

July • August • September
2008



AMERICAL JOURNAL

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



Burtell's Art of War

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commander's Comments

By David W. Taylor

I Have Come to Serve

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their vote in electing me as the new ADVA National Commander. Although I ran unopposed, I do not take my election lightly and will work hard on your behalf. I want to thank the departing commander, Larry Watson for his leadership and friendship. Larry's office was only a 30 minute drive from my home and we were able to meet frequently to discuss ADVA programs, prepare the budget, etc. Larry will continue to serve the ADVA as a member of the Executive Council.

As I mentioned at our great reunion in Jacksonville, Florida my number one priority as National Commander is recruiting. As a fraternal organization we must be constantly growing or will be slowly dieing. Our Vietnam vets are starting to leave us at the same rate as our WWII vets. We must expand our efforts at recruiting!

John (Jay) Flanagan is the new Senior Vice-Commander. I have known Jay for a number of years in the Eastern Chapter where he was the chapter commander. I have asked Jay to take on two primary tasks: First, refine and complete an ADVANational Reunion Policy and Procedures Manual. This manual will help reunion committees plan more effectively and operate our national reunions on a cost-effective basis. My priority is to try everything possible to make our national reunions as affordable as possible for our members. Second, Jay will assist me in working with our chapters to help make them more vibrant. One of the few issues that came out of our national survey (sent in the last issue of the Journal) was that most chapters were not communicating with their members or offering chapter activities on a consistent basis.

Larry Swank is the new Junior Vice-Commander. Larry has been working with me for the past two years in helping us to increase our recruiting efforts. In a few short weeks he will have copied all of the approximately 40,000 orders that the Americal Division issued in Vietnam. These will be the source documents that we will attempt to locate and recruit the many vets who served in Vietnam. This effort to assist in recruiting will be Larry's primary function and only function, and I have appointed him as the Membership Chairman for the ADVA.

National Recruiting

As mentioned above, recruiting is my top priority but it is everyone's responsibility. We hope to mail recruiting brochures to approximately 10,000 Americal vets, with location information obtained from Americal orders, later this year. If the results are cost-effective we will follow the same procedures, slowing hoping to reach all the vets who served. Currently we are finding about a 20% deceased rate from names on orders.

As we proceed with this effort there are other opportunities to provide a locator service while respecting an individual's right to privacy. We are also thinking (perhaps in 2009) of beginning a membership roster book, sorted by name and unit, for those who wish to contact others in their units, within the ADVA. This will have to be done on a volunteer basis as we must protect our member's information; More on that later.

I want to thank all who have asked to take recruiting brochures to their small unit reunions. I would also ask members of these small unit groups to consider becoming a unit chapter in the ADVA. There are many advantages to doing so. If interested, please contact me directly.

ADVA National Survey

I personally reviewed all the National Survey forms returned from the last issue of the Americal Journal. Some survey forms were returned unused and they apparently fell out of the Journal when the postal systems' automated handling equipment was too aggressive and torn the wafer seal that closed the pages. In the next issue of the Journal I will prepare an overview of the survey results for all members. If you did not receive a survey and would like one, please let me know.

We received a 9% response from our membership survey, which is a good response for a survey of this type. After the first two hundred were received, reoccurring comments and scores began appearing so I believe we have a good snapshot of members' opinions. Let me say, the results were very favorable about the ADVA and the programs and leadership within it. Two areas that need to be addressed for improvement are our Chapters (more communications) and our National Reunions (more affordable & accessible). I have prepared a detailed report of the results, which I have already sent to the ADVA Executive Council, ADVA Senior and Special Staff (elected and appointed positions) and all Chapter Commanders. We have already begun dialoguing about the survey comments to enhance our organization. If you would like to receive the full report by e-mail, please contact me (dwtaylor@ohio.net).

He Ain't heavy, He's My Brother

I want to close by reminding everyone to keep in touch with your comrades, both those you served with and friends you've made in the ADVA. I am reminded now and then how much that means to someone that you cared enough to contact. Space doesn't permit the stories I could share about this. We are reminded, "Love one another".

Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

I want to start this quarter's notes thanking Lee Kaywork and his 2008 reunion staff for the great reunion this past June in Jacksonville. The hotel was very nice, the events great, especially the Friday night stand-down with the Polynesian review.

I had the pleasure of traveling part of the way to the reunion with one of the Old Guard. On Thursday I picked up member Domenic Pantaleo at his home in Ocala, FL and "chauffeured" him to the reunion hotel in Jacksonville. During the two hour drive, we talked about our common experiences with the Americal Division, as well as our civilian life experiences. That two hour drive to and from Jacksonville on the return trip Sunday and the dialogue with Mr. Pantaleo made the reunion an even more memorable experience for me.

Since the last Americal Journal issue, we've seen a steady influx of new members. We added thirty-two new members during past three months. Of those thirty-two new members, seven joined as life members. Eight former members were reinstated.

Our continued success as a vibrant veterans' organization is dependent on new members joining ADVA. Getting new members in depends on the recruiting efforts of all of us. The national recruiting initiative, headed by National Commander David W. Taylor and Junior Vice-Commander Larry Swank, is an immense effort using Americal Division orders from Vietnam to create a prospective member database for future mass mailings of our recruiting brochures. We are optimistic that the ADVA can bring in many new members once recruiting brochures go out in the initial test mailing.

For all annual pay members, please keep your membership current by paying your dues. Your renewal date is listed in the address box, just above your name line, on the back cover of this issue. If this date is May 2008 or earlier, please send your dues payment to PNC Ronald Ellis. Ron's mailing address is listed on the back cover.

NEW MEMBERS

Bruce E. Allen
196th LIB B/1/46th Inf
Port St. Joe, FL
★ *Self*

Charles H. Blakeslee
123rd CAG Aero Scouts
San Antonio, TX
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Gary M. Callahan
198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Dallas, TX
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Terry De Mott
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Archer, FL
★ *NC David Taylor*

Norman Fredriksen
196th LIB A/3/21st Inf
Hauppauge, NY
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Paul L. Grubbs, III
71st Avn Co
Ocoee, FL
★ *Self*

Wayne Hales
196th LIB C/2/1 Inf
Chesapeake, VA
★ *James Gales*

James E. Haney
198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf
Decatur, TN
★ *Self*

Dennis Hugues
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Wilmington, DE
★ *NC David Taylor*

Albert V. Jones
132nd Inf Rgmt
Stockbridge, GA
★ *Self*

David L. Jones
198th LIB C/1/6th Inf
Middleton, TN
★ *Mark Deam*

James J. McGregor, Jr.
57th Cmbt Engrs Co A
Saugus, MA
★ *Self*

John Migacz
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Ware Shoals, SC
★ *NC David Taylor*

Dennis J. Milner
6/11th Arty HSB
Mentor, OH
★ *Self*

Michael K. Neeld
Div Arty HHC
New Boston, IL
★ *Self*

James C. Newcomb, Jr.
11th LIB C/4/21st Inf
Cambridge, MD
★ *Bob Kapp*

John D. Olson, Jr.
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Broken Arrow, OK
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Bruce P. Person
196th LIB D/4/31st Inf
Beltsville, MD
★ *Self*

Michael L. Raymond
23rd MP Co
Patterson, LA
★ *Tom Packard*

Tom Roche
23rd MP Co
Morrisville, PA
★ *Tom Packard*

William T. Sargent
23rd MP Co
Harrisonburg, LA
★ *Tom Packard*

James E. Sheridan
8th Cav F Trp
Pensacola, FL
★ *Self*

John W. Small
123rd Avn Bn HHC
Springfield, MO
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Terrill G. Underwood
23rd S&T Bn
Lehi, UT
★ *Self*

Tom E. Vaughn
11th LIB B/1/20th Inf
Hot Springs Village, AR
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Richard Vidaurri
26th Cmbt Engrs Co E
Alhambra, CA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

NEW PAID LIFE MEMBERS

John W. Bennett
11th LIB HHC/1/20th Inf
Fairfield, PA
★ *Self*

Earl P. Clayton
164th Inf Rgmt HHC
Rector, AR
★ *Self*



ADVA MEMEBERSHIP
June 30, 2008

World War II	611
Vietnam	2,184
Korea	7
Associate Members:	176
Total Members	2,978

Frank Dougherty
198th LIB HHT/1/6th Inf
Sarasota, FL
★ *Lee Kaywork*

Peter W. Duffy
11th LIB A/1/20th Inf
Fayetteville, NC
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Earl W. Hensley, III
116th ASHC
Wenatchee, WA
★ *Kenneth Sandhop*

Sid Liming
198th LIB 5/46th Inf
Circleville, OH
★ *NC David Taylor*

Paul A. Norris
198th LIB 5/46th Inf
Decatur, IL
★ *NC David Taylor*

Warren F. Porter
26th Cmbt Engrs HHC
Fayetteville, NC
★ *Self*

Charles L. Barbo
198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Olla, LA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

David M. Bradley
1st Sqdn 1st Cav Rgmt
Westerville, OH
★ *Self*

Gerald F. Coffey
1/82nd Arty D Btry
Atkinson, NH
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Nicholas G. Ferry
198th LIB C/1/52nd Inf
Cincinnati, OH
★ *Paul Stiff*

Earl H. Russell
23rd Div Adj Sec HQ
Harrisburg, PA
★ *Self*

Kenneth L. Sandhop
164th Inf Rgmt
Wenatchee, WA
★ *Self*

Ronald E. Soder
11th LIB C/1/20th Inf
Duluth, MN
★ *John R. Wallace*

Larry Spedden
198th LIB 23rd MP Co
Baltimore, MD
★ *Bernie Carroll*

Larry Watson
198th LIB C/1/6th Inf
Wooster, OH
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Virgil R. Baughman
USN (USS Ponchatoula)
Benton, LA
★ *PNC Ronald R. Ellis*

James E. Mayes
NA
Loxahatchee, FL
★ *Self*

Thurston T. Sullivan
NA
Louisville, KY
★ *George H. Haertel*

RE-INSTATED MEMBERS

Brian Bartlett
198th LIB D/1/52nd Inf
Sandpoint, ID
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

William E. Chrest, Jr.
196th LIB B/2/1 Inf
Owosso, MI
★ *Self*

Lanny Davis
23rd MP Co
Apple Valley, CA
★ *Rich Merlin*

Thomas B. Glen, Jr.
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Centerville, IN
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Jerry D. Ladd
23rd Div HHC
Mesa, AZ
★ *Don Shebesta*

Kenneth F. Teglia
1/14th Arty B Btry
Vernon Hills, IL
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Linda J. Wilson
American Red Cross
Hudson, MA
★ *Self*

Larry Wilt
1/82nd Arty C Btry
Defiance, OH
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Taps

World War II Veterans

101st QM Corps
Henry R. Hall
Hopedale, MA
Date Unknown

121st Medical Bn
Donald A. Ballou
Cherry Hill, NJ
May 20, 2008

125th QM Corp
George W. Clover
S Attleboro, MA
September 2005

132nd Inf Rgmt
William Laurie
Laurium, MI
April 22, 2008

F Co
Charles H. Runkel
Annville, PA
May 13, 2008

I Co
Mitchell J. Przybycien
New Lenox, IL
August 1, 2008

164th Inf Rgmt
C Co
Reno L. Menegon
Payson, AZ
Date Unknown

K Co
Richard O. Lyons
Harrisonburg, VA
October 18, 2007

182nd Inf Rgmt
F Co
Edward Lorenz
Dorchester, MA
June 27, 2008

K Co
Woodrow W. Cash
Spring City, TN
February 12, 2008

21st Recon Trp
Vernon L. Allen
Tallahassee, FL
September 23, 2006

221st FA A Btry
Leonard S. Graham
Gloucester, VA
January 14, 2008

26th Sig Bn
Kermit E. Trout
Mohnton, PA
July 14, 2008

9th Stateside Hosp
Warren R. Hester, DDS
San Antonio, TX
May 27, 2008

Vietnam Veterans

11th LIB C/3/1st Inf
Harry J. Rhinehart
Kennesaw, GA
May 17, 2008

198th LIB D/1/52nd Inf
John W. Edwards
Bradshaw, MD
Date Unknown

26th Engr Bn HHC
Lee W. Tucker
Indian Mound, TN
June 4, 2007

523rd Sig Bn HHC
Dallas J. Riddle
Fayetteville, NC
January 25, 2008

LAST ROLL CALL

132nd Inf Rgmt
Co C
Floyd J. Garman
Independence, KS
May 28, 2008

182nd Inf Rgmt
Co E
James E. Sweeney
Nesquehoning, PA
June 15, 2008

Co K
William Henry
Oklahoma City, OK
May 19, 2006

Unit Unknown
Kenneth L. Boydston
Bella Vista, AR
July 12, 2008

Vietnam War
1st Sqdn 1st Cav Rgmt Trp C
Monty D. Johnson
Elkton, MD
July 15, 2008

11th LIB
Robert S. Pearson
Little Silver, NJ
March 9, 2008

123rd Avn Bn Co B
George Taylor
Belle Plain, NJ
March 21, 2008



Dear editor,

Several Americal Division veterans attended the New York State VFW District 2 convention in Kingston, NY on June 7-8. The photo shows (left to right) myself, Karl Rohde, and Jan Milles



Past State Commander Karl Rohde served with the 523rd Sig. Bn. in 1969-70. He serves as the Legislative Chairman of the VFW Dept. of New York. Jan Milles was installed as the Sr. Vice-Commander of Dist. 2. He served with Co. C, 4/3rd Inf. I was installed as Judge Advocate of Dist. 2. I was with the G-2 TMF, HHC, Americal Division in 1969-70.

Art Hanley; ahanley@verizon.net

Dear readers,

Duane F. Getzmeyer of Oxford, MI has just completed his term as the 2007-2008 State Commander of the Michigan Disabled American Veterans (DAV). He served in the 196th LIB and the Americal Division in Vietnam until his discharge in 1972 and is a life member of the ADVA. He retired from his profession as a senior automotive designer in 2002 and currently teaches Architecture-Interior Design classes at Baker College in Clinton Township, MI. He and his wife Shirley have two daughters, Amanda and Paula.

-Editor-

Dear editor,

Has our beloved Americal Division been re-activated for the war on Global Terrorism? One of my favorite TV shows is The Unit. On one of their episodes the troopers were wearing the Southern Cross patch on their shoulder.

Bobby D. Albers;

daalbers55@charter.net

Editor's reply: The Americal Division is not active today. COL (Ret.) Tom Be-dient reported at the meeting in Jacksonville that the lineage of the Americal Division is being considered for a future combat brigade. The Army is currently placing emphasis on independent brigades rather than on divisions as the largest field deployable unit.

Dear editor,

I was a team leader in Chu Lai in '68-'69. I was assigned to Personnel but some times went to the field to service the actual fighting troops. I was at the base of Hamburger Hill when the 101st Abn. Div. was called in to replace the 198th LIB. I believe that was late April or early May 1969. I need confirmation of these dates.

Another time I was at LZ Siberia to service the 3/82nd Artillery. As dusk approached the CO came around and told us to start cleaning our weapons as word came down of a possible assault on the base that night. It looked like the chopper wasn't going to make it back for us in time to avoid the

battle. As it turned out, the chopper did make it and we were lifted off and we returned to Chu Lai. I heard the base was over-run that night. Can you give me any particulars on that night, particularly the date?

Dale Pulley; *19dmp48@earthlink.net*

Dear editor,

I had a real nice surprise happen to me on Memorial Day that was a carry over from last years Veterans Day. On Veterans Day I was out raking leaves when the neighbor stopped over and handed me an envelope. Inside was a letter written by his four children telling me what Veterans Day meant to them. It also thanked me for being a Veteran.

The dad said the kids wanted to make me a little surprise, but the flu bug had hit and he didn't want to pass it to me if they would have made their surprise. On Memorial Day I took my flags down at the end of the day. Then the doorbell rang. It was my neighbor with his two youngest kids.

They said happy Memorial Day and gave me a cake that was red, white and blue and said thank you for being a vet. The dad said the kids had been so disappointed on Veterans Day that they weren't able to make the cake and they were chomping at the bit to give it to me on Memorial Day. Boy did that make me feel good. I just wanted to pass along a nice heart warming story. I wish all veterans could have such nice neighbors.

Jim Gales; (414) 351-DEER;

galesgemoll@aol.com

Dear editor,

Veterans of Co. B, 4/21st Inf. (Big Bad Bravo) recently made a donation to K-9 Heroes in Iraq. The donation was acknowledge by the following message: The Big Bad Bravos' generous gift of high-tech cooling gear to three military working dogs in Iraq will greatly enhance their ability to protect the combat soldiers under their care. More information can be obtained at *www.HelpingUdders.com*. Connie Steers; Co. B, 4/21st Inf.

Dear editor,

Early on the morning of December 8, 1941 the 164th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Infantry Division found it was an "orphan regiment". Overnight the Army reorganized the infantry divisions and reduced division strength from four regiments to three regiments. The 164th was split off from the 34th and went its separate way.

All training ceased and a speedy pack up and shipping out ensued. The 164th arrived in San Francisco on December 17th and prepared for deployment to the Pacific. The 34th Inf. Div. was soon sent to Europe and deployed in Ireland.

The 164th was quartered for about a week at the Cow Palace arena in Daly City, CA. The Cow Palace was completed and put into operation in 1941. The facility is owned by the State of California and is used for livestock shows, conventions, concerts, and the 1960 Republican national convention. The regiment's use of the facility followed a livestock show and incoming soldiers got to remove the barnyard refuse left behind. There were no cots or bunks provided for our use.

An April 2, 2008 article in the San Francisco Chronicle states that Daly City wants to demolish the Cow Palace and redevelop the land for a supermarket, elementary school, businesses, and residences. The matter was placed on hold by the state legislature.

Carl R. Lauritsen; Santa Barbara, CA

Dear editor,

I am making plans for a September or October 2009 visit to the places in the Pacific where my father served in World War II. My father, Hyman Trusten of Woburn, MA is 88 years old and doing well. He served in the Message Center with the 26th Signal Co. that came from Boston.

I am studying the book Under The Southern Cross, so I have the overall account of events, but the personal facts are missing. I want to go to the exact places my father was at and I need more information on the locations of the Message Center in the war zone.

Dad joined the Message Center on

New Caledonia after working as a wire layer. He then went to Guadalcanal and was near Henderson Field. But I would like to know exactly where the position was. After Guadalcanal the Message Center was moved to Fiji. I need to know the location. The same goes for Bougainville and Cebu. After Cebu my father had enough time in to come home. He was in Pearl Harbor when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan.

My Dad and I have talked about his WWII service often, and for many years, but this time I tried to pin him down as to just where he was, and he just can't remember. Thank you in advance for any information that will help me fill in the gaps. God bless all of the generations of the Americal, and God bless America!

Paul Trusten, R.Ph.; 3609 Caldera Blvd., Apt. 122; Midland TX 79707-2872; 1(432)528-7724

Dear editor,

Veterans of Co. C, 4/21st Inf. had a wonderful time in Las Vegas on March 3-6, 2008. Most of the men were from the 1968 -1970 era. Many of them had started their friendships in Hawaii the summer of 1967. They had not seen each other since they left the field.

Attendees included 49 men and 23 wives from 24 states. There was much laughter, tears of joy, much hugging, pictures to see, and memories galore. What fun it was! We also took the time to have a memorial service to remember our fallen brothers-- the KIAs and the ones who have died since coming home. If you have not been to a reunion, these guys recommend that you get together.

Kitty Millard; Houston, TX

Ensure prompt delivery of your Americal Journal. Send all address changes to Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant, as soon as possible. This includes seasonal changes.

REUNION SCHEDULE

164th Infantry Association of the United States, September 12-14, 2008. Valley City, North Dakota. Contact: Patricia Drong Sec/Treas; pjdrong@ictc.com; PO Box 192; Sanborn ND 58480.

178th ASHC (Boxcars) and 400th TC, Pensacola Beach, FL, Sept. 15-18, 2008. Contact: Dean C. Nelson; boxcar088_67@msn.com, 763-780-8869.

132nd ASHC (Hercules) and 16th Trans Det. veterans join the 178th ASHC (Boxcar) reunion, 15-18 Sept 2008, Pensacola Beach, FL. Contact: Bill McRae; 770/565-7132 or wmcrae@mindspring.com.

Co. D, 4/3rd Inf., Des Moines, IA Heartland Inn, October 3-5, 2008. Contact: Dan Behrens; coalcreek@iowatelcom.net, 641-634-2150.

6th Spt. Med. Bn. and the Co. C, 23rd Med. Bn. 40th reunion Oct. 3-5, 2008, Potawatomi Inn, Angola, IN. Contact: Bill Hawkes; beh8445a@mebtel.net, 919-563-9265.

Co. A, 1/46th Inf., October 16-19, 2008; San Antonio, TX. Contact: Bill and Ann Schneider; wschnei591@aol.com, 636-942-4042.

26th Cmbt. Engr. Bn., Oct. 16-18, 2008, West Point, NY. Contact: Robert Kastins; ffgris@verizon.net or Linda Gordon; iwfrog@mcleodusa.net.

3/1st Inf. Bn. veterans, Marietta Conference Center, Marietta, GA, Oct 17-18, 2008. More information at <http://www.3rdbn1stinfg.org/>.

Updated reunion information can be found at www.americal.org/reunion.shtml

2008 ADVA Reunion Jacksonville Wrap-up

By Lee Kaywork; Reunion Chairman

It is hard to believe that after two years of planning the ADVA 2008 Reunion in Jacksonville is now over. I think everyone who attended had a good time and those that did not attend will hear they missed a good one.

Here are some reunion numbers; 355 registered, 311 attended the Chu Lai Stand-down, 325 attended the banquet, 78 went to Camp Blanding, and 48 went to St. Augustine. We had a large WWII contingent and the cannoneers had a luncheon amongst themselves. Although the rain forced us indoors, the Friday night beach stand down was certainly a highlight of the reunion....particularly the memorial service and the Polynesian show.

I would like to thank all who helped make this reunion a success; including, Tim and Sue Vail, Jerry and Glenda Nichols, Bob Short, and my registration gang, Jerry Anderson, Bob Kelly, Dave Chrystal and Dave Taylor.

I hope you had as much fun as I did.

Thoughts On Attending My

First ADVA Reunion

By Alonzo H. Hodgdon
Co. E, 132nd Inf. Regt.

Having just returned from attending my first reunion and while it is fresh in my mind I would like to give my thoughts. From the first my wife and I were treated very well and felt part of it all. I have to admit to having preconceived notions that, as the bulk of the membership is Vietnam vets, we would not have very much in common. What I neglected to consider was that we are all brothers-in-arms who fought for our country.

As a life member of the ADVA, and as a veteran who was on New Caledonia when the Americal Division was created, I am very happy that the ADVA is in good hands. It was a blast meeting other WWII members and being recognized and having our picture taken for the magazine.

To repeat, I came away with a very good feeling. Lee Kaywork did a great job of putting it all together. My wife and I met many new friends and found a bit of our youth to the music of an excellent quartet.

In closing, it was a great honor to be with brother veterans.

In Memoriam

Mitchell J. Przybycien, New Lenox, IL, passed away on August 1, 2008. Mitch served with Co. I, 132nd Inf. Regt. He was active in the 132nd Inf. Regt. Assn. and the ADVA. He was a member of the ADVA Executive Council at the time of his passing. He and his wife Lillian enjoyed attending many ADVA reunions including the 2007 reunion in Buffalo, NY. The ADVA expresses sincere condolences to Mitch's family and friends.

Remembering Donald A. Ballou

By Gary L. Noller



Donald A. Ballou, Cherry Hill, NJ, passed away on May 20, 2008. Don was finishing his fourth year on the ADVA Executive Council and served on the membership committee for almost 15 years.

Don served as a litter bearer with Co. C, 121st Medical Co. in 1945. After the Americal Division was deactivated Don served occupation duty in Japan with the 1st Cavalry Division. He was a native of Buffalo, NY and spent many years in New Jersey as an engineer with Texaco.

Over the past several years Don made contact with many Americal Division veterans via the internet and issued them invitations to join the ADVA. He also corresponded with veterans about membership questions. He once said, "Helping fellow veterans is a great joy to me. I want to continue doing it as long as I can."

Don also made many new buddies by corresponding with Americal Division veterans on internet message boards. He was one of the first members on the Prodigy bulletin board when it started in 1993. His friends will always remember him as "a very fine gentleman."

Help Wanted

National Commander David W. Taylor has recently acquired numerous back issues of the Americal Newsletter (now the Americal Journal). These were donated to the ADVA by widows of members. These issues provide the beginnings of an archive of past newsletters and magazines. The ADVA is grateful for the donations of these important historical items.

In order to make these newsletters available to all ADVA members they will have to be transcribed into an electronic format. While the exact procedure is not known at this time it most likely will involve a page-by-page scanning of the newsletters. The electronic files can be copied to DVDs and distributed to interested members.

A volunteer or volunteers are needed to take on this project. A computer and scanner will be required. Software to convert to .pdf format is a benefit. Tasks will include cataloging available items, scanning pages, conversion to electronic format, and storage on DVD or other mobile memory media. Work will be complete in small batches with items mailed back and forth. Care must be taken to preserve and secure the items while being process.

If you would like to donate your time please contact Dave Taylor. His contact information is in the directory of this issue. If you have past issues of the newsletter that you can donate to fill in any gaps please contact Dave and let him know what you have. If you want to volunteer some time on behalf of the ADVA this is a good time to step forward.

Remembering Russell B. "Pappy" Welder By Lee Gunton



Russell B. "Pappy" Welder was an original member of Co. C, 5/46th Infantry. He succumbed to cancer on February 17, 2008. He and his wife, Paisoon, retired to her native Thailand in late 2005.

Welder's memorial service was held in Cape Girardeau, MO on Memorial Day 2008. The ceremonies were conducted in the courtroom where he served in civilian life as a court reporter. It was attended by approximately 75 people. Ed Arndt and Lee Gunton, also original members of the 5/46th, offered eulogies.

The 5/46th formed at Fort Hood, TX in 1967 and deployed to Vietnam in late March 1968. Arndt recalled several anecdotes about Welder, including the time that Arndt was wounded by a sniper and Welder was the first one to come to his aid. Gunton offered up an adaptation of Lawrence Vaincourt's poem "A Soldier Died Today", including several personal verses about Welder at Fort Hood and in Vietnam.

A detail from Ft. Leonard Wood provided the eleven-member honor guard. They performed an impressive ceremony which reflected the professionalism and dignity with which Russell B. "Pappy" Welder served his country.

Locator Requests

Looking for individuals that served with me in Co. A, 8th Spt. Bn., 196th LIB. My MOS was (64A10 - Transportation), July 15 - December 15, 1967. Contact Barry O'Neil; Barryhog@aol.com; 732-291-9270.

Looking for anyone who knew my cousin, George Hobert Noe, killed-in-action on May 26, 1969 while serving with the 198th LIB. He was only with the unit a few days. Contact Bill Dean; bdean@northamericansubstationservices.com, (407) 788-3717.

Looking for anyone who was in the 62nd SAG, Chu Lai, 1970-71, or anyone stationed near the 62nd Signal Co. in Chu Lai. I recall Harvey Avery, Kiko and Gray (whom we called "Stump"). Contact: Bob Dietenhofer; dorisanbob@verizon.net.

Looking for information on the 26th Cmbt. Engr. Bn., HHC, from Nov. 1967 through August 1968. Contact Ken Newman; jackiesbmw@verizon.net.

Looking for anyone who knew Robert W. Bibeau in 1942 at New Caledonia and Guadalcanal and can correspond with him. Contact: Bonnie Newman; BNewman985@verizon.net.

Looking for veterans of Co. A, 5/46th Inf., 1969. Contact Ronny R. Dunn; ronny.r.dunn@us.army.mil.

Looking for Doc Davis, possible first name Clarence, served with Recon from Jul.-Dec. 1968. Contact: James R Gladden; fardidle@comporium.net.

Looking for anyone serving with Co. A, 8th Spt. Bn., Jul.-Dec. 1967. Need information to help with VA claim. Contact: Barry O'Neil; 24 Burlington Ave., Leonardo, NJ, 07737, barryhog@aol.com.

Looking for veterans from Co. B, 3/21st Inf. and Co. C, 3/21st Inf., Aug. 71-Aug. 72. I would like to put names on faces on photos that I have. Contact: Mike Campbell; sgtcampb@yahoo.com.

Looking for anyone who knew my uncle, Floyd J.M. Garman, a scout for Co. C, 132nd Inf. Regt. He passed away on May 28, 2008. He was from Independence, KS and was nicknamed Kansas. Contact: Charles Garman; charlesigarman@yahoo.com.

Looking for members of companies A, B, and C, 1/6th Inf. that were at the battle of Lo Giang on Feb. 8, 1968. We are making a documentary about the battle and want perspectives from the companies that were involved. Contact Don Kaiser; dondkaiser@aol.com.

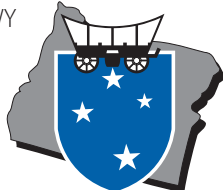
Looking for images of Task Force Oregon, August 1967 and the battle of An Ba. Any good, strong images of the Americal Division or anything to do with Task Force Oregon in the battle or in Chu Lai. Contact: Guy Nasuti, Photo Editor, Weider History Group, 19300 Promenade Drive, Leesburg, Va. 20176. 703-779-8329 guy.nasuti@weiderhistorygroup.com.

NORTHWEST CHAPTER

AK WA OR ID MT WY

COMMANDER

David Hammond
1900 SW River Dr. #805
Portland, OR 97201-8002
503 • 644 • 3623
pacwesthi@aol.com



The Northwest Chapter is pleased to announce a merger with the Far West Chapter. We feel strength in numbers will be an asset to all members in both chapters. All active ADVA Northwest Chapter members will be contacted in the future with an invitation to join the Far West Chapter. The Far West Chapter offers a newsletter and annual reunion to promote camaraderie and support of our organization. For more information please contact Rick Ropele at 951-218-3071 (rropele@yahoo.com) or Dave Hammond at 503-319-2421 (pacwesthi@aol.com).

FAR WEST CHAPTER

AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT

COMMANDER

Rick Ropele
246 Coronado
Corona, CA 92879
951 • 735 • 7316
rropele@esri.com

SEC/TREAS

Tom Packard
6613 Birch Park Dr.
Galloway, OH 43119
614 • 878 • 5197
packard50@columbus.rr.com



The Executive Council of the Americal Division Veterans Association met in Jacksonville at the annual reunion. Among other business, they voted to approve the merger of the Northwest Chapter into the Far West Chapter. The newly merged chapter will retain the Far West Chapter name, logo, and officers. Dave Hammond was appointed to the previously unoccupied position of FWC Vice-Commander by National Commander Larry Watson. The merger is part of a plan by the ADVA to realign chapters to allow members of inactive regions to become more involved.

ADVA members who live in the northwest region will be given free membership in the Far West Chapter through the end of 2008. We hope the members in the northwest will like what they see in the Far West Chapter and continue their membership beyond 2008. Welcome packets were mailed the last week of July. The Far West Region now includes Arizona, Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Dates for the Far West Chapter Reunion are October 12-14, 2008 at the Aquarius Casino Resort (former Hilton Flamingo) in Laughlin, Nevada. Registration forms and detailed information is being mailed at the end of July. Laughlin is a great place for a reunion. If you would like to join us in October, let us know and we'll send you the information.

Far West Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Tom Packard was elected to the ADVA Executive Council for a two-year term which began in July. If you have any questions or concerns, let him know. The Chapter is also represented on the Executive Committee by our Chapter Commander, Rick Ropele. See you in Laughlin.

EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

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

COMMANDER

Conrad Steers
124 Harding Avenue
Hicksville, NY 11801
516 • 822 • 5938
11thbrigade@optonline.net

SECRETARY

Elmer Wright
16 Sherman Avenue
Glen Ridge, NJ 07028-1441
973-743-3376

VICE-COMMANDER

Joseph M. Adelsberger
7010 Price Hillards Rd.
Plain City, OH 43064
614 • 873 • 3638
joeordeb_1@msn.com

TREASURER

Mark Deam
418 East Ruth
Sidney, OH 45365
mdeam@woh.rr.com



The East Chapter annual reunion will be held on October 23-26, 2008 at the Drawbridge Inn at Ft. Thomas, KY. The hotel is near the Cincinnati, OH airport which is located across the Ohio River in Kentucky.

The following are just some of special activities are scheduled:

Thursday- Riverboat dinner cruise on

the Ohio River at 7:00 PM.

Friday- National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH. Depart the hotel at 8:30 AM

Saturday- City tour of Cincinnati with lunch at the Hofbrauhaus. Buses leave at 9:00 AM. Closing banquet at 6:30 PM at the Drawbridge Inn.

More information on the reunion can be obtained from Mark Deam, 418 E. Ruth Street; Sidney, OH; 45365-1623; (937)492-1908 / (937)489-3137 (cell); mdeam@woh.rr.com.

The chapter website can be found at
<http://home.woh.rr.com/sidneyalum/advaerc/>.

I would like to start off by telling the chapter about the National Reunion in Jacksonville. Cherie and I had a great time. It was hot and humid but the camaraderie with our Americal brothers and sisters was awesome. We have a good Executive Council and we came out with some great ideas. Lee Keywork did a great job in running the reunion.

Everyone should have gotten a registration form for our chapter reunion with their dues notice. If not, contact Mark Deam or better yet look at the web site and find the reunion registration form you can print.

I went to Portland, Maine to see about the 2009 Chapter Reunion. I went to the Best Western called the Merry Manor Inn where they put me up for two nights and showed me around Portland. The Waterfront and beaches are beautiful and the surrounding area is great for tours. Just down the road is where President Bush has his summer home. Larry Shover a chapter member will have the lead since he lives an hour and a half from Portland. Larry and I will speak on the proposal at this year's reunion in Kentucky. It is up to the chapter if we want to go there. We are shooting for a weekend in September. I hope all chapter members had a great and healthy summer. If anybody has a problem or a kind word to say please contact the officers. We are here to serve you. Welcome Home.

Connie Steers; Commander

SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX
COMMANDER
Cameron F. Baird
 P.O. Box 211
 Stonewall, TX 78671
 830 • 644 • 2704
 altdorf@kctc.com

Malcolm East has accepted an appointment to the vacant chapter office of Vice Commander. Malcolm and his wife, Beverly, have been active in the ADVA for many years, and in his new capacity Malcolm will represent the chapter on the Executive Council.

This chapter is sponsoring next year's national reunion in Shreveport/Bossier City (see separate article for details). This is a terrific opportunity for lots of people in this region to be able to drive to a reunion and avoid having to endure air travel expense and hassles. We couldn't have a better reunion chairman than Ron Ellis, who is putting together a terrific slate of events. We especially want to extend an invitation to those members that have never attended a national reunion before. A good time is guaranteed, and the opportunity to engage in some camaraderie is priceless.



Make your plans now for the 2009 Americal Division Veterans Association Annual Reunion to be held in Shreveport, LA on June 25-28, 2009. Reunion Chairman is PNC Ronald Ellis of Henderson, TX.

Shreveport – Bossier City, located on Interstate Highway 20 and the Red River in northwest Louisiana, is a blend of Texas spirit and Cajun attitude. Many premier casinos are located in Bossier City and are easily accessible from the host hotel, Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort. Some of that great Cajun cuisine is sure to be included in the dining events.

Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort has been recently remodeled and is now an all suite hotel with jet tubs in every room. It also features 24 hour slots and table gaming, and has four restaurants. For those who may consider traveling by recreational vehicle, Diamond Jacks has a 32 space RV park with full hook ups and utilities.

Nearby attractions include the Louisiana Boardwalk which features outlet shopping, riverfront dining, carousel and trolley rides, as well as a number of antique shops. For those interested in outdoor merchandise, an Outdoor World, operated by Bass Pro Shops, is near the Boardwalk.

A Friday tour is being planned for Barksdale Air Force Base, home to one of only two remaining B-52 Bomber wings in the United States. The air base is also home to the 8th Air Force Museum which will be included in the tour.

For those flying to Shreveport, Shreveport Regional Airport is an area hub served by Allegiant Air, American Eagle, Continental Express, Delta Connection and NWA Airlinck.

The best part of the reunion will be reuniting with those friends and buddies you see at each annual reunion. Let the good times roll on the Red!

23rd MILITARY POLICE CHAPTER

WWII Korean War/Panama CZ Vietnam Global War on Terrorism

COMMANDER
Dutch DeGroot

VICE COMMANDER
Dale Meisel

SEC/TREAS
Tom Packard

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We'd like to thank the Jacksonville Reunion Committee for putting on a great reunion this year. A good time was had by all 31 MP's and their family members in attendance. Thanks to all the people who helped stuff the MP donation jar. We collected a record amount this year. All donations made during the reunion went to help pay for the refreshments in our hospitality

suite. A special thanks to Rich Merlin for furnishing the Thursday evening reception refreshments.

We added five new chapter members during the reunion, bringing our chapter membership to 139. Chapter dues notices went out in July to those members whose dues expired on June 30, 2008. If you are not yet a 23rd MP Chapter member and would like to join, contact Tom Packard at the address above.

During our Chapter meeting held Saturday afternoon, we amended our by-laws to include a finance committee to oversee chapter funds. Chapter Commander, Dutch DeGroot, added a nominating committee to select candidates for our elections to be held next June at the Shreveport reunion. If you are a Chapter member would like to serve on the either the Finance or Nominating Committee, contact Dutch. If you are a chapter member as well as an ADVA member and would like to run for any of the offices in the chapter, contact Dutch or Dale or Tom. The offices of Chapter Commander, Vice Commander, Secretary/Treasurer and Sgt-At Arms will be elected.

We also discussed and voted to investigate the possibility of a mid-winter Chapter Reunion next January in Spring Lake, NC near Ft. Bragg. The 23rd Military Police Company was re-activated at Ft. Bragg on Oct 21, 2005 as part of the 16th MP Brigade (Airborne). Several former 23rd MP's visited Ft Bragg again in May of 2006 for the dedication the Fallen Soldier Memorial containing the names of the thirteen 23rd MP's who were killed in Vietnam. Although the current 23rd MP Co. is assigned to Ft. Drum, NY (after returning from deployment on Operation Iraqi Freedom), we have several ideas to make the reunion a good one.

Chapters need your support. The recent national survey indicated that help is needed to conduct chapter activities such as newsletters and reunions. This is a good opportunity for chapter members to break the ice and get involved. Let your chapter commander know if you are interested in helping him make improvements in your chapter.

2008 ADVA SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Submitted by Bob Short

The scholarship fund trustees met on June 26, 2008, at the annual reunion in Jacksonville and authorized awarding **\$31,000** in scholarships to children and grandchildren of ADVA members. There were forty-seven applicants this year. *Thirty-four* applicants were sponsored by Vietnam veterans and *thirteen* applicants were sponsored by World War II veterans.

Timothy Gates received the first place award of **\$3,000**. Timothy attends Western Illinois University and was sponsored by his father, Kenneth Gates, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry.

Timothy Thorlton received the second place award of **\$2,500**. Timothy attends Ball State University and was sponsored by his father, Danny Thorlton, who served in Vietnam with the 23rd Military Police Company.

Patrick Bright received the third place award of **\$2,000**. Patrick attends Bemidji State University was sponsored by his father, Gene Bright, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Two fourth place awards of \$1,500 each were presented to the following applicants.

Joel Reynolds attends the University of Oregon and was sponsored by his grandfather, Jack Morton, who served in World War II with the 182nd Infantry.

Conor Walsh attends Harvard University and was sponsored by his grandfather, the late William McGoldrick, who served in World War II with the 182nd Infantry.

Nine fifth place awards of \$1,000 each were presented to the following applicants.

Amber Allen attends Gulf Coast Community College and was sponsored by her father, Bruce Allen, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry.

McKenzie Baird attends Dallas Baptist University and was sponsored by her father, Cameron Baird, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

Meredith Gibson attends Iowa State University and was sponsored by her great-grandfather, the late Jack Leaverton, who served in World War II with 221st Field Artillery.

Kelsey Hobar attends Northern Virginia Community College and was sponsored by her grandfather, Larry Henry, who served in Vietnam with the 6th Support Battalion.

Eric Oliver attends American University and was sponsored by his grandfather, the late Leonard Oliver, the served in World War II with the 221st Field Artillery.

Jason Platts attends Misericordia University and was sponsored by his father, Thomas Platts, who served in Vietnam with the 23rd Military Police Company.

Jessica Scott attends Miami University and was sponsored by her grandfather, Marvin Scott, who served in Vietnam with E Troop, 1st Cavalry.

Caitlin Snow attends the University of Michigan and was sponsored by her father, Paul Snow, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry.

Bryce Young attends Montana State University and was sponsored by his grandfather, Victor Lander, who served in World War II with the 132nd Infantry.

An additional twenty-three awards of \$500 each were presented to the following applicants.

Bridget Alsbro attends Lake Michigan College and was sponsored by her grandfather, Donald Alsbro, who served in Vietnam with the 23rd Administration Company.

Melissa Bungo attends the University at Buffalo and was sponsored by her father, Ronald Krul, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry.

Douglas Chiki attends Miami University and was sponsored by his father, Thomas Chiki, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Thomas Chiki attends Ohio University and was sponsored by his father, Thomas Chiki, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Jared Clayton attends the University of Arkansas and was sponsored by his grandfather, Earl Clayton, who served in World War II with the 164th Infantry.

Diana Cudworth attends Wilkes University and was sponsored by her grandfather, Robert Cudworth, who served in Vietnam with Headquarters, 11th LIB.

Jeffrey DeGroot attends Depaul University and was sponsored by his father, John DeGroot, who served in Vietnam with the 23rd Military Police Company.

Troy Freeman attends Fordham University and was sponsored by his father, Frank Freeman, who served in Vietnam with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry.

Zachary Hall attends Wabash College and was sponsored by his father, Charles Hall, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Jeanne Harwood attends Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late Lloyd Davis, who served in World War II with the 123rd Field Artillery.

Kimberly Jackson attends George Fox University and was sponsored by her father, Bradley Jackson, who served in Vietnam with the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry.

Katelyn Mahoney attends Chowan University and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late William McGoldrick, who served in World War II with the 182nd Infantry.

Crystal Martinez attends the University of New Mexico and was sponsored by her father, Ruben Martinez, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Sean Matthews attends the University of Connecticut and was sponsored by his father, Dennis Matthews, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry.

Glenna O'Connor attends Marymount College and was sponsored by her father, Michael O'Connor, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry.

Alan Orthmann attends the University of Washington and was sponsored by his father, Dennis Orthmann, who served in Vietnam with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company.

Taylor Polikoff attends Texas A&M University and was sponsored by his great-grandfather, the late David Fonseca, who served in World War II with the 26th Signal Company.

Kimberly Smethurst attends the University of Dayton and was sponsored by her father, Richard Smethurst, who served in Vietnam with the 26th Engineer Battalion.

Alexandra Steverson attends Bates College and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late Arthur Little, Jr., who served in World War II with the 101st Quartermaster Regiment.

Don Tait attends Central Michigan University and was sponsored by his father, Larry Tait, who served in Vietnam with the 23 Administration Company.

Tiffany Thiesen attends St. Luke's College and was sponsored by her father, Thomas Thiesen, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry.

Elizabeth Trout attends Temple University and was sponsored by her grandfather, Kermit Trout, who served in World War II with the 26th Signal Company.

Elizabeth Wengers Herron attends Fordham University and was sponsored by her grandfather, Edward Wengers, who served in Vietnam with Task Force Oregon.

Raffle Winner

The \$250 scholarship raffle winner this year was Anthony Galgano, who served in World War II with the 182nd Infantry.

\$220,000 Awarded

Since the inception of the ADVA scholarship fund, scholarships totaling more than \$220,000 have been awarded to children and grandchildren of ADVA members.

Scholarship Fund Summary

Beginning balance 7/1/07	\$99,561
Donations and receipts from annual raffle	34,652
Interest earned	896
Depreciation on investments	(3,890)
Expenses including awards granted	32,848
Ending balance 6/30/08	\$98,370

Itemized Expenses:

Printing and postage	\$1,515
Awards to scholars	31,000
Raffle prize	250
Bank fees	83
Total Expenses	\$32,848



Scholarship Chairman Appointed

On June 30, 2008 Bob Short stepped down after serving eight years as Chairman of the Scholarship Fund. Bob served with Co. A, 1/46th Infantry and lives in Kalamazoo, MI. Bob plans to spend time working on other worthwhile projects. His services as chairman are greatly appreciated by the members of the ADVA and by scholarship applicants. Larry Watson presented Bob Short with an appreciation award at the Jacksonville reunion.

National Commander David W. Taylor has announced that John (Ron) Green has accepted an appointment to the chairmanship of the scholarship program. Green served with HHB, 6/11th Artillery and is a recently retired high school principal. Ron can be reached at 816-992-8658 or ron_green46@yahoo.com. Ron expects to relocate from his current home in Missouri to Tennessee in the near future.

Application Deadline

Applications for 2009 awards must be received by the Chairman no later than May 1, 2009. Eligibility requirements, program rules, and an application form can be found on the internet at www.americal.org/scholar.shtml.

Future Scholarship News

Scholarship recipients have been asked to submit a photo and short message for use in future editions of the Americal Journal. The Journal will also post the name of scholarship fund donors in a future issue.



NATIONAL REUNION





NATIONAL REUNION





Remembering Joe E. Brown

By Richard Stevens

Corporal, Co M, 164th Regt. WWII
Colonel (US Army, Retired)

(Reprinted with permission, The 164th Infantry News, July 2008; courtesy of the Editor, LTC (Ret) Shirley Olgeirson).

Many Americans have formed their impressions of the USO from the TV – decades of Bob Hope's big-cast variety shows, or a young Sissy Spacek's poignant PBS Special, "Vera, USO Girl." But those of us who were there also remember individual personalities – athletes, actors, politicians – who didn't sing or dance or play musical instruments; that just came to visit for a spell, to talk, to sign autographs, to tell stories, to present informal "pieces of business." That's how Joe E. Brown came to the "Canal" sometime in December 1942.

It was a miserable day at the drab, tented, island hospital. Two nights earlier, Washing Machine Charley had miraculously cured a goodly bunch of patients, mostly there for malaria, by scattering his small load over one hospital ward and points nearby. By noon next day, the "cured" were gone. Those of us still too sick with malaria to go were dutifully drinking the Cure of the Week – liquid quinine. There are many possible reasons why no one on Guadalcanal ever seemed to get the same treatment for the same kind of malaria. Whatever, there appeared to be endless combinations of substances, dosages, and frequencies of medication. But liquid quinine had to have been the least user-friendly. Uncompromisingly awful stuff to get down, it made the ears ring loudly, ceaselessly. We were doing a small cup every four hours, six times a day.

A medical orderly passed the word. Joe E. Brown was outside; he was going to do a show. Five or six of us turned out into an overcast drizzle in our meager, ill-fitting hospital robes – feverish, ears ringing and miserable. Here was Joe all right, standing on a tiny hummock in the middle of the palm grove, redolent in field clothes – fatigues, soft hat, and poncho. A couple of soldier escorts stood discreetly by; "A show?" This was going to be a show? Where was the music? Where was the stage? Where was his costume? Where were the props? We should have known better.

Joe was an old vaudeville clown – as familiar to 1930s movie-goers as Bob Burns, Ed Wynn, Martha Raye, or Judy Canova. He proceeded to recreate for us many of those hilarious comic routines of his that we knew so well – like his Elmer the Great baseball pitching routine. For a half-hour or so of magical moments, we forgot all about the weather, the hospital, and our ailments. We were transported, instead,

back to a world we thought we'd left behind, we few and Joe E. Brown. And, no doubt, ours was but one of many stops for him on the Canal.

New Year's Eve 1945, I was on leave in Kansas City with orders in my pocket for Germany. My brand new bride and I took a long street car/trolley bus ride (who had a car?) to the Terrace Grill at the Hotel Muehlebach (Dancing with Anson Weeks). Over our wine, I spotted Joe at a nearby table; he had just finished an evening performance of "Harvey"

at the nearby theater. Made bold by the wine, I went over in Staff Sergeant's uniform, and thanked Joe for what he'd done for us nearly three years earlier. I recalled for him the miserable, improbable scene – how we'd felt before, during, and after his informal performance. He was very pleased, doubly so I'm sure, because he was with a table full of other actors who overheard it all. Payback time.

In the 1930's, Joe E. Brown was a movie box office champ, pulling in more money than the Marx Brothers, Eddie Cantor, Wheeler & Woolsey or W.C. Fields. Women as well as the men enjoyed Joe, which may have accounted for the degree of his success. Over the years, Brown made dozens of movies, more than most comedians, but he was a success in vaudeville,

musical comedy & revues, burlesque, light comedy and drama. He began as a boy acrobat, living a mean existence in the hard knocks show business of circus, carnivals, saloons and vaudeville, yet finding fame, if no fortune, as the "only acrobat in the world now doing a double body-twist and back somersault in one leap."

For Joe, the highlight of his life was his tours to the Pacific front lines in WWII. Over a period of nearly three years, while he neglected his stage and screen career, Joe E. Brown traveled 200,000 miles to bring a few laughs and cheer to those soldiers hunkered down in the fire zones. This record was unequalled until Martha Raye's later USO tours. Brown was awarded the Bronze Star, one of only two civilians in WWII so honored. The other was Ernie Pyle. (Reprinted from Vaudeville.org. Frank Cullen, American Vaudeville Museum)



*Editors Note: During the war Joe E. Brown traveled 200,000 miles, played in jam-packed halls, hospitals, gun emplacements, rainy ditches and jungle outposts. Once he climbed Canton Island's sole palm tree to entertain the solitary G.I. on lookout duty. Sometimes Comedian Brown would start his prayers: "Listen, God, this is your kid, Joe..." Early on, Joe lost a son, Captain Don E. Brown, who was killed in a bomber crash (in California). A few months later, Brown began his marathon journeys to entertain troops. "When you've lost your own boy," he wrote in his book *Your Kids and Mine*, "all other lads become your sons."*



American Anthem

Lyrics by Gene Scheer

All we've been given by those who came before
The dream of a nation where freedom would endure
The work and prayers of centuries have brought us to this day.
What shall be our legacy?
What will our children say?

Let them say of me
I was one the one who believed
In sharing the blessings I received.
Let me know in my heart when my days are through
America, America I gave my best to you.

Each generation from the plains to distant shore
With gifts they have been given were determined to leave more.
Valiant battles fought together
Acts of conscience fought alone.
These are the seeds from which America has grown.

Let them say of me
I was one the one who believed
In sharing the blessings I received.
Let me know in my heart when my days are through
America, America I gave my best to you.

For those who think they have nothing to share,
Who fear in their hearts there is no hero there,
Know that quiet acts of dignity are that which fortifies
The soul of a nation that never, never dies.

Let them say of me
I was one the one who believed
In sharing the blessings I received.
Let me know in my heart when my days are though
America, America I gave my best to you.

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Burtell's Art of War

David W. Taylor

Doug Burtell joined the North Dakota National Guard in 1940 and was assigned to the Headquarters Company of the 164th Infantry Regiment. When the 164th was sent to camp Claiborne, Louisiana for training, Burtell was trained in intelligence duties and assigned to the regiments S-2 section.

Burtell had a "knack for art" even though he was not formally schooled in art. As he experienced the war in front of him he began sketching images and sights that stuck in his mind. "I found myself drawing as an outlet to record what I was seeing," he recalled. "I wanted to show visually what it was like for the average soldier."

After Guadalcanal Burtell was placed on the S-2's Intelligence Reconnaissance Section which required long-range patrols deep into enemy territory. His experiences with front line soldiers and the combat that ensued made an indelible mark on his mind and his art reflects some of those images.

Burtell never formally took up art after the war; instead he worked in the Millwood industry as a Sales Manager and later, a Company Vice President. In the 1990's he was commissioned to adapt one of his sketches for use on the memorial plaque at North Dakota's Veterans Cemetery in Bismarck. More recently, some of his sketches were used in interpretive panels now on US Highway 2, designated as "The 164th Infantry Memorial Highway." In the near future, the Americal Journal will feature Burtell's wartime autobiography as well as additional art not seen on these pages.

Editors Note: All art copyright ©, Douglas Burtell.

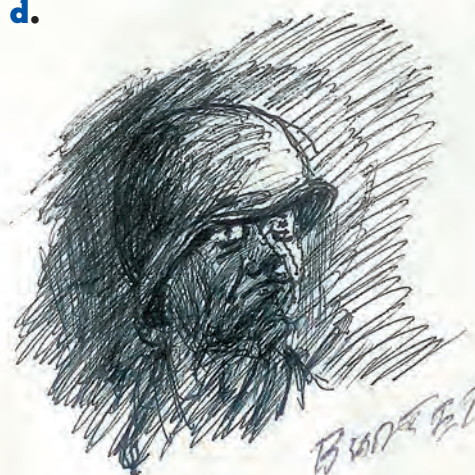


b.





d.



c.



e.

- a. River Crossing
- b. Jap Position
- c. Moment of Death
- d. Stare
- e. Landing at the Canal (Guadalcanal)

Front Cover Image
Americal Soldier



An Army of One

By Harold R. Sargent

(Editors note: This is part I of Harold Sargent's WWII memoirs which will run over the next several issues of the Americal Journal. Harold would like any vets from E Company, 132nd regiment to contact him at: 1139 Foxwood Drive, Hermitage, PA 16148)

Harold Sargent

(Source: David Taylor)

Most of the men who fought in the early years of World War II enlisted in the National Guard to escape the Great Depression. Such was the case for the Guards that composed the Americal. Being born between 1920 and 1926 automatically made you a member of that cohort. Before they graduated most of the men in my graduating class had enlisted. In the depression a dollar a day was big money but no one could find a job.

Pearl Harbor changed all of that. By 1942, anybody who could breathe real deep found employment. I was one of those. At sixteen, I signed on as a "Gandy Dancer" on the Erie railroad. Holding on to a Chicago Pneumatic Hammer that first day I lost the skin off my hands and the soles of my shoes. But I wouldn't quit. At eighty-five cents an hour, I was making twice as much as my teachers were making.

My goal was to get in the service as soon as I graduated from High School. September rolled around and the draft board had not called me. I presented myself at the board and told them to call me. Coming from a dysfunctional family I knew what I had to do. A week later I took the Greyhound to the armory in Erie, PA., for a physical examination. I chose the Marines first and was rejected. The Navy next. Rejected. The Army Air Corps had an attraction for men at that time. Each time the exam was the same, I was rejected. I knew it was high blood pressure. Rejection did not deter me. The doctor looked at me quizzically and asked if I wanted the Army. Sure. Apparently acceptance for the Army had lower requirements. A rigorous exam brought the same results. "What do we do now?" the doctor said. I had no bones about it. "I don't even have a way home." I knew what he was thinking. My pressure was up because of the stress.

"Tell ya what I'm gonna do. Here's a chit. You can stay

all weekend at the hotel down the block. Come in Monday morning at nine-thirty and we'll start over again."

On Monday they put me through the Army exam again. Rejected. He knew I was an odd ball because all the other men wanted rejection.

"You still want in?"

"I have no other choice."

"Lie on this table for fifteen minutes and don't move. I'll be back."

All kinds of thoughts went through my mind. He had left. I knew he had a quota to fill. Why couldn't I be the one? There was still a chance.

A half hour later he reappeared and went through the same routine. Negative. I was despondent and he knew it.

"OK. Lay there another half hour." When he returned, he stood staring at me and shook his head in disbelief.

"You really want in?"

"Yes Sir!"

"Well son, as they say nowadays, you're in the Army now."

I loaded on the train and the next morning I was in Indian-town Gap, the Army center. In two more days I was at Camp Wheeler, Georgia. Fourteen weeks later, I had a ten day leave en route to Fort Ord, California. Many of us shaved our heads with a razor. Inching along the rail to the troopship, girls lined the route to wave goodbye to the troops. You should have seen their faces when we doffed our helmets. The troopship USS



USS Butner (Source: Seaweed Ships Histories)

Butner waited for us. It was ninety days before we got off that ship again. There was no air conditioning as we made our way across the equator to Hollandia, New Guinea.

I had trouble sleeping because my eyes stung at night. We were four bunks high with two feet between bunks. I discovered that the trooper above me threw his arm over the side and sweat from his body trickled down his arm and dropped from the end of his fingers onto my eyes. The deck was too hot to walk on.

We stopped two days at Hollandia, then pulled anchor and sailed for Leyte.

The USS Butner with over 20,000 troops aboard sailed slowly up the east coast of Leyte in the Philippine Islands until sundown. Existing in a world of top secrecy, no information had trickled down to me since sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge in January 1945. It had been two and a half months since any of us had a shower. This was before air conditioning. Below the Deck, on the USS Butner, the av-

erage temperature was around ninety.

We landed at Tacloban on the island of Leyte, which had just been secured from the Japanese. It was 10 March 1945, my nineteenth birthday.

"Now hear this," the squawk box boomed. "All troops go below and prepare to embark." Hardened soldiers, fresh from basic training, were now weak as kittens. After a meal of baked beans and wieners, we returned to our bunks and fidgeted nervously, stuffing our duffle bag and clutching our M1's, web belt and steel helmet; the only security we knew or would know for weeks ahead. It's odd how you grow accustomed to the stench of a few hundred men sweating 24 hours a day.

The loudspeaker squawked again. "Now hear this, the smoking lamp is out. Above board there will be silence. Prepare to debark." With the duffel on my left shoulder and the M1 on the other, I inched slowly up the gangway. Top deck was pitch black. I could barely discern objects as we inched down the accommodation ladder to the sweet earth below. As he touched earth the GI ahead of me said, "I'm scared. Are You?" "Hell no!" I replied, with all the bravado I could muster. Twenty of us held on with white knuckles, as our truck sped south to what was referred to as the "repple depple", three hundred yards from Leyte Gulf. A corporal, full of importance, motioned us toward a large tent, with no bunks. "Bed down there", he pointed to the earth. "In the morning you'll get your orders."

We smoothed out our blankets, took off our helmets, laid down and went to sleep. At three in the morning the force of rain from a tropical storm washed us outside the tent. Torrents of rain swept off the flopping tents. Mushing around in the mud, we crept back to the tent and slept on our wet blankets.

We were classified for our assignments to an infantry unit and three days later I boarded an LCT with the hold loaded with food supplies instead of a tank. The next two days were the best I had spent in three months. I slept on deck with the cool air streaming across my face. We sailed around the southern coast of Leyte to become part of the relentless program to drive the Japanese from the Philippines. We moored between Mactan Island (where Magellan was killed) and the island of Cebu, which is one hundred and fifty miles long and twenty miles wide with a ridge running down the center. In the morning a thunderous explosion got my attention. A destroyer, three hundred yards from us, was shelling what looked like a mountain peak. Fifteen minutes later a shell exploded this side of the peak and the side of Mount Lanibga cascaded, burying part of the 132nd Infantry that was attacking the ridge. The peak had been honeycombed with tunnels big enough for cannon which were rolled out at night to fire down on the advancing troops. To the right dive bombers and flame throwers could be seen working away at bunkers. That afternoon, we docked and the following morning a jeep appeared. The sergeant behind the wheel yelled, "Which one of you is Private Sargent?" I held up my hand. "Hop in", he said, "I'm taking you up the hill." We jolted up a ridge which had been blasted by bombs, artillery, strafing and tanks. The infantry had followed the tank to the top of the hill, using steel for protection.

Within minutes we had reached a ridge where I could see several soldiers with no insignia or rank talking quietly and kneeling in foxholes. A soldier raised his arm and the jeep stopped. "Are you the replacement?" I nodded my head. "Private Sargent?" I nodded again. "I'm Lt. Goss, your platoon leader." He was a handsome officer, thin to the point of emaciation, with several days' growth on his face. "This is what's left of Company E." We walked to the foxholes set along a ridge facing a huge valley. "This is Bill Davidson, he'll tell you what to do." Bill was no blabbermouth, but he did offer some information. "We captured this hill yesterday behind a couple of tanks. My partner was killed and you're his replacement. I've been working on this hole all day; solid rock. Find some coral to build up our space above our hole. That black stuff is old lava." The improvised fort offered little protection. The sides were no more than two feet high, and the hole itself was nine feet long, just big enough for a six-foot soldier to stretch out in to rest when not on guard. There were ten foxholes rimming the hill to the right and about twenty bending to the left. Behind us were the mortars and machine gun, and behind them was what you might call headquarters.

My foxhole buddy continued, "We don't get too friendly. This outfit has been through Guadalcanal, Bougainville and Leyte. There are few left from the original Americal formed on New Caledonia from the National Guards of Chicago, North Dakota and Massachusetts. It rips you apart when you lose a buddy. We came ashore taking Cebu City on the 27th of March. Stay close to your hole. It's time to prepare for the night; two hours on and two hours off." That was my total training for combat on Cebu. At one-thirty, an explosion caved in the rock piled up around us. Davidson seemed calm, "Probably a grenade." I came to the conclusion that some combat-weary soldier had dropped or thrown it, which did nothing to bolster my confidence in the warriors around me. It was a "friendly fire accident."

On that first night in the foxhole, we came under intense rifle fire on our left. For fifteen minutes the assault continued. In the morning, a dozen bodies lay to the front of the foxholes. A Filipino officer surveyed the damage. Davidson and I approached the lifeless bodies wanting to know what dead Japanese looked like. The soldiers ignored the scene. They had been through it before.

A valley stretched out before us to another ridge; most of the time we stood guard and watched for activity on the further ridge. Each morning just before noon, a machine gun opened up on us. They described him as "Chow Time Charlie."

On the fourth day, we lolled under the tropical heat until Lt. Goss came by. "Sargent, you and Davidson come with me. We're going back to burn those huts we bypassed to prevent anyone from hiding in them to ambush us." Six of us in battle dress ranged out along the hill to raze and kill. I circled a thatched hut with my finger on the trigger. Two infants playing on wiry grass, alive with bugs and flies. An old man perched upon a stool, and flies sucked on his festered leg, distended like a log. In his eyes, the only fear I saw was the fear I would not shoot. Goss came around the hut with eyes so blue it made me shudder. "Elephantiasis," was all he said.

ELEPHANTIASIS

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Harold R. Sargent

**Down that lonely mountain on Cebu,
We scouted out in combat gear
To torch the native, bamboo huts,
That perchance could shield a foe.**

**Cisco had his Zippo tucked,
Ready to raze a few.
We circled to the shaded side
Where infants played in wiry grass,
Flies buzzing around their heads.**

**An old man sat upon a stool,
Whose leg protruded larger than his life;
A fattened log, diseased and gross.
I glanced into oceans of his eyes,
To islands where I have never returned.**

**My M-1 rifle, inches from his face,
Held him in casual jeopardy.
His gaze of borrowed yesterdays
Cast me in the image of a brute.**

**We left them there in safety and I
Returned to the suburbs of my mind
Where that naked fear still clings.
My God! The fear! Behind his eyes
The fear that perhaps I would not shoot.**

Days ran into each other. A sergeant came to our foxhole and said flatly, "Fall in. We're leaving this hill." On a beach next to the bay, we stopped and found a shady spot under a coconut tree, stretched out on the grass and slept an hour. Goss came along grinning. "Take all you clothes off except your boots." We stripped. "Form a single file and follow me." We marched along chortling, and tossed our soiled fatigues onto a pile that looked to be ten feet high. At the next station hundreds of new fatigues lay on the ground. I picked up what was close to my size and dressed again for battle. Two soldiers came with big drums of gasoline, poured all of it on the discarded GI issue, lighted it, and we cheered as the worn fatigues went up in a tower of flames.

Goss appeared again. "Check your rifle, ammunition, and water. We're moving out tomorrow morning." I made conversation with Scarduzzio, an Italian exactly my age from Philadelphia. His story intrigued me. Stories about "Polish" filled the air. "She's blond, the opposite of me. I love her. She's in my graduating class. Same church too. If I ever get back to Philadelphia I'm gonna marry her."

Just before we fell asleep, he leaned toward me.

"Sarge, you know we're slated for battle tomorrow."

"Sure. That's what I think."

"Are you scared?"

"No." I replied. "No bullet has been made with my name on it."

I had made up my mind that I would never succumb to fear. I meant to go home a hero – the Silver Star or the Congressional Medal. That was in my teenage mind. If I couldn't go home alive, at least I would go home a hero.

"You mean you don't think you're going to die?"

"Hell no!" I answered. At nineteen, I hadn't yet conceived that death was permanent. We were all a bunch of kids, less than 21.

"Sargent, I'm gonna be killed tomorrow, just as sure as the sun comes up. When I die, write my mother and tell her how it happened."

What could I say? "Go to sleep. Be ready for tomorrow. You'll probably marry 'Polish' and have five kids."

"No," he added. "I'm gittin it tomorrow."

In the morning, from our location up to the summit there was nothing but devastation. Small trees had been shorn into small, ragged limbs stuck up from coral. We crawled foot by foot up the hill. Each of us had two canteens, one on each hip. Suffering from thirst, I reached for the canteen on my right hip. Empty! In a panic, I reached for the canteen on my left. Empty! I had committed the unforgivable. In an hour I began to feel weak and my buddies started to dance around my eyes. There was no way I would tell them that I had forgotten to fill my canteens, and for sure I wasn't going to ask for theirs. I inquired where I could find water. No one knew. I asked the sergeant. "It's back there somewhere." He pointed to a bombed out, devastated area to the rear. "It's not secure and you could be picked off by the snipers." I never told them, ever that I had not filled my canteens as ordered. Still, my decision to act right then created a reputation of heroic proportions that was to cling to me as long as I stayed with the Americal Division.

"I'll go and get some water!" I said quietly.

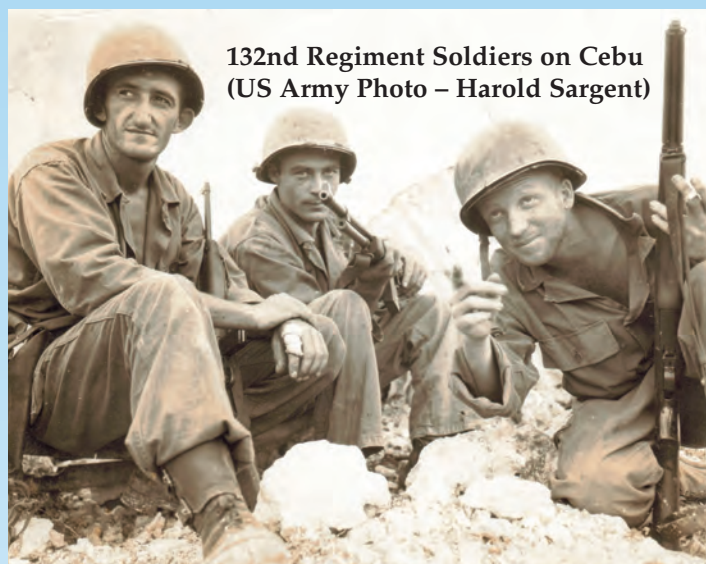
"Sure! I'm not ordering you to go back there. I don't even know where it is."

"I'll go! I'll find it!" It was that or die of dehydration.

"OK, but if you're goin, git some water for the rest of us. Take two long sticks and thread the chains over the rod, that way you can carry ten on each rod."

I looped the M1 over my shoulder which left my hands free to hold the rods and wormed my way back to the rear, each minute with more stars in my eyes. Walking toward the bay, a good 400 yards, I looked for Japanese wandering around the devastation of war. In a low gully there was something that looked like a dirty swamp. On the side of the swamp stood a contraption that had a long hose sticking into the warm, swamp water. That was the supply of chlorinated water for the whole company. Two huge bags of water hung from a support used to create drinking water.

I drank until my belly was so distended that I looked pregnant. Only then did I fill my two canteens, and after that filled the twenty canteens and threaded them back onto two poles. Looking over the desolate hillside, I decided to hide behind the water bags until my stomach adjusted. I lay safely under the contraption for at least five minutes enjoying the apparent safety at the location. Then, taking my good time, I inched up the slope where I sighted my squad under a



**132nd Regiment Soldiers on Cebu
(US Army Photo – Harold Sargent)**

poncho stretched between four sticks they had found in the rubble. That device provided some shade from the relentless sun. Needless to say, I was welcomed heartily. In my brief journey, I had not seen one other person.

The following day, April 12, my squad came under intense mortar fire as we shuttled from one abandoned foxhole to another trying to find an easy way to attack the hill. It began to rain. Someone came along and said, "President Roosevelt is dead. Truman is now President." Grousing for a while, we decided that didn't change our situation any. We still had to take that hill ahead. I crawled into a foxhole with three inches of water and mud. Mortars landed all around. Lt. Goss loomed over me. "Scarduzzio has been killed with a knee mortar. It landed right on top of his helmet. Go up there with your buddies and carry him to the rear. We've got him wrapped in a poncho."

"I can't do it sir." He looked at me and understood. That's the only order I ever refused in this man's army. I sat there in the mud and thought of "Polish", Scarduzzio, and of his mother. Five minutes later, four men carried the loaded poncho past my hole. It sagged in the middle along the mud. They laid it out like cord wood along the others already laid out to our rear.

Scarduzzio's death caused a problem. Someone had to carry the BAR. At twenty-five pounds, some couldn't carry it and some wouldn't, even if they were to be court-martialed. Goss walked off a few yards, returned with the weapon and shoved it at me.

"Do you know how to use this weapon, Sargent?"

"Only what I learned in Basic." All I need to know is how to ram the cartridge in, aim, and pull the trigger."

"You're the biggest and strongest man in the platoon. It's yours." From the tone in his voice, I knew this was no request. "I'll bring you Scarduzzio's ammunition."

We moved up the scarred hill a few feet at a time. Howie Fiscus, from out of the hollers of Tennessee was in our platoon. Usually these soldiers from out of the hills were the best shots and best warriors we had. Howie was not one of them and should never have been drafted in the first place. He couldn't read or write so we had to read the "Dear John"

letter to him. As darkness came on, I found an abandoned foxhole. Howie stumbled over and announced that he was "afeered" and that he had been told to get in the same hole with me. I knew that was no happenstance.

After midnight, the Japanese rolled out their howitzers and began firing straight down on us. Every fourth shell was a tracer. Howie screamed and bawled like a baby. "I'm gonna get it," he blubbered. "Can't take it Sarge, it's the tracers." I yanked him down. "If you lay flat they can't hit you." Every once in a while he jumped up, but the shells missed him.

The scarred battlefield indicated that other units of the 132nd had fought over the same territory. Foxholes looked like they had been used several times before. It could be that we now had no more than the reserve. We continued to advance until we came to an elaborate system of trenches about five feet deep that the Japanese had built over the last several months. An officer, with a cloth eagle on his shoulders, stalked up through the trench maze with binoculars in his fist. After surveying the front, he lowered his binoculars and asked, "Have you men seen any life on that hill?" We all agreed we hadn't. He grunted, "That's what I figure." With that he didn't look either way and walked down the entrenchment.

One of the older veterans said, "That was Colonel Franco, commander of our regiment. He's been with the outfit since it was formed on New Caledonia." A warrior led our regiment.

"Sargent", someone yelled, "Come out here and look at this." As many as twenty dead Japanese lay in various positions in khaki uniforms. Heat had swollen their bodies until their flesh stretched through their tunics. The awful stench of decaying flesh left an odd, sweet aroma which could be described as unique. With my bayonet, I opened a soldier's tunic and a photo of his wife and children popped out.

As dusk approached, Lt. Goss came to our squad. "Sargent after dark I'm sending you and two other soldiers beyond our position." He pointed to a row of old foxholes. "Take your BAR and get in that one on the right. Olmstead and Oporto will anchor you on the left." My previous dumb heroics had caught up with me. Around nine o'clock, Goss threw his arm forward and the three of us crawled to our designated positions which were about 15 feet apart. I sat alone with my BAR and did not move. I figured total stillness would be my best defense.

Stones began to rain in on me. "Sarge! Wake Up!" I had fooled them. Picking up the biggest rock I could find, I heaved it in their foxhole. "Shut up, you idiots. You're giving our position away." It was quiet the rest of the night.

The next morning the company commander, Captain Stewart, and Lt. Goss, our platoon leader, were in a huddle. A single file of twenty men formed and started up the hill. Apparently, Company E had been given the honor of being the first to reach the peak. We looked down on the land we had secured over the last three days. When the enemy was on the hill, they could see our every move, even those of us going to the slit trench.



To be Continued

Jungle Hammocks

By Leonard M. Owczarzak
746th AAA Gun Battalion

I came across an ad for jungle hammocks from a war surplus catalogue and the picture brought back a lot of memories.



We landed with the Marines in Bougainville on December 4, 1943, a few weeks before the Americal came in. We finally got the LST unloaded about 4:30 in the afternoon and the LST officer wanted to get the hell out "because the Jap Air Force from Rabaul came over about 5 or 6 O'clock".

The engineers had made a new road through the jungle for a couple of miles from the beach. We had a lot of heavy equipment with our 90MM guns, machine guns and radar sets. We just went up the road a mile or so and went off the road to park and camp for the night. We hacked our way into the jungle. We had been issued these jungle hammocks on Guadalcanal so we could keep dry until our tents came in.

While we were hacking away trying to find trees to tie our hammocks to, a Marine patrol was passing by on the road. The Marine in charge of the patrol came into the clearing asking, "What the hell are you doing?" We told him we were setting up for the night. He said, "Are you crazy? Those hammocks are death traps! We don't use them anymore after the Japs snuck into our area, put their arms around the guys in the hammocks and stabbed them to death because when you're in the hammock you are like a bug in the rug" We stopped using them right then!

The Luck of the Draw

By Bill Chisholm
B/221 Artillery Battalion

By the end of spring, 1944 "The Second Battle of Bougainville", the Marines had successfully fought the "first", was, for all intents and purposes, over.

During the month of March, we – the Americal Division along with the 37th Division – repulsed numerous maniacal Bonsai attacks on our Empress Augustus Bay perimeter. Their avowed intent was – I paraphrase – "To avenge their mortification since Guadalcanal" and drive us into the sea.



Their efforts were, to say the least, a miserable failure. Literally thousands of them were annihilated by our overwhelming fire power. Their bodies were piled up like cord wood before our heavily barbed wire defensive positions. (Later, on one of the bodies was found a precisely diagramed map of the exact locations where ceremonies would be conducted to accept our surrender!).

The survivors – all that remained of the infamous Japanese 6th Division, notorious for their participation in the "Rape of Nanking" – retreated to the islands interior where, for the most part, they were effectively contained during the balance of the campaign.

Now, "fast forwarding" to the relative quiet if not completely serene "R&R" months, I found myself relaxing with other members of our gun crew in our tent. I was comfortably inclined on my cot reading one of those "pocket books" and allowing the tropical breezes wafting through our canvas shelter to lull me into a complete state of inertia.

All of a sudden, my reverie was abruptly interrupted by the appearance, seemingly out of nowhere, of a non-com I didn't know from Adam. He had a not too subtle sadistic gleam in his eyes and was fanning a deck of cards. He then, without preamble, ordered each of us to "pick a card."

While not too sure of just what was transpiring, we each, albeit most reluctantly, drew a card. Of course with my luck, I drew a low card, a two of hearts. The next thing I knew I was told I would accompany two other "low card" companions from our battery to "Dog Block", an artillery observation post and infantry defense position located on one of the hills fronting our perimeter. Our mission: carry "fresh" radios up to Dog Block and exchange them for "dead" ones.

My two "low card" companions and I then "saddled up" with the radios and directed to follow a certain path until we reached a river. We would then ford the river and ascend the hill beyond, leading to Dog Block. The non-com advised it was essential that we accomplish the mission during day light hours before the river crested. If such a tidal situation occurred, we would be stranded for the night on the far side of the river, making us precariously vulnerable to infiltrating patrols. This was not good news, knowing the enemy's penchant for inflicting horrifically unspeakable atrocities. After all, these would be remnants of the previously mentioned Japanese 6th Division.

With this, to say the least, ominous admonition, my two companions and I proceeded to fulfill our mission. "Companions" is not really the correct term for these two guys. In retrospect they were a casting directors dream come true for the movie "Deliverance"; they were both rangy, raw-boned Appalachian country types. The "vibes" were definitely not good. Neither of them said a word to me, nor I to them. They just stared at me with what can only be described as contemptuous jaundiced eyes. They obviously had nothing but disdain for this citified-looking skinny soldier!

We followed the path to the river – I believe it was the Laruma or one of its tributaries – and were confronted with

a stream already in a percolating state. There was a rope strung across to enable “safe” fording – just like the ones I used to see in those “jungle” movies when I was a kid in the 20’s and 30’s.

I grasped the rope and commenced fording the stream, albeit apprehensively, because of the under currents swirling aggressively around my legs. When I reached the far side, I immediately became aware my Appalachian pals were no longer in sight! Their mountain-seasoned legs were already carrying them well on the way to Dog Block!

Well, I couldn’t help but feel deserted. I was all alone and confronted with an almost perpendicular hill. It was heavily forested with dense brush and thickets, real jungle-like terrain. I began the climb having to literally hoist myself upwards by grasping vines and branches. This was a real effort for a non-athlete such as myself and certainly worse than any Army obstacle course I had ever experienced. In addition, I had to contend with a cumbersome radio and a carbine on my back!

Finally, I don’t know how, I reached the top of the hill. I thought my ordeal as over. No such luck. Before me was an almost barren plateau leading to yet another hill! It was also practically perpendicular with the same jungle-like terrain. Somehow I managed to negotiate the steep incline, but when I reached my Dog Block destination my strength was completely spent. I have never before or since experienced such a grueling physical ordeal! (I knew I had reached Dog Block because I saw artillery observers “scoping” the countryside and the infantry on alert in their dugouts just below the crest of the hill).

At first glance there was no sign of my “no man left behind” Appalachian buddies. And then I saw them; they were reclining in a shady area, laughing and joking and having a good ‘ol time. They didn’t appear to have a care in the world. Indeed, the hill climbing experience for these mountain bred guys was obviously a piece of cake!

Well, at that point in time I couldn’t have cared less. I was totally and completely exhausted. I just unsaddled my gear, radio and carbine and collapsed on the ground, dead to the world around me! I instantly fell asleep. However, my “nap” was short lived. I was nudged awake and told that we had to get moving “pronto!”

We were saddled up with the “old” radios and began our descent back to home base. True to form, my two buddies almost immediately disappeared from sight as they literally scrambled down the hills toward the river. I couldn’t help but marvel at their prowl ness. They would have certainly been excellent candidates for one of the Army’s elite Ranger units!

I didn’t have the strength left in me to walk, let alone “scramble”. So I just sat down on my haunches and commenced sliding down the hill, using the jungle growth as breaks for my precipitous descent. While my debilitated physical condition made the descent far more arduous for me than the ascent, I somehow reached the bottom and finally, the river’s bank.

It was just about dusk and the river was no more “percolating”. It was now a raging torrent with all sorts of debris – branches and other types of flotsam – a swirling cascade like a furious downstream flow. It was indeed a foreboding sight! Considering the river’s state of total turmoil, I began to wonder if my “buddies” had actually made it across. I was praying that they had, dismissing all my previous negative thoughts about them.

While I was at first inclined to spend the night on the far bank and cross in the morning, when the tidal activity had subsided, I remembered the non-com’s admonition about the vital importance of crossing before dusk. My mind conjured up images of wild-eyed, machete-wielding Japanese infiltrators intent on staking me to the ground and, as was their wont, slowly hacking me into pieces! Well, as far as I was concerned that was not going to happen. I opted to cross then and there!

I grasped the spanning rope and proceeded to cross, but almost as soon as I began a powerful undercurrent turned me upside down and completely submerged me – radio, carbine and all! I still remember the pressure of the rushing currents assailing my ear drums and nostrils! I was certain I was going to drown! I held on to that spanning rope for dear life! If I would have lost my grip, I would have most certainly swept down stream to my demise!

Miracle of miracles! Another powerful current turned me right side up! And I was able – God only knows how – to muster enough strength to complete the crossing. Once on shore I literally staggered, like a man on a drunken binge, down the path leading to our battery area. I must have been quite a sight. I was shivering, my helmet was askew and, my fatigues were soaked and caked with mud. But my radio and my carbine were still slung on my back, all the worse for wear, but still in salvageable condition!

It was dark when I arrived at the battery area. Our First Sergeant had apparently been waiting for me (it was hard for me to tell if his wait was based on a concern for my safety or of he was worried about having to spend his time writing a voluminous MIA report).

At first he didn’t say a word to me, but his eyes said in no uncertain terms, “where the hell have you been?” I told him I was hungry. He said “the mess hall is closed”. He then turned on his heels and disappeared into the night.

While I never had further contact with my erstwhile companions, I was very much relieved to learn later that they indeed successfully forded the river before it had crested and that they were comfortably ensconced in their cots by the time I staggered back into the battery.



*One Last Campaign for
the Old Guard!*

MUSEUM

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The Listening Post

Dennis Hugues
(5th/46th -198th LIB)

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"Huey!"

"Yo, L.T."

"You got listening post"

"F_kin' A, you sure it's my turn again?"

"Pretty sure, why...what's the matter?" Lt. Kuhn said with a shit eatin grin.

That grin told me all I needed to know. "Ain't no moon tonight, L.T. Like you didn't know?" We were operating off of LZ Ann, a Company-size LZ in the middle of Indian country.

One thing you learned real quickly here were the phases of the moon. You learned it quick or you never learned it at all if you get my drift. A full moon's a grunt's best friend. It's like broad daylight, and Charley mostly stays home. No moon's another story. Charley moves like an Indian and things can get pretty hairy in the boonies on those nights. You could never forget that Charley had home field advantage.

"That's why I'm putting my two best men out there, you and DeMott; our lives are in your hands, I can't think of anyone in the entire battalion better suited for the job "LT was laying it on thick. I was experiencing Deja Moo... the feeling that I had heard this Bull before.

"Your life is in our ears is more like it ", I said sarcastically. " I'll get DeMott, we'll find a good spot to dig in and let you guys know where we are."

"Roger that "said L.T.

I found Terry DeMott sitting under the shade of a lean-to that he put together with a poncho liner and a couple of sticks. He was entertaining a couple of replacements with one of his favorite stories. It goes like this... We had just come in from the field after four weeks. We were tired, dirty; beat up from booby traps, snipers, mine fields and the occasional fire fight. Half of us had come back earlier.... we were what was left if you get my meaning. Anyway, we were supposed



to be coming back to our company rear on the battalion's base, LZ Gator for a little breather. Just for a couple of days, replace missing gear maybe get a shower and then back out to the bush. Well, the first thing that happens is this L.T. grabs Terry and me and wants us to burn shit. You heard me right.... The "Out Houses" had a cut-in-half 55 gal. Drum sitting under a cut-out "toilet seat". The procedure was to drag the drum out, replace it with an empty and burn the shit that was in the loaded one. You mixed diesel fuel into the piss and shit, stirred it with a broom handle and cooked the mess while you baked under the Southeast Asian sun...like it wasn't hot enough. Never mind the smell. Well, Terry, he looks Lt. REMF right in the eye and tells him there ain't no way on Gods green earth that he is going to burn shit...not after spending a month beating the odds in the field. He told him he could send him back out but he couldn't get him to burn shit. He turned and walked away leaving Lt. REMF staring dumbfounded at his back... I thought Terry's argument made a lot of sense and took his side... I left too....end of story.

The new guys were equally impressed and vowed that if they were lucky enough to get out of the field alive, they wouldn't burn shit either. I'm pretty sure that no one from our platoon ever burned shit again..... Terry is a pretty persuasive guy.

"DeMott ", I said "We're on listening post."

"So I heard" said Terry. Damn...he

did have good ears!

"Get Migacz to go, I'm on a roll here "he continued.

"John's been on point all day, he deserves a break", I replied.

John Migacz would walk point all day and not complain but he wasn't dumb enough to spend all night in a listening post unless you dragged him there at gun point, and nobody was gonna' try that; after all John was armed too... I thought it best not to mention this to Terry; he had a bad enough attitude as it was.

"Keep your heads down", Terry warned the new guys, as he got up and we went out to find a good spot to spend the night.

"Here's a good spot "said DeMott.

"Works for me ", I said, as I unfolded my entrenching tool.

"Very funny "said Lt. Kuhn, "What? You figure I'll be nice and safe with the listening post right beside my command center? "

"Actually, I figured that you'd be scared shitless and stay awake all night... and me and Huey can crash till sun up" said DeMott. Now you know why I liked this guy so much.

Terry's motto was "never share a fox hole with someone braver than you ". We were both determined to stay alive. We weren't about to take any unnecessary risks. However our L.T. pulled rank on us and made us move the listening post to a position that he claimed made more sense. Hey, maybe he knew what he was talking about,

after all we were barely nineteen and he was almost twenty... plus he had six months of OCS.

Well, here we were. We each dug a hole about five feet from each other. That way if Charley stumbled onto one of us we had some back up. I had some twine tied around my left wrist and the other was tied to Terry's wrist; A silent communication device.

I was in that semi-conscious state that passes for sleep in the boonies, when I felt a slight tug on the twine. Instantly alert I strained my ears. Nothing! Couldn't see anything of course, it was pitch dark, no moon remember? I quickly surmised that Terry was telling me it was my turn to be alert and his turn to be semi conscious. I gave a slight tug back to let him know I got the message.

It was really dark, not even a star could be seen. It was hot and still and about 0330 I think, I was seeing things that most likely weren't there. Man I hated this shit. Twenty or so guys behind us trying to get some rest and Charley knowing we were around and likely looking for us. And me... crouching in a hole in the ground, the early warning system. I'm getting really edgy; a heightened state of alert can't be maintained indefinitely. It takes a toll. Someone once said that WWII was long periods of boredom punctuated with periods of sheer terror. Well let me tell you, for the grunt in Viet Nam, life was constant apprehension punctuated by frequent periods of sheer terror. And, if you can f__king believe it, we actually got used to it! I hope God has a special place for the Infantrymen of this world. How's that poem go? "And when I get to heaven...To Saint Peter I will tell...Just another Grunt reporting sir... I've done my time in Hell"

It was creeping up on 0345 and I heard something. Oh shit! did I really hear that? It sounded like a foot step. Was it my imagination? As I strained my senses I heard it again. Oh f__k! Not my imagination, the real thing, and not far away by the sound of it. What should I do? I don't want to make any noise that would give away my position. Maybe Charley will walk right by. It happened one time before.

We were on an ambush. We were hiding in the undergrowth beside a trail that was heavily traveled. We heard Charley approaching and held our collective breath. But Charley wasn't on the trail right in front of us. He was on a newer, less noticeable trail right behind us. We all knew instinctively that to try and turn around and redirect our field of fire would create a suicidal situation. So we just kept on holding our collective breath and let Charley walk on by. No harm, no foul... Next time Charley.

But I knew that I couldn't let whoever was out there stumble onto us. I had taken a hand grenade out the instant I heard the noise and told myself that if I heard it again I would pull the pin. So here I am with the pin in one hand and a live grenade in the other. I heard another footstep and threw the grenade in the direction of the noise.

Now, if you've been paying attention you know what happens next... Right! All hell breaks loose from the perimeter behind us. I can't communicate with Terry, too much noise and like me he is as deep in his hole as he can get. We aren't about to raise our heads above ground level....all that hell that is breaking loose is going right over our heads

I know Terry is doing what I am doing.....lying on his back.... his M16 on full rock an' roll..... pointing up..... ready to waste anyone who pokes his head in.

The guys in the perimeter finally decide it's time to stop shooting and start asking questions. Terry and I both have questions too. I have a little more information than he does but our basic concern is the same Who the f__k is out there!

We aren't about to give our position away until we know we're safe, so we aren't answering the guys calling to us to see if we are all right. Everything is happening at once now....Terry and I are both cautiously raising our heads up to have a look-see..... as if we could see in the pitch dark.....however, as I start to peer over the top of my hole I actually do see something; four tiny white paws. Damn.... it's Bitch! And she comes over and starts licking my face.

Bitch is a mutt that hangs out with this Marine CAP team, not the one that trained us, another one. Even though we're Army, we occasionally operate with these guys and Bitch knows me well. Stupid dog is just like the Marines she pals around with, doesn't have enough sense to stay in her own AO.

We had a full pitched fire fight one time with this same CAP team. No shit... we start to saddle up one morning after cleaning up our RON (Remain-Over-Night) on top of a hill and we come under fire. We can see these idiots running around in the valley below us and the only reason no one got killed is they were out of range of accurate small arms fire. It wasn't until we called artillery in on each other that things got sorted out. Thank God we both called the same Battery. And I thank him again that whoever was in charge realized what was going on. Turns out these dumb F__ker's were in the wrong AO. Bitch should find some smarter friends. I mean who the hell attacks a hill from an open valley? Our L.T. was so pissed he contemplated not calling off the artillery strike... something about the Army being a lot safer without the Marines to contend with. (On the other hand maybe we were in the wrong AO; our LT wasn't the best map reader in the world...however he swears by the first version.)

So...here's the situation. I'm laughing and marveling that Bitch survived everything we threw at her. I'm filling Terry in on what happened and listening to the guys in the perimeter speculating about what went down. Because we weren't responding they decided that Charley got us. Not all that unreasonable an assumption. As we hastened to tell them that the reports of our demise were slightly exaggerated I became aware that Danny Powell was moved to tears by the thought of my death. And now he was just as emotional at the sight of my resurrection. I was deeply touched by this, since I only knew Powell as one of the guys in our platoon and we weren't really what you would call close friends. Of course we now became very close... I should have known better.



Nose to the Ground

Jim Pene, 5th/46th, 198th LIB

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Mines are expedient. No one has to be nearby to detonate them if they're armed properly. They can be command detonated by a hidden guerrilla for maximum benefit, so to speak. Properly designed they'll fly upward from under the earth and explode at chest height. If large enough they're mass killers. Small ones shatter feet and remove from action the casualty and those that have to transport him. They can rip asunder the main victims but those nearby physically unharmed are crippled in another way. Survivors are dealt severe psychic trauma. They're weapons of terror. This I know all too well.

All Alpha soldiers wear one dog tag dangling around the neck and the other fastened to a bootlace in the hopes of identification of our remains should an explosive encounter of any kind occur. Gould is the FNG. He's pleasant and seems easy going. He should fit into 2nd platoon fairly well. He's watching the disarming of a mine and he asks all the right questions. He's naturally curious about how to avoid such devices. I'm more than happy to divulge my personal rules for avoiding bad encounters. So I relay the rules. I hope they will serve him well.

Walk in the middle of the trail. Don't step near the edge. If you must step off the trail take a big step. Don't step on anything in the trail, don't move it, kick it, or disturb it in any fashion. When you come to hedgerow opening don't step into the center of it. Be especially cautious where trails cross one another.

Hueys ferried us to a small hilltop with knee high grass. Out we spring from the helicopters and circle around to form our perimeter. To the south there is action occurring. A helicopter has engaged the enemy and has them moving into a wooded area. Our platoon will move out, establish a blocking force, and engage them as they emerge.

The trails are narrow and crowded mostly by grass, but other foliage as well. We walk in the middle. Near the edge of the wood line we get on line.



Photo taken before mine incident; Doc Brannon standing second from left; Jim Pene standing far right with cigarette (Photo: Jim Pene)

The helicopters are firing. Rockets explode. Then all goes quiet. The VC has run into the hamlet of Nghiem Quang for safety. There they stay secure in the knowledge that the ville won't be fired upon unless they engage us. We will move in to get them.

Several pathways wind their way to where we need to go. A few of us have to be on the same avenue of approach due to the terrain. Woven grass hooch's can now be seen. They are typical in the countryside and probably contain earthen bunkers. The enemy can also seek shelter in these. It will be a dangerous chore to find them.

I walk carefully in the center of the trail. It's difficult to do this and keep an eye on the hooch's as we approach. I don't want to get shot, and I don't want to get maimed by a mine. But long ago, I decided I would rather be shot square in the face than lose a limb. Following on the trail as is Gould. He's carrying a M79 grenade launcher. Behind him is Ardoin. I've shared much with him and trust him without any reservations. We all wear flak jackets and steel helmets. Slung across my back is a LAW. I'm hoping the armor-piercing rocket will come in handy if we meet up with VC in bunkers.

Three trails meet in a small opening just outside the village. I make my choice and step through the junction. Peck is up ahead of me on the winding

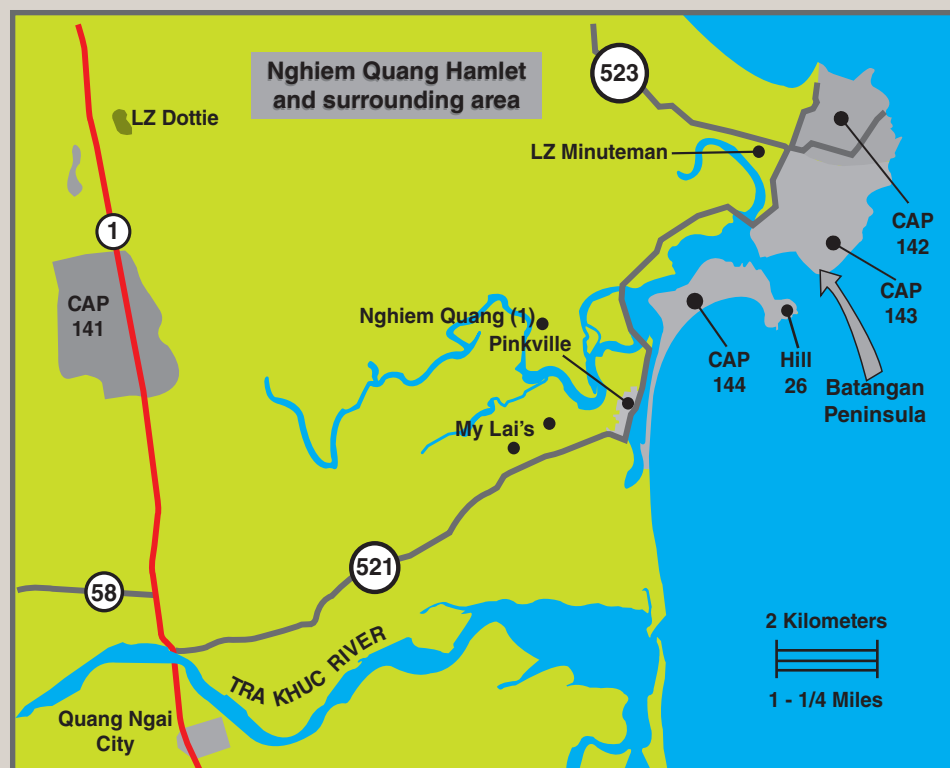
trail. We're near the entrance to the ville. Then a giant clapped his hands around my whole body and my eardrums collapsed against each other. Concussive force thudded clear through to the marrow of my breast. The blast propelled me, with a stumbling gait, toward Peck. I remained erect and watched as Peck kept his footing, too. Completely surprised I turned and knew what had just happened. I just didn't know right away whom it happened to. Through the thinning cloud I could see Ardoin far back on the trail. He was erect and clasping his hands over his eyes. Terrified he was blinded by the blast I called out to him.

"Ardoin!" He didn't move.

"Ardoin! Are you alright?"

Slowly he lowered his hands and looked in front of himself and realized the miracle of safety just given him. "Yeah." He breathed in wonderment. Ardoin and I both peered at the trail and could make out the outline of Gould. He was barely discernible with the dirt and dust upon his body, I wasn't sure he was alive. Then his head moved. I could see that at least his right leg was gone. Simultaneously Ardoin and I started shouting in shrill voices.

"Medic! Medic!" It came together for me. Gould lay right at the trail junction. He'd tripped a mine. I'd just walked through there myself. Doc Brannon came trotting back along the



trail. He was fearless at these times and would tend any of us without reservation. Doc passed Peck and as he went by I made a feeble remark to him, "Be careful, Doc." It was an obvious admonishment and Doc brushed it aside with a casual reassurance. "Yeah. Sure." And down the trail he went, squatted at Gould's side and started his talented administrations.

Things were not right. I turned around to voice my concerns to Peck. "Peck there's got to be more than one mine at that junction." The giant clapped me on the back again and I lurched forward as Peck's eyes widened and his body jumped. He stared past me in horror and I turned to see the source of his angst.

Doc hit a mine. He started pounding the ground at his sides with his hands and shouting. "No! No! No!" His body shook in frustration. This approach to the rear of the village, the VC that never came this way. It all added up now. We were lured here. We were in a minefield.

Terror welled up in me. Who would help Gould and Doc now? They were helpless, bleeding to death, and out of reach. I had considerable knowledge of first aid from my civilian life and my military training. Suddenly I was

calm. I started to move back up the trail toward them. I would not let someone die because of my personal shortcomings.

Dead on my tail was Peck, moving with me. I appreciated the fact he was willing to share the danger with me, but I didn't think it good we were so close together. I had to give him a reason to stay back. When we got to them we'd have nothing to work with and so I told Peck. "The aid bag is gone. Go get all the field dressings you can." Without hesitation Peck started back toward the rest of the platoon. He could collect what we needed from the others.

Doc looked at me as I came up beside him. His face was pitted with dirt, shrapnel, and coated with the dust from the fall out of the blast. He looked toward Gould and said two words. "Help him." Walking a few more steps to Gould I knelt at his side. He was covered with dirt, barely discernible from the trail. There was a fleshy dirty stump just below his buttock where his right leg used to be. Surprisingly, there was very little bleeding yet. A hole as big as my fist was in his right buttock. A field dressing would not cover that stump and it was just a matter of time before that raw hamburger of a limb would start to leak life out of him.

I unslung the LAW, off came my web gear, flak jacket, and helmet. Reaching to my waist and pulling upward I stripped off my T-shirt over my head. Removing my knife I picked up the LAW and cut the end off its sling. After removing the strap, I pulled my shirt around the stump of Gould's leg. Folding it over raw meat, I stuffed my own field dressing from my helmet in the hole in his buttock, encircled it all with the strap, and cinched it tight in the hopes of preventing severe blood loss. I thought my work with Gould finished. I admit my greatest concern was Doc. Gould had been standing erect when his mine went off. Doc had been squatting right over top of his as it detonated. I turned to my left to start on Doc.

His right leg was gone above the knee. The left leg ended just below the knee in a thrust of jagged boned. Attached to the lateral aspect of that bone was a strip of meat about three fingers thick that ran to the top of a lone booted foot that lay on its side near the edge of the trail. Doc held up his right hand to say something. The index and middle fingers flopped backward over top his wrist. They were only attached by a slight piece of flesh to the rest of his hand. This would require some work and I set about it.

Peck came back up the trail with Parisian. They carried handfuls of field dressings. I started ripping them open. Covering and tying off the right stump I started on the left and finished that. All this while Ardoin was covering the trail behind us and watching the hooch's in the ville. The battalion commander's helicopter came in and landed in a small opening in the woods behind us. We couldn't move Doc and Gould just yet. There was no adequate way to carry their shattered bodies. Ardoin ran to the commander's Huey and told them we couldn't bring the casualties out just yet because we were in a minefield so they prudently left rather than risk being a target.

I had an idea for a way to construct litters. If we could gather four poles we could shove them through the armholes of flak jackets, fold the fronts around the poles, and zip them up. Some of the guys were moved to action, but there was still an understandable

lethargy in the rest of the platoon. They were maintaining a vigil against any possible attack from the VC, but I needed help. Now Peck was after me to hurry up. I told him I had only two hands and needed help. I made my way back to find others from the platoon. There was Austin standing by a short rail fence just outside the ville. I told him I needed help. "Hey. I need poles to make litters" He was unmoving. The terror of additional mines gripping him fast to the earth. I shouted at him. "Hey! C'mon, I'm scared too!"

Austin snapped instantly, his face wrenched, and he roared in my face. "All right!" He turned towards the rail fence and a single buried post. Grasping it with both hands he squeezed and pulled. The post creaked, the earth groaned, and that's no bullshit. I watched as this man heaved that post up more than two feet so it was free of the ground. He thrust it toward me. "Here!" He barked again and looked away from me. This signaled to me that his obligation was met. I took the post. It wasn't light and had just been ripped out of the ground by one man in a singular effort. I couldn't believe it. I looked at Austin. He was short, stocky, and muscular, but no more so than other people I'd met. I never imagined anyone capable of such a feat of physical strength. I'd just been hollering in that man's face. Holy shit. I don't believe he knew what he'd just done.

I retrieved my flak jacket from beside the LAW. As I shoved the post through the one armhole I noticed something about it. The back of it was all chewed up. Surprised I looked down at the LAW still lying next to Gould. It was pitted. Damn, I was one lucky guy. Evidently shrapnel had hit me from one or both blasts and thanks to the flak jacket I had never been touched. More poles were provided, some shirts, flak jackets, and another litter was constructed. We could now move the men. We started to move.

Doc started screaming something about his foot. I looked down below the litter. The strip of meat running from above his knee to the top of his boot was stretched out about a yard and the boot was dragging on the ground. Reaching down I grabbed up his

booted foot and placed it on the litter between the remainders of his legs. We raced back up the trail to where the Huey was just touching down again. Looking behind me I could see others hefting Gould's litter up and then I could see what I'd missed. His other leg had been covered with dirt, dust, and his tattered pant leg, but now it was exposed. Bare bone showed from his hip down. His foot was gone. The thighbone and tibia were fleshless. I hated myself for being hurried, but what could I do?

They were bringing up Gould's litter and we needed more room on the chopper. The battalion executive officer was abroad with the CO. He got up from his seat, and pulled the end of Doc's litter over to make room. Doc's lone foot, still in the boot, didn't move with the litter. It rolled off and maintained a position in the center of the floor. The Major bent to move it. His eyes fixed on the boot and he hesitated. Then he looked out the Huey at me. "Get in here and move that!" he growled.

I filled with loathing. When my medic needed him he wouldn't touch him. I sprang onto the Huey, grabbed the boot, and placed it back on Doc's litter. Jumping off as the others were just putting Gould abroad I looked at Doc's face. Eyes rolling in their sockets his hands were up and twitching. I slapped him on the face and admonished him.

"Doc! Don't do that! Don't go to sleep! Stay awake until you get to the rear!" Weakly Doc said one word. "Okay." The Huey lifted. A great sorrow set upon me as I watched the bird circle toward Chu Lai. Every time something like this happened, the microcosm that was the "face of the platoon," changed. Doc would be sorely missed and Gould had been shaping up to be a good addition to the group, too.

We still had to police our stuff from the minefield. Somehow I was in possession of my web gear again and put it on. Then I saw something I hadn't noticed before. I was covered with blood up to both armpits. None of it my own. Slowly, wordlessly we started back to our LZ on the little grassy hilltop. My fearlessness was ending as I started to understand what

I'd just done. My mind started to numb and I was enveloped in a deep gloom and was starting to tremble. I don't remember the walk back.

We got back to the grassy hill and others started to talk, part rehash and part gratitude for personal survival. One of the brother's mentions that it's a miracle I wasn't hit. I'm amazed too. Maybe I'm too shocked to feel it. So I drop my pants and he waves me off. "No, no man! You're okay!" He claps me on the back and walks away.

Then I glanced over where Ardoin was scurrying about picking grenades off his pack. He was pitching the grenades one at a time down the hill toward a trail. I asked him what he was doing. Excitedly he told me. "Pene. Don't you see it? Right there, it's a mine. I'm trying to set it off." He pitched another one down the hill. I ducked down for the explosion. There was no secondary explosion this time and I looked again and there it was, finally exposed. Ardoin had good eyes. It lay right in the middle of the trail.



Editors Note: Sergeant Jim Pene was awarded the Silver Star for his actions related above.



Mines: "Chot, our Kit Carson scoops soil from around a mine and shoves the black safety pins into the holes below the center of the tripping device and into the hole at its top. The mine can now be removed for destruction later. This has been a good encounter with a mine. Unfortunately, there always remains the chance of a bad encounter." Jim Pene

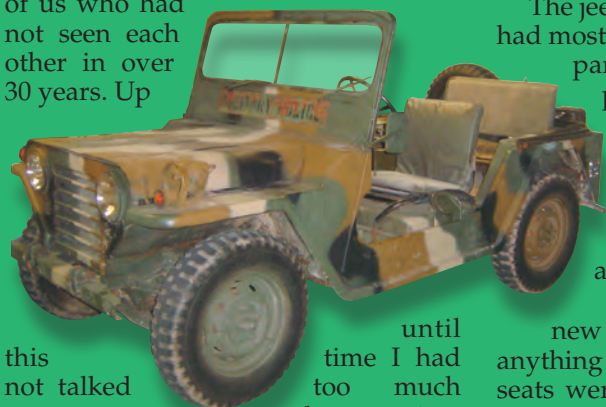
MERLIN'S MP JEEP

By Rich Merlin



During my time in Vietnam with the 23rd MP Company (69-70), I spent a lot of time in a jeep also known as a ¼ ton truck, M151A1. The jeep was the main vehicle used by Military Police in Vietnam. It was used for routine patrol and turned into a gun jeep for providing convoy security. It was always the work horse of the Army and was a unique vehicle to drive.

Shortly before the ADVA Cleveland reunion in 2001, the 23rd MP's started an intense search for our fellow MP Brothers which resulted in us locating almost 1000 of the 1300 who served in Vietnam. Of course this united many of us who had not seen each other in over 30 years. Up



until this time I had not talked to anyone about my time in Vietnam, but this reconnection with the men I served with opened up the floodgates. I enjoyed sharing my experiences and learning the rest of the history of the 23rd MP's. So much that took place before and after I served, I had never known about. Of course a lot of the stories revolved around the MP jeeps, everything from humor to tragic, our MP's lived and died in our jeeps.

One of the first MP's that I talked to a lot was Paul Stiff, he talked about the jeeps he had and how he was restoring them and his future plans. This got me very interested and I started watching E-Bay. In May 2004, I found what I was looking for, it was a 1968 Army jeep and although it spent it's life stateside it had spent it's career as a Military Police Jeep, what else could I ask for.

I made a deal and a sale was completed; now the only problem was, that the jeep was in Illinois and I live in California. Now, how do I get it here? That's when my old buddy and hootch mate from Duc Pho, Dave

Chrystal came through. Dave lives in Missouri, not far from where the jeep was. Dave took a trailer and picked up the jeep and took it to his home. It took us about six months to decide what we wanted to do with the jeep and how to get it out to California. Finally, we decided to rent a regular U-Haul truck and Dave drove the jeep inside to my home in California.

Now came the fun part and the expensive end of the project. I had decided to make it as close as I could to what I drove in Vietnam. I thought it may be difficult finding parts, but with the help of Paul Stiff and others I soon found out that there were many sources of parts throughout the country.

The jeep was about 35 years old and had most likely spent all of those years parked outside in some motor pool when not on duty. Just about anything rubber was dry rotted, it had its share of rust, dings and holes and it leaked anything that could leak, and of course it needed a paint job.

I started by putting all new tires on it and replacing anything that was rubber. All of the seats were replaced with new canvas seats. I replaced all seals in the engine, transmission, Oil pan, rear differential and anything else that had a seal. When I had the engine out, I replaced the clutch. It seemed that every time I pulled out one thing to replace, I ended up replacing three more items. I replaced a lot of things that were working, but I decided to change them anyway. By the way, before I did anything to the jeep, it started right up and drove well. I have also recently installed all new brakes and new brake cylinders. I also discovered that there was a lot of rust in the gas tank, so I installed a new gas tank also.

Now came the extras, I located and installed a gun mount and found a replica M-60 Machine gun, inert ammo belts and ammo cans. I installed a radio mount, radio and antenna. The round MP sign that goes on the rear spare tire was made for me by Rich Smith, our MP in Nebraska. I installed two revolving red lights on the front, if you ever wondered where these revolving red lights came from; well they were the red lights from the top of a Huey



helicopter. Even though our jeeps did not have a siren on them in Nam, I installed one anyway, it is fun to play with, and of course I had a Military Police sign with the Americal patches made for the front windshield.

Lets not forget the most important thing, the paint job, of course I found the right paint and the jeep was painted OD in Semi-gloss. I found a guy who makes the stencils to regulation for the numbers and stars which were painted on the jeep per the regulations. The number on the hood of the jeep is the same number as the patrol jeep that I drove at Duc Pho. The bumper number X52, was the bumper number of a super gun jeep that Dave Chrystal had built and then one day one of our CAV guys drove over it on his way through the gate at Duc Pho, of course the jeep was parked and there was nobody in it. I am sure that is another whole story.

I do have a top for the jeep, but have chosen not to install it, who needs a top in California? The jeep is done and I am enjoying it, people wave and salute as I drive it down the street. Recently I displayed it at the Riverside Air Show and won the Judges Award. The biggest award, however is I now have a tangible reminder of a special time in my life, when I served my country in Vietnam.

Last October Al Feser and Tom Packard, a couple of my fellow MP's were my guests here in California, and one day we went for a ride together. It was like being on patrol again, but no one was shooting at us and there was no fear of mines.



Photos By Rich Merlin note the radical before and after restoration

We'll Leave The Lights On For Ya

By Gary L. Noller

In November 1970 I was abruptly plucked from my duty as the chief RTO (radio-telephone operator) with Co. B, 1/46th Infantry and flown by helicopter to the battalion TOC (tactical operations center) on LZ Young. CPT John Strand, battalion S2/S3 officer (intelligence/operations), immediately put me to work. I was now a battalion RTO.

As a RTO for the company commander I was very aware of the radio procedures between company and battalion levels. But I did not know the methods of communicating between battalion and brigade. I was glad to find that it was not too different. The main thing was keeping a written journal of all important activities happening in the battalion.

I put in an eight hour shift of on-the-job training and about midnight I was pronounced ready to go. As I left the TOC I asked the senior RTO where I was to sleep. He replied, "Anywhere you find room." His inflection and manner of speech indicated "have fun while you are at it."

I spent almost six months in the field with Co. B before landing the job on LZ Young. I always slept on the ground. I tried to sleep in a hammock once but I found it uncomfortable. The final straw came on a night when the B-52 can opener hanging from my belt pierced the fabric of the hammock and slit it end-to-end. The next morning I had to put up with the usual yee-haws such as "Noller, was that your ass that got dumped on the ground last night?"

It was never wise to wander around a firebase at night. I did not know anything about the layout of LZ Young. So I inflated my air mattress and bedded down next to the TOC. It wasn't a choice spot as it was on a slope and I continually found myself sliding down hill. But this was not to be my greatest grief that night.

About 3:00 AM I was awoken by a commotion in my pants. Something was crawling up my right leg. It was inside my pants between my knee and my waist. Needless to say I considered this a critical issue. I was born and raised in western Kansas and nothing in my brief life's experiences had prepared me to be a meal for some hungry varmit.

I grabbed the creature with my right hand and squeezed it as hard as I



Chinook helicopter from 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company (Boxcars) unloads soldiers from 1/46th Infantry on the supply pad at LZ Young. Photo was taken in late 1970 and is looking to the north-northwest. Photo by Andy Olints.

could. I felt it squirming as I struggled to get to my feet. As soon as I stood up I dropped my pants, ripped them off, and shook them out. The following morning I found a ten inch lizard crumpled on the ground.

Now that it was light I decided to find a permanent place to lodge. But there was nothing to be had. LZ Young was a very small and gritty base and every available spot was already in use. It was the monsoon season and everything had turned to mud. Now I knew why the senior RTO grinned and told me I could sleep "anywhere you find room."

I finally found an open level space about five feet by ten feet that provided ample room for my air mattress and some overhead cover. The only problem was its location. It was in the middle of the ammo dump. Crates and boxes of grenades, trip flares, mortar rounds, and rifle and machine gun ammunition were neatly stacked inside a barbed wire enclosure.

Believing the ammo dump to be better than the lizard infested slope on the side of the TOC I began construction of my living quarters. I stacked a few culvert halves on top of some empty wooden ammo boxes and covered it all with a sheet of polyethylene. This "hootch" was to be my home for almost a month.

My shift at the radio was always at night so I got my sleep between breakfast and lunch. In the afternoon I wandered around the base and chatted with friends. One day I returned to my hootch to find my poncho liner missing. There was no doubt in my mind that it had been stolen.

It was cool enough at times to require a cover of some type when

sleeping. I went to the supply pad and asked around for a new poncho liner. The reply was always the same. "What happened to the one you had? We don't have any to give out." So I picked up two red polyester mail bags and covered up with them.

About a week later a South Vietnamese soldier approached me as I was reading a book in my hootch. He did not speak much English but he showed me a jacket made from a poncho liner. He repeated several times, "Twenty-doll'a, twenty-doll'a".

I rudely told him "Get the heck out of here and don't ever come back." I backed this up with some threatening gestures and a few cuss words. The fellow left and never came around again. I am sure the jacket was my poncho liner returning in an alternate form.

After my short stay at LZ Young I went to FSB Mary Ann. Accommodations there were a little better. I got another poncho liner and I slept on a cot in a bunker someone else built. I ignored the rats running around on the floor and on top of the sandbagged roof. I was tempted a time or two to shoot them with my M-16 or stab them with my Kabar knife. But I never did.

All of this was good preparation for my last night in Vietnam. I reported to the processing center at Cam Rahn Bay to catch my flight home. I asked the person on duty where I was to sleep. He replied, "Anywhere you find room." I slept outside his office on a wooden sidewalk. I'd had worse. My only complaint- all the lights were left on.



Haiku About My Americal Division Vietnam Experience

By Louis H. (CPT B) Blumengarten

Every Americal Division Vietnam veteran has a different story about his military service experience. In July 1967 I entered the Army as a draftee. I completed 7 _ months as an enlisted man and then received a direct commission in the Army's Medical Service Corps (MSC).

I should not have accepted the commission. I was on orders to Korea and would have finished my two-year military service obligation without going to Vietnam. Accepting the commission meant a three-year obligation from day one of the commission and it almost certainly included an assignment to Vietnam.

I did the wrong thing and accepted the commission. I went from private first class (PFC) to first lieutenant (1LT). After Officer Basic and a short assignment to the General Leonard Wood Army Hospital at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, I was off to Vietnam. I arrived in-country on 31 December 1968.

I served for two years (yes, I extended) with the 16th Combat Aviation Group (CAG), the helicopter unit that supported the Americal Division. I was based in Chu Lai and had administrative responsibility as the 16th CAG MSC officer for three dispensaries. Two were in Chu Lai and one was in Duc Pho.

It was a great two years. I served with some really outstanding people (and a few who were definitely not outstanding.) Right near the end of my two years a rocket hit my main dispensary (where I had my office) and killed a number of my men. Except for that one horrible incident it was a fine two years.

This December will mark the 40th anniversary of my taking off for the Nam. To honor that occasion, I have composed some haiku.

Haiku is an ancient Japanese tradition of unrhymed, normally season-related poetry in three lines consisting of five, seven, and five syllables respectively. As a very urban person, I am not into season-related nature poetry, but I think the haiku format is just right for describing my Americal division Vietnam experience.

Let me close this introductory section with my very urban signature haiku:

New York City streets
Buildings stand while I walk through
Urban dreams in place



My Americal Division Vietnam Experience

**Came to Cam Ranh Bay
On a hot and muggy day
Forty years ago**

**Soon I was sent north
On a plane bound for Chu Lai
What would await me?**

**A monsoonal downpour
Greeted me on my first day
In sandy Chu Lai**

**High over I Corps
Americal Division
Fought in Vietnam**

**I did get lucky
With my assignment to the
16th CAG**

**Three dispensaries
Under my supervision
Kept our fly guys fit**

**'Twas a good two years
Liked the South China Sea and
The Beach at Chu Lai**

**Said goodbye to Nam
Was not sorry to leave, but
Was glad I served there**

**Old vets are meeting
And talking about the Nam
They have walked the walk**

Engineer's Toolbox

Photos by Richard Vidaurri
Captions by Gary L. Noller

M88 Armored Recovery Vehicle (ARV)



The M88 Armored Recovery Vehicle was based on the M-48 Patton main battle tank. It provided a totally enclosed vehicle for a crew of four. It recovered disabled vehicle from the field while under fire. Its recovery and repair assets included a front spade, boom, winch, and assorted mechanics tools.

The M88 had the capability to tow disabled tanks, extricate tanks stuck in mud or trenches, and to remove tank engines and transmissions for repair or replacement. Its armor was less than a main battle tank but it did offer protection from small arms fire (SAF) and shell fragments. It defended itself with a turret mounted M2 .50 cal machine gun.

The Vietnam War era M88 has been upgraded to a more modern version capable of deployment with the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. This eliminated the need to use two older M88s to tow one M1 tank.

Richard Vidaurri served with Co. E, 26th Combat Engineer Battalion in 1970-72. He is the author of the just published novel *The Gates of the Shadow*.

M55 Quad 50 Machine Gun



The M55 Quad 50 utilized four Browning M2 (Ma Deuce) .50 cal machine guns mounted on a rotating turret. The Quad 50 was first used during WWII as an anti-aircraft weapon. During the Vietnam War it was frequently used for defensive purposes on gun trucks and on perimeters of fire support bases.

Each of the four guns is fed by a 200 round "tombstone" canister. Battery G, 55th Artillery was assigned to the Americal Division in Vietnam and manned Quad 50 guns in a variety of locations. The photo shows a Quad 50 on the southwest side of FSB Mary Ann.

The D6 dozer was used to clear firing lanes outside the perimeter of the firebase. Note the use of concertina wire in the middle of the cleared lane. The tree stump in the foreground shows the obstacles that were encountered by the D6 in its land clearing mission. The bunker in the foreground held ammunition for the Quad 50.

CH 54 Tarhe Helicopter (Sky Crane)



The CH 54 Tarhe heavy lift helicopter was popularly known as the Sky Crane during the Vietnam War. The Sky Crane was based on the Sikorsky S-64 and had a lift capacity of 20,000 pounds. It had six main rotor blades on a diameter of 72 feet.

The Sky Crane was unique in that a pilot was seated facing to the rear to observe the placement of the load. This unusual looking machine was frequently used to recover downed aircraft, to move artillery pieces and other heavy war materiel, and to carry equipment in a special pod attachment.

M728 Combat Engineer Vehicle (CEV)



The M728 Combat Engineer Vehicle (CEV) was built on the M60A1 Patton tank. Its purpose was to construct defensive positions and to destroy enemy fortifications. Its list of massive tools included a dozer blade, winch, and boom. It was operated by a crew of four combat engineers.

The CEV defended itself with M60 7.62mm machine gun and a M2 .50 cal machine gun. It had a stubby main gun that was effective in knocking out enemy bunkers at close range. Richard Vidaurri holds a personal weapon while standing in front of a CEV.

M60A1 Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge (AVLB)

The M60A1 Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge was built on the M60A1 Patton tank. It was operated by a crew of two combat engineers. The vehicle had no turret and no main gun. It carried a twelve-foot wide bridge folded in half over its chassis.



The bridge could be deployed in a manner of minutes and could sustain a load of up to 70 tons. The deployed bridge could be crossed by its launch vehicle and then picked up on the other side and relocated to another position. The maximum span of the bridge was sixty feet although its effective span was less than this length.

D6 Bulldozer



The D6 Bulldozer was valued for its ability to be disassembled into two main pieces and moved to a forward location by a CH 54 Sky Crane helicopter. The D6 weighed approximately 12 tons and could be taken apart in about an hour. Its tracks and blade section weighed about 4½ tons while the chassis weighed 7½ tons.



D6 dozers were operated by soldiers of the 26th Engineer Battalion (Combat). They were frequently used to clear jungle growth around the perimeter of fire support bases. They could also be used to construct helicopter landing pads, roadways, perimeter trench lines, and pits and berms for fortifications and bunkers.

In the photos above Joe Nunez (with sledgehammer) prepares a D6 for movement to a new location while soldiers of 1/46th Infantry look on. Richard Vidaurri poses with a D6 of FSB Mary Ann in early 1971.

Rome Plow



Agent Orange was used to defoliate thousands of acres of forest in South Vietnam. But another technique was also successfully used to deny the enemy the use of cover and concealment.

The Rome Plow was a specially modified D7 dozer that was originally used to fight forest fires in the United States. It has a sharp blade for cutting down trees and offers a reinforced cage to protect the operator. A fully equipped Rome Plow can weigh as much as 36,000 pounds. It gets its name from the manufacturer, Rome Plow Co., originally located in Rome, GA.

The photo shows that the massive dozer can be delayed by soft ground. The Rome Plow in the photo is mired down to the frame and is being extricated by operators from the land clearing unit.

Road Grader



Road graders were used in Vietnam to construct and maintain roads and airstrips as well as to prepare building sites for construction. The photo shows a grader being hauled on Highway 1 near the town of Tam Ky.

The grader is on a trailer pulled by a M123 10-ton truck. The truck tractor was powered by a 300 horsepower diesel engine and was commonly used to pull semi-trailers with heavy loads. Note that the truck hauling the grader is being followed by a M48A3 Patton tank. Richard Vidaurri is shown standing on the turret of the tank.

26th Engineer Battalion Vietnam

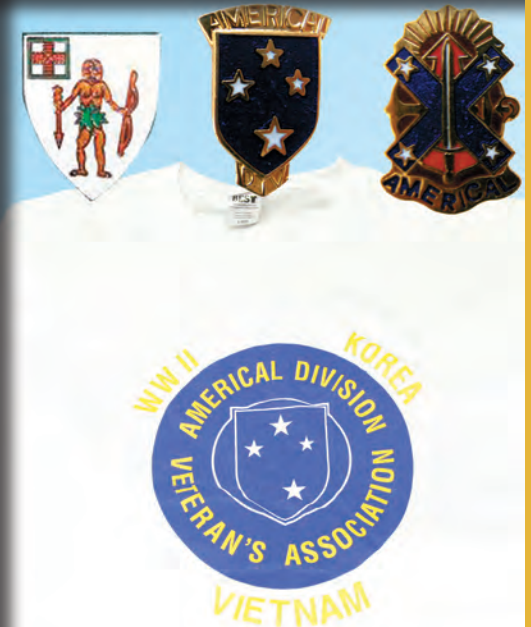


The 26th Engineer Battalion was composed of four Combat Engineer line companies, a Float Bridge Company, and a Headquarters and Headquarters Company. Company A was formerly the 175th Engineer Company, organic to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. Company B was the 555th Engineer Company, organic to the 198th Light Infantry, and Company C was formerly the 6th Engineer Company, 11th Light Infantry Brigade. Company D was formed primarily from elements of Company B, 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) which was attached to the Americal Division at the time of activation. The 554th Engineer Company (Float Bridge) was transferred from the 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) and redesignated Company E, 26th Engineer Battalion (Combat). Headquarters Company was formed from elements of the USARV Engineer Command.



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