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Cobra pilots from 1969 and 1970.

### **Membership Info**

Life Membership has been lowered to \$125 (from \$185). **Join for Life Now.** Or, pay your \$20 annual dues.

Send your check to: Bob Brown 6311 Mission Hills Drive San Antonio, TX 78244-2701

### 114TH AVIATION COMPANY ASSOCIATION

# KNIGHT LETTER

### **DIRECTOR'S FORUM**

Hello! I hope that 2025 is finding you all happy and healthy. The 2023 reunion, held in Colorado Springs, was hosted by Joe and Cindy Stogner and their dedicated family. They do a spectacular job and we are fortunate to have them in our association.

Sadly, in 2024 we lost Pete Anderson, our newsletter publisher. His wife, Jean, passed away three weeks later. In December, we lost Jerry Eatherly, Cobra Lead in 1970 and, on March 2, we lost Doc Cole at 94, the unit's 1st physician. This is a stark reminder that none of us are leaving this earth alive.

So, I want to encourage all of you who have not yet participated to investigate signing up for an Honor Flight to Washington DC to visit the Vietnam Memorial and the

others. The Honor Flight Network (Honorflight.org) will celebrate its 20th year of operation soon. It started in 2005 with the focus of World War II veterans. They fly over 22,500 veterans annually. It is a one-day opportunity to celebrate veterans. There is no cost for veterans, and you are worth it.

They have expanded their efforts to include Korean and Vietnam Veterans.

There are 128 hubs across the country. I had the honor of going on a flight last September. It is well worth it.

Warmest Regards, Jeff Carr

#### **Jeff Carr Contact Information:**

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## 2025 Reunion

### **Town & Country Inn and Suites**

2008 Savannah Highway Charleston, SC 29407 Charleston, SC May 5<sup>th</sup> - May 8<sup>th</sup>

### Reservations

843-571-1000 \$146/night before taxes

**Registration Form on Page 10** 

### **VETERAN UPDATE**



### Whole Health: Information For Veterans

Using the power of the mind to support health and well-being is not new, but it may be new to you. Bio-feedback can help decrease your blood pressure, lower muscle tension and pain, and improve other areas of your health.

Biofeedback is a process that uses your body's own signals like heart rate and body temperature to bring about healthy changes. Whole Health is an approach to health care that empowers and enables YOU to take charge of your health and well-being and live your life to the fullest. It starts with YOU. It is fueled by the power of knowing yourself and what will really work for you in your life.

Whole

Health

All resources provided in these handouts are re-viewed by VHA clinicians and Veterans. No endorsement of any specific products is intended.

### va.gov/wholehealth

The link above will take you to the page with all necessary information.

### **Update Your Address and Contact Information Online**

Are you moving, currently receiving benefits or prescriptions, or enrolled in VA health care and want to know how to change your address? You can update your personal contact information anytime, anywhere through VA.gov. Log in or create a free VA.gov account to-day!

# MEDAL OF HONOR FOR CAPTAIN HUGH R. NELSON JR.

One of our members, Captain Hugh R. Nelson Jr., had his award for valor upgraded to the Medal of Honor. It was presented to his daughter this fall. Below is an exerpt about the battle from his Medal of Honor page on the U.S. Army's website.

You can read the full article here: army.mil/medalofhonor/nelson



#### The Battle

Protecting a fellow soldier's life at the cost of his own

June 5, 1966 | Near Moc Hoa, Republic of Vietnam

114th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)

Capt. Hugh R. Nelson, Jr., distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a member of the 114th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light) on June 5, 1966, near Moc Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. Nelson was the acting aircraft commander of a Huey helicopter on a search-and-destroy reconnaissance mission when it was struck by a large volume of enemy fire that rendered the aircraft virtually uncontrollable.

With great difficulty, Nelson and the pilot were able to crash-land the aircraft without lateral controls. At some point after the crash, Nelson exited the aircraft and went to the aid of his wounded comrades.

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# Peter E. Anderson

Peter E. Anderson, 79, passed away on Sunday, June 23, 2024 at the East Orange VA Medical Center and his wife, Dorothy Jean, 78, passed away nearly three weeks after on Thursday, July 11, 2024 at JFK Medical Center in Edison.

Peter was born in Plainfield and grew up in Westfield. While serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, he lived in Germany with his wife Jean and following his return back to the United States the couple resided in Roselle prior to settling to Piscataway in 1980.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1966-1969. During his active duty service Peter was awarded the National Defense Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service and Campaign Medals, Two Overseas

Bars and the Marksman Badge M-14.

For over 20 years Peter worked at Rutgers University and for several years at UMDNJ where he became

highly respected which led to several lifelong friendships with colleagues and students.

Peter's life was filled with laughter love and joy. He enjoyed taking care of plants and flowers inside and outside of his home. He loved spending time with his family and friends. Peter and his wife Jean were always there for anyone in need. Peter adored his beautiful wife Jean, loved his entire family, and was always there for any friend that needed him. Peter enjoyed traveling all over the country and abroad with his family and friends. He traveled from Canada to many countries in Europe including Norway which was his dream trip to see where his ancestors were from and also back to Germany where he and his wife lived while in the Army. Peter was extremely proud of his military service and continued to show support as he was

part of key personnel in the 114th Aviation Company Association assisting with newsletters and communication.

Peter is survived by his son, David Anderson of Pennsylvania; brothers, Frank Anderson of Arizona, Bruce Anderson of Roselle and Donald Anderson and his wife Judy of Plainfield. In addition also surviving are numerous extended relatives and friends.



### Carl Leonard Conley

Capt. Conley was a man who valued family and country. He was born in Bakersfield California on December 19, 1940. He joined the army at the young age of 17 and one day. He proudly served three tours in Vietnam before retiring after 22 years of service. After retiring he earned a Bachelor of Science in business from Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

He was proceeded in death by his beloved parents Hugh and Nelly Ethel Conley, brother Eddie Conley and sister Lahoma Clark, loving wife Carol Conley, eldest daughter Charlotte Conley, and eldest grandson Michael Harris.

Those left behind to cherish his memory are his children Debbie (Bobby) Dunno of Seward, AK., Kenneth "Jay"(Tiffany) AuBuchon of East Bernard, TX., Colleen (Brian) Benefield of Natchitoches, LA., Stacy (Terry) Henderson of Leander, TX. Charlene (Dennis) Harper of Blacklake, LA. He also leaves behind 16 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Also, a special friend and constant companion Mary Jane Mclaughin, as well as a host of nieces and nephews.

Capt. Conley was a brother of freemasonry and Past Master of the Sugarland Mosaic lodge.

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# Elmer Melvin "Mel" Cook

Elmer Melvin "Mel" COOK (CW-4 U.S. Army Retired) passed away peacefully in his sleep on Leap Day, February 29, 2024, at home in Alexandria, VA, with his wife Bette and son Joe by his side. He succumbed, at age 97, to congestive heart failure.

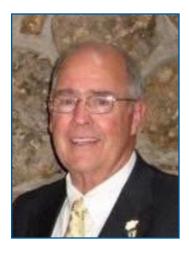
Born on October 7, 1926, in Delavan, IL, Mel was a descendant of military men who fought in every war this country has been engaged. Mel continued the legacy and served 32 years in the U.S. Army through three wars -World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam – entering the military as a Private in 1945 and retiring in 1980 as a Chief Warrant Officer W-4. Among the many medals and awards he received during his military career were the Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service, Air Medals, Army Commendation, and Purple Heart. The capstone of Mel's career was induction into the Army Aviation Hall

of Fame where he was cited as "the epitome of the finest traits and capabilities of our flying warrant officers." In 2000, he was invited by President William J. Clinton to accompany his final Presidential delegation to visit Vietnam. In Mel's mind, however, his most important honor was being the father of his son Joseph and a loving husband to Bette. Of their 67 years together, Bette remembers Mel's romantic side and their special times like horseback riding on a Caribbean beach.

Some highlights from Mel's exceptional career include:

• In 1945-46 during WWII in the Asian-Pacific Theater, he later found he was scheduled to participate in the invasion of Japan, which was negated by Japan's surrender, thus end-

Continued on page 6



### Lane Russel Ramsdell

Lane Russel Ramsdell, age 81, of Harker Heights, Texas passed away on February 5, 2025. Born on December 6, 1943, in Santa Barbara, California.

Lane was preceded in death by his wife, Donna Kay Miller; parents, George and Barbara Ramsdell, his brother Albert Ramsdell; sister, Peggy Pruett, and his nephew Benjamin Ramsdell and niece Barbara Isaacs.

He leaves behind his beloved son and best friend, Patrick (Shannon) Ramsdell, his stepchildren Ricky (Jacqie) Hill, Randy (Donna) Hill, Kelly (Billy) Ruch, and his four nieces, Cathy (Steve) Ruesch, Cari (Tom) Zocco, Lisa (Larry) Fierro, and Lisa (John) Patter-

son. Lane had a fierce love for all of his family and would do anything to help any family members. Lane had only recently met his nieces Cari and Lisa (Patterson) who were adopted as infants. This brought him great joy.

Lane was a faithful patriot to his country. He served in the US Army from 1963-66, functioning as a Crew Chief on UH-1 Huey helicopters during his tour in Vietnam.

After leaving the Army, he had numerous jobs and in order to support his growing family, he decided to re-enlisted in the Army in 1972 and was stationed at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky as part of the 101st Airborne Division serving as a Crew Chief on CH-47 AND AH-1 Cobra helicopters. He served until 1987.

While in Vietnam, he was part of the elite 114th Aviation Company, later serving as National Director of the 114th Aviation Company Association. Lane was very proud of the opportunity to be a leader in this role. He was awarded the esteemed Purple Heart and Bronze Star (with a "V" Device)

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# Jerry Wayne Eatherly

Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Wayne Eatherly, aged 82, of Fairfax Station, VA, passed away peacefully at home on December 8, 2024.

Born on November 26, 1942, in Lebanon Tennessee, Jerry was the son of Edgar William Eatherly & Barbara Wylene Philpot Eatherly, and the oldest of four children.

A dedicated and highly respected member of the U.S. Army, Jerry served his country with honor for 20 years, joining in 1967 and retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1987.

He was a decorated officer, having served two tours as a Cobra pilot in Vietnam and one tour in Korea.

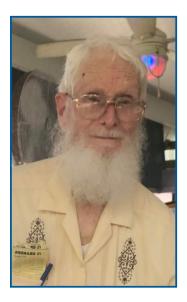
Jerry attended Murfrees-

boro Central High School, Middle Tennessee State University, The University of Tennessee, and obtained his Master's degree at Kansas State University. After retiring from the Army, Jerry went on to found

Technology Concepts & Designs Inc. (TCDI), an IT services and software development company. He also worked as a Computer Operating Systems Developer for the U.S. Department of State from 1980 to 1985, and later served as a Senior Management Analyst with The Prospective Group.

Jerry is survived by his beloved wife, Deborah "Debbie" Briggs Eatherly, and their son, William Goodbar Eatherly, born in 1996; his siblings Jack Eatherly (Susan), Jill Eatherly, and Jeff Eatherly (Shelley); as well as many cousins, nieces, and nephews. He will also be greatly missed by his two parrots, Max and Mosby, and his two cavachons, Zelda and Link.

He was a devoted father and loved spending time with Will, whether coaching his football team or a scout leader of his boy scout troop. He also passed on to his son his passion for sport cars, boats, and motorcycles. His interest in anything technical meant the house was always full of the latest gaming console and equipment.



# **Edward Fowler Cole**

Colonel US Army Retired, Master of Public Health, Senior Flight Surgeon. He was born as an Army brat at Vanderbilt University Medical School Hospital 24 March 1930 while his Father was professor of the Vanderbilt Medical ROTC.

Growing up he lived in

Fort Barrancas, Florida, Carlise Pennsylvania, Panama Canal Zone, San Francisco, Dallas, Savannah Beach, New Orleans, and Santa Fe, attending 12 different schools before graduating from high school in Orlando. After one year as an undergraduate at Vanderbilt he entered service for the first time in a pilot program for Universal Military Training under the 1948 draft act. Released after one year, he entered the University of Florida, receiving a BS degree and an appointment as a second lieutenant in the field artillery.

Informed that Congress had changed the draft act and his prior service did not exempt him, he entered service for the second time. Released after 21 months, he was accepted for medical school at Vanderbilt, graduating in 1960 with an MD and commission as first lieutenant Medical Corps.

Interned at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas, then entered the aviation medicine program, training at Brooks Air Force Base and Ft Rucker. After serving at Ft Jay, Governor's Island,

Continued on page 7

PAGE 5 WINTER 2025

### Cook

Continued from page 4 ing the war, and saving millions of lives, including Mel's!

- He returned to the Army in 1950 after a five-year civilian stint to further his education. This time, Mel was assigned to Japan under different circumstances and enjoyed meeting the people and learning their culture.
- Mel was accepted into the U.S. Military Attache service and assigned to the American Embassy in Tunisia in 1959-61. There, in his off-duty pursuit, he earned the first private pilot license - Tunisian Government License #4 (the first three licenses were honorary) - issued by the newly independent country. In 2019, he was invited to meet with staff, students, and spouses of the Attache course at Fort Meade, MD, to talk about the differences 60 years ago in the Attache field!
- Mel was also granted an age waiver (he was five years over the 30-year age cap) to attend the first class of the re-opened U.S. Army Primary Helicopter School in 1961. As a graduate rotary-wing pilot, he trained at Fort

Knox, KY, and deployed as the advance party to set up camp in Vietnam for the 114th Aviation Company, the first air mobility unit in combat. For a Master Paratrooper trained to jump from airplanes into combat, this was a welcomed way to be transported into battle.

- Mel was quickly transferred from Vinh Long to the U.S. Army Support Command headquarters in Saigon to serve as Assistant Aviation Officer and personal pilot for Commanding General Joseph Stilwell, son of the famous WWII "Vinegar Joe." Stilwell chose not only to command the air missions but also to be Mel's aircraft door gunner. Holes in the aircraft after combat missions were not uncommon.
- During two assignments (1965-68 and 1970-74) with the Aviation Warrant Officer Branch at the Pentagon, Mel participated in the rapid expansion of the Warrant Officer aviation program from 1,700 to 7,000 pilots, and the development of studies and plans that resulted in the creation of a new W-5 rank. In 2019, Mel was invited to meet with W-5 officers at a professional development session at the U.S. Army

Intelligence and Security Command headquarters at Fort Belvoir and was pleased to learn the impact his work had on the Warrant Officer Corps was still being felt today.

- While a dual-rated fixed wing pilot at the Priority Air Transport Division, Fort Belvoir, VA, Mel served as a personal pilot for Secretary of the Army, Clifford Alexander, the first Black Army secretary, who granted him a waiver of the 30-year retirement requirement for Regular Army personnel. While mandatory retirement was not waived at that time, it has become more common today.
- · After retirement, Mel served 18 years as the Director of Play at Army Navy Country Club, Arlington, VA, where he was privileged to become a friend and golf partner with a President. On September 11, 2001, while standing on the first tee, he witnessed an airplane fly low overhead and down the hill into the Pentagon. In shock and distress, Mel spent the day sending staff in golf carts down the hill to assist workers leaving the Pentagon for the clubhouse to call their families, rest, and recover.

• Mel continued military camaraderie through professional associations such as the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA). the National Museum of the U.S. Army (founding member), Friends of the National World War II Memorial in Washington DC, U.S. Army Warrant Officer Association, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, 114th Aviation Company "Knights of the Air", American Legion (Auxiliary Post 39), and Army Navy Country Club.

Mel will be dearly missed by his family and friends. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Bette Mayes, and son Joseph Cook of Alexandria, VA; nephews Gale Johnson and wife Karen, Douglas Johnson, Dennis Johnson and wife Tina, Patrick Baillargeon, and Christopher Baillargeon; nieces Patricia Nelson Halper and husband Wayne, and Cynthia Oryall Gregg; and many loving grandchildren and great-grandchildren. is preceded in death by his mother Josephine Van Buskirk and father Joseph Melvin Cook, sister JoAnn Cook Johnson and husband George, and nephews Robert Nelson and James Leroy Tauberschmidt.

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### Ramsdell

Continued from page 4 while serving in Vietnam.

Upon honorable discharge, Lane worked for AmCom, supporting the Aviation Missile Command in numerous locations, including Bosnia, Somalia and Iraq.

Lane married the love of his life, Donna Kay Miller, and was blessed with sharing their life together for 53 years until her death in 2021. Together, they had a lot of fun, especially traveling to reunions with Lane's military buddies.

Lane's son, Patrick, was his greatest pride and joy. Patrick had those same feelings about his dad. He was extremely proud of his father's military service. They spent many years enjoying fishing, golfing, camping and traveling, making many cross-country trips moving from base to base.

Patrick and his wife, Shannon, played a significant role in Lane's care until his move to the William R. Courtney State Veterans Home where he remained until his death.

In 1974, Lane became a proud Mason of Queen

City Lodge in Clarksville, TN. Upon moving to Texas, his membership transferred to Mount Horeb Lodge in Mohomet, TX. Once he moved to Harker Heights, he then moved his membership to the Killeen Masonic Lodge, and continued his membership until he passed away.

The family would like to thank the nurses and aides at William R. Courtney State Veterans Home, his hospice nurse Christine Williams, Social Worker Maggie Plaster, and Chaplain Mallory Fredrick of Halcyon Hospice.



### Cole

Continued from page 5 New York City (with a stint at the University of Southern California) he went to Viet Nam.

On his return he entered into the residency in Aerospace Medicine, earning a Masters of Public Health at Harvard, taking a didactic year at Brooks Air Force Base, and a clinical year at Ft Rucker.

He has served at Ft Wolters, Texas, Bad Kreuznach, Germany, attended Command and General Staff College, Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, was on Bright Star 83 in Egypt, and commanded the Army Aviation Medical Activity, Ft Rucker and Medical Department Activity, Ft Sheridan, Illinois.

He completed his military service of 39 years in St Louis as the medical waiver authority for the Army Reserves, and has received the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, five Air Medals, Combat Medical Badge, and Order of Military Medical Merit among other honors, awards, and decorations.

He enjoyed a quiet retirement in Masaryktown, Florida. Ned and Jane, his wife of 71 years, also enjoyed participating in dinner theater productions, playing with computers, genealogy research, travels to Viet Nam reunions with the 114th, and visits to their children and grandchildren.

They have six children: Dorothea Cole (Kenji Nakagawa), Katherine Appleton (Larry), Edward, Jr (Candy), Elizabeth Tate (Steve), Lester, and Brenda Morgan (Eric). They have 22 grandchildren

and 18 great grandchildren with one more on the way along with one greatgreat grandchild on the way. His family is scattered throughout the US.



If you know of someone's passing, but an obituary has not been published, please let a member of the EC know so that we can share it.

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### **Key Personnel** -

#### National Director Jeff Carr

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#### Web Master Terry A. Dell

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### Reunion Committee Chairman Joe Stogner

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### Newsletter Editor May Jones / Joe Stogner

PO Box 924 Manning, SC 29102 843-707-5486 island2farm@pm.me

### Medal

Continued from page 2

Proceeding to the other side of the aircraft, he found his dazed and wounded crew chief still trapped inside. After removing the specialist and placing him on the ground, Nelson climbed into the severely damaged helicopter to assist the door gunner, who was still strapped inside and unable to move.

While Nelson tried to free his comrade, the insurgents engaged the aircraft with a heavy volume of automatic rifle and small-arms fire at a range of approximately thirty feet from the aircraft. Despite the heavy enemy fire, Nelson continued his gallant efforts, freeing the trapped door gunner despite being hit by enemy fire. Upon removing the wounded door gunner from the aircraft, he forced the specialist to the ground and, without regard for his own life, used his body as a shield to cover his comrade from the intense enemy fire. Nelson was hit several times as he sacrificed his own life to save his comrade.

His selfless sacrifice allowed his wounded comrade to use a smoke grenade to signal supporting aircraft in the area that there were crash survivors. The supporting aircraft responded immediately, preventing the insurgents from advancing on the downed aircraft and successfully rescuing the three wounded crew members.

Nelson's conscious decision to sacrifice his own life for that of his comrades saved the lives of his three fellow crew members that fateful day. Nelson's distinctive accomplishments are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon him, his unit and the United States Army.

The Knight Letter is seeking your stories and photos. No one else can tell your story. And everyone else wants to read it.

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## HERITAGE OF THE 114<sup>th</sup> AVIATION COMPANY

- First UH-1 Huey airmobile company deployed to Vietnam directly from the U.S.
- Developed airmobile tactics for all who came later.
- Performed the first Army night heliborne troop reinforcement.
- Participated in 16 of the 17 official campaigns of the Vietnam war.
- Trained U.S. Navy 'Seawolves' crews in early 1967.
- Trained Vietnamese Air Force pilots during 'Vietnamization' period before withdrawal.
- Was the original 'Cobra' unit, for which Bell Helicopter later named its AH-1G super gunship, the 'HueyCobra.'
- First unit to have Hueys exceed 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 individual flight hours.
- First Huey unit to reach 10,000 and 100,000 combined flight hours.
- Flew missions in all four Military Combat Zones (Corps) in Vietnam plus Cambodia and Thailand.
- Flew all Bell models, UH-1B, C, D, H, and AH-1G in Vietnam.
- Only unit to field two transport and two gunship platoons simultaneously.
- First helicopter unit to have its entire gunship platoon the Cobras - accepted into the American Fighter Pilots Association.

# 1 Picture is Worth 1000 Memories



The ladies of the 114th



Bob and Cathy Codney



Gene Boyle and George Bradley

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# 114TH AVIATION COMPANY "KNIGHTS OF THE AIR" 2025 Reunion Registration Charleston, SC May 5th - May 8th

**Mail/Email Your Reunion Registration to:** 

Jeff Carr • 84 The Woodlands, Gladstone, MO 64119 jandmcarr@comcast.net • Cell: 253.255.4006

**TOTAL** 

Memb	er Name <b>-</b> ↑				
Guest'	s Name 🗅				
Addre	SS ♪				
City →			State → Zip/Postal Code →		
Teleph	ione (please inclu	ude area code) ♪			
Email	<b>1</b>				
MON, MAY 5	Arrival and	Welcome reception w/light meal – Hospitality room	# of adults x \$20 =	\$	
	Registration	Hospitality room and administrative costs	# of adults x \$35 =	\$	
TUES, MAY 6	Morning	Tour of the "Hunley" Civil War Submarine built in 1863	#attendingx\$20=	\$	
		Lunch on your own.			
	Afternoon	Group Tour of Patriot's Point including the Yorktown, Vietnam Experience and the Medal of Honor Museum	#attendingx\$25=	\$	
WEDS, MAY 7	Morning	Business Meeting 9:00 to 10:30 AM			
	Afternoon	Free time to enjoy the many sights of Charleston.			
	Evening	Harbor Dinner Cruise 6:00PM to 9:00PM 4 course meal aboard the Spirit of Carolina.	#attendingx\$75=	\$	
HURS, MAY 8	Morning & Afternoon	Valious tours of the city of charlestoff to be affiliable a.			
rhurs,	Evening	Plated dinner at the hotel. Choice of menu items will be sent later.	#attendingx\$25=	\$	

Please make your check payable to: 114th Aviation Co Assn

For those wishing to pay with a credit card, please email the registration form to jandmcarr@comcast.net and call Jeff Carr at 253.255.4006 to securely make your payment.

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