

Colonel Delmas V. Lippard, US Army (Ret.)  
13006 Stagecoach Way  
Manchaca, Texas 78652

10 August 1990

Mr. Howard Olsen  
6456 Fairview Drive  
Watauga Tx. 76148

Dear Mr. Olsen:

Your letter concerning the 25th Division Books and Pamphlets I collected while I served in the Tropic Lightning has been received, and I have reviewed the information I have in my files.

Unfortunately, I find that my information concerning the 1/8 Artillery is very limited. I have, however, photocopied what little information I have, and am enclosing it for you.

I regret that I didn't take advantage of some of the opportunities I had to gather even more information than I did while I was in The Division, as I fear that so very much of the minor (and very unofficial) history of our stay in Vietnam may be forever lost. We will, however, be abused by some very biased and erroneous history, such as the movie **Platoon** which I consider a slander, and some books, such as **Lightning Forward**. But, I digress.

It was nice to hear from somebody who was with the "Automatic Eighth", and I wish you well.

Sincerely,

*Delmas V. Lippard*

# The 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam

In early 1963, the first contingent of 100 aerial door gunners from the 25th Infantry Division was sent to South Vietnam to protect MACV helicopters from hostile fire. By November 1965, more than 2,200 "Tropic Lightning" soldiers had served in this dangerous duty assignment. They came to be known as "shotgunners" and they logged tens of thousands of combat hours for which these gallant soldiers earned many combat awards. And so it was with the "shotgunners" that the 25th Infantry Division first entered into combat in the Vietnam War...and they were to be followed by tens of thousands of "Tropic Lightning" soldiers in five years of bloody combat.

In December 1965, the 3rd Brigade was airlifted to Pleiku in the central highlands of South Vietnam; the 2nd Brigade left Hawaii by sea and was deployed to Cu Chi District some 25 miles northwest of Saigon; and the 1st Brigade followed in April 1966, so that the entire 25th Infantry Division was in-country and ready for combat missions.

The 25th Division's area of responsibility (Provinces of Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia; and also the Michelin Rubber Plantation) were astride the main infiltration routes from Cambodia thru the enemy held War Zone "C" in Tay Ninh Province down to Saigon. In essence the 25th Division was occupying enemy-held territory in which existed the most extensive number of enemy base camps and tunnel complexes in all of South Vietnam.

The battle was quickly joined as the 25th Division combat forces made heavy contact with enemy forces all around them (and below them as well in the famous tunnels of Cu Chi). From September through November 1966, the 25th Division along with their team mates from the 1st Infantry Division and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade fought long and hard to drive large enemy forces out of War Zone "C" (a heavily forested area in Tay Ninh Province which bordered Cambodia) in OPERATION ATTLEBORO.

All through 1967, in OPERATIONS GADSDEN, MAKALAPA, JUNCTION CITY, MANHATTAN, and CEDAR FALLS the 25th Division was heavily engaged in routing out strong and determined enemy forces from its area of responsibility and destroying base camps there.

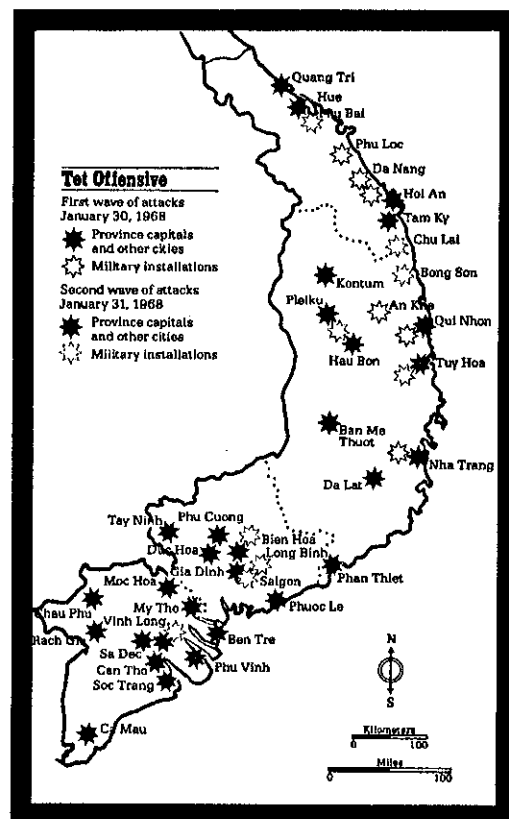
In 1968, the 25th Division took the brunt of the enemy's main assault against Saigon in the famous "TET" offensive and for six weeks fought fiercely to defeat elements of three enemy divisions attacking Saigon from the North. Then again in the enemy's "MAY" offensive, the division fought two enemy divisions for four weeks again north and west of

Saigon. Finally, the "Tropic Lightning" took on the vaulted 5th and 9th North Vietnamese Divisions in August and after a bitterly contested campaign of 10 days crushed the enemy's Summer Offensive against the bases of the 25th Infantry Division in Tay Ninh Province. These three bloody enemy offensives in 1968 decimated the enemy forces for the 25th Division inflicted terrible casualties against them so that the enemy retreated into their sanctuaries in Cambodia to lick their wounds for many months to come.

The "Tropic Lightning" continued to guard the northern approaches to Saigon until 1970 when they returned to Hawaii after approximately 5 years of close and heavy combat having fought over a hundred battles, thousands of skirmishes, and earned hundreds of combat awards to include 22 Medals of Honor (16 posthumously).

The gallantry and combat exploits of the Officers and Men of the "Tropic Lightning" Division are now legendary, but on this occasion, the 40th annual convention of the 25th Infantry Division Association, we again salute their heroic deeds and honor our Veterans both living and dead.

*Col. Duke Wolf, USA-Ret.*



**Front Line** continued...

Ed Munis is finalizing the draft of the Chapter Constitution and By-Laws for approval at the national Convention in Washington this November. Northern California members are urged to join the Chapter by contacting Edwin V. Munis, 1145 S. Wright Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95407.

**Rocky Mountain Chapter**

The Rocky Mountain Chapter has a new address and new officers. All correspondence should be addressed to Rocky Mountain Chapter, 25th Infantry Division Association, P.O. Box 16007, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.

Officers elected at the August 26, 1989 meeting include: President - George H. DeChow, Col-USA-Ret; Vice President - Richard Rafter; Assistant VP - David R. Krogman; Secretary - Reuben Fuller; Treasurer - William McCabe, Col-USA-Ret. Directors for the current year include; Brig. Gen. Guy A. LaBoa; Ralph W. Melcher, Col-USA-Ret; Dewey Knox; and William McCabe, Col-USA-Ret.


**South Atlantic Chapter**

The South Atlantic Chapter held a reunion at historic Fort Monroe, Virginia in August 1989.

Logistical support for the reunion included Ken Hoser, providing spirited bugle calls and George Murray, who brought the Mini Store all the way from California for the long weekend.

Stories of Pearl Harbor, Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, the South Pacific, the Solomons, Luzon, Korea, Cu Chi and the great Tropic Lightning units were exchanged by nearly 200 members in attendance.

Bob Muzzy coordinated the Wednesday-through-Sunday events at the old Chamberlain Hotel. The Hotel overlooks Hampton Roads, the scene of the Monitor-Merrimack ironclads battle during the Civil War.

The local Daily Press/Times-Herald newspaper gave the reunion multi-page coverage that featured several large color photos of reunion events and characters. 

# Reunions

**"I" Company, 27th Infantry - Wolfhounds**

The first mini-reunion of I Company was held at Tickle Acres, Bland, Virginia on Memorial Day weekend, 1989.

A night of refreshing rain, gave in to beauty for the three day affair; allowing outside tours and activities, with Jungle Jim McGlinch cooking the barbecue of tube steaks and hamburgers, plus all of the usual, and some unusual, condiments

supplied by the whole Tickle family; including a Helen Tickle scrumptious specialty, Dump Salad. Six attending wives and friends gave assistance, leaving the fellas free to exchange info and stories. Most had lost contact and hadn't see each other in 44 years.

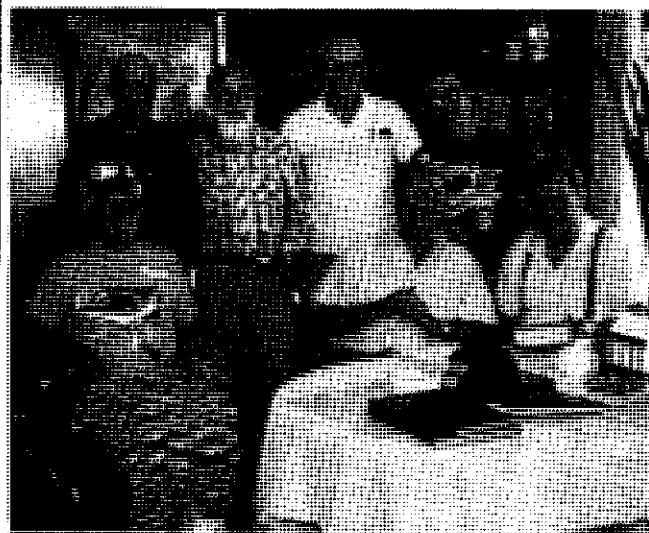
All eight attending vets had been wounded on Luzon, three with 50% disability, giving much to talk about. Those in attendance hope to repeat the experience again within a year.

*Guy Maddux*

**89th Field Artillery Battalion Association**

Raymond Kerns was elected President of the Lizard Association and Leroy Ryder was elected treasurer at the recent reunion. L.W. LeGrand is the 1990 reunion chairman and is busy planning another spectacular event at the Cabot Lodge, Gainesville, Florida.

The reunion is scheduled for April 5-7, 1990. For more information contact L.W. LeGrand, P.O. Box 422, Bronson, FL 32621



*I-Company Mini Reunion attended by (Front L to R) John Nye Tickle, Ernie Cucas, Bill Allen, Rear: (l to r) Marsee Wilson, Guy Maddux, Don Meloys, Jim McGlinch.*

**24th Infantry Regiment Association**

Over 250 members and 138 wives of the 24th met in Columbia, SC, July 20-23, 1989. Every year we are getting larger and larger.

An awards ceremony was held for the nine members who got the organization started just a few years ago.

On hand were a number of special guests including Lt. Gen. Chambers, Maj. Gen. Brady, Mr. David K. Carlisle and Col. John Cash.

The next annual reunion will be held July 1990 in Columbia. The 24th is especially interested in contacting former members of support units, including 159th FA, 77th Combat Engineers, and the 512nd MP Co.

For further information contact Taylor Moore III, USA-Ret., 24th Inf. Regiment Assn., P.O. Box 3428, Columbia, SC 29203.