilton who shot down 4 July 1968 and recovered by ARVN chopper.

Lt. Gen. E G “Buck” Shuler JR.; 391st & 558th TFS F-4 Pilot and Flight Leader, CRAB, Mar 1968 – 69.

Douglas C. Smith; 12 TFW HQ Sqd., Computer Data Entry. CRAB Jan 1966 – 67.

6. History

A. Did you know? Clara Barton & MIAs "Most people know Clara Barton as a pioneer of the nursing profession and founder of the American Red Cross. Very few know that she was the first person in U.S. history to formally search for members of the armed services who were missing in action. After the Civil War, the by-then renowned Barton received some 63,000 letters from people searching for loved ones who never returned from battle. Working out of the Washington, D.C. boarding house where she lived, and with a small cadre of workers, she managed to locate or discover the fate of nearly 22,000 of these men." Source: AAA World, September/October 2015 and forwarded to us by member Hank Haven.

7. VVA – Special Life Membership - The Vietnam Veterans of America is offering a **Life Membership** to both new and current members for only \$100. The offer is limited to sign-ups from 1 August to 31 December 2015. **Why belong to the VVA?:** The content of their magazine is focused on SEA & the South China Sea and the Vietnam War effort and it's after affect and issues. I will attach a PDF copy of the Special Life Membership application with this news release. *E J Sherwood, VVA Chapter 1011.*

9. Interesting reference to world military aircraft: <http://12tfw.org/worldaf.pdf> by Ron Doughty

Stay Safe,
E J