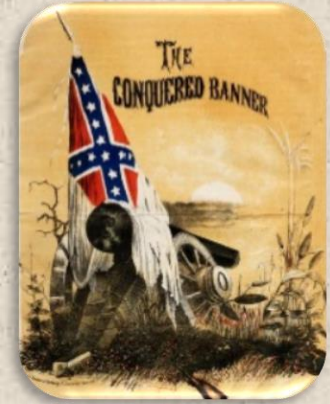




The Conquered Banner



Newsletter of the
Father A. J. Ryan San Diego Camp 302
Sons of Confederate Veterans



VOLUME 31 NUMBER 6

November/December 2023

The Spotlight is on Roy Adair



In our July/August issue of this newsletter, we put our compatriot Steve Perdue in the spotlight, highlighting his experience in Vietnam during his time in the U.S. Navy. Now, as we close out 2023 with this publication, it's time to bring attention to another fellow camp member, Roy Adair, former Camp Commander and now Treasurer.

Likewise, we're going to look at Roy's time during Vietnam and what he did while based there. As most of us know, Roy retired from the Navy as a Commander after an impressive twenty-eight-year career. After he joined the Navy and reported to boot camp, he was picked up for the NAVCAD program to begin training as a Naval Aviator.

In 1965, he was flying the P5M-1 Marlin Seaplane, as seen here, in VP-40, operating out of Sangley Point in the Philippines.



Continued on Page Three

International Headquarters
Sons of Confederate Veterans
P.O. Box 59
Columbia, Tennessee 38402-0059
1-800-MY-DIXIE

Salute to the Confederate Flag

I salute the Confederate Flag with affection, reverence and undying devotion to the cause for which it stands.

Charge to the Sons of Confederate Veterans

“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and the ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish.”

Lt. General Stephen D. Lee

Newsletter

The Conquered Banner is the official newsletter of Camp 302 and is published each odd-numbered month. Permission to reprint material contained in the newsletter is freely given to SCV, MOSB and UDC organizations. Commentary and articles are solicited and should be mailed or E-mailed to the Newsletter Editor. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the preceding month. Consideration of space may require editing.

Meetings

The camp meets the 2nd Saturday of each odd-numbered month at various locations which are announced in the newsletter.

Correspondence

Membership applications, dues renewals, changes of address and other business should be directed to the adjutant.

Dues

Annual dues are billed each August and are \$50.00 for members. Dues include the *Confederate Veteran* magazine and a newsletter.

Camp officers

<u>Commander</u>	<u>Jim Millsap</u>
<u>Lieutenant Commander</u>	<u>George Faircloth</u>
<u>2nd Lieutenant Commander</u>	<u>Jim Coulsby</u>
<u>Adjutant</u>	<u>Jim Stephens</u>
<u>Treasurer</u>	<u>Roy Adair</u>
<u>Webmaster</u>	<u>Roy Adair</u>
<u>Chaplain</u>	<u>Jim Coulsby</u>
<u>Sergeant-at-Arms</u>	<u>Steve Smith</u>
<u>Historian</u>	<u>Vacant</u>
<u>Newsletter Editor/Publisher</u>	<u>Jim Stephens</u>

Many of us in the Navy at that time became aware of the escalation of the war in Vietnam not only from news sources but info filtering down through the chain-of-command at the various commands we were in—very much so as the Navy, in many areas of operation in Southeast Asia, was asking for volunteers to serve in a host of duties. The battleship USS New Jersey BB-62 was coming back on line during this time and former battleship sailors were being searched for to volunteer to man her as the mighty ship would find its way to that theater. Cam Ranh Bay airfield was building up and the Navy needed men with various aviation ratings to man it up. I digress here a bit, but these are two examples of expanding operations in Vietnam at this juncture.

Roy's task in VP-40 was to fly patrol missions along the coastline to check on the smuggling of arms and equipment into South Vietnam for use by the Viet Cong. Eventually, the Navy would establish a seadrome off the southern tip of Vietnam near the island of Ko Samui. This move gave the patrol squadrons more time on station by eliminating the long flight from the Philippines.

It was during this time that Roy became aware of a Navy message asking for Lt(jg)—*this was Roy's rank at the time*—volunteers to become officers-in-charge of the Navy's Swift Boats, *like the craft seen at right*, that were used for coastal patrol and riverine duties. This was to be, as Roy gleaned the message, a one-year tour. Therefore, he requested a transfer to that community.



Roy admitted that, like a lot of folks during those years, he assumed the conflict in that region would be a short one and he wanted to be a part of the action before it ended. His request for transfer to Swift Boats was endorsed and he reported to Amphibious Base Coronado, California for training. As an interesting side-note, Roy found out later that he, amongst the other trainees, was the only aviator in the group.

While undergoing training, he became aware of a strange-looking craft that he spotted on the base at Coronado, but he paid little attention to it because he was set on becoming a small boat skipper. About the time he was completing his swift boat training, he was approached by the commanding officer of a "Hovercraft" unit and, a short time later, was offered a transfer from Swift boats to PACV's (Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles). Through a turn of fate, you might say, one of the five officers slated for hovercraft training by Bell Aerosystems was transferred out, thus providing a chance for Roy to move into his slot. After a short tour and a ride, Roy accepted the offer. Being a seaplane pilot with his expertise in flying, though not a requirement, would mimic controlling the PACV.

The question arose as to who should maintain the hovercraft—aviation or ground personnel. The craft did have numerous aviation-style components: a jet engine, a variable pitch and reversible propeller, rudders and elevators, a joy stick with helicopter type collective and rudder peddle controls and aviation-grade aluminum construction.



With all this, the surface navy proponents won the argument on this issue as they contended, rightfully, the hovercraft could not become airborne. *Pictured above is the PACV hovercraft in its operational environment*



Roy describes here how to operate the craft. As he well puts it, operating the craft is likened to driving a car over a sheet of ice. The “Joy Stick” between the knees operated four hydraulic jacks that would tilt the rubber skirt in any given direction. The “Collective,” operated by the other hand, controlled the throttle and the pitch of the propeller. *Bellow left, we see Roy at the controls.*

Twisting the throttle would get the craft moving by increasing the engine RPM. The engine controlled the propeller while also controlling a large squirrel-cage fan that provided lift by inflating the cushion with air that lifted the vehicle up to four feet maximum from the surface with the bottom of the skirt always touching the surface somewhere around the craft. When fully inflated and resting on the surface, forward pitch would be applied to the propeller, giving the craft forward movement.

Taking the joystick and moving it left or right tilted the craft in the appropriate direction. With the opposite side being clear of the ground, the craft

turned in the direction of the tilt. At high speeds, the rudder provided adequate directional control by carefully using the joystick.

Under ideal conditions, such as with the winds and sea conditions, the PACV was capable of speeds up to 60 kts (75 mph). The craft was a joy to operate under these conditions with little chance of nosing or plowing in. The operator would have to plan far in advance, the turns to be made. The hovercraft's rudders were all that was necessary to control direction. Roy mentioned



that he and other operators found they could actually slow the vehicle to a safe stop by reversing the direction of the craft while at these speeds. They would be going in one direction while pointed in another. *At left, a PACV operates in open waters.*

For obvious reasons, the design of this craft left it vulnerable to strong winds and rough seas, making the rudders and elevators ineffective with the skirt control being limited to directional control, which would mean the operator

should deflate the cushion and either request a tow or wait out the existing weather conditions. It was for the above reasons the PACV was best suited for river, coastal, or bay operations.

Another hazard hovercraft operators faced was underwater objects such as fish traps and tree stumps that were in abundance.

Fortunately, the PACV's were radar equipped and were quite capable of picking up these and other obstacles to allow ample room for maneuvering safely around them. Roy tells us that it would not be easy to sink a hovercraft as it was honeycombed along the entire bottom of the solid structure with compartments filled with buoyant material. *Roy is seen here, third from left during a discussion between missions.*



The photo on Page Four shows the PACV during dry land operations. Roy tells us that these operations were not normally advisable due to potential damage to the skirt; dirt and dust blown up by the downward blast damaged the engine more than salt spray. These conditions would not, of course, hinder land ops. The craft could maintain constant speed on a maximum grade of 1:10. Anything more than that, the vehicle would run out of speed and stop. If properly maneuvered, the craft could cross over an open ditch 8 to 10 feet wide and bounce over an obstacle 3 to 5 feet high. Air pressure in the cushion was 4 psi and, being spongy, the rubber skirt was not easily damaged. One thing to keep in mind here was that the deployment of these hovercraft in Vietnam was for “operational test and evaluation.” No one was sure what they were good for, but the Navy planned to find out. Initially, the operations were tentative to minimize damage. Roy will give us some highlights of the experiences he encountered during his deployment with PACV 107, Cat Lo, Vietnam in 1966 as office-in-charge.

The original mission of the PACV's in Vietnam was to mirror that of the Swift Boats. However, the PACV's were kept out of the rivers and were used, initially, to patrol the coastline about a mile offshore. With their radar and the use of lookouts, the craft could swoop in on a suspicious target even if they had to start their engine, providing they were drifting along for awhile. This area near Vung Tau was comprised mostly of fishermen and, after accomplishing this duty for a couple of months and with nothing of military value found, they went on to their next mission.

Roy, holding the M-16, and fellow officers, checks out a Vietnamese fishing boat during an evaluation exercise in May of 1966.



Search and rescue missions were next in line for the PACV's due to their high speed and quick response. Unlike a helicopter, the craft could stay on station indefinitely, but because of the lack of activity in their area of operations, it was felt that these missions were unjustified.

At this time, as Roy says, military planners wanted more out of the PACV's. It was decided to put them to patrolling the rivers all across the Mekong Delta. To enhance their survivability, orders were given not to patrol the same place twice. Interestingly, Roy noted that the sound of these hovercraft in the rivers with the echo effect bouncing off the banks apparently struck fear in the Vietnamese, friend and foe alike.

With the evaluation period ending, the Navy wanted to put the PACV's to a real test, now having survived several months of night river patrols.



They wanted to try out one more operation before putting them to the real test. The exercise was to place three PACV's in the well-deck of the USS Tortuga, LSD-26 (Landing Ship Dock.) *As seen at left* While operating several miles off shore, at least two of the PACV's would

launch from the well-deck and then proceed to take up their station near the coast. After completing this mission, the craft would return to the LSD's and dock in ship's well-deck. A few weeks of this test ended when the viability of this concept proved its worth.

It was time to put the PACV's to the real test that would determine its true functionality in a combat environment. All three craft departed Cat Lo and proceeded 150 miles up the My Tho River that ran through the head of the heart of the Mekong Delta and deep into the Plain of



Reeds to a location called Moc Hoa. This place was a few miles from the Cambodian border in an open area referred to as the Parrot's Beak. Joint operations took place with the Army Special Forces Advisors, Vietnamese troops along with Army and Navy helicopters. Because of limited US presence in this region, the VC used it as a haven. *Roy checks out his PACV in this photo.*

Roy talked of the PACV's operating in terrain such as rice paddies, over dykes, across canals, deep into trees and through tall grass. These were places where trucks and helicopters were limited. The PACV's could do it all. The weaponry on these craft gave them massive fire power: twin 50 caliber twin turret mounted machine guns, two side mounted M-60 machine guns. The craft could carry a 12-man Vietnamese rifle squad. These missions were to catch the Viet Cong by surprise resulting in the capture of as many as possible.

The operations described above turned out to be a success. Because of this, it was felt the PACV's could be returned to the U.S. having met their objective. The Navy planned to return the craft to Vietnam with freshly trained crews.

It was around this time that the Army decided to build their own PACV's using the lessons learned from the Navy.

Roy recalls a few incidents from that time that he felt were of interest to relate here. One took place after a night patrol out of Cat Lo. A PACV departed the base and, after rounding a turn in the river, two PBR's (Patrol River Boats) were returning to their base. The three craft would meet in a collision that resulted in the PACV bouncing up over the PBR, destroying it. Extensive damage was done on the PACV. Fortunately, no significant injuries occurred among the crews involved. All three craft made it back to their base but the damaged PBR was deemed unsalvageable. The PACV was repaired and returned to service within two weeks.

The next incident occurred during the Hoc Moa Operation when all three PACV's were returning to base. One of the craft developed control surface damage in either the elevator or rudder. Roy says he could not remember which. The damaged PACV stopped at their base but could not make it back to Cat Lo. A decision had to be made to either scuttle it or helevac it out of there. An enterprising sailor who was an engineering crewmember came up with a plan to replace a broken rod with a broomstick reinforced with a flattened sheet of a coke can as a temporary fix. Obviously, skepticism prevailed regarding this *jury rig fix*, but it worked and the craft made it back to Cat Lo.

Incident number three was tied to a weather event. While returning from a delta river patrol, a decision was made to go straight across the mouth of a large bay instead of skirting the coastline due to high winds and heavy seas, as well as fuel considerations. As luck would have it, the weather turned bad with the craft well out to sea; the crew decided to head for calmer waters. This move did not come soon enough. The craft was taking a beating with waves coming over the bow and slamming into the wind screen that eventually gave way, flooding the cabin with seawater. The crew, concerned about possible sinking, started throwing everything not tied down overboard. With the weather calming down and things returning to normal, the craft made it back to base.

As Roy aptly put it, this was the *End of The Line*. As a naval aviator, he was ready to move back into naval aviation as his one-year tour with the surface Navy's PACV's was coming to an end. As promised, Roy was in receipt of orders to the Naval Training Command as a Flight Instructor. Things would change, however. After his return to the amphibious base at Coronado, he learned that trained PACV O.I.C.'s that were reserve officers had reached the end of their service obligation and were being processed out. His orders were cancelled and he was told that he was to return with the PACV's while crews were being trained. The downside to this was that his aviation career was in jeopardy if he allowed this to happen. Fortunately, Roy was able to meet with an Admiral whom he was able to convince that he needed to get back into aviation. The Admiral obviously agreed with Roy's reasoning and had his orders to the Naval Training Command reinstated. Roy departed the amphibious base shortly thereafter. Roy did state that the little more than a year that he served with PACV's was the highlight of his twenty-eight-year career.

For those of us in the SCV who served in the Vietnam theater during those trying times and had our own experiences, we salute Roy for the part he played. There would be much more ahead in his future.



This Grumman A-6 Intruder All-Weather Attack Aircraft of VA-85, attached to the USS Forrestal, was now in Roy's future and, as he indicated me, that could be him flying this aircraft. Perhaps, another story for another day.

Much appreciation is extended to Compatriot Roy Adair for providing the data and photos of his tour in Vietnam for this article

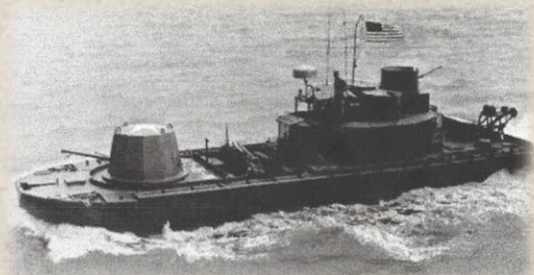
Jim Stephens

Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument

Saturday, October 14, 2023, Adjutant Jim Stephens, representing Camp 302, was pleased to be present at the monument located on the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, CA to present to Chuck Chaldeckas, Director of the VUMMF, the camp's annual \$150.00 donation to help with the replacement of state flags that adorn the monument. Also present was Robyn Adair of the



Stonewall Jackson Chapter 476. While there, Robyn and I had interesting conversations with several of the volunteers that keep the monument looking pristine on the small piece of land that the Navy has granted them. I enjoyed my talk with Steve Watson, *Far Right*, ENCM USN Ret who has done so much in building up the memorial to the way it is today. *Above left and right* Jim and Robyn Adair present their respective donation checks to Director Chaldeckas. We learned some interesting facts during this visit, like how little money in the way of donations come into the memorial fund and every cent given is well appreciated. Even though this monument is on Navy property, they offer no financial help and very little, if any, material help. Robyn and I learned that not all state flags seen above are represented, mainly because those states had no known participation in the Brown Water Navy. Robyn will look into determining those missing states. Below, *Left to Right*, are the three representative boats on display at the Memorial: A Command Control Boat called a Monitor, A Swift Boat and A PBR (Patrol Boat Riverine.) Unfortunately, a PACV is not on display.



Camp 302 Meets at Marie Callender's

Members and guests gathered at the camp's favorite local restaurant for lunch and business on September 9th, 2023, for the last in-person meeting for this year. We will all meet via ZOOM on November 11th. It was a good turnout with the following in attendance: Camp Commander Jim Millsap, Lieutenant Commander George Faircloth Treasurer Roy Adair and members Steve Perdue, Mike Schooling, Steve Musgrave, and Gary Faulk. A pleasure as always, Robert and Jane Zoch, and Robyn Adair were the camp's guests.



Clockwise from front: George Faircloth, Steve Musgrave, Gary Faulk, Robert Zoch, Jane Zoch, Robyn Adair, Mike Schooling, Steve Perdue, Roy Adair. Commander Millsap is the photographer.

Commander Millsap called the meeting to order and announced a quorum was present to present motions. He then gave the Invocation for the opening prayer followed by George Faircloth, starting off with the Pledge of Allegiance and followed by the Salute to the Confederate Flag. Treasurer Roy Adair gave his Treasurer's report, indicating a beginning balance of \$39,007.85 as of July 6, 2023, and a current balance of \$31,799.82. The largest transaction was the \$5,000.00 donation made in July at the National Convention in honor of Jim Taylor. Other expenses included \$1,435.00 paid out to National and Division for annual membership dues. Reimbursement to Commander Millsap for \$1,189.15 for travel and Gator Beach reimbursement. Incoming funds during this period were comprised of donations and incoming annual dues. A complete report is available upon request.

Commander Millsap gave an update to Adjutant Stephens' roster, showing the camp as having 35 members. He pointed out in the current issue of the Confederate Veteran Magazine for Sept/Oct, 2023, a new member in Camp 302 that he confirmed with National was in error and has since been corrected.

The remaining Camp Calendar was reviewed with the following events listed: The October 9th Black Powder Shoot, which has since been canceled, the November 11th camp meeting via ZOOM, and the December 16th Wreaths Across America.

The California Graves Guardian Program is a standing agenda item in the camp's schedule. Mike Schooling brought up some questions and was advised that information and guidelines, application and best practices can be found on the California Division's website, <http://californiascv.org>.

Under Old Business: Discussion on potential Community Service Projects for the future needs to be finalized for camp motion/vote as brought forward by George Faircloth: 1) Financial assistance to Boys and Girls clubs; 2) Disaster relief for victims of fire, flood, earthquake; 3) Food Banks; 4) Environmental restorations such as planting trees and post fire planting of Oak saplings due to massive die-off in California; 5) Financial support to the Red Cross and things like blood donations; 6) Support of veterans groups; and 7) Donations to Meals-on-Wheels.

Mike Schooling made a **motion** that was seconded by Roy Adair to make a \$100.00 donation to the San Diego Food Bank, the North County San Diego Food Bank and the Lions, Tigers, and Bears Sanctuary for a total of \$300.00. During the **Discussion**, it was decided to make this a one-time donation. However, each year the camp will make a motion and discuss what community service project the camp wants to make next that are not SCV related to have greater recognition for the SCV in the community.

The **Vote was taken and passed unanimously**. Adjutant Stephens will draft checks to those organizations soon.

New Business: Commander Millsap brought to the meeting 1 of 7 boxes of books that Chaplain Jim Coulsby donated from his private library to the camp. A few of the members in attendance took a few and Jane Zoch accepted the remainder of the box. **For future events**, those present agreed that the USS Midway tour was a great success and would like to have this as an annual event. A memorial service for Confederate Veterans followed by a luncheon was another suggested event among others.

Robyn Adair gave a brief presentation on Civil War veteran Colonel John Collis

Moore, CSA. Col. Moore was the 1st commander of the UCV chapter in San Diego (John Hunt, Morgan Camp 1198).

Do we continue the Annual Black Powder Musket Shoot? Commander Millsap mentioned that only 5 folks RSVP'd for the upcoming shoot in October. It takes 8 minimum attendees @\$20.00 each to pay for the range at South Bay Rod & Gun Club. The event may have to be cancelled due to lack of attendance. A request was made to look at a different month next year. Unfortunately, this gun club is the only one in San Diego County that allows a small group to rent an entire range for black powder shooting.

At this time, business ended and the meeting was closed.



Commander's Message



Greetings – I attended the Old Wild West Days event in Randsburg, California on September 16th to support the Tehachapi Bakersfield Camp 2048 with their fundraising and recruiting efforts. Camp 2048 has a booth there and they sell flags as a fundraiser. They also have recruiting tools available for interested parties. The event was a great success as the camp raised several hundred dollars in sales, as well as in donations. Several passing folk were interested in learning more about the SCV and were greeted by Camp 2048 members manning the booths.

These photos show the color guard during the opening of the ceremony. Camp 2048 members Zane Welsh, Jim Howard, Nolan Street, and Russ Person were present, but not in the photos. Russ also played reveille at the flag-raising on main street.

The group celebrated Caleb Jackson's 22nd birthday after the event at the eatery called the "Vault" with BBQ and a birthday cake for Caleb.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the annual black powder shoot this year due to lack of RSVP's prior to the event on October 7th. The UDC convention in Bakersfield that same weekend may have had an impact. We will evaluate the musket shoot for next year to see if we want to move the date or schedule a new event instead.

Our next camp meeting will be via ZOOM on November 11th. Look for an E-mail invite from Adjutant Stephens.

Your vigilant Commander, Jim Millsap

