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AMERICAL

JOURNAL

DEDICATED AS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO ALL VETERANS OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION

Americal Red Legs 3/18 Field Artillery



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commander's Comments

By Larry Watson

On January 12-14, 2007 I attended my first Winterfest in New Glarus, Wisconsin. What a delightful little town it is. There are no large chain stores. All the merchants in this beautiful small town are locally owned "Mom & Pop" stores, and the restaurants are locally owned as well. The citizens are friendly and the food was great. The weather was very good, cold enough to be Winterfest, but not too cold for comfort.

On Friday night there was a celebration called "Winter Burning". It began with a bonfire of Christmas trees. That was followed by a parade through the town to the fire station for music and beer. Saturday morning a Great Lakes Chapter business meeting and elections were held at the Chalet Landhaus Hotel. That afternoon an auction was held. The items that were auctioned were very nice. The weekend was wrapped up with a banquet with a comedian and live music.

The ADVA was very well represented with officers and members from several chapters. It was nice to see our Junior Vice-Commander, Rich Merlin, at the event. Rich has attended Winterfest regularly over the past several years. I enjoyed it and I will likely return to a future Winterfest.

Senior Vice-Commander Dave Taylor continues to work hard on recruiting. I can't emphasize enough the importance of building our membership. I hope you will help out by recruiting new members. Dave has new recruiting literature and information now available. Many of us are members of other veterans' organizations and we attend their meetings and conventions. These veterans' events are a source for new members. I encourage you to contact Dave if you will be attending one of these events.

I started off talking about the Winterfest in New Glarus, and now I want to mention the ADVA reunion in Buffalo, New York. I hope you will be there. Now is the time to make your reservations at the Adam's Mark Hotel and get your registration mailed in. Niagara Falls is one of the most spectacular wonders of North America, and you will want to see it. Visit our website at www.americal.org/reunion.shtml for details. Event and registration information is also in this issue of the Americal Journal. The members of the East Chapter are working very hard to make this a memorable reunion. I hope you will support it. Take care, Spring will soon be here.

Americal Division MIAs Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced in December 2006 that the remains of five U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. The five missing servicemen were assigned to units of the Americal Division.

Three of the identified MIAs served with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company (Firebird 91). They are CPT. Herbert C. Crosby, of Donalsonville, Ga.; SFC Wayne C. Allen, of Tewksbury, Mass.; and SFC Francis G. Graziosi, of Rochester, N.Y. Burial dates

and locations are being set by their families.

On Jan. 10, 1970, these men were returning to their base at Chu Lai, South Vietnam aboard a UH-1C Huey helicopter. Due to bad weather, their helicopter went down over Quang Nam Province. A search was initiated for the crew, but no sign of the helicopter or crew was spotted. Later investigations and excavations lead to the discovery of remains and artifacts that resulted in the identifications.

Two identified MIAs served with Recon Platoon, Co. E, 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB. They are MAJ Frederick J. Ransbottom, of Oklahoma City, Okla.; and SSG. William E. Skivington Jr.; of Las Vegas, Nev. Ransbottom was buried in Edmond, Okla. on Jan. 13, 2006. (See related article on page 20) and Skivington was buried at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., on Jan. 23, 2006.

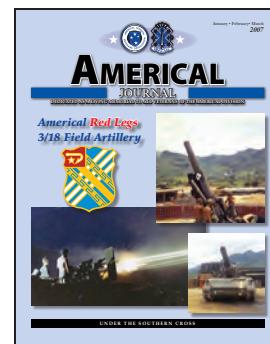
On May 12, 1968, North Vietnamese forces overran the Kham Duc Special Forces camp and its surrounding observation posts in Quang Nam-Da Nang Province (formerly Quang Tin Province), South Vietnam. Ransbottom and Skivington were two of the 17 U.S. servicemen unaccounted-for after the survivors evacuated the camp. Search and recovery efforts at the site in 1970 succeeded in recovering remains of five of the 17 men.

During an excavation conducted in 1998, two U.S. servicemen who survived the battle accompanied investigators to help locate the observation posts, but found no evidence of human remains. Later excavations conducted in the area yielded human remains, identification media and personal effects for Ransbottom, Skivington and several other soldiers.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO Web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169. [Information for this article was taken from Department of Defense press releases dated December 19 and December 22, 2006.]

Late Notice: It has been learned that burial ceremonies for CPT Herbert Charles Crosby will be held at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. on May 25, 2007. The exact time is not yet known. See the 71st AHC Association website at www.rattler-firebird.org for updated information on all arrangements.

Crosby was born on May 30, 1947, the traditional date of Memorial Day. He will be buried on Memorial Day weekend 2007, sixty years after his birth. His father, a World War II veteran, preceded him in death. His mother and a sister survive him.



Cover
Redlegs of the 3/18 Americal Division Artillery
story page 32

From The National Adjutant

The new year 2007 is off to a fast and furious start. I hope everyone had a happy holiday season and a great start to the new year.

The Association did fairly well in terms of new member additions during the last quarter of 2006. Over the last two months of 2006 and first weeks of 2007, we added 30 new members to the ADVA roster. Two new members joined as Paid Life memberships.

One of the initiatives for the ADVA National New Member Recruiting Plan will be a Sponsor A Buddy plan. Any ADVA member can sponsor and pay the first year dues for a WWII or Vietnam buddy to offer him/her exposure to the organization and the ADVA publication. This quarter, ADVA members Dan Young and Harold Hansen sponsored buddies for their first year membership.

Other phases of the National Recruiting Plan are featured in this edition of the Americal Journal.

The ADVA is honored to have a new Honorary Life Member recently added to the roster. He is Mr. James A. Taylor, who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for valorous action in Vietnam during 1967 action near Que Son. James has attended past ADVA reunions and many of you may have met him at one of those reunions.

Annual pay renewal notices for January 2007 annual pay members were mailed the end of December. All annual pay members with renewal dates of JAN07 or earlier in your address block on this publication need to mail dues payments to PNC Ron Ellis. Ron's mailing address is listed on the outside back cover of this publication.

In closing, I remind all members to notify me when moving to a new mailing address so you will have no interruption in your Americal Journal delivery.

For added convenience, this page is re-designed to be used for notifications of permanent mailing address changes, as well as temporary address changes for members heading to warmer climes during the winter months.

Roger Gilmore
ADVA National Adjutant

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS

If you have a second address during the winter months, we need to know that address. Please give us the dates and address for both addresses.

Winter Address: Approx Dates _____

Name _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Summer Address: Approx Dates _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Change Of Address

If you move or change your address, we need to know as soon as possible in order for you to continue receiving your Americal Journal.

New Address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

**Mail Snowbird Information or
Address Changes to:**



**Americal Division Veterans Association
National Adjutant
P.O. Box 830662
Richardson, TX 75080**

NEW HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

James A. Taylor
1st Sqdn 1st Cav Trp B
Trinity Center, CA
★ David Taylor

NEW MEMBERS

Walter C. Bryant
198th LIB C/1/46 Inf
Birmingham, AL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Jim L. Davenport
196th LIB D/2/1 Inf
Norman, OK
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Ron C. Dewitt
11th LIB 3/1 Inf
Birmingham, AL
★ Self

Arturo Esparza
198th LIB A/1/52 Inf
Anchorage, AK
★ Dan Young

Angel I. Fernandez
205th Ord. Det. TF Oregon
Miami, FL
★ Self

William E. Fluke
1st Sqdn 1st Cav
Upperstrasburg, PA
★ Paul Stiff

Roman P. Frank
196th LIB 2/1 Inf
Anchorage, AK
★ Mark Ladd

Stephen D. Frausto, Sr.
198th LIB D/5/46 Inf
Costa Mesa, CA
★ David Taylor

Calvin Fred
198th LIB A/1/52 Inf
Anchorage, AK
★ Dan Young

Thomas J. Gleason, III
23rd Medical Bn Co D
Holley, NJ
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Ronald Goodrich
11th LIB HHC
Omaha, NE
★ Harold Hansen

John T. Goorley
198th LIB D/5/46 Inf
Pueblo, CO
★ David Taylor

Dr. Gary Greenburg
2nd Surgical Hosp.
W. Des Moines, IA
★ Les Hines

William E. Hendricks
198th LIB A/1/6 Inf
Lynchburg, VA
★ Kenneth York

Alan C. James
Associate
Greenville, SC
★ Jesse L. Helms

Timothy F. Koehler
123rd Avn Bn HHC
Lagrangeville, NY
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Robert Lipinski
23rd S&T Co. B
Rutherford, NJ
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Dale Melton
198th LIB C/5/46 Inf
Casey, IL
★ Self

Thomas J. Munley
11th LIB
Jessup, PA
★ Dave Taylor

James V. Occipinto
11th LIB A/1/20 Inf
Holland Patent, NY
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Leo A. Selk
11th LIB HHC
Omaha, NE
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Albert G. Skabla
23rd Recon – Panama
Springfield, OH
★ Leon Doutrich

Lynn R. Smith
11th LIB 52nd MI Det.
Titusville, FL
★ Bob Kapp

Jan R. Snedecor
11th LIB A/1/20 Inf
Chesapeake, VA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James R. Tidwell
11th LIB E/4/21 Inf
Bishopville, SC
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Daniel R. Vess
723rd Maint Bn HHC
Gray Court, SC
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Joseph P. Vilimek, Jr.
198th LIB D/1/6 Inf
Downers Grove, IL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Miles T. Williams
Associate
Long Beach, CA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Joseph Adelsberger
11th LIB E/1/20 Inf
Plain City, OH
★ Self

Harold Cooper
196th LIB C/1/46 Inf
Friendsville, TN
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Frank A. Fortuna
14th Arty B Btry
Long Valley, NJ
★ Bernie Chase

John W. Geisewite
723rd Maint. Bn HHC
Birdsboro, PA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

David K. Germain
Div Arty 3rd Bn 16th Arty
Burke, VA
★ Self

Millard P. Heistand
Div HHC & Band
Charleston, SC
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Harold P. Lutz
11th LIB A/1/20 Inf
Warrenton, VA
★ John McKnown

Donald Rieke
11th LIB A/1/20 Inf
Belle, MO
★ Harold P. Lutz

RE-INSTATED MEMBERS

Doug Rebman
11th LIB D/4/21 Inf
Stella, NC
★ Self

TAPS

World War II Veterans

101st Med Bn
Joseph P. Giachetti
Braintree, MA
December 31, 2005

132nd Inf Co C
Montrose C. Greene
Media, PA
December 7, 2006

132nd Inf Co E
Leon E. Coleman
Williamstown, NJ
July 22, 2006

132nd Inf HQ Medical COL (Ret)
Toby Weinshenker
Oaklawn, IL
April 2006

182nd Inf
Samuel Goldstein
San Diego, CA
Date Unknown

182nd Inf Co A
Elliot J. Carey
North Billerica, MA
September 24, 2006

247th F.A. A Btry
James F. Varner
Monterey, VA
October 10, 2006
26th Signal Co

John A. Miner
Baltimore, MD
Date Unknown

World War II – Widows

Mrs. Lionel St. Pierre
Haverhill, MA
Date Unknown

Vietnam Veterans

198th LIB C/5/46 Inf
Larry Robbins
Yorba Linda, CA
September 2006

Let's Go to Buffalo: 2007 Reunion Here Soon

The Buffalo, NY area was settled shortly before 1800. It is a known fact that the City of Buffalo took its name from nearby Buffalo Creek. But it is not exactly known how Buffalo Creek received its name.

One legend has it that the name comes from the French words *boeuf a l'eau* meaning "cattle at the water". A more generally accepted belief is that the creek was named after Buffalo, a Seneca Indian who lived on the creek.

While the origin of the name Buffalo may be debated it is a fact that the Americal Division Veterans Association will hold its annual reunion in Buffalo on June 21-24, 2007. Additional information and a registration form are in this issue of the *Americal Journal*.

Buffalo has grown into a modern city and is second in size in the state of New York. It is on Lake Erie in far western New York and within a day's drive of most large East Coast cities. Buffalo Niagara International Airport is served by ten major airlines and offers 110 flights a day. Transportation from the airport to the hotel is readily available.

Reunion headquarters is the Adams Mark Hotel conveniently located at 120 Church Street in downtown Buffalo. The hotel is close to I-190 and the lakefront. The reunion rate is \$83 per night plus tax. Parking is available for an additional \$6 per day.

Buffalo is on the Niagara River and just a short distance south of Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls is one of the premier travel destinations in the United States and attracts visitors from all over the world. June weather is described as "balmy" and a light jacket is suggested while visiting the falls.

The Anchor Bar Restaurant at 1047 Main St. holds claim to inventing the Buffalo chicken wing. In 1964 Teressa Bellissimo bathed some fried chicken wings in a special sauce, added a garnish of celery and Ranch dressing, and served them to patrons. The novel recipe soon caught on and is now a party favorite across the country.

Tours of the Buffalo/Niagara Falls area are offered at reasonable rates. See the information below for identification requirements when traveling to and from Canada.

The reunion is sponsored by the East Chapter. Contact Dave Eichhorn, Reunion Chairman, at dave.eichhorn@kraton.com for additional details.

Bring Travel I.D.

New identification requirements are in effect for travel between the United States and Canada. Travel by air



requires a valid passport. Travel by land or water requires identification indicating citizenship. This can be a passport or other documents such as a birth certificate matched with a driver's license or other photo identification.

Vietnam Historian Report

By Les Hines

I recently received about 1,500 to 2,000 pages of materials from Timothy Jakubowski. The material pertains to the 196th LIB and includes such things as situation reports and operation plans. This is exciting as we did not have much material on the 196th prior to when they had joined TF/Oregon in April 1967.

I also received materials from Leonard Hedges of H Troop, 17th Cavalry, circa 1970-71. The H/17th Cav. material includes a copy of the 1970 troop unit album. The album has been scanned to PDF format and can be made available to members of the ADVA.

Work is proceeding on the acquisition and preparation of Americal Division Tactical Operation Center (TOC) daily journals. I have through July 20, 1969 ready at this time. Bruce Flaherty is preparing the files so I can put together the information through the end of December 1969.

Operation LZ/DC 2007

The Great Lakes Chapter is co-sponsor of Operation LZ/DC 25th Anniversary of the Wall to be held in Washington, D.C. on November 9-12, 2007. Headquarters is at the Doubletree Hotel at 300 Army Navy Dr. in Arlington, VA, 800-222-8733. A special rate of \$99/night plus tax applies to the first 200 rooms reserved before October 9, 2007.

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The Wall is one of the most visited memorials in the Capitol and this year's observances are expected to draw record attendance.

Many special events are planned by LZ/DC to include day and night tours of the nation's capitol, a memorial service in Arlington National Cemetery, and transportation to the parade and Wall on Veterans Day. There will also be a banquet, hospitality room, and vendor areas at the headquarters hotel.

For more information contact Terry Babler at pointman69@tds.net or 608-527-2444 or go to www.americal.org/lzdc25.shtml.

Late Breaking News

PNC Richard Scales has resigned his post on the ADVA Executive Council. He plans to run for Jr. Vice-Commander of the Illinois Dept. of the VFW. Rich says, "I wish the ADVA and its members the best and hope to see all in the future."

The Americal Field Artillery (all eras) will hold a reunion on May 3-5, 2007 at the Holiday Inn Battlefield in Gettysburg, PA. Make lodging reservations before April 16 to get the special rate of \$80/night plus tax. For more details contact Bob Miller at 1-585-924-5296.

Co. D, 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB will hold a reunion in Des Moines, IA on September 21-22, 2007. Contact Dan Behrens at coalcreek@iowatelcom.net or 641-634-2150.

Dear readers,

The Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2006 edition of the Americal Journal resulted in many compliments for the layout and the use of full color. The Journal staff appreciates the many fine comments that were received. A few of them are printed below. —Editor

I just received a copy of the *Americal Journal*. All I can say is, "Wow!" What a spectacular difference! The magnificent format is a far cry from the first publication which was a mere pamphlet. But it was a start. If only more of the original Americal veterans were alive to see the Journal. The names of the charter members appeared in that first modest pamphlet. Those members would be especially proud.

All this progress is the result of the dedication, not only of the WWII veterans, but above all to the Vietnam veterans. If it were not for them, the entire concept of our Americal association would have fizzled out into oblivion. I think I can speak for the WWII veterans: We owe this preservation of the association to the Vietnam veterans. We salute you.

I mentioned the first Americal publication that was just a pamphlet. The copy I had was beginning to show age. As a result, before it was lost forever, I donated it to the Americal Museum in Worcester. I was a bit embarrassed to offer it, for it was not in mint condition. At an annual convention in Worcester, I saw the embryonic "newsletter" that grew to the status of "Journal" on display, safe and secure.

Strange how what was once an almost insignificant scrap of paper can become a treasure, a sentimental one, but nevertheless a precious document. I'm sure the Americal veterans will have another feather in their caps to be proud of: The Americal Journal.

The convention next year in Buffalo is still on my mind. I had minimum inconvenience in traveling to the one in Portland. Therefore, if all continues well, I'll see you all in Buffalo.

Al Cotta

I am a life member of the ADVA and I have been recalled from retirement to serve again. It makes me proud every time I see a report or hear a briefing where the name 23rd Military Police Company comes up.

Since I arrived at Camp Victory on 30 November 2006 I have only seen one other individual wearing the Americal patch on his right sleeve. I have had some interesting comments from many General Officers when they see the patch which I proudly wear.

I will be on active duty for at least another year and will continue to wear the Americal Division patch. I like the new format of the *Americal Journal* and I love the articles (especially the one this time on the 23rd MPs).

E. Robert Clifton

If you wish to send a letter of support to an Americal Division veteran still proudly wearing the Southern Cross patch on his uniform, write to: EMORY R. CLIFTON; MNC-I, C4 Trans; Deputy Corps Transportation Officer; Camp Victory, Baghdad; APO AE 09342]

It is really great that over the years we have had a publication and that it has arrived where it has today. It has been done with the hard work over the years of members who are dedicated to serve the ADVA. Keep up the good work, you are appreciated.

James C. "Jim" Wark

I just received the Oct-Dec 2006 *Americal Journal*. It looks great. You might consider marketing the magazine through book stores like Borders or Barnes and Noble.

Raymond Oglesby

I just got my copy of the *Americal Journal* and I have nothing but wildly enthusiastic kudos!! Damn, you guys get better every issue!!! Thanks for all the hard work guys.

Don Boito

After a long and tiring day yesterday, I just wanted a warm meal and a snooze afterwards. The warm meal was eaten but prior to the snooze I sorted through the pile of mail on my desk and the nap was put on hold. I picked up the new *Americal Journal* and couldn't put it down until I read it cover to cover. All I can say is WOW! Thanks for taking it up a notch and giving us a publication of such quality.

Art Hanley

I received the latest issue of the *Americal Journal* and it is GREAT!! "You've come a long way baby!"

Jim Buckle

Note from the editors

Your contributions to the Americal Journal make it a unique publication. Please send your stories, articles, and photos to Dave Taylor (WWII) or Gary Noller (VN and other). Contributions can be made by e-mail or postal mail.

Photos taken with a digital camera need to be high resolution. For example, a photo needs to be 300k-500k or better, not 30k-50k. Scanned photos and images need to be at 300 dpi. Photos may be color or black and white.

Paper print photos should be copies if at all possible. Photos will be returned if return is requested. Be sure to include your current return address.

The deadline for submission of articles is the first day of the first month of the quarter (Jan. 1, Apr. 1, Jul. 1, Oct. 1). Our goal is to have the Journal complete and at the printer by the last day of the first month of the quarter. Delivery to readers is usually in the last month of the quarter.

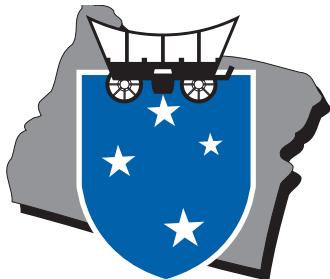
Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and appropriateness. You may review your edited contribution if you request to do so.

Please help collect and preserve the true history of the Americal Division.

NORTHWEST CHAPTER

AK WA OR ID MT WY

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The Northwest Chapter needs volunteers. As most of you know, the NW chapter is basically inactive. With family and work my time has been limited. The 2006 Reunion was put together with the help of family, Charlie Company 5/46th family, and many friends. Thanks again to all of you. It turned out great.

Anyone who would like to head up or lend a hand in getting the chapter up and running please contact me.

An informal meeting can be scheduled here in Portland or in the Seattle area to begin brain storming. Hope to see all of you in Buffalo.



SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX

COMMANDER
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altdorf@ktc.com

All Americal veterans in the chapter region are eligible to receive the chapter newsletter. If you have moved or otherwise have not been receiving a newsletter and wish to do so, please notify the chapter commander.

Mark your calendars now for participation in the Memorial Day parade in Dallas. Details will be provided in the next newsletter.

The National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas, will be hosting a symposium in September entitled "The Turning Point", which will focus on the battles of Midway and Guadalcanal. Americal veterans who served on Guadalcanal will be honored guests, and the chapter is seeking panelists to participate in the discussion and to provide the Army's perspective of this historic battle. Please contact the chapter commander for details of this event.



EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

DC DE KY MD NJ NY OH PA VA WV MA NH VT ME CT RI

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mdeam@woh.rr.com



lobby of Norwalk City Hall.

I had received word of the observance from the local Veteran Memorial Committee. I agreed to go and to represent Americal Division veterans. Wow! Am I glad I went.

As I walked up to the entrance to City Hall I passed a line of high school ROTC cadets, each greeting the arriving guests with a smile, a program, and a warm "Good morning, (Sir or Madam)". Just inside, before the lobby, there was a line of tables with veterans ready to give everyone directions and sign them in for the ceremony.

I was instructed to go down a hall and find a seat, which would have my name on it. I was in the front row center (eat your heart out Bob Uecker) next to Dennis Shea, the brother of Daniel Shea. The room is a concert hall in the middle of City Hall. There was a big brass band on stage (The American Festival Band) playing wonderful renditions of patriotic, march, swing and sixties music. A soloist sang a few songs and I have to tell you, she sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" hitting all the notes beautifully. Her range seems to be unlimited.

They had a color guard of about 20 members for the presentation of the colors. The band played "America the Beautiful" followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by a local Girl Scout. Mort Walker (yes, Private Beetle Bailey's creator) was the guest speaker and did a grand job. Afterwards, Mr. Walker gave kids between the ages of six to ten personal drawings.

After a moment of silence at 1100 hours, two young men played taps from different ends of the room. Then the band played the anthems from all the branches of our military. Then there was announcing of awards and scholarships, recognition of various invited guests, and words from the committee thanking everyone.

We went out to the lobby for the unveiling of the

plaque. There were some more talks by local people on the backgrounds of Daniel Shea and John Magrath. I spoke for the American Division and thanked them for honoring one of our own. I complimented them on what a great job they had done. Mr. Bill Duncan spoke for the 10th Mountain Division on behalf of John Magrath.

I hope I have been able to sufficiently describe somewhat of what impressed me so much today.



GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CHAPTER

IL IN MI MN WI

COMMANDER

Dale J. Belke
W655 City Rd. E.
Brodhead, WI 53520
775 • 751 • 1861
belked@wekz.net

Senior Vice Com.

Gary Gardner
Jr Vice Com.
Harold Waterman

Adjutant

Terry Babler,
W5889 Durst Road
New Glarus, WI 53574
(608) 527-2444 email: pointman69@tds.net



the ADVA. Veterans came from as far as California, Maine, Florida, New York, and Nebraska.

A Great Lakes Chapter meeting and elections were held on January 13, 2007. The following officers were elected for two-year terms: Dale Belke, Commander; Gary Gardner, Sr Vice-Commander; Harold Waterman, Jr. Vice-Commander; Bill Lobeck, Sgt of Arms & Service Officer; and Mike Iverson, Chaplin.

Our ADVA Great Lakes Chapter is working in conjunction with the 1st/1st Cavalry Association in planning a National Reunion in Washington, D.C. for the 25th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Operation LZ/DC - 25th Anniversary of the Wall will be held November 8-11, 2007 at the Double Tree Hotel in Arlington, VA. We are planning for 400 or more in attendance. Reservations can be made by calling the Doubletree Hotel and booking under LZ / DC 4 for the special rate of \$99 per night. Reservations will be taken by the hotel until up to October 26, 2007 or when the hotel block is full. There will be tours, memory books, a dance, and more. The next newsletter will have the registration sheet in it. Information will be going out to other organizations as well.

For those of you that may not yet be a member of the Great Lakes Chapter the dues are \$10/year or save and pay \$45 for five years. Send dues payments to Terry Babler, Chapter Adjutant.

ARTHUR R. WOOD SOUTH EAST REGION CHAPTER

AL GA FL TN VA NC SC

COMMANDER

Paul Stiff
P.O. Box 495991
Port Charlotte, FL 33949
PStiff3@aol.com

SEC/TREAS

Allen Feser
625 N. Indiana Ave.
Lindenhurst, NY 11757
afeser@juno.com

This is the first of a series of articles designed to introduce you to Jacksonville, FL, the site of the 2008 ADVA Reunion. The SE Chapter hopes to create a vacation destination for you and your family. Jacksonville sits on the Northeast corner of Florida; 30 miles from the Georgia border. It's proximity to

Georgia is the reason it is the home to the "worlds biggest cocktail party", the Florida- Georgia football game.

Getting to Jacksonville is easy from all the major metropolitan areas. It is only a two to two and a half hour flight from; New York, Chicago, Detroit, Dallas, St Louis and Cincinnati. There are direct flights from LA and most other destinations are only one stop away (usually Atlanta). Driving to Jacksonville is just as convenient; with both I-95 and I-10 passing though the heart of the city and I-75 is less the 90 minutes away on I-10. It is about 1,000 miles from Dallas, Chicago and New York; a nice two-day drive. For the RVers there a number of great sites, many right on the ocean. And of course for you train buffs there is an Amtrak station.

The Wyndham Riverwalk Hotel is located on the St John's River. The hotel has just completed a renovation, which included new beds, a fresh painting, new carpeting, and a new restaurant and sports bar. If we meet our attendance goal we will be the only ones at the hotel for that week end. Within walking distance is the San Marco historic area with its many shops and restaurants. The water taxis, located on the walkway outside the hotel, is a five minute ride to the famous Jacksonville Landing with its many restaurants, sports bars, and shops.

I hope you find these articles informative. Future subjects will include details of the various sights and trips that are planned, details of the reunion and additional things you could do before and after the reunion to make this a memorable trip. Have a great time in Buffalo for the 2007 reunion and plan to join us in Jacksonville in 2008.

Lee Kaywork, Vice-Commander, Chair 2008 Reunion

The *AMERICAN JOURNAL* is interested publishing in your stories. Please send submissions to Dave Taylor (World War II) or Gary Noller (Vietnam). Send your items by postal mail or by e-mail. Scanned photos should be at 300 dpi. See the directory for contact information. Help tell the true history of the American Division.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear editor,

It appears my story, "Survivor's Guilt" published in a previous newsletter stirred some emotions that I believe were misunderstood. This story was written for a veterans writing class several years ago and for me it was a form of healing and dealing with my survivor's guilt.

The paragraph that stated we don't have as many rear echelon personnel members attend the annual reunions was meant to be a regretful statement. I wish they would attend. As for the use of the acronym for rear echelon personnel, I was also one for part of my tour. My story was not written to be politically correct.

Thanks to all of you who have contacted me who enjoyed the story. I do apologize and regret that this story may have offended some others. It was not my intent to do so.

Dave Hammond; pacwesthi@aol.com

Dear editor,

I shall be visiting Australia from 17 to 31 March 2007. Part of my visit will be to Melbourne, where my father, Hyman Trusten (still living, in Woburn, MA), was stationed briefly with Task Force 6814 before it went to New Caledonia to become the Americal Division. In fact, it was a PVT Fonseca, in my Dad's company (26 Signal Company) who coined the name "Americal."

The book "Under The Southern Cross" details very little about the Melbourne period. Has anyone written about it more extensively, as to exactly where, in Melbourne, the various components of the fledgling division were located during 26 February to 12 March 1942?

This is going to be the journey of a lifetime, to see just where my Dad was during World War II. I grew up with this story. It is particularly satisfying that I go while my Dad is still quite alive. We have talked about his war experiences extensively, and I made many notes in his copy of "Under The Southern Cross."

Paul Trusten, R.Ph.; trusten@grandecom.net

Dear editor,

My uncle was in WWII participating in the New Guinea, Southern Philippine, and Luzon Campaigns as a member of the 1489th Engineering Maint. Co. Perhaps there is an error in UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS and the reference to 1459th Engineering Maint. Co. should be 1489th. Can anyone help determine the correct unit designation?

Larry McGirr; larrymcgirr3130@hotmail.com

Dear editor,

I have a pocket patch that was made in Vietnam. I believe it to be for the Americal Division.

The patch was found in a second hand store in Dothan, AL. Can someone shed some light on this patch?

Bernard L. Karabin; bkarabin@sw.rr.com



Dear editor,

I am trying to locate all veterans who were with H Troop, 17th Cavalry. I have been in contact with Paul Lefkowitz of the H-Troop reunion committee and he has been able to offer some help with names. We contact information for 21 veterans.

This has been quite an exciting and sometimes emotional experience in locating these individuals. The men have been most grateful for being contacted and many are very anxious with the thought of seeing each other again.

Jim Linton; 7147 Partridge Dr., Flushing, Mi. 48433; jlinton1@comcast.net

Dear editor,

I was in Vietnam in 1969 with the 1/20th in the Duc Pho area. I have recently learned that the Americal and the 101st Airborne (502-strike) were working in the same area at that time. I would appreciate any additional information on this.

Steve Mann; stevethemann@webtv.net

Dear editor,

I am trying to reconstruct my great-uncle's service record in World War II. His name is Wayne Emil Gundestrup. His service records were burned in St. Louis in the 1970s along with the records of many other veterans.

Family history and a newspaper article say that he was at Guadalcanal from October 1942 to January 1943. He was wounded and sent to Australia for recovery. He was discharged with 100% disability in April 1943.

I believe he may have been part of the 1,100 soldiers and officers sent from Ft. Ord, CA to reinforce the 164th Inf. Regt. as it sailed from San Francisco on March 18, 1942. He may have been with an attached unit such as the artillery. He passed away on October 27, 1972.

His name is a unique name and I hope someone remembers him or has documents that indicate his service. Please write me at P.O. Box 26, Shasta, CA, 96087,

Kim (Gundestrup) Ryan; cowliller@dirtracers.com.

Dear editor,

The National Army Museum slated for construction at Fort Belvoir, VA, has launched a project intended to honor all who served: the Registry of the American Soldier. The registry will include a soldier's name, rank, hometown, and a brief service history, as well as any stories or memories soldiers or former soldiers wish to share.

For more information on the registry and the planned National Army Museum, go to <http://larmyhistory.org>, or write to the National Museum of the United States Army, Museum Transition Office, 6020 Goethals Road, Building 1812, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6205.

Dale E. Wilson

Dear editor,

A group of veterans of Co. B, 4/3rd Inf. have become close lately by phone and e-mail. At least four of us have 4/3rd Staff Journals. Mine are for the time period 1 Nov. 68 - 31 Dec. 69. We are wondering why March 3-4, 1969 are missing. This happens to be when LTC Stinson was KIA. Is there a way we can find these missing pages?

Jerry Druery; jbdldard@netscape.net

Dear editor,

I am the sister-in-law of Harold Lee Smith from Des Moines Iowa. He was KIA in Vietnam in February 1968 during the Tet Offensive. He was in Co. A, 1/52nd Inf., 198th LIB.

My husband, MSG Dale W Smith, now deceased, was Harold's brother and the only living relative of Harold.

Now my daughter, Harold's niece, is the closest next-of-kin.

Harold Lee Smith (R) and buddy



My daughter now is serving as a SSGT in the United States Air Force. Neither my son nor daughter knew their uncle Harold. But it is so important to them and to me to perhaps get in touch with people that may have served with him.

It was always painful for my husband to talk about Harold and what happened. It was also difficult for him to talk of his own experiences in Vietnam. Is there anywhere I can go where I can post something to help find people that served with Harold?

Barbara Smith; barbsmith@charter.net

Dear editor,

The National Museum of the Pacific War will hold a special symposium on Guadalcanal in September 2007. The event will be held at the museum in Fredericksburg, TX. We are seeking members of the Americal Division who fought in this campaign to participate in a panel discussion. The individuals need to have good communication skills and be able to travel to Fredericksburg..

We are particularly looking for one or two representatives of the Americal Division to share their personal, first hand accounts of their recollections from the early period of the Guadalcanal campaign (Aug 42-Jan43). There are historians who will be doing the overview of the ground actions followed by the veterans who will share their stories. Please call me for further details.

Helen McDonald
Director of Programs
(830) 992-2765

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear editor,

I served in Vietnam in 1970-71 with Co. E, 4/21st Inf., 11th LIB. On April 21, 2006 my wife Alison and I began an 18 day trip to Vietnam. Our trip was with a group from Toledo, OH that included other veterans. We participated in community service projects in the Quang Tri area that are conducted by the Development of Vietnam Endeavors (D.O.V.E.) Fund.

Our most striking memory from the trip is the visits we made to schools. D.O.V.E. provided funds for the construction of small school houses and to provide uniforms and supplies for the students. We passed out small gifts, hats, pens and candy to the children. They were thrilled.

We were not able to visit any of the areas that I was at while in the Army. We hope to correct that on a future trip back to Vietnam. We may also add on a trip to Cambodia.

A report of our trip written by Matt Sanctis appeared in the May 15, 2006 edition of the Fremont, OH News-Messenger. Information on the D.O.V.E. Fund is at www.dovefund.org.

John Lauer



Chuck and Johanna Swanson

Dear editor,

I am enclosing a photo of my husband, Chuck Swanson (Co. C, 1/52, 198th LIB) and our daughter Johanna at Hope College's graduation.

I want to thank you all for the three years in a row that she won a scholarship grant from you. I thought maybe a picture of the proud papa and daughter at baccalaureate would say it best.

Christine Swanson.

Dear editor,

I viewed the order of battle information on the web at <http://www.americal.org/oobc1.shtml>. I wish to point out that the 570th Transportation Corps Detachment and the 415th Signal Corps Detachment both supported F Troop, 8th Cavalry. Thanks for adding them appropriately.

T. Burkee; Teeburkee@aol.com

Dear editor,

On May 24, 2007 the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association (AVVBA) will honor PFC Jerry Wayne Gentry, Silver Star recipient from the Americal Division. Gentry was killed-in-action on November 9, 1967 while driving a M113 tracked vehicle. He was assigned to B Trp., 1/1st Cavalry and was credited with saving the lives of four comrades.

The primary focus of the AVVBA "is a commitment to erect a memorial plaque in various locations in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia for an individual from the Atlanta area who was killed in Vietnam. This is a small way for the Association and its members to honor those who did not return home."



Jerry Wayne Gentry

The ceremony will take place at 11:00 AM on May 24, 2007 in Cartersville, GA, Gentry's hometown. Having representation from the Americal Division and B Trp., 1/1st Cav., including his commanding officer, would make our memorial event more meaningful to the Gentry family and to the members of the AVVBA.

Robert Hopkins, Memorial Chairman

robhopper@aol.com

770-394-1329

Editor's note: If you wish to reply to a letter but you do not have e-mail please contact me and I will relay your message.

Call Gary L. Noller

at

816-695-6390

or write to

1662 Landmark Rd., Kerrville, TX, 78028.



Looking for: company roster from Viet Nam. I was a medic from **Co. D, 23rd Med. Bn.** from Chu Lai and was assigned to H Trp., 17th Cav. I am trying to determine the medics that were assigned to the troop from 23rd Med. Contact: Tom Dees; tldees@earthlink.net

Looking for: Anyone who knew my uncle, Albert Pierni, served in 182nd Inf., Co. B. He turned 90 in December and has begun talking about his experiences and the people he served with. I would like to correspond with anyone who knows my uncle. Contact: Bob Casey; remsc@gmail.com

Looking for: Anyone in the 196th LIB stationed at **LZ Baldy** from October 1968 to October 1969. We then we moved to Hawk Hill where I was until December 1969. I am looking for any and all information I can get about incidents that happened at the two LZs. I am also looking for the following men: 1SG Fulgram, CPT Allgood, CPT Young, CPT Hill, LT Homoki, LT Rowland, LT Marconi, SP4 Harold Zachary, SP4 James Scott, SGT Gayden, CPL Smith, SGT Kendall, PVT Webb, PVT Kinser, PVT Schuffield, PVT.

Burns, SP4 Haynes, SP4 James McQueen, PVT. Champaine. I need help for a VA claim. Contact: D.R. Willis; Drwillis1940@aol.com

Looking for: Anyone who served with the **178th ASHC or 132nd ASHC, 71st AHC** Chu Lai anytime during 1969. Dan Flahaven; cookwagon2@aol.com

Looking for: Anybody who served with me in **Co. D, 1/6, 198th LIB**, 1967-68.

Hockless Bryant; 1401 NW 103 St., Apt. 232, Miami, FL 33147; 305-694-9607.

Looking for: Looking for some help in locating a certain photograph, probably from Life magazine. The photograph is of **CSM Morrill**. A. Barron (then CSM of the Americal Division or one of its units) rolling the division's colors as it leaves Vietnam. Contact: MSG Brendan W. O'Connor, USA; oconnorb@soc.mil

Looking for: Anyone who knew Don Bobo, **1/46th Inf., 196th LIB**, February 1971 to January 1972. He needs buddy statements in order to file a VA claim. He remembers Mike Silvia, Jesse Rojas, and Danny Canu. Contact: Brian Ayers, Delta County Veteran Service Officer; 970-874-2083, bayers@deltacounty.com

Looking for: Capt. Brackett, XO in A Co. **723 Maint. Bn.** I need him as a witness for a VA claim. Contact: H.G. Sooter; hgsooter@yahoo.com

Looking for: Members of **Co. B, 6th Spt. Bn., 11th LIB**, 1968-69. Contact: Kramer; kramer11th@yahoo.com

Looking for: Anyone who served with **Co. L, 164th Inf.**, at Guadalcanal and Solomon Islands in WWII. My dad served from 1941-1945 but died of polio in 1948 when I was 2 years old. I am looking for more information on details of Purple Heart (121507 GO#27), 3/24/1943, somewhere in North Solomon Islands. I have names on photos of James R McGunn, Ralph A Hempel, Fred W Hales, Lyle O Johnson, and Lyle R Rolfe. Contact: Lyle C. MacIver; lrmaciver@charter.net

REUNIONS

Btry. C, 1/14th Arty. will have its sixth reunion on May 24-26, 2007 at Branson, MO. See more information at www.charliebattery1-14thartillery.org.

Clarence L. Marrs; (918) 647-5782
cbmarrs@windstream.net

26th Engineers will be holding a reunion in Indianapolis, IN on October 18-21, 2007.

Robert W.Kasting; (574) 753-4375
ffgris@myvine.com

Co. B, 1/46th Inf. reunion, June 28-July 1, 2007.

D. M. (Woody) Woods; (563) 391-3702
dmwoods5716@hotmail.com

Co. C, 4/21st Inf. (1970-71) will hold a reunion on May 4-6, 2007 in St. Louis, MO. Kitty (281) 333-3620
Mpet2345@aol.com

Co. E, 1/46th Inf. will have a reunion in Nashville, TN on April 26-29, 2007.

Paul Gildner (231)816-0468
pgildner@sbcglobal.net

196th LIB Assoc. will hold its bi-annual reunion at Fort Mitchell, KY (Cincinnati area) on July 26-29, 2007. Additional information at www.196th.org.

Warren Neil (317) 984-3853
Grunt196@insightbb.com



Membership requirements: The applicant must have been awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge as certified to by official notation on the applicant's DD-214, Official Army Orders, or other official documents. Applicant must attach a copy of such documentation to this Enlistment (Membership) Application.

Dues are \$20.00 for two years or \$75.00 for a life membership.

We do not have a one (1) year membership.

For more information and membership application please visit our website at www.cibassoc.com or contact:

Daniel R. Sankoff, Major, C.I.A.
National Membership Officer
236 Danby Road
Lehigh Acres, FL 33936-7531
E-mail: silverfoxx236@aol.com

Scholarship Fund Prepares for 2007

The Americal Scholarship Fund wishes to thank donors for the very generous support received in 2006. Plans are underway for the 2007 fundraising raffle and award determinations.



The scholarship program made its first award of \$500 in 1993. Since that time 147 awards have been made for a total of \$148,000. In 2005 a record was set with \$30,000 distributed to 35 recipients.

Scholarship applications must be completed and delivered to Mr. Robert Short, Scholarship Chairman, no later than May 1, 2007. Complete details on eligibility and application requirements can be found at www.americal.org/scholar.shtml or by writing to the chairman. All eligible students, including those who have previously applied, are urged to send their completed packets as soon as possible.

Beginning this year donors will be able to name scholarships. For a minimum donation of \$500 the donor can designate a name for an award. The name can be that of an individual, group, or unit. A brief written profile of the named person, group, or unit should be provided with the donation. The award winner will be presented with the written profile along with the award.

Donors and applicants are asked to contact the chairman with any questions they may have.

Send communications to
 Mr. Robert G. Short, Scholarship Chairman,
 3839 Old Savannah Drive, Kalamazoo, MI, 49009,
 or e-mail C146thinf@aol.com

The following is a list of contributors for 2006. If your name is omitted in error please inform Mr. Short so that the record may be corrected.

\$1,000 OR MORE

Albert Cotta

\$500-\$999

Edward DenBraven
 Richard Merlin

\$100-\$499

Spencer Baba
 William Bacon
 Barton Berry
 Michael Browning
 William Bruinsma
 Chuck Carlock
 Peter Chelemedos
 Steve Dant

Frank Davis
 Robert Dyson
 Michael Ebert
 John Ewing
 Raymond Fox
 Joseph Gaston
 Michael Gould
 Wesley Haun
 Millard Heistand
 Ann Herd
 Allen Hoe
 Wayne Johnston
 Lee Kaywork
 Marc Laxer
 James Lyons
 Arthur Martinez
 Gerard McDonald
 John McNown, Jr.
 William Pierce

Jack Rudder
 Laurance See
 Charles Stirling
 Dutch & Jan DeGroot
(in memory of Mike Ackerfeld)
 David Eichhorn
(in memory of Alice Mullen)
 Paul Grice
(in memory of fallen brothers of Alpha, 1/20th Inf., CSM Cecil Lowery & SGT Allan Barfield)
 William Maddox
(in memory of Ernest Carlson)
 Gary Noller
(in memory of WWII veterans)

\$50-\$99

Lawrence Andrzejewski
 Chuck Arcoletti
 Wayne Bryant
 Dorothy Bukiri
 William Burton
 Richard Carey
 William Castillo
 Billy Coleman
 Earl Cook
 Slater Davis
 Imelda Driscoll
 Frank Dulak
 Pearly Dupuis
 David Eckberg
 Ron Ellis
 John Gasper
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Steven Parkman
Verner Pike
Derek Price
Edward Raymond
Jack Reid
John Sabolenko
David Saxon
William Schott
Bruce Sexton
Dan Smith
Paul Snow
Conrad Steers
Herman Stephenson
David Taylor
Maurice Henson
*(in honor of members of
A Co., 26th Engineers,
and the Demo men of
1st Plt.)*
George & Elaine Hatch
*(in memory of Leonard
Oliver)*
James & Karen Lopes
*(in memory of Leonard
Oliver)*
Nancy Oliver
*(in memory of Leonard
Oliver)*
Elizabeth Reddish

**(in memory of Leonard
Oliver)**
John Smith
*(in memory of J. Laffey
& L. Oliver)*
Sal Vinciullo
*(in memory of Joseph
Papa)*

\$15-\$49

Paul Strotman
Richard Sheffer
David McCreight
Harold Hansen
Jan Milles
George Jones
Jalmer Logan
Darrell Ordway
Leonard Owczarzak
Stephen Lewis
Sheridan Lightner
Louis DesRochers
Frank Kreisel
Terrence Siemer
Bertha Kerner
Novella Klausing
Robert Feeken
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Frank Dupuy
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 Michael Kratochvil
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 Merrill Matson
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 Sheridan Kennedy
 Dennis Matthews
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 Raymond Ellerman
 Michael Boise
 Richard Bush
 Roy Sargent
 John Moren
 Mitchell Przybycien
 David Germain
 Frank McQuaid
 Thomas Packard
 John Brown
 Elbert Fuller
 Otto Boehmig

Laverne Dean
 James Sheehan
 Floyd Nicholas
 Benjamin Tanish
 David Mower
 Jean Rockowitz
 David Orndorff
 Robert Carrigan
 Lenore McKnight
 John Dure
 Thomas Brown
 James McFarlen
 Malcolm East
 Joan Nardone
 James Grubka
 Roland Castranova
 Marsha Piazza
 Bernard Petronis
 Bruce Meskers
 Alexander Cameron
 Paul Reitchel
 Richard Heroux
 James Lewellan
 Donald Stevens
 Joanne Stygles
 James Flynn
 William Augerson
 Robert Holt
 Dan Brasher
 Ron Green
 Arthur Hanley
 Roger Luckjohn
 William Hanusek
 Jesse Mendoza
 Al Straessle
 Michael Kosteczko
 Carroll Staton
 Robert Behnke
 Oscar Gerner
 Roger Gilmore
 Richard Smith
 William Honjiyo
 James Gaffney
 Paul Cuddy
 Don Counter
 Tim Vail
 Gordon Morse

Donald Boito
 Jim Rogers
 Richard Andel
 Andrew Adams
 Gerald Borysiak
 Carlos Boone
 Jack Morton
 Marlin Egelund
 Robert Liddell
 Robert Nadolski
 Charles Barbo
 Bobby Preston
 John Grubbs
 Grant Finkbeiner
 Robert Frey
 Lloyd Morrell
 Caleb Mills
 Morris Spadaccini
 Raymond Fawkes
 Sam Mazzola
 Cameron Baird
 James Burch
 John Foisy
 Gerald Martel
 William Hawkins
 Gene Bright
 Michael Ross
 Elizabeth Pariseau
 Carol Fonseca
(in memory of David Fonseca)
 Barbara Chin
(in memory of Joseph B. Chin and Bernard G. Carroll)
 Andrews-Dahill VFW Post 1531
(in memory of Leonard Oliver)
 Tri Delta Ladies Group
(in memory of Leonard Oliver)
 George Panagakos
(in memory of Leonard Oliver)
 Tillman Cole
(in memory of Stanley Marwil)

National Recruiting & Retention

David W. Taylor

New Recruiting Brochures Available!

The new ADVA Recruiting Brochure is now available and a copy is included with this issue of the Americal Journal. Each one of you is a recruiting pointman! We are asking each ADVA member to take his copy of this new recruiting brochure and mail it to an Americal buddy who is not yet a member of the ADVA. The steps are easy and will only cost you one stamp:

David W. Taylor
970 Kenner Drive
Medina, Ohio 44256-2908



**DID YOU WEAR
THIS PATCH?**

**Place
Stamp
Here**

Americal Veteran
Any Street USA
Any town, State USA



1. Print your name in the "sponsor" line on the application form.
2. Fold the brochure to an 8-1/2" x 5-1/2" size as shown in the picture. This size will allow you to use only one stamp to mail it.
3. Place a small piece of tape on the bottom fold to keep it from opening during the mailing.
4. Write the address of your buddy where shown
5. Place your stamp and mail it away!

If each member takes the time to mail their recruiting brochure to one individual we will have over 3,000 sent in the mail between now and spring! For those of you who have a list of buddies you've developed for get-togethers please contact me and I will be happy to send you the required number of brochures for you to mail. Please be sure you print your name as the sponsor so we can give you the credit for recruiting in our Adjutant's section of the Journal. If you do not have the time or money to mail a large list of prospects, please contact me and we will mail brochures from your list for you. Being a member of the ADVA for only \$15/year is a great bargain for the many reasons outlined in our brochure.

Join The Americal Division Veterans Association **ADVA Today!**

Get your membership application here
Visit us at
www.americal.org

Recruiting Kits Now Available!

Exportable recruiting kits are now available for ADVA members to use at their smaller unit reunions or other military events where they think Americal vets may attend. Included in the "kit" are a 3 foot x 8 foot vinyl banner (shown on this page), recruiting brochures, a sampling of past Americal Newsletters and a sampling of items that can be purchased from the PX to demonstrate the availability of veteran pride materials. The items are not for sale but there will be order forms for those who wish to order direct from our PX.

Currently we are reserving space to recruit at the Melbourne, Florida veterans reunion (April) and the Kokomo, Indiana veterans reunion (September). Vets who wish to use a kit will be sent the kit by UPS and they can mail it back to me after their event.

Recruiting is everyone's mission. Help us to bring in new members in our growing brotherhood of Americal vets! Anyone having questions, comments or wishes to reserve a recruiting kit for your function please contact me: David W. Taylor, 970 Kenner Drive, Medina, Ohio 44256-2908. (330) 723-2517. E-mail address is: dwtaylor@ohio.net.

Share With Us Your Lists

There are a number of smaller organizations composed of Americal units from Vietnam and a number of these members are not ADVA members. Please contact me if you have such a list and let us work together to see how we can jointly help each other to make them aware of the ADVA.

Americal Division Veterans Association

2007 ANNUAL REUNION

Buffalo/Niagara Falls NY



Come in early on Thursday, June 21st for a great time.

The hospitality room will be open and ready for three days of comradeship and fun.

Friday, June 22, 2007 – 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM – NIAGARA FALLS EXPERIENCE

This tour features New York and Ontario views of Niagara Falls. Our group will travel to the U.S. side of the falls to visit Goat Island and Terrapin Point for a view of the upper Niagara River rapids and the American falls. Then we are off to the Niagara Reservation State Park where we will descend into the Niagara Gorge aboard the Maid of the Mist for an unforgettable cruise. Our group will travel into Canada (proof of citizenship required for all passengers) for a fabulous luncheon with a spectacular view of the falls. Following lunch, the group will visit Table Rock, the floral clock, and the Whirlpools.

Friday, June 22, 2007 – 3:30 PM to 11:00 PM – NIAGARA FALLS TOUR AND CASINO

Niagara Falls illuminated tour and casino stop. This tour includes luxury transportation, visit to the Fallview Casino Resort in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. (Proper proof of citizenship is required when traveling into Canada.) Visit the casino from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Following our visit to the casino we will view the falls as they are illuminated. Schedule permitting we will enjoy the Niagara Falls fireworks display.

Saturday, June 23, 2007 – GALLERIA MALL TRANSPORTATION

School bus transportation provided from the Adams Mark Hotel to the Galleria Mall and return. Depart Adams Mark hotel at 10:00 AM and arrive at the Galleria Mall at 10:30 AM. Depart the Galleria Mall at 3:00 PM and arrive at the Adams Mark Hotel at 3:30 PM.

Saturday, June 23, 2007 – 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM – LADIES TOUR

This tour includes luxury transportation, a visit to Kelly's Country Store, a luncheon cruise aboard the Grand Lady and an afternoon visit to the Chocolate Shoppe.

FREE FOR REUNION ATTENDEES! NAVAL AND MILITARY PARK

Visit the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Serviceman's Park open from 10AM to 4PM any day. Entrance is **FREE for Americal reunion attendees who wear their reunion badges.** It is within easy walking distance from the hotel. Transportation will be provided for those who need assistance from 12 Noon to 4 PM on Saturday. This fabulous park is the largest inland floating history museum in America. Experience how sailors lived during a tour of the USS Little Rock missile cruiser, the USS Sullivan's destroyer, and the USS Croaker submarine. A memorial service is planned for our group at 3 PM on Saturday, aboard the deck of the USS Little Rock.

For up to date reunion information go to www.americal.org/reunion.shtml

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION

ADAMS MARK HOTEL - BUFFALO, NY - JUNE 21-24, 2007

Hotel Reservations, call 1-877-892-MARK (6275) for the special rate of \$83/night (plus tax). For 24 hour parking at the hotel, the rate is \$89 (plus tax). Mention the Americal Division Veterans Association. Make reservations by **May 21, 2007** to secure the special group rate

Registration:

Payment before May 1 st , 2007	\$20/person	X# _____ attendees	= \$ _____
Payment after May 1 st , 2007	\$25/person	X# _____ attendees	= \$ _____

Friday, June 22nd Tours:

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Niagara Falls Experience	\$79.95/person	X# _____ attendees	= \$ _____
3:30 PM - 11:00 PM Niagara Falls Tour and Casino	\$39.95/person	X# _____ attendees	= \$ _____

Saturday, June 23rd Opportunities:

Galleria Mall Transportation	\$10/person	X# _____ attendees	\$ _____
10:00 AM Depart Adams Mark			
3:00 PM Return Adams Mark			
9:30AM - 4:00 PM Ladies Tour*	\$68.00/person	X# _____ attendees	= \$ _____
6:30 PM Annual Banquet (Waterfront Buffet)	\$40/person	X# _____ attendees	= \$ _____
Reunion T-Shirt** \$10/each	Med _____	LG _____	XL _____
			XXL _____
Reunion Memory Book	\$20 /each	X# _____	\$ _____
(Full Color - Mailed in two months after the Reunion)			
		TOTAL	\$ _____

Naval and Military Park Museum available Thursday, Friday or Saturday 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

FREE to reunion attendees who wear their reunion name badges. It is just a short walk from the hotel. Transportation available for those needing assistance, on Saturday from 12 Noon to 4 PM.

* (Limited to the first 50 registered)

** (Supplied in your welcome packet)

Make Checks Payable

to: ADVA/ERC

Mail Checks with Registration Form to:

**Robert F. Cudworth
203 Stone Street
Moosic, PA 18507-1532
See You In Buffalo!**

Last Name _____	First _____
Spouse/Guests _____	
Address _____	City _____
State _____	Zip _____
Phone _____	
Vietnam <input type="checkbox"/> WWII <input type="checkbox"/> Unit(s) _____ e-mail _____	

MAJ Frederick Ransbottom, Kham Duc MIA, Laid to Rest

By Gary L. Noller



Ransbottom's casket is covered with the flag carried in Vietnam in 1968 by Allen Hoe, E/2/1 Recon chief medic. The same flag was carried by Hoe's son, 1LT Nainoa K. Hoe, when he was killed in Iraq in January 2005 while serving with Co. C, 3/21st Infantry. Honor guard was provided by Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City.

Laverne Ransbottom never gave up hope that her son's remains would be found and returned for the honor and respect that he deserved. But she had to wait nearly 39 years for her prayers to be answered.

1LT Frederick Joel Ransbottom was only 21 years old when he took command of Recon Platoon, Co. E, 2/1st Infantry, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. His platoon was composed of experienced veterans who desired a competent leader. Ransbottom filled that need.

Recon Platoon went by the radio call sign of Snoopy and Ransbottom became Snoopy 6. Allen K. Hoe, the platoon's chief medic, describes Ransbottom as "a breath of fresh air." Hoe went on to say, "We only knew him a few weeks but it seemed as if we knew him for fifty years."

In May 1968 elements of the Americal's 2/1st Inf. and 1/46th Inf. and other units were defending the remote Kham Duc Special Forces camp. Kham Duc was just a short distance from the border with Laos and almost straight west of Chu Lai. The base featured an airstrip capable of landing C-130 Hercules aircraft.

On May 10 the 2nd NVA Division attacked Kham Duc and a neighboring camp at Ngok Tavak. The fighting was fierce

with both sides fully engaged in close combat. Attempts were made to reinforce the Americans at Kham Duc but on May 12, 1968 the order was given to evacuate the base.

The evacuation was frantic but much of the friendly force was extracted by end of the day. Ransbottom and other members of his platoon were at an observation post (OP) holding off the enemy. But the enemy assaulted the OP with a massive attack and the OP was lost. Ransbottom was among those whose bodies were not recovered leading his casualty to be listed as missing-in-action (MIA).

Laverne Ransbottom lost her son on Mothers' Day. She kept up the search for news of her son through her activities with POW-MIA families. In 2006 she finally received the word that she had awaited so long.

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducted investigations at Kham Duc and in March 2006 Ransbottom's remains and personal effects were recovered in an excavation. This included his dog tags and high school class ring. The remains of Ransbottom's radio-telephone operator (RTO), PFC William Skivington, were found at the same time.

The funeral service for Frederick Ransbottom was conducted on January 13, 2007 at the Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond, OK. Dennis Newkirk, Senior Pastor, officiated at the services.

This is what the Lord says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord. "They will return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your future," declares the Lord. "Your children will return to their own land." Jeremiah 31:16-17

September 19th 1946 ~ May 12th 1968



This is what the Lord says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord. "They will return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your future," declares the Lord. "Your children will return to their own land." Jeremiah 31:16-17

Members of the Snoopy recon team served as honorary pallbearers. They are Allen Hoe, Edward Sassenberger, Paul Ternullo, Orlando Vasquez, Jeffrey Weber, and Bill Wright.



Display of flags and wreaths at funeral service

They presented Mrs. Ransbottom with her son's found dog tags. Army pallbearers were from the honor detail of the 6th Battalion, 27th Field

Artillery from Ft. Sill, OK. Allen (Doc) Hoe gave a touching tribute to his lost leader as well as to Laverne Ransbottom. For years Allen had been a source of strength for Laverne. She was able

to return much needed support when

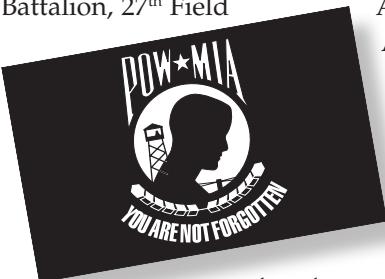
1LT Nainoa Hoe was killed in Iraq in January 2005. 1LT Hoe was serving as a platoon leader in Co. C, 3/21st Infantry when he was cut down by an enemy sniper.

Snoopy team member Bill Wright also addressed the gathering of family and friends. Wright traveled to Kham Duc in recent years to help locate the position of the OP for excavation. Mrs. Ransbottom referred to Hoe and Wright as "our rock, our voice, and our biggest supporters."

Ransbottom was posthumously promoted to the rank of major and was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart. COL Thomas Guthrie, current commander of the 196th Inf. Bde. at Ft. Shafter, HI, presented the medals to the family. GySgt Robert Anderson, USMC Retired, read the accompanying citations.

Matthew Ransbottom, nephew of Frederick, spoke about the uncle that he never knew but always heard about. He also acknowledged the service and sacrifices of veterans and expressed appreciation to veterans on behalf of the family. He noted that his middle name came from his uncle's first name.

Chaplain (MAJ) Ted Wilson, 90th Troop Command, Oklahoma Army National Guard, was the Casualty Affairs



PNC Gary Noller presents Americal Division flag to Mrs. Laverne Ransbottom. Wreaths presented by veterans of E/2/1 Recon and the ADVA

Officer (CAO). He reminded everyone that Vietnam veterans did not receive the homecoming they deserved. He asked all Vietnam veterans to stand as he issued a Welcome Home greeting.

Ransbottom was interred next to his father, Frederick Arthur, at Memorial Park Cemetery in Oklahoma City, OK. Laverne Ransbottom was presented the folded flag from her son's coffin. After the firing of the final salute and the sounding of taps a flock of white doves were released into the frigid air. The long journey home was complete.

In a written statement the family stated, "We want to thank the family members of our missing men and our supporters who never give up by keeping the pressure on our politicians to bring all our men home. We have come to know and appreciate all that these families have sacrificed in order to keep these men from being forgotten."

Roger Gilmore and I represented the Americal Division Veterans Association at the visitation and funeral. The ADVA provided an Americal Division flag for the ceremonies and gave it to the Ransbottom family as a remembrance. Gilmore characterized the funeral ceremony as "respectful, touching, and peaceful."

Memorials can be made to the Kham Duc Group, in care of Bill and Ann Schneider, 4300 Schenk Rd., Barnhart, MO, 63012. Bill Schneider is a veteran of Co. A, 1/46th Inf. and was at Kham Duc. The Schneiders have accumulated extensive written records about the battle of Kham Duc.



Welcome to New Caledonia

Edited by David Taylor

What appears below is an edited version of the War and Navy Departments "Pocket Book Guide to New Caledonia", printed by the US Government printing office for soldiers arriving and stationed on New Caledonia during WWII. The editor wishes to thank Tom Howard, Secretary / Treasurer of the 754th Tank Battalion for providing a transcript of the source document. Photos used are courtesy of Howard Burroughs, 70th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft). Map is from a government web site. This is part 1 in a 2-part series

Introduction

You and your outfit have come to New Caledonia not only as friends to help guard the strategic interests of the United Nations in a distant and vital corner of the world, but virtually as newcomers.

This island of the Free French have been the home of Frenchmen for more than a century, but few Americans have been there and few know anything about it. This guidebook now in your hand is the first guide of any kind every published to inform Americans about New Caledonia. Its purpose is to introduce you to the country and facilitate your learning more about a people whose love of freedom is as great as our own. If you are an alert soldier, the time should come quickly when you know more about the country than is to be found in the guidebook. That should be your aim. The more you learn of New Caledonia, the better you discharge your duty as an American.

New Caledonia stands guard over the Pacific lifeline which joins our strength with Australia and with the Dutch who still give battle to the enemy in some of the islands of the East Indies. You are fortunate that this island will be your station for the time being. New Caledonia is the only island in the Western South Seas which is wholly free of fever. The public health problems are minor.

The New Caledonia natives are your loyal comrades in arms. They have become associated with our arms to serve as guides and service corps troops. While the American troops wear khaki the New Caledonia natives (this term used to designate the original inhabitants) asked for a modified OD uniform because they do not like the feel of cotton. Some of these dark-skinned men are warriors who have won decorations on the battlefields of France during the First World War. Mutual respect between you will develop naturally. Three flags now fly over New Caledonia – the Tricolor of the old French Republic, The Lorraine Cross, symbol of the Fighting French and the Stars and Stripes.

The surrender of French Indo-China to Japan destroyed the balance of power and led to the defeat in Malaya, the Philippines



and the Dutch East Indies. This cigar-shaped island lies only 750 miles across the Coral Sea from Australia. Given possession of this key spot, the Japanese might have been able to knock out Australia before now and certainly would have blocked our present route across the Southwest Pacific.

New Caledonia must also be held because for its size, acre for acre, mile for mile, it has the richest mineral resources of any country in the world – nickel, chromium, cobalt and iron. Many an American plane and munitions factory is dependant today on nickel or chrome from New Caledonia. That's the chance the initiative of the New Caledonians has given us – and the great responsibility.

Meet Our Allies

New Caledonia is a thinly populated country. It is little larger than New Jersey in square miles but only has 61,000 inhabitants, as compared to 4,000,000 in New Jersey. By American standards the island cannot be called fertile. One third or more of the area is too rugged or barren to be of economic use. Behind the beaches the lands are apt to be swampy. Thousands of acres in the river valleys, however, are suited for agriculture. There are four groups of people making up the population. The largest group is European – mostly French- who are a third of the population. The French are not colonialists but consider the island their home and like to be called Caledonians. They are mostly farmers, shopkeepers, businessmen and government employees.

The second largest group of people is the native Kanakas. They are of mixed Melanesian and Polynesian origin, whose ancestors were the original Caledonians. Some may tell you the Kanakas are lazy but the climate is pleasant and fish, game and food are easy to get. When they were asked to work in the mines their attitude was, "we are getting along fine". But we have found them willing to do hard work with us. There is one unusual sight you will see - about half of them have reddish or orange-colored hair. This is not a freak

of nature but caused by rubbing lime, once used to kill parasites, into the roots of the hair. The custom is still followed as a means of tribal adornment.

The third group is the Javanese and Tonkinese, brought to the island to work the mines. About 12,000 of these laborers are on the island according to latest figures. They are usually brought here on 3-year contracts. Some Javanese women work in the mines but many are employed, and prefer, domestic service. The Tonkinese are from the Tonkin region of Indochina and are similar to the Chinese in appearance and customs. They are regarded as reliable workers and many of them are fine artisans in metal and wood. The fourth group is Japanese. There were about 1,100 on the island but after Pearl Harbor they were collected up for their own safety and evacuated to Australia.

Getting Along in New Caledonia

The best way to get along is to be friendly, courteous and considerate. Respect their customs and their privacy. New Caledonia is comparatively free from religious taboos but there are some things you will want to know. The siesta hour is observed rigidly throughout the island and all shops and offices are closed



Hotel Sevastopol – Capital City of Noumea, 1943

tight for a few hours at midday. Most of the French are very devout and conservative in their personal lives and the families observe a strict moral code. Among the Javanese and Tonkinese you will find all sorts of religious customs, festivals and observances. The important thing is to never laugh or interfere.

Liquors of all kinds are extremely scarce. The Europeans were accustomed to French wines but that is rare now. Such wine as can be found is now imported from California. A little beer is imported from Australia but it is not especially good beer. Ice is hard to get, there being only two small plants on the island, with a plentiful demand for the product.

Nearly all native New Caledonians live in villages, called **tribu** (tree-boo). They are generally found in the river valleys but some are deep in the mountains. The old-style native hut, now rare, is a

cone shaped thatched roof affair looking something like a beehive. The more common dwelling today, encouraged by the government for reasons of public health, is a rectangular cottage with tin, bark or a thatched roof. The walls are made of waddle and mud, usually painted in bright colors. Woven mats are used as bedding and the cooking fire is an open hearth on the earth floor.



Typical Native Housing, New Caledonia, 1943

Eating and Drinking

The French have somewhat different customs of eating than our own. In the morning they have a *petit dejeuner* or "little breakfast", usually consisting of coffee and a roll. Then *dejeuner*, an early lunch. And finally dinner ("Dee-Nay"), the main meal. They drink a great deal of coffee (some grown on the island) and use rum and light wine in moderation. Despite the shortage of liquor, the New Caledonians retain their rigid ideas about the use of it. It is a social sin to get drunk and it is a jail offense to give liquor to a native. The Tonkinese and Javanese follow their own customs of cooking and eating. Rice is their staple food garnished with fish and vegetable sauces. Though beef cattle are plentiful the natives prefers potted meats. New Caledonians are willing to share what they have with strangers but they can't afford it. Please refrain from boasting about the abundance and quality of your own food.

The best sports for Americans are fishing and hunting. Deer are so plentiful that they are regarded as pests. In one year more than 120,000 hides were exported from the island. Soldiers are given as much liberty as they wish to hunt deer with government ammunition. It is good live target practice to prepare for the bigger game that all soldiers are talking about.

In New Caledonia our soldiers are gathering oysters off of trees to garnish the company mess. There are no better oysters in the world. They cling to the roots of the mangrove in the tidal rivers and a hungry soldier comes along, pulls the root up and eats several dozen on the half shell.

To be continued.

"Perils of Pauline" My WWII Memoirs

Fernando Vera

WWII Historian's note: This is part 1 of Fernando Vera's memoirs, which be presented in edited form over the next several issues of the Americal Journal.

Preface

The title of my memoir was borrowed from the early 1930's movie serial and to raise some nostalgia of our youth. This particular serial had a heroine who left us on pins and needles as to how she would get out of her weekly hair-raising dilemmas. We tried to keep up on a weekly basis if we could afford it. Remember? Only 5 cents to go to the movie house! These serial thrillers were shown on Friday evenings and Saturday matinees. Nothing X-rated ...just plain old American thrills. Maybe my memoirs will raise some eyebrows, but like the Pearls of Pauline, you'll return to some normalcy at the end and the "hero", the American fighting man, will persevere through all.

Drafted April 1943

In March 1943 I received my 1A draft notice. It had an "RSVP" saying "respond in person if you please." I had been reclassified from an agricultural deferment as I had changed to a packing house from working in the fields. Farm work was 16 hours a day and no extra pay. It was physically very hard work. But leaving it got my invitation to the military. We draftees in my hometown boarded a Greyhound bus and headed for Fresno. We went over the mountains on a very treacherous but scenic road. There were drinking fountains along the way fed by natural springs. The two-lane highway was called "the grapevine". Today it has been replaced by a six-lane freeway on lower level hills.

After many hours we finally arrived in Fresno and our introduction to strange military food. I didn't eat very much. The next morning we were asked to get into our birthday suits and received physicals by perverted Army doctors as how they checked us out was something else. Well, I made it because I had a pulse!

Three branches of service were present to try to induct us into their branch. First was a swarthy Marine in his dress blues and he said, "well how about it?" I had seen a Life magazine article about what had taken place on Guadalcanal so I said, "no thanks." It was not that I was chicken, just cautious. Next came the Navy recruiter; passed him up because I didn't like their uniforms. At last I was trapped and the Army was in luck. Five of us ended up at Camp Cook, now Vandenberg Air Force Base. Our basic was Armored Infantry training. For three months they wouldn't let us off the base. Then we got a weekend pass and the battle begun, trying to get home with thousands of other GI's. Those of us from Oxnard, California had about 150 miles to hitchhike. Man, what hardship! I brought my 1937 Chevy coupe back to the camp and the guys would furnish their gas ration stamps for a ride. Usually three of us would get to go home at a time; on the way I'd pick up three more hitchhikers and stuff them in the coupe's trunk. It's a wonder they didn't suffocate.

Training was hard. I fell asleep sitting up one day during a field lecture and the platoon moved elsewhere and left me. I woke up and located them but couldn't sneak in as the hill was bare; but for some reason wasn't reprimanded. I did get KP the next day. What

was funny in our chow was the fact we only had one plate, so if there was ice cream or Jell-O, it was slopped on top of our main meal along with the very fine, fine dust that was so prevalent in the camp. Another thing I noticed is that an officer was required to be present to see that we ate everything. Also, they had to eat the same food for the day. Some of the guys that got KP at the Officers Mess said they really ate like kings and so did the KP! It was the elite duty. I lucked out; I never got on the garbage detail.

In late August or early October, we were to be disbanded to be sent overseas. Those of us who "dodged" on the firing range were told we wouldn't get to go overseas or a leave if we didn't qualify at the rifle range. The experts got to go home on leave earlier than us; they were given a week-long pass. Well, at the range some of the target markers were some of those who qualified and we were holding them back from going home. Needless to say there were no "Maggie's Drawers" that day, we became expert marksman all of a sudden!

I went home, fooled around, and didn't tell my folks I wouldn't see them for a while, if at all. When we returned we boarded a train at night and ended up at Fort Ord. The whole front of the fort was not fenced in so we'd take off at night on military buses to the small town of Salinas. I did it several times without a pass and each time the MP's missed me in their gate checks. At Fort Ord we received some more infantry training and a night hike. Just before shipping out we had a regimental parade. On the last week we knew we were going over so I sneaked out of the base and went to Salinas hoping to hitchhike home for one last time. I stood on the coast highway for about one hour; only two cars passed me so I silently went back to the base. Then on October 27, 1943 we boarded a troop train with a base band there to send us off, just as the sun was setting.

We reached the docks of San Francisco about 2 or 3AM, a real eerie scene – foggy and dark due to the coastal blackout – a scene just like one sees in the movies. We went in file through this warehouse and there were a bunch of MP's on each side with Thompson submachine guns, big guys! Anyway, I told the guys near me, "last chance!" We boarded a brand new victory ship name



USS Gen. George O. Squire (AP-130)

(Photo: Seaweeds Ships Histories)

George O. Squire and we left around 7AM from Pier No. 27. It was October 28, 1943, my mother's birthday. I saw the pier 10 years ago, the dock was still there but the warehouse was gone. As I crossed under the Golden Gate Bridge I looked at it and wondered if I'd ever see it again.

Five or six days out a wild rumor was put out by Uncle Sam, Goebbel's minister of propaganda that we were going to Hawaii. We only got as close to it as our minds could imagine it. It was just the latrine rumors doing their job. We only got two lousy meals a

day; later I was to learn that even "C-rations" were better. Our days were spent on the deck sweltering in the hot weather while at night the locked-up body heat and BO was horrible! No use taking a shower as fresh water was scarce, the salt water and saltwater soap we had at the time didn't mix. It made me feel greasier and worse. Throughout the whole voyage I only attempted a shower once.

Sadly one of our troops was killed on work detail, never got a chance to fight. Another sad thing took place on board: a black sailor was in line waiting for the ship's PX to open and one of our duty Marine guards ordered him to the rear. He refused and so the Marine beat him with his baton. I didn't see this but some of the guys that were there told me; racial prejudice at work. I'd experienced it during my young life and even when we were wearing our Army uniform in my hometown they were still separating us in the movie house. The poor usherettes were embarrassed to do it. I'm sure they were ordered to do it. We stared to object and integrated ourselves so people started to realize we were human too. My own feeling about this is not to bow to anyone, respect yes, but not be subservient. You see, even when I came home I couldn't get a better job. Thanks to the G.I. Bill, it helped!

At last we entered a reef-protected bay going into Noumea, New Caledonia, final port of my destiny, and we docked. A bunch of truck drivers were waiting for us and they cheerfully told us that the honeymoon was over. As we walked down the gangplank we were so weak we could barely carry our duffle bags. We went through the town to some remote area up in the hills, to a tent city. There was a dammed-up stream that had been made into a pool and we dove into it and got our first bath in sixteen days. Here I had my first experience with good old powdered eggs; I thought they were pancakes at first. Guess the cooks were ashamed of them and tried to disguise them. The cooks were a surly lot and gave no seconds! We stayed there a couple days given our MOS as riflemen.

We were then trucked to Noumea to some terraced tent city where the ground was sticky and muddy when it rained. The town was picturesque and hilly, but the one thing that stands out in my memory was the beautiful white church on the peak of a small hill. Finally we were bound for Fiji. On board were some English and Fijian Air Force troops and we had a nice rapport with them. The Fijians were coaxed into performing a Fijian ritual dance for us only they couldn't finish as they were too bashful and laughed at themselves. There were some nurses and officers on the top deck silently looking at us below. It seemed to me they were quietly wondering how many of us would survive.

At last we reached Suva, the capitol of Fiji, where we docked but didn't go ashore. I saw the Fijian native police in their red skirts as they performed a precise military drill. The Fijian men that I saw all seemed to be in excellent physical shape; I never saw any shorter than me at 5' 7". We trucked across the island on a narrow two-lane dirt road. Left-hand driving, the trucks would pass others coming the other way, missing each other by inches. We passed Fijian villages of grass houses with immaculate yards. There were coconut trees all over and bananas – a very beautiful island.

We finally reached our final assigned unit for the duration. Mine was Company L, 3rd Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment. I was interviewed by the First Sergeant, Ray Kinnon one hell of a nice guy. He asked me if I ran track, which I did in high school. So he said, "Go to Sergeant Standish". Thankfully, he was the Company Communications Sergeant. We got acquainted and I found out he was from Malden, Massachusetts. He had a soft but strange accent, at least that's the way it sounded to me. Here I met the rest of my

section and we were to become a well-knit group.

Sergeant Standish stared teaching us troubleshooting; our combat wire-communications system was simple to me and this type training was to become my lifetime job in the local phone company a few years after I got home, using the G.I. Bill. He also took us to the beach about a half-mile away to an enclosed pool of ocean water protected by a small coral reef with no waves. We went swimming, as it was just perfect. The Fijians would come and take our laundry and none of it was ever lost or mixed. There were

many Indians here but the company areas were off limits to them. Why I don't know, so we never got acquainted with them. Actually we had it pretty easy here in Latoka, stuffing ourselves with delicious bananas. We took a company hike to Nandi and back, and 'tough old me' almost suffocated in the end, couldn't breath and it was a good thing the medic was around. It was embarrassing. I guess this happened because I stuffed myself with bananas along the hike.

At last the day of reckoning came. We boarded trucks and again took a hair-raising ride with those nervous truck drivers to Suva to board a ship, Bougainville-bound, on December 23rd 1943, and whatever my fate was to be.

Bougainville

On our way to Bougainville we stopped overnight at Guadalcanal where we could see some of the war destruction from aboard our ship. Arriving at Bougainville we approached Empress Augusta Bay and we could view the enormous mountains and the jungle. What stood out prominently was Mount Bagana, apparently an active volcano, as later when we were settled in our permanent frontline we could see fire on the sides of the mountain at night.

We landed, I think, during Christmas week and bivouacked somewhere in the rear area. I dug my lone slit trench, ate some delicious C-rations for supper and settled in for the night. My imagination ran amok imagining that Japs might sneak up on us, little realizing there was a permanent front line, I guess, a horseshoe shape from the ocean shore by the Torokina River to the other end bordering the Laruma River. I don't know but I think the 37th Division was already established on the Laruma River. Our mission was to relieve, if I remember right, the 3rd Marines and to defend the airstrips.

Our first night we were greeted by the Japanese with an airplane bombing raid. Our air defensive units locked him with



PFC Fernando Vera on Bougainville
(Photo: Fernando Vera)

their searchlights and were shooting at him with tracers mixed in to follow their aiming. I think he dropped one bomb but it fell harmlessly in the jungle. The following day we moved to the base of Hill 260 which was later to be an area of intense fighting. There we bivouacked for several days and, needless to say, we quickly learned to adapt to jungle living. From here a squad was sent on a patrol and they met resistance, with part of the squad returning. Three were lost in the jungle. The company was assembled to go look for them and volunteers were asked to step forward. Well, much to my chagrin the whole company did. You see, I was in the front of the group, so I was pushed forward.

As we were preparing to go in the morning, we received word that the lost had returned. Since we were prepared to go out, we went. In crossing the Torokina River I noticed it was half-warm and half-cold. This condition persisted the whole time we were there, as we were destined to cross it many times after that. Two Marines accompanied us to show us where to go; they were carrying Thompson submachine guns. Being in the communications section of the company and company runner, I got the distinct honor of carrying a roll of combat wire, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile long and damned heavy! Going along what was to be a well-trod trail, we headed for the "East-West Trail." Needless to say, the jungle was thick. We bivouacked that night, dug in shallow again, no fires and UGH, C-rations!

Next morning we started again, rolling out the wire slowly and cautiously with our communications section about in the middle of the column. Around 11AM we were stopped. Word passed back that a Jap bivouac and ambush area was sighted. We cautiously advanced and the firing started and lasted a few minutes. Twenty-six Japs were killed. They must have been very careless. We received no causalities except one, Bennie Wauneka, a Navajo Indian who yelled, "I'm shot." What happened was that a bullet had pierced his canteen and the lukewarm water spilled on him. Our Marine guides started spraying the trees and the firing stopped. While we gawked at the enemy dead a Jap Nambu light machine gun started firing at us. It goes without saying that our basic training came in handy as we sure went into the prone position pronto! It was hard to tell where the shots were coming from but they stopped and didn't fire anymore; it might have been just one soldier and he took off. As the firing had been going on I was lying near Sgt. Standish and I told him, "I guess we've had it, huh?" No comment, I guess he was as frozen stiff as I was.

Anyway we tried to use our hand walkie-talkies and our magneto hand-powered radio to contact battalion or regimental headquarters; apparently they had a lousy range. So we just bashed them there as they weren't going to be any good in the jungle. Later we acquired an SCR300 that had good range but it felt like it weighed 100 pounds. However, it was quite reliable. Incidentally, I must mention here that our first scout, a guy named Corregio, got a Silver Star in this engagement and shortly after the battle of Hill 260 he was rotated home for a training cadre assignment. I guess we all wished it were us.

Bye and bye we were able to contact battalion headquarters through our combat wire and magneto phone and our regimental CO was talking to our CO, Captain James Harris, and asked for us to bring him back a souvenir. Thankfully, I know we destroyed a Nambu, and I guess their rifles. I don't think anything was brought back. Young as we were, it seemed just like all the strength was sapped out of us and we were just lucky to walk back. Anyway, that's the way I felt.



SCR300 radio carried by Vera
(Photo: US Army training photo taken stateside)

Next day we relieved a Marine company at the base of Hill 210. From there we proceeded to establish a permanent trench front line. I think our cooks were based at the regimental headquarters and hot food was trucked into our area. We also received a mess of free canned cigarettes. One brand I remember was Chelsea. I didn't smoke much so many

of us buried them in the sandy soil near our foxholes, which we exhumed later because of the shortages of such PX supplies due to either a typhoon or battle conditions on other islands further north. Also, Sgt. Standish introduced me to Blue Boar Tobacco for pipes; it's still a flourishing brand at the tobacco stores.

As our frontline trench was finally set, fields of machine gun fire were established and mortars set by Sgt. Foley and Sgt Levine. We laid out our sound communications to all the platoons. The brush was cleared completely so the Japs would have no place to hide in case they came. To my knowledge they never came to our area. Heavy weapons sections were established on top of Hill 210. They also had a spotlight to use at night. K Company was next to us on the left and A Company of the 132nd Infantry Regiment on our right.

Our company headquarters area was to the rear of our frontline trench by about 175 feet, so we didn't get any night watch duty. Louis Winshelbaum dug our two-man hole about 2-foot deep and 5 feet by 6 feet. Two cots fit in it with a 2-foot space between. Louis was our company mail clerk and did one hell of a job! I must say here that we put some logs on top of our hole, then split some banana trees and utilized their circular bark for a roof sealer interlaid like Spanish tile. Then we covered it with a large amount of sand and it served quite well for six months with no leaks even when we had heavy rain. Also, it was quite cool on hot days.

Having settled down to frontline and patrol duty, we of the communications section went about carrying the SCR300 on squad patrols but luckily we never encountered any resistance on the patrols I was on. We had received a message requesting an orderly for our division general; I took it to our CO, Captain Harris and, since I had seen it first, I bravely told him that I'd take it. He looked at me in a non-committal manner and said, "You wouldn't like that would you?" So I guess he wanted me around so it was passed down the line. If I remember right a guy in the 2nd platoon named "Little" took it and I forlornly watched him go. Of course, I never regretted it, even though our experiences were not the most enlightening, the comradeship built was one to last a lifetime.

One thing that was noticeable about us in our duty whenever it was our turn to go out on patrol we did it without complaining. I just think, worldwide, we were all a pretty good bunch of G.I.'s. Only twice did I beg off of patrols as I had very weak ankles and at that time they were sprained and I know I would not be able to do my duty. First Sergeant Kinnon graciously excused me. In carrying the SCR300, I tried carrying a carbine and a 45mm automatic, both for some reason were cumbersome to me. So I went back to using my trusty Garand.

If I remember right, our patrols prior to Hill 260 were uneventful. In a way it was not the rough territory in our zone like the 37th Division or the 164th Regiment had; their area was quite hilly. Also,



Disposition of Americal units on Bougainville during early March 1944
Japanese offensive (Map: US Army history publication)

I believe our 1st battalion got a share of it as well. Our area was quite flat. On one patrol I got snagged in the shoulder by a "wait-a-minute" vine; I still have the puncture scar showing on my right shoulder; no Purple Heart for this! There was no way to go when I got punctured but back. That plant was tougher than barbed wire.

On March 8th a general offensive was launched by the Japanese and on March 10, 1944 the battle of Hill 260 began. From our L Company position on Hill 210 we could see machinegun tracers being fired toward our defenders. I think Hill 260 was about a mile away from us. There was no lull in the fighting from beginning to the end. From what I remember two of our men were sent – Corregio, an excellent scout, and a day or so later a flame-thrower trained man was asked for. His name was James Mackey; he was the father of three children and I feel he shouldn't have been sent. Unfortunately he became our first "killed-in-action" on Bougainville. A road on top of Hill 210 was named in his honor. During all this time, our artillery was fired incessantly, especially at night. I remember the automatic "boom-boom". In a diary found on one of the Japs, he even mentioned his belief in our having automatic-firing artillery pieces; I even thought so too! In "shooting the breeze" with our company supply Sergeant, John Thomas, he almost had me convinced that we did have them. Can you imagine belt-fed 105's?

During this hard-fought battle the Japs had a lone artillery piece, which they fired toward our rear areas and we could hear the shells fly over our Company Larea. Louis Winshelbaum and I were standing in the entrance of our dugout when we heard a sharp slap on a tree in front of our hole. At that time we didn't know what it was. When the shelling let up we discovered that it was a shell that had been deflected and left a burrow in the ground about twenty-five feet behind us. Luckily, it didn't explode; otherwise I'm quite sure I wouldn't be here many years later writing about it!

Some demolition men came and dug it out; it was a 155mm or equivalent size shell; also it was a good thing it landed on sandy soil. When the battle was over, if I remember correctly, about 500

Japs were removed by burial detail head count. That info was from word of mouth. After this battle was over we went out on a patrol where the jungle was still standing. On our return we came through an area of jungle where it was really devastated by the artillery. Although there was a path already established by other patrols, it was cumbersome walking through the fallen trees. We came upon the remains of one of our fallen comrades from the regimental recon unit. I feel that I must give his name just in respect for his sacrifice. I can only remember his last name, it was Johnson. He was retrieved by our Graves Registration Unit.

Bob Hope visited our island and Jack Benny also came with their USO contingents and I got to see them both. The 132nd Regiment had a band and they came and played for us; they were good! Also, boxing matches were held in our movie amphitheatre in back of Hill 210. One of the guys from the 132nd named Polack that I had basic training with and another guy from our company, Anton J. Rosko, also participated.

Sometime along the later part of the year it looked like the Japs had moved back and weren't patrolling close to our area further out by the Sava River. So we had a lull and a black infantry regiment relieved us of our patrolling duties. Apparently it was safe enough that we were able to move out of our dug outs.

Louis Winshelbaum had already rotated and I was with my new dugout buddy, an Italian from New York City. We got along good! We were very comfortable in our dugout so we didn't want to leave it for the tents. Sergeant Ray Kinnon gave us a "fish-eyed" look and ordered us out and to destroy our haven. While we were caving it in I discovered a snake at the head of my cot that it looked like it had been there for months. It was behind a cardboard box in which I kept some things. I remember at night I used to hear thumping above my head, so I would hit it and mice would run around. Apparently the snake stayed there all the time and its meals came to it; anyway we buried it. Oh yes, it was a healthy three feet long!

During our lull period we got some combat training and obstacle course also (we needed it). We also went out on night patrol training, which we needed. We found that in dense jungle it was almost impossible to function. It was so dark we had to hang on to each other's belts as we walked. I never in all my time had gone on a night patrol before.

When we were on the island for about six months a latrine rumor got started that anyone with six months or more were going to be able to go to Australia on a week's leave. I wonder of this came from Division Headquarters as a morale booster? Anyway, it was good for about a week, as we soon saw that no one was missing. I did get three days of R&R by the beach doing nothing except to look at the ocean. When I returned to my company I found a nice welcome. There had been a rainstorm of somewhat extra strength, and it had blown a large rotten tree across my bunk, didn't even tear the tent! Of all the bunks, it had to be mine! Best R&R I ever had!

To be continued.

A Quest for "Santo Nino"

Leonard "Sack" Owczarzak

While attending school in Detroit I was very interested in geography and history. World War II was in its third year when I was drafted into the US Army. Little did I realize that within a year

I would be visiting and viewing some of those exotic locations I studied about!

Those tropical isles, volcanoes, earthquakes, thick jungles, torrential rains, poisonous snakes and even cannibals were becoming an exciting reality for me! After landing on Cebu Island in the Philippines, I had the added privilege of standing next to the small building housing Ferdinand Magellan's large cross he had planted there when he claimed this land for Spain. This was truly an 'out of the history book' experience for me!

Our unit had landed on Cebu Island in April of 1945 to assist in liberating the island from the Japanese occupiers. Before the invasion, our B-24 bombers had bombed various locations on the island where it was believed the Japanese had constructed strong defenses. Cebu City, the second largest city in the Philippines was located here. Within the centuries-old Spanish part of the City, the Santo Nino Cathedral was standing where it had been lovingly established when the Spanish colonized the islands in the 1500's. The B-24 bomber crews were instructed to avoid harming

the historic Cathedral at all costs.

Inside the Cathedral, set in a place of honor on the gold encrusted main altar, was a small statue of the infant Jesus - "Santo Nino" (Holy Infant) - that Queen Isabella of Spain had given to Ferdinand Magellan to present to the King of Cebu. I was always surprised to hear that the Japanese occupiers did not loot or damage the Cathedral or its contents. The people of the city told us that the



**Location of Magellan's Cross,
Cebu City, July 1945**



**Santo Nino Cathedral,
Cebu City, July 1945**

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Japanese feared severe reprisals by guerilla groups if the historic reliquary was disturbed or harmed in any way. I attempted several times, while stationed in Cebu City, to enter the Cathedral, but was told that it was locked down to prevent any damage until the war was over. I was very eager to view this religious icon.

Fifty-two years after the war I came upon some of the material I had put together about our Philippine adventure during WWII. I decided to write to a Cebu City newspaper and thank the Filipino people who had given us such great assistance in freeing their city and island from the Japanese invaders. Within weeks I received dozens of letters from Cebu thanking the Americans over and over again for ousting the Japanese.

I received one interesting letter from a young Filipino lady whose father had assisted the Americans during the war. Even though he was only 14 years old then, he joined an American fighting unit and was able to give them valuable information on Japanese positions. His knowledge of the Japanese language was also of great assistance. She asked if I could assist her in finding the former American officer (named "Ramsey") who had been in charge of the unit her father had joined during the war. This lady's father was now elderly and ill and could not get assistance from the Philippine government because he had no proof of his service with the Americans.

A computer search revealed that there were several William Ramsey's still residing in the United States. When contacted, the former Captain Ramsey was overjoyed to hear that the young lad who had been so helpful during their wartime actions was still alive. He then sent monetary assistance and a letter attesting to the former young aide, thus allowing him to become eligible to receive a pension from the Philippine government.

Shortly after, I received a wonderful gift from the Philippines. A beautiful miniature statue of Santo Nino, which I will always treasure!



Editors note: All photos shown are courtesy of Leonard Owczarzak.

Reflections of the Past: My War in Service Co., 164th Regt.

Peter Diaz (as told to David Taylor)

I was from San Diego and was drafted in the Army, doing my basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. I arrived on Bougainville as a replacement and was assigned to the 164th Infantry Regiments Service Company as a tractor driver. I had no formal Army training for this job so the Army gave me on-the-job-training, or "OJT".

Our company always had at least one tractor close to the front lines, in whatever terms that was defined, to pull stuck trucks out of the jungle rivers before they became too water damaged. We carried rifles because there were a lot of Jap snipers in the trees. We also spent a lot of time grading roads so we could keep supplies going to the troops. At first, we hauled a big iron bar of iron behind us to grade the roads because that was the only thing we had.

On Leyte I drove a 3/4 ton truck and ended up driving it from one end of the island to the other. It was tricky business and in some areas we had to wait for low tide to make a crossing, driving on the coral reef. Leyte was quite a change from Bougainville. The area was much more open and clearer, and we saw a lot of people in villages. The Japs were mainly held up in caves. Bougainville was all jungle and you only saw your fellow soldiers and the incoming fire from the Japanese, who were everywhere. I do remember on Leyte however, when we would get under the trucks to get some sleep and protection, you listened to the crickets. If they stopped making noise you knew someone was coming.

We were in Cebu then we went to the Negro's Islands, when I had my picture taken wading ashore from a landing craft. The craft had hit a sandbar so we were required to wade ashore. I am smiling in the picture as I wade ashore because the sergeant in front of me (off the picture) was short and all I could see was his helmet above water. We came ashore with the infantry and performed as infantry until our trucks could be off-loaded. An officer later tracked me down and gave me a copy of the Army Signal Corps photo. I believe I'm the only soldier to get a personal copy.

After the Negros Islands we returned to Cebu to train for the invasion of Japan. Fortunately it never happened. When we arrived in Yokohama Japan it was tough for us to drive our trucks around this area because so many buildings were bombed out and there was rubble everywhere. Once we made a 32-truck convoy to

Mt. Fuji to collect rifles, pistols and sabers from a large warehouse there. The weapons filled all 32 trucks and when we returned we were ordered to throw it in the ocean. I did retain two rifles and some pistols and brought them home, but over the years they disappeared.



During my short time in Japan I met two Japanese boys, one was 15 and the other was 17, who were brothers. They were both raised in San Diego and spoke excellent English. Both parents were dead and at that time they couldn't get back to San Diego. I gave them my address and phone number but never heard from them. I often wondered if they made it back to the states.

When I received my discharge papers I was surprised to see I had been awarded a Combat Infantryman's Badge. In the fall of 2006 I went to a 164th Reunion and a recently retired Lieutenant Colonel remarked it was unusual for a truck driver to get a CIB. I looked her straight in the eye and said, "Not in the war I was in!" I returned to San Diego after the war and drove trucks a couple years, then became a tile installation specialist which I did for many years, specializing in large facilities, including some jail houses.

Three years ago my wife passed away and last year my son and daughter-in-law asked me to come to Cummings, Georgia and live with them. I sold my house I had for 45 years (with a yard full of orange, lemon and tangerine trees) and moved to Georgia. It's certainly not Southern California – too cold in the winter and too hot and humid in the summer, but I keep in touch with other family and friends in California. I have a niece who lives in Buffalo, New York so I hope to make the annual reunion there in June 2007.



US Army Signal Corps photo showing Peter Diaz (left foreground) wading ashore with carbine held high and smiling. This was the Negros in the Visayan Islands. He is leaving the Landing Craft Infantry (Large) #963. Inset Peter Diaz WWII & 2006

A Vietnam Experience

Leonard A. Clapes
Co. A, 123rd Avn. Bn.

I arrived in Vietnam on January 24, 1971. Although I was trained as a door gunner I was assigned as a mechanic in a maintenance unit for tracked vehicles. I immediately requested a transfer to an aviation unit so I could better apply my skills. On March 2, 1971 received orders for Co. A, 123rd Avn. Bn.

Company A was known as the Pelicans. Most other companies had names like Warlords or Sharks or something like that. Co. A had created a shoulder patch design that members wore. It was the profile of a goofy looking pelican's head wearing an old-fashioned flight helmet. I was now a crew chief and door gunner on Bell UH-1H Iroquois "Huey" helicopters flying for "Pelican Airways".

Ash and Trash

Company A was a service unit for the Americal Division. We flew ash and trash and filled in as needed. There were two or three daily jobs to be done. One was to fly VIPs in a special helicopter that was very plush and fitted out for this job. It had a nice paint job and was waxed. It had padded seats and the interior was kept clean and sharp. A second ship just like this one was kept as a backup.

Another job was to resupply troops in the field and on firebases and outposts throughout the division area. These bases were located on steep mountaintops with no roads leading to them. The only way in or out was by helicopters. The resupply ship spent all day taking food of all kinds, hot and cold, fresh and old, to troops in these inaccessible areas.

One time we took hot chow to a patrol a few miles east of Firebase Mary Ann. They had chopped a clearing in the jungle so we could land. We had to hover straight down through the trees. When we got near the ground there were bushes and stumps that presented still more hazards to the aircraft.

The crew chief and I had to lean out and watch the tail rotor for the pilot and help him clear any obstacles. It was a challenge for us. The guys on patrol were glad to see us and to get some good food. I know that

if I was in their place I would feel good about somebody doing that for me.

We also acted as courier service for the division. We ran a variety of routes depending on how the Army wanted to shuffle its papers that day. While flying resupply and courier duties there was always the possibility of transporting passengers to and fro. This is where the company picked up the name "Pelican Airways."

Nighthawk Mission

Even though our company was mainly concerned with logistics we did have other missions. One was known by the name Nighthawk. There were two aircraft, one flying low and one flying high. We usually flew in the high position and another company provided the chopper flying in the low position. The tactic was to harass or neutralize the night operations of the enemy.

out all the ammo, about 500 rounds per gun is normal. It all lays in ammo can, folded in smoothly so it will come out the same way. The ship gets checked out and run up. We lift off and head up to the north end of the runway to load the flares. With all the weight we can barely get into the air.

The night progresses slowly. The low ship cruises at about 200 to 500 feet with only its rotating beacon on. This allows us to follow its path while we watch from 3,000 feet. If the low ship draws fire or sees something it goes blacked out. We circle them and see if they want a flare. It is also our job to recover them if they get shot down.

Weapons Platform

The low ship is a specialized weapons platform. The large spotlight and the mini-gun were on the left side. There was a crewman for each of these elements and they worked together. The spotlight was about 18 inches in diameter and was extremely powerful. When it was on the white beam almost looked solid.

In the center of the cargo area was a huge container that held a continuous belt of 7.62 mm ammunition. Every fifth bullet was a red tracer round. The mini-gun had six barrels and was driven by an electric motor. It could fire 6,000 rounds in one minute but I do not know if there was enough ammo on the chopper to last a full minute or not. When the mini-gun was fired the light of the tracers equaled the beam of the spotlight only it was red.

On the right side of the ship were two more guns- a .50 caliber machine gun and a M-60 machine gun. I was told that when the .50 caliber fired the whole ship would shake. All of this armament was a truly impressive combination to be carrying on a Huey helicopter. I understood why this crew was so motivated and why they enjoyed doing what they were doing.

At Duc Pho we took a break to refuel and to get a snack. After about an hour the pilots said, "Let's go." They had gotten word about reported enemy movement and we headed northwest into the coastal plains. I had seen this area in the daytime. It was just scrub forest and abandoned farmlands. There were the usual bomb and artillery craters everywhere.



Leonard A. Clapes

The low ship had three types of guns and a large spotlight. It flew at low altitudes, mostly under 500 feet. The object was to draw fire from enemy positions, then put the spotlight on the suspected enemy and blast them with the weapons. The high ship flew at two to three thousand feet and was a flare ship. Upon request from the low ship the flares were tossed out every few minutes.

Every day about sunset the pilots and crew get together down at the flight line. I pick up the M-60 machine guns and check



C's AND SIESTA Michael Crook
US Army Center of Military History

Tiger in the Night

We were high up watching the rotating beacon on the low ship when it goes out. The pilots talk a little and we begin to circle. The spotlight comes on the low ship and they begin their search. They move and orbit and then call for a flare. We toss one out. The flare falls for a short distance and then its parachute pops out and the flare ignites. The flare throws 50,000 candlepower of light over a one-mile radius. We ready more flares in case they are needed.

A call comes on the radio from the low ship that they have spotted four or five Vietnamese. They request clearance from the operations center. A minute later the word comes back "there are no friendlies in the area." The low ship locates two or three people in the spotlight and the mini-gun opens up. It tears them to pieces.

All I can see from 3,000 feet up is a beam of light and a wavy red line. We hear over the radio that the kills are confirmed and that the search for others continues. After a few seconds we hear that an animal has been spotted. They announce, "It is a tiger." I wondered what in the hell a tiger was doing there.

After a few minutes it came clearer to me

what happened. The people were trying to chase the big cat away and they were killed in the process. Nobody can say for sure, because normal peace-loving people were supposed to be asleep at night, so these guys must have been the enemy.

I am glad my hand was not on the trigger. I tried to imagine being caught in that spotlight on the ground. You cannot run away from it. Then the mini-gun "burrrrrrrps" and a red hot line from the sky cuts you to the ground until you are reduced to a mere grease spot in the dirt. This is the first action that I have witnessed. What can I say?

I continued on Nighthawk missions. It was like having a night job in the war. We usually got back to Chu Lai about sunrise. After taking care of the ship and guns we would get a ride to the mess hall. If everything went smoothly I could get some sleep before it got too hot.

Crash and Burn

While flying around to various firebases and outposts I noticed many spots on the ground, especially near the bases, that raised my concern. It was obvious that they were crash sites. You could tell because the ground was burnt and covered with ash. Sometimes near the edge of the burn spot the tip ends of the rotor blades were left unburned. Everyone in aviation called this

"crash and burn". The material which helicopters were made of was similar to magnesium that burns quick and hot.

Straight off the north end of the Chu Lai main runway was a shallow island bay. There was a complete, intact jet fighter submerged in the water. I used to see it almost every day. I never knew the circumstances of these crashes but they were a constant reminder of the danger of flight and of war.

After another Nighthawk mission we returned to Chu Lai about sunrise. It had been a wild night. The pilots headed for their hootch area and the gunner and I stayed around to take care of the ship. About half an hour later as I was greasing and cleaning the rotor head the gunner called out to me. He wanted me to come down and check out a bullet hole in the tail boom.

The gunner discovered a bullet hole in the tail as he wiped soot from the area. The entrance hole was on the lower right side and the exit hole was on the upper left. I stood there looking at the bullet hole and going over the flight in my memory. I wondered how many other bullets had passed by the ship without hitting it. Who knows? I never saw any muzzle flashes while we were over the target area. But one can't see everything all the time.

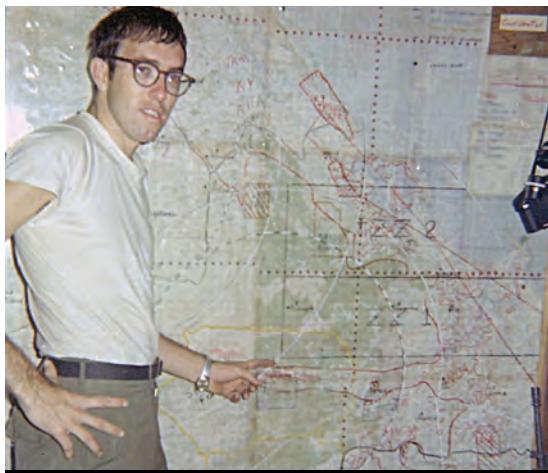
The hole was about eight feet from where I was sitting. I had been wearing my chest armor and sitting on my butt plate, but that only gave minimum protection. I felt fortunate and I was glad that I had found out about the bullet hole a few hours after it happened and not when it happened.



[Editor's note: Leonard A. Clapes lives in San Antonio, NM. He is pictured sitting on top of the helicopter on page 30. The above story was composed from a larger autobiography that Leonard wrote in 1987. He wanted to put his memories on paper before they were forgotten. Look for more of his articles in future editions of the AMERICAL JOURNAL.]

Battle for Tra Bong

By Raymond Oglesby ©2007



Raymond Oglesby with map of AO

This story is dedicated to all those who served at LZ Cindy, the MACV compound, and "Searchlight Hill" OP at Tra Bong, Vietnam.

I was stationed with the US Army in Vietnam from January through most of December 1970. Upon arriving in-country I spent a week at Chu Lai for orientation and jungle warfare training. After that I went to Landing Zone (LZ) Cindy and was assigned to Battery A, 3rd/18th Field Artillery, Americal (23rd Infantry) Division. We were one of three sister artillery batteries in the area.

Tra Bong and LZ Cindy

The village of Tra Bong in Quang Ngai province was approximately 20 klicks (kilometers) inland from Chu Lai, headquarters of the Americal Division. (In 2000 the population of the Tra Bong area was 46,000.) LZ Cindy had two self-propelled eight-inch howitzers and two self-propelled 175-millimeter howitzers. Our primary mission was to offer artillery fire support for the Americal Division.

The 8" guns had a very accurate range of 20 klicks while the 175s, though not as accurate, had a firing range of 32 klicks. We shot an average of one thousand 90 to 110 pound shells per howitzer per month.

We were located in the Tra Bong valley with high hills all around the firebase. Just outside the firebase was the Tra Bong River that flowed easterly to the South China

Sea. We were at one of the same locations the French had used in their battle over Vietnam. LZ Cindy was supplied by air until a road was built from Chu Lai to LZ Cindy in the fall of 1970. After being built, the road was seldom used.

About 200 yards from our firebase was an Army of the Republic Vietnam (ARVN) Ranger battalion firebase with towed 105" howitzers. Down the valley on the other side of the Tra Bong village was the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) compound. Overlooking the valley was "Searchlight Hill", an American observation post (OP) searchlight battalion.

In 1970 the ARVN base and our firebase had approximately 100 men each. The MACV had 35 Americans and the OP had five to seven Americans. Other friendly Vietnamese forces, besides the ARVN, within the Tra Bong area were the District Headquarters, Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), and Revolutionary Development (RD) camps. With all this manpower, we were a heavily defended LZ.

My Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) was 13E20. At LZ Cindy I was a shift leader for Fire Direction Control (FDC). My bunkmate was Sherman Ray Cook of Fayetteville, Arkansas. I worked up fire missions using the Area of Operations (AO) map and the Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computer (FADAC). I also worked on the radios for receiving fire missions from Americal Headquarters and forward observers and gave fire commands to our howitzers.

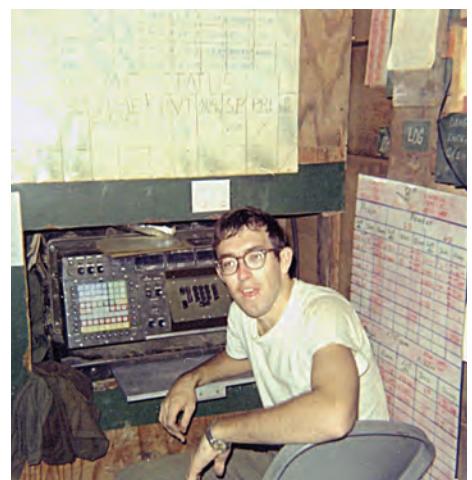
September 1 – 7, 1970

One of the reasons for the many attacks throughout South Vietnam during the first week of September 1970 was to honor the one-year anniversary of the death of Ho Chi Minh. The North Vietnamese leader died on September 2, 1969.

LZ Cindy had been on alert for about a week prior to the initial attack. We reached full alert status on September 7th. We had two units of "Dusters" (M42A1 twin 40mm automatic weapon self propelled artillery unit) on our firebase equipped with Starlight scopes. They noticed enemy

soldiers trying to reach the summit of "Searchlight Hill". Each night the Dusters would start firing. They were not supposed to do this, because we had to have Americal Headquarters permission before firing. They fired anyway, every night.

Our company commander, CPT Washington Sanchez, was very upset at the "Duster" guys and told them to quit. CPT Sanchez was a quiet man and well liked. Each night around 2 AM – 3 AM, he awoke and walked the perimeter to check on the guards.



Raymond Oglesby in front of FADAC

Field Artillery Digital Computer. This computer had one disk drum. It took up to 90 seconds for the computer to calculate a fire mission. The calculation was then hand-checked using the Area of Operations Map (AO). If the coordinates both agreed, then we knew we had the correct position to lay down artillery fire. We would get a "fire mission" from Americal Headquarters. The Fire Direction Control (FDC) radio guy would phone the gun(s). The gun bunnies would start the gun and get ready for digging in the gun. The gun bunnies were always impatient. As soon as we (FDC) knew the location, then we would phone the gun bunnies again. Then they dug the gun in. At the same time, FDC ran the FADAC and hand check the AO map. Then we (FDC) told the gun bunnies the exact coordinates. The bunnies would position the gun and wait for our "fire" commands. Once all approvals were in place, then we gave the "fire" command to the gun(s). This whole process took up to 15 minutes.

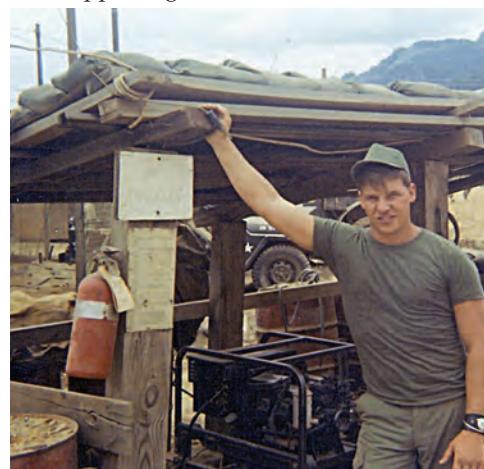


Tra Bong from Searchlight Hill

September 7 - 8, 1970

On the night of September 7th Captain Sanchez saw the enemy through a Starlight scope and told the "Dusters" to start firing. The "Dusters" fired several hundred rounds as did the quad 50s (M-55 Quad 50-cal machine gun mounts). This was a direct violation of Americal Division orders. The following week Captain Sanchez was relieved of his command at LZ Cindy.

During the early morning hours of September 8, 1970, the 406th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Sapper Battalion and supporting units attacked the MACV



Sherman Cook, my bunkmate, in front of FADAC generator (Note the bracelet on his left arm)

compound, District Headquarters, ARVN Ranger Battalion, CIDG, and RD camps. The attack started at about 3:00 AM and lasted until daylight. A force of 200 plus

NVA soldiers, mostly sappers, using mortars and grenades, inflicted heavy causalities to all units. The attack was very precise and well planned.

I was on duty in FDC the day and night of September 7th and went off-duty around 2:00 am the morning of September 8th. After getting only two hours of sleep all hell broke out. Mortars, trip flares, AK 47 shots, and grenades were heard at the nearby ARVN Ranger firebase and MACV compound. The FDC guys in our hooch got up and loaded their M16s. We had no plan of action or orders on what to do in case of an attack. I told everyone to stay put until told otherwise.

One young guy had a full metal jacket M16 pointed at me with his finger on the trigger. Even in dim light I could see that "look" of fear you only see in a combat situation. I told him to lower his weapon and he did. (Later, I learned he had the safety off). I never will forget that "look" and how close I was to being shot by another American.

The artillerymen, affectionately called "gun bunnies", had their M16s stored in a locked cabinet while their ammo was locked at another location. They were scared shitless. This was unbelievable! Here they were in a war and they had no

ready access to their weapons. No one had grenades because of a deadly incident that occurred in 1969. Three guys were passing one or more grenades around when one of them went off and killed one of the men'.

As for FDC, we had no plan for defending the firebase and had conducted no drills in case of a firefight. James Barney (Sam) Perkins, the other FDC shift leader, was asleep in the FDC hooch. He did not have to report to duty until 7:00 AM. Sam and I talked briefly after he awoke. He said he was going over to FDC (about 20 yards away) to see what was happening. He said that since I had just come off shift he needed to go to the FDC. I did not stop him because I was so tired.

I was the last person to see Sam alive. As soon as he opened the flimsy door to the FDC he was shot by TOP, the Master Gun Sergeant (also known as Chief of Smoke). TOP had slipped into the FDC sometime that night or early morning and got on the cot underneath the AO map. Sam did not knock on the door. As soon as Sam opened the flimsy FDC door, TOP shot him twice at a range less than 5 meters. Sam felled into the FDC and died within a few minutes.

TOP was supposed to have been with his men on the guns. He must have freaked out



Duster

during the attack and went into the FDC. TOP wasn't the only one who cracked that morning. One of our FDC guys cowered under the radios bench in one corner of the FDC and laughed hysterically all through the hellish activity. For the next ten days his jawed remained in an open locked position.

Someone came over to the FDC hooch and told us to man the foxholes around the FDC. This was the first time I had been in any foxhole that surrounded the FDC. At that time, I did not know that Sam had been killed. About twenty minutes later a medical evacuation helicopter landed outside the FDC area and took Sam.

I later learned that CPT Sanchez was screaming over the radios for air cover from Americal Headquarters. They finally came an hour later. As I remember, only one gunship (a Cobra helicopter) came and circled firing his rockets and cannons toward the enemy at the MACV site. Another guy remembers more than one gunship. This went on for about 90 minutes, until daylight, and then the firing stopped. It was an awesome show of deadly firepower from the Cobra gunships' tracer rounds and from returned enemy fire. At least one gunship returned to Chu Lai for more ammo and rockets and rejoined the battle.

In the mid-afternoon some NVA sappers



Unidentified soldier (left) and Sam Perkins

that had overrun the ARVN camp tried to shoot at us with the ARVN towed 105mm howitzers. Two rounds exploded in the air over LZ Cindy. We were below the ARVN camp so they could not shoot at us directly.

September 9, 1970

The next day the brass arrived from Americal Headquarters and passed out medals. TOP was relieved of his command, never to be seen or heard from again.



Aerial view of LZ Cindy

The MACV compound was completely destroyed by precise NVA mortar fire. One MACV guy survived the attack by making his way to our camp during the firefight. I talked to him briefly in the FDC the morning of September 8th. He told me that one of the MACV guys took a mortar round in the chest while running to a bunker and was blown apart. He was MACV Advisor, CPT Frank Neil Vavrin of Augusta, Georgia.

The ARVN unit was also completely destroyed with most of the personnel being killed. The NVA got past the ARVN's wire, booby traps, claymores, etc., then walked into their hooch's and laid grenades on their chests. District Headquarters, CIDG, and RD camps were 50% or more destroyed.

The OP on Searchlight Hill was also attacked. Since our unit was not under attack, only three NVA Sappers were killed outside our wires. I went and viewed the bodies of the dead sappers. One of our FDC men watched as someone burned the sappers and blew their brains out.

Total casualties were two Americans plus unknown number of American OP personnel, 100 plus ARVN's, and 80 to 100 NVA sappers killed. In addition three Americans were wounded in action. An

unknown number of District Headquarters, CIDG, and RD personnel were either killed or wounded.

For the next few nights, Sherman Ray Cook and I worked the mortar tubes shooting flares. Sherman was the comedian for the next four days and nights by telling jokes and making everyone laugh. He should have received a medal.

September 10, 1970

To beef up our defenses additional men



8" self-propelled howitzer

and equipment from 1/14th Artillery were



Quad 50 firing at night

Sheridan (M551) tanks as well as additional men from the 1st Cavalry Squadron.

The NVA were not done- we were next on their list. But that was not to be. Several of the Dusters guys left the LZ on September 10th and captured a few NVA

high explosive (HE) rounds before it started raining. The NVA never attacked us.

We later learned that 20 NVA soldiers died eating rat poison at MACV. As to the rest of the NVA, they either were killed by the Cobra gunship fire or our howitzers or they left the area. On September 12 the OP and ARVN camp received some enemy fire. This was the last known enemy fire for the Tra Bong area.

Afterwards

I have lived with the guilt associated with the death of James Barney (Sam) Perkins. It should have been me. He had everything to live for and I didn't. He had just returned the week before from Rest and Relaxation (R&R) with his wife in Hawaii. I went to Vietnam on a suicide

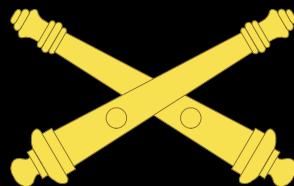
mission, thinking this would be a great way to go.

After the September attacks I was not very well liked at LZ Cindy, especially by friends of Sam. The experience of



175mm self-propelled gun (Note the shells on the ground)

and made them confess as to where their unit was. Then we got permission from Americal Headquarters and lowered our 8" howitzers to point blank level at the suspected location and fired about nine



Branch Insignia: Two crossed field guns
Crossed cannons (field guns) for Artillery have been in continuous use since 1834, when they were placed on regimental colors, knapsacks, and as part of the cap insignia for Artillery officers. In 1901, the branch insignia was modified to include Coast Artillery. It was superseded in 1957 by the consolidated Artillery insignia consisting of the crossed field guns surmounted by a missile. In 1968 when the Air Defense Artillery and the Field Artillery were authorized to have separate insignia, the former Field Artillery insignia was reinstated.

that hellish week, Sam's death, that guy pointing his full metal jacket M16 at me, is always with me, something I live with each day.

Sam Perkins was buried about eight days later in Birmingham, AL. He can be found on the Wall at panel no. 7W, line no. 47. I have seen his official report of his death. It had been typed, and then someone handwrote some notes as to the exact cause of his death. I wonder what version his wife and parents got. Several years ago I visited his gravesite.

Frank Neil Vavrin of Augusta, GA, the MACV advisor killed in action, can be located on the wall at panel no. 7W, line no. 48.

LZ Cindy was abandoned in August 1971 and relocated to Chu Lai. Around Christmas of 1971 the NVA/Viet Cong attacked the ARVN camp and wiped them out again.

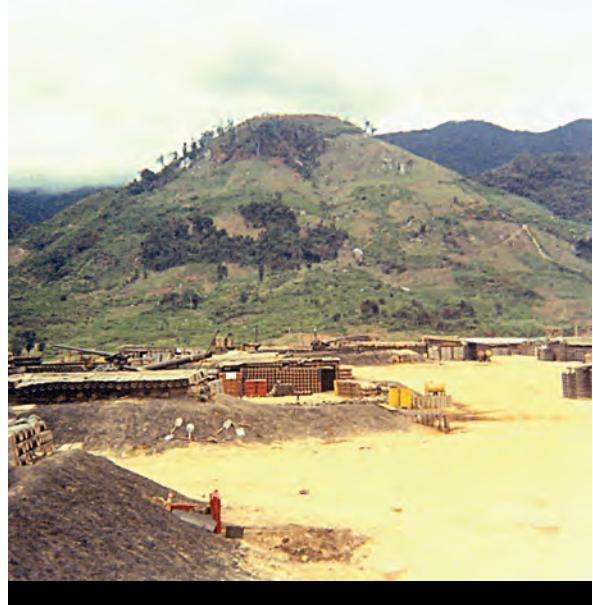
Robert Hornikein passed away on March 15, 2001 from Agent Orange. He was the senior FADAC guy and ran the mortars. He sprayed the area around the FDC bunker in the early spring of 1970. We washed the place in Agent Orange. That's why everything was brown and dead there. Not only did we hand spray but we were air sprayed as well. Larry Milton died on October 2000 to Hepatitis "C". He was a gun bunny in 1970.



8" howitzer in action

Return to Tra Bong and Chu Lai

Starting in 1994 I have made nine visits to Vietnam on humanitarian trips. I had the opportunity to return to Tra Bong on two of these trips- 1994 and 2000. I was surprised at the friendly response by the Vietnamese



Searchlight Hill from LZ Cindy

people we received not only at Tra Bong but also throughout South Vietnam.

In 1994 I was very excited about the possibility of returning to Tra Bong. I had not slept for days. We had to receive special permission from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRVN) to go to Tra Bong. The SRVN government granted us

permission. Today, you can freely travel most anywhere. One limitation is that you are not allowed to take photos or shoot video of any government facility.

Jesse Helms of South Carolina, a driver, an interpreter, and I left Da Nang in a van and traveled down Highway 1 to Chu Lai. Near Chu Lai we stopped and visited LZ Gator where Jesse had served. The iron gate sign was still at the Chu Lai airbase entrance. Our driver stopped the van and our interpreter went to the guardhouse to ask permission for Jesse and I to photo the entrance sign. The guard refused to give us permission.

We then traveled down the road and went up a hill to a Vietnamese cemetery that overlooked the former Chu Lai airbase. As with most other airbases, it was completely gone. If you didn't know where you were at you wouldn't believe it. Chu Lai was the site of the largest division in Vietnam, the Americal Division, and it was gone except for a few buildings.

On the way back, our driver slowed down and we took photos of the entrance gate. The guard saw us doing this and came running after the van. The driver speeded up and they both started laughing. I freaked out, took my film out and hid it. Luckily, we were never stopped. Can you imagine, after 24 years, some Vietnamese guard has the responsibility not to allow any photos of a rusting sign. Unbelievable!

The Vietnamese travel on both sides of the road and use the horn constantly. We would be on the wrong side of the road with a big truck approaching us. Our van driver would cross back to

the other lane just in time. If you were in the front seat as I was, you would wet your pants.

When we arrived in Tra Bong we found the school was at the same location. As we turned off the main road for LZ Cindy we saw the iron entrance gateway and sign was still in place. Boy, was I ever excited just

seeing that sign. The old LZ was covered with tall grass, trees, and scattered hootch. You could just kick the dirt around and find mosquito netting, plastic stuff, and the like. Yes, even after 24 years, pieces of our equipment are still there. At the ARVN camp we found a French gunner rail that overlooked the valley.

The OP had crumbled down about five feet, probably due to the torrential rains over the years. Most of the forestation and vegetation had returned. In 1970 the Tra Bong area was brown with little forestation due to the spraying of Agent Orange.

All the time we were in the area we had a large following of Vietnamese kids and adults. A few of them could speak English and they showed us the way to the firebase and the ARVN camp. I met a former ARVN soldier, almost blind, who was stationed there. I also met a mamasan and papasan who did the laundry for us in 1970. Before leaving the area, I thought about a verse from Psalm 23, "yea thou I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil". Once I was in the valley of death but it's now peaceful and calm. I knelt to pray for the guys who had served and died there.

As we walked back to our van, the word had gotten out that "the Americans are back". Soon we found ourselves completely surrounding by a hundred or so school kids. We had a hard time getting into our van. They wanted to see and touch us, to practice their English. One word they all knew was "Hello". I was very sad to leave. It was a day of extreme emotions.

In my nine trips back I have visited most of South Vietnam from Saigon to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Some of the sites well known by American GIs that I have visited are: Saigon, Long Binh, Cu Chi tunnels, Cao Dai temple, My Lai, Da Nang, Marble Mountain, South China Beach, Hue, Citadel, Pagoda on the Perfume River, Dong Ha, the Rockpile, Khe Sanh and Montagnard villages.



18th Artillery Regiment Campaign Participation Credit:



WWI
Champagne-Marne
Aisne-Marne
St. Mihiel
Meuse-Argonne
Champagne 1918



WWII
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe



VIETNAM
 Defense
Counteroffensive, Phase I, II, III
Tet Counteroffensive
Counteroffensive, Phase IV, V, VI
Tet/69 Counteroffensive
Summer-Fall 1969
Winter-spring 1970
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Counteroffensive Phase VII
Consolidation 1



SOUTHWEST ASIA
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation & Defense Of Kuwait



Distinctive Unit Insignia

Description: A gold color metal and enamel device 1 1/16 inches (2.70 cm) in height consisting of a shield blazoned: Azure, three bendlets sinister Argent, a bend double-cottized potente counter-potente Or; on a canton Gules a mullet within a fish-hook fesswise, ring to dexter and barb to base, of the second (for the 5th Field Artillery).

Symbolism: The shield is the shoulder patch of the 3rd Division, the bend and bendlets are from the arms of Champagne. The canton indicates the parentage of the regiment. The fishhook and Star are from the coat of arms of the 5th Field Artillery; the union battle line of Gettysburg was in the shape of a fishhook and the corps badge of Slocum's 12th Corps was a star.

Background: The distinctive unit insignia was originally approved for the 18th Field Artillery Regiment on 2 October 1923. It was amended to correct the method of wear on 25 May 1925. It was amended to correct the blazon on 12 July 1928. It was redesignated for the 18th Field Artillery Battalion on 4 September 1943. The insignia was redesignated for the 18th Artillery Regiment on 18 November 1958. It was again redesignated for the 18th Field Artillery Regiment effective 1 September 1971.

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2306	American Flag Patch	\$4.25			
2307	ADVA License Plate	\$8.00			
2308	Americal Shield Pin (Large)	\$3.50			
2309	Americal Crest Pin	\$4.00			
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2320	Americal License Plate Holder	\$4.00			
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2329	ADVA Challenge Coin (10 or more \$ 14.00 ea)	\$15.00			
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2331	Baseball Cap - Black (1 size fits all)	\$12.00			
2332	T-Shirt Americal Vietnam (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)	\$15.00			
2333	Americal Nylon Wallet	\$6.00			
2334	Americal Tie	\$23.00			
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Korean War	1954-1956
Vietnam War	1967-1973

Eligibility includes those who served with Task Force 6814 (WWII) and Task Force Oregon (Vietnam). Branch of service is immaterial.



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The ADVA is dedicated as a **LIVING MEMORIAL** to all veterans of the American Division and is pledged to foster true American patriotism, social and welfare activities for all members, allegiance to the United States Government, and its flag, and to perpetuate the traditions and history of the **American Division of the United States Army.**

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