

RANCH HAND - VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

INCORPORATED

COWBOYS,

Sorry your semi annual newsletter is 6 months late. If you noticed the heading of this letter, that's right, we are officially incorporated as a non-profit organization. All \$\$ sent to us is now deductible. A permanent Board of Directors was appointed consisting of all former Ranch Commanders. Russ Mohney, Ralph Dresser, Bob Dennis, Don Steward, Art McConnell, Rex Stoner and Bud Fisher fill these slots for us. Fitting recognition for up with the likes of us. Other folks elected for one year terms to various positions were Ray Lemaire, Paul Clanton, Pete Spivey and myself. Our incorporators were Jack Womack, Mick Mikolasy, Marv Zepf, Burk Mucho, Doug Riffey, Len Bochicchio, Stan Phillips, Mike Topolosky, Tom Boone, Hugh Scott, Tom Quinn, Dewey Barich, Walt Weston, Ed Kraft and Chuck Davenport.

Our reunion at the Sheraton Hotel in Dayton was typical. Folks flew in from all over the U.S., the Dayton Flight hosted it and we are still getting bills from the management of the Sheraton for some of our over exuberance. We must have done well since the Dayton police undercover vice squad used our 7th floor corner suite as a command post for a bust (of locals) they were working on. I'm happy to report none of our folks have forgotten their radio procedures. Every time one of the hippie dressed cops would set his radio down to use his binoculars to spy on the folks they were after, a helpful cowboy would make a transmission like "take 'em down cowboys" or "groundfire on the right" which just boggled the mind of the police dispatcher. The fuzz joined us for a few, and thanked us for our public spiritedness.

I would like your comments on the attached sheet as to where to hold the next reunion. We have received a great deal of publicity from Harlingen Texas trying to get us to use their convention facilities next year. Obviously they don't know too much about us. Once again I want to thank the Dayton Flight for hosting this one, it was handled in an outstanding manner and all details were covered. It was a real bell ringer.

Other items: Bill Knothe has been medically retired with what appears to be Parkinson's disease. I have been in close contact with the medics on this as some doubt exists as to whether it could have been Ranch-associated due to the chemicals we were in contact with. If any of you think you have any Ranch-related ailments keep me informed. The medics and the JAGs know who we are and that we are concerned as an organization.

I do have updated rosters and they are available if you request one. So many of our folks are retiring, there are a larger number of changes. Also, we have tracked down more cowboys and now number more than 600. I still need more names of the early and the very last cowboys.

Again, I must ask for your best efforts in sending me donations with your replies to keep this thing going. The incorporation just about wiped out our kitty and we have things we need to do in the next six months. "Patches" was scheduled to be flown to the reunion, but Bernie Shearon and Patches were diverted on another mission at the last minute. We need funds to put a proper plaque on Patches when it goes to the AF Musuem.

Bad News: John Beakley after 3 tours in SEA and an ejection from a T-33 last year, was fatally injured this summer in a car accident. John was an outstanding Ranch Hand and outstanding in everything he did. A great loss to his family, to us, and to the Air Force.

Good News: The Ranch is alive and swell, our fight to get the Vietnamese wings officially recognized is still kicking around the AF Uniform Board - no reply yet. We need \$\$\$ desperately (always will). We will have our 9th (count 'em) 9th annual reunion next spring, and there are more of us than ever! Hang in there and support the program. Thanks for your support - you're the greatest.

TO THE RANCH



President Ranch Hand Vietnam