

By Louis Hansen
The Virginian-Pilot
© July 1, 2009

VIRGINIA BEACH A few years ago at a reunion for Navy sailors and airmen, Clarence Cooper met two men he'd seen just once - Sept. 14, 1968. It was a hot and humid afternoon when North Vietnamese troops ambushed Cooper's supply ship on the river outside Vinh Long.

Rockets streamed from the bank, blasted through bulkheads and drove shrapnel into the small crew. The sailors unloaded on the entrenched enemy lines. The deck was covered with smoke and fire and cartridge cases and two rocket-propelled grenades that somehow didn't explode.

[Read entire story here »](#)

Photos from the event:

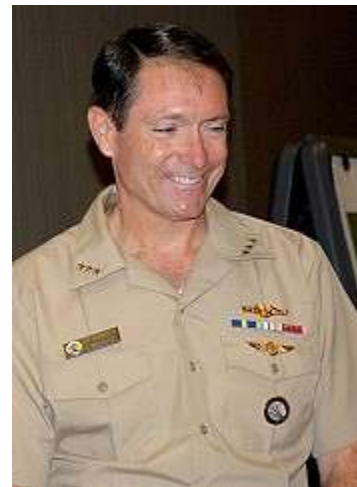
Click on the thumbnail for a close-up image –



Captain Jim Walker, Seawolf pilot and Navy Cross Recipient.



Vaughn Shuler, VP East Coast.



VADM Donnelly, Presenter.



Captain Max Duncan, ComNSA Saigon 68-69.



Coop and VADM Jay Donnelly.



VADM Donnelly and Captain Max Duncan.



Coop being interviewed by the reporter.



Captain Jim Walker and QMCS (SS) Cooper.



Captain Jim Walker, Coop and Debra McGuire, Chaplain.



Captain "Wes" Weselesky, Seawolf pilot.



Coop and YNC (SW) Adrienne Green.



Jerry Gandy, President of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter, Coop and A. Billy Ratt, Jr.



The Crew.



Eric Cooper, son and USMC; "Coop", Vicki, daughter and creator of A. Billy Ratt and A. Billy Ratt, Jr, Derek, Grandson of Coop.