

Museum News

June 2011



NVWM Represented in Georgia

By Colette Lemmon

The National Vietnam War Museum will be represented in Demorest, Georgia at the unprecedented dedication of a new middle school named for Hilliard Almond Wilbanks (pictured at left), killed in action in 1967. United States Air Force Capt. Wilbanks, then serving as a Forward Air Controller in Southeast Asia, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his selfless actions to protect a South Vietnamese Ranger battalion from a devastating ambush by North Vietnamese forces. No school in Habersham County has ever been directly named for an individual. Speaking about this break with tradition, the school board declared, "It was the right thing to do."



The dedication will feature a formal ceremony and open house on August 13, 2011 from 10 AM – 2 PM. Stations will be set up onsite so that attendees can learn about Capt. Wilbanks, his life, and his sacrifice. The NVWM was honored to be asked to participate by granting permission to screen a video that we produced for our "Tribute: Expressions of Loss and Remembrance by Vietnam Veterans" exhibit (Fort Worth Community Arts Center, 2009) as part of the day's activities. The video presents the

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Friends Fundraiser Raises Fun and Funds



Glen McEntire stands beside the painting donated at the event by Vietnam Veteran and artist James Nelson. The theme was western this year and Glen chose to dress appropriately.

You helped us raise over \$20,000 this year, and created a great evening. Sponsors included **Judge:** Baum Carlock Bumgardner Funeral Home and Betty Boyd Dettre. **Sheriff:** Palo Pinto General Hospital, Bob Ford, Don & Leigh Payne, First Financial Bank, Bryan & Megan Horton, Virginia Upham, Allan & Helen Jane Werst, Roger Williams Chrysler Dodge Jeep, Dave & Kathy Boswell. **Deputy:** Richard Hanson, Paul & Sanna Roling, Bar Double Ought Ranch, John & Sandra Lawrence, John & Monica Chesnut, **Constable:** continued on page 3

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story of Hilliard's final hours with music by songwriter and fellow FAC Jonathan Myer and air to ground footage and stills contributed by the Wilbanks family and others.

The museum is also contributing a copy of the complete video, which features additional song elegies by Myer and Dick Jonas, to the school to be incorporated into their annual Veterans Day programs.

Military and civilian representation at the Dedication Day event will be notable. The International Birddog Association has committed to a flyby, weather permitting. The 17th Air Support Operations Squadron from Ft. Benning, Georgia, will be in attendance and a jet flyby is also in the works.

Long after the opening day excitement has lulled, Wilbanks's legacy will continue to inspire generations of students. Those who will attend when the school opens this September chose the school mascot. The students were given three choices: Patriots, Big Cats, or Cavaliers. Aptly, they selected the "Patriots." Plans for a fantastic mural for the school gym are already underway. In it Hilliard will be represented flying his small unarmed O-1E through the clouds. To the left side of his plane a Revolutionary soldier will hold the American flag. To its right, a contemporary female soldier will be shown saluting. Underneath the plane, the artist will include "Wilbanks Patriots" on a wing insignia. A display area will also be designated in the school to house some of Hilliard's memorabilia - tangible reminders of a father, son, and soldier who lived, and died, with rare and uncompromising dedication to duty.

As the National Vietnam War Museum we are grateful for the opportunity to extend our support and education efforts to other parts of our nation and honored to play a small role in

the success of this upcoming event. Friends and members of the museum are welcome to attend. For information contact: Patricia Wilbanks DeWitt, 1402 Stratford Hall Court, Grayson, GA 30017 or :

<http://hilliardawilbanksfoundation.com>.

Reflection Garden

Dustin Rollings sends his thanks to all who supported his work towards his Eagle Scout Award. A special thanks to sponsors: Daryl Rollings, Sandra Midkiff, William Warren, VFW Post 2399, Harris Brooks, Max & Tracy Smith, Boy Scout Troop 142, Powell Auto Center, First Financial Bank, Wayne Franke, Daryl Rollings, William McCalister, Laurie Mauldin, 170th Assault Helicopter Company.

With the completion of this first phase of the gardens, volunteers and Master Gardeners will begin work on the remaining parts of the Reflection Garden. The first step was the installation of flagpoles to support flags of our allies in the Vietnam War; Australia, New Zealand, The Philippines, The Republic of Korea, The Republic of Vietnam, and Thailand.

Founders Association

The Founders Association continues to grow. New members since our last newsletter are:

Jim & Neda Vines

Jim & Jill Parker

Harry Jones

Ed & Joanne McKee

This latest addition to the Founders Association brings the total membership to 93. You should be a member also. We need all of you to help.

The mission of the museum is:

To promote an understanding
of the Vietnam era
while honoring those who served.

Constables

Mike & Janet Holland, Jack & Susie Lowey, Fran Acosta-Carlson M.D., Don & Diane Brawley, American Legion Post 163, Bobby & Pat Bazzell, Ron & Penny Chandler, James & Terri Collins, Col Robert Cooper USAF (Ret), Julian Driscoll, Vern & Constnace Eppley, Harry & Debra Fisher, Joe Gray, Dan Kauth, Bob & Nicky Lakey, John & Jennie Sue Mackel, Ed & Joanne McKee, Norm & Margaret McMullen, Joseph Paladino, Jim Parker, Scott Paternoster, Laine Perry, Mr & Mrs Nicholas Petrera, Pat & Elizabeth Richardson, Wayne & Ginny Sanderson, Steve & Debbie Smith, Texas Assn of Vietnam Veterans Austin Chapter, John & Ludonna Tipton, Sylvia Vines, Wallace Voss, Thomas Wills, and Win-Gen Power.

Mark June 2, 2012 on your calendar now for next years event titled "Spring in Paris." The Friends of the Museum will host their annual event at the Holiday Hills Country Club in Mineral Wells.

Womens' Memorial

This Spring the local Zonta Foundation established an endowment fund to be used to create a memorial to the women who served in Vietnam. If you are interested in helping with this wonderful project, please contact the museum or send in your donations. We will be working on a plan, then a budget. We hope to have a plan ready next year.

Coming Events

July 9 - Peach Festival, Weatherford, TX. Friends of the museum will set up the gift shop

September 24 - Our annual Ultra Run; run From the Ducks at Clark Gardens. For details, visit the website:
www.8HRFD.com

The "Last" Huey

Recently, many people have sent in a copy of a speech, given at Ft Rucker, about the last Huey. It was not the last Huey in the Army, only the last Huey at Ft Rucker. Those of you at our wall update, saw a Huey from Ft Hood that is on active duty and there are two more like it at Ft Hood. The Huey is still there! In a few years, they will be turned over to civilian contractors, but they will still be carrying people around Ft Hood. Just like the jeep from earlier times, there will always be Hueys.

Internet Service Now at the Museum

We always wanted and needed Internet service at the museum and only wondered how we would be able to afford it. Well, our friends at Skybeam solved our problem by donating wireless Internet service. We can now e-mail, and research using the high speed capability of their service...thanks Skybeam.

Audited Financials

Our audit was a little slow last year, but the results are in and here's the basics:

Total revenue for 2009 – \$ 144,715

Expenses

Program – \$ 48,333

Fundraising - \$ 3,619

Administrative – \$ 22,783

End of Year Net Assets – \$ 615,429

Program Expense Ratio 65% (Goal > 65%)

Fundraising Expense Ratio 3% (Goal < 35%)

NOTES-

1. Administrative expenses remain low as we are an all volunteer project and have no paid employees.
2. Fundraising expenses remain low as we focus on face to face fundraising.



P.O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76068-0146

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The New Wilbanks School to be Dedicated in August (story on page 1)