

October • November • December
2008



AMERICAL

JOURNAL

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



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commander's Comments

By David W. Taylor



L to R: American Vietnam Vet Dave Taylor and American WWII Vet Karl Wagner

Trooping the Line

Since being elected as National Commander, my first priority has been to meet the troops and recruit Americal vets into the ADVA. This spring while in Toronto with my daughter and her family, I took the opportunity to visit retired WWII vet Karl Wagner (we published his WWII memoirs in the 3rd Qtr 2003 issue of the Americal Newsletter). Karl and I had an excellent lunch swapping stories between our two generations of Americal experience.

Regrettably Executive Council member Mitchell J. Przybycian (132nd Regiment) answered his final roll call in August. The closest runner-up candidate in the last election was Sergeant-of-Arms Richard K. Smith. I have asked Rich to fill Mitchell's position and he has accepted. Rich will continue to be the National Sargent-at-Arms.

September 10-14 I flew to North Dakota and, in line with my WWII Historian role, spent 1-1/2 days conducting research into the Americal historical records at The University of North Dakota (165th Regiment records); then I drove to Valley City, ND to attend the annual 164th Regiment 3-day Reunion. What a great bunch of guys! Many are ADVA members but several other vets and members of their families also signed up for the ADVA. The following week (September 18-21) I drove to the 26th Annual Vietnam Vet Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana where we set up a recruiting table in the large vendor tent. Over 100 ADVA members stopped by and we recruited some new members as well collected some dues renewals.

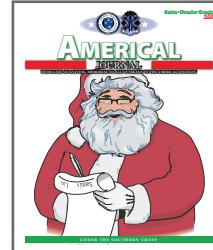
October was equally busy. On October 10th I stopped in to see the vets of H Troop, 17th Cavalry who were having their annual reunion in Cleveland, Ohio. I also attended the Far West Chapter Reunion in Laughlin, Nevada (October 12-15) and the Eastern Chapter Reunion in Northern Kentucky (October 23-26). Whenever I meet with Americal Vets I encourage them to recruit their buddies who are not members of the ADVA. You also have the opportunity to encourage your buddies to join the ADVA; there are over 3,000 of you so please, get involved!

Preserving the Americal Legacy

At the suggestion of National Adjutant Roger Gilmore, he and I will be visiting the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia and discuss the possibility of some recognition for the Americal Division from WWII, the Caribbean period (Panama Canal) and Vietnam. Our division is very unique for many reasons and should be recognized whenever, wherever and in whatever means possible.

Accordingly I am forming the Americal Legacy Committee which will be chaired by Roger Gilmore. The purpose of the committee is to foster opportunities suggested by our membership for perpetuating the history of the Americal Division. For example, those of you who served in other branches (artillery, quartermaster, etc.) may find an opportunity in your branch museums to have an Americal plaque or monument or other recognition to the branch-specific units that served in the Americal during the periods it was activated. Other museums related to the specific wars or cold war period may also offer opportunities as well as state recognition where the WWII Regiments came from. The Far West Chapter looked into the possibility of creating an Americal monument at the Riverside California National Cemetery. This opportunity exists at all our national cemeteries. I am conducting research into the procedures and costs that will be required.

If you have some suggestions on how the Americal Division can be recognized, or wish to join the committee, please contact Roger. In most cases separate funding campaigns will have to be developed for each opportunity presented. It is possible that our national organization could support partial funding for some projects if a chapter or a group of individuals can also provide matching funds. The best thing about the national organization coordinating this effort is that it allows members to make tax deductible contributions to the ADVA Legacy Committee for any specific project they wish to support, versus the chapters or other groups trying to do this on their own. Down the road we will also look at developing Americal informational pamphlets, to be used at these sites. Please consider helping in this worthwhile endeavor!



Best wishes during this Season of Peace

Christmas will soon be with us, then the year will end and a new year begin with new hopes for the future; Christians are drawn to contemplate in this special season the many blessings we have; to accept in some small way those things we can't control and to remember our hope for the future resides in a child born in simplicity but of great love. It is also time to forget about "things" and focus on "relationships" as He did. This Christmas season it is my hope and wish and prayer that you will find peace; peace in your hearts, in your families and the communities around you. We Christians can find peace when we realize the Prince of Peace is always with us.

Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

The association's new member increase since the last issue of the Americal Journal was the best of this year due in large part to the recruiting efforts of our National Commander, David W. Taylor. Dave attended the annual reunion for the 164th Infantry Regiment in North Dakota and signed up five new WWII Americal vets for ADVA memberships. In addition, five family members of deceased 164th Regiment veterans were signed up as associate members.

Recruiting efforts at the annual Kokomo Veterans reunion brought in twelve new ADVA members this past September. From the South Pacific Buddies Association reunion (182nd Infantry Regiment), we picked up six new members.

In total, we added fifty nine new members during past three months. Of those fifty-nine new members, nine joined as life members. Four former members were reinstated during this period.

With so many of our World War II veterans answering the last roll call we are excited about adding a significant number of new members from the Old Guard. Of the fifty-nine new members added this quarter, fourteen are World War II veterans who served with the 164th or 182nd Infantry Regiments in the Pacific Campaigns.

The ADVA is honored to add Mr. Frank Anton to our membership rolls as an Honorary Life Member. Frank served with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. When his helicopter was shot down in 1968, Frank was captured and imprisoned in South and North Vietnam until his release with other POWs in 1973. Many ADVA members have heard Frank speak of his experiences when he has attended past annual ADVA reunions.

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 September 2008 or earlier, please send your dues payment to PNC Ronald Ellis. Ron's mailing address is listed on the back cover.

As we enter the 2008 holiday season each of us will get together with family and friends to celebrate our many blessings of the past year. May each of you have a happy holiday season and a great start to the new year.



ADVA MEMBERSHIP June 30, 2008

World War II	601
Vietnam	2,185
Korea	8
Associate Members:	184
Total Members	2,978

NEW MEMBERS

Garland L. Bradley
754th Tank Bn Co A
Cincinnati, OH
★ NC David Taylor

Lewis W. Bradshaw
182nd Inf Rgmt
Caliente, NV
★ NC David Taylor

Stan Bulger
17th Cav H Trp
Magee, MS
★ NC David Taylor

Douglas Burtell
164th Inf Rgmt
Bowman, ND
★ NC David Taylor

James R. Canady
26th Cmbt Engrs Co E
Kokomo, IN
★ NC David Taylor

Stan B. Castro
164th Inf Rgmt
Clovis, CA
★ Self

Thomas Chumley
1/82nd FA HHB
Long Beach, CA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Joe Clemons
198th LIB
Hendersonville, NC
★ PNC Ron Ward

Charles Cooper
1/1st Cav C Trp
Ypsilanti, MI
★ NC David Taylor

Ron Coppersmith
26th Cmbt Engrs Co A
Menomonee Falls, WI
★ NC David Taylor

Carmine De Silva
182nd Inf Rgmt
Lakeworth, FL
★ NC David Taylor

James E. Donegan
23rd QM Corp Co B
Prospect, OH
★ NC David Taylor

Ronny R. Dunn
198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Las Cruces, NM
★ Self

Frederick T. Flo
164th Inf Rgmt Co C
San Clemente, CA
★ NC David Taylor

Donald R. Foster
11th LIB 4/3rd Inf
Weymouth, MA
★ NC David Taylor

Larry L. Frie
6/11th Arty HHB
Bedford, TX
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

George M. Gogas
182nd Inf Rgmt Co A
Haverhill, MA
★ NC David Taylor

Michael E. Greer
11th LIB HHC/1/20th Inf
Muncie, IN
★ NC David Taylor

Richard L. Gregg, Jr.
196th LIB B/1/46th Inf
Sulphur Rock, AR
★ NC David Taylor

G. Filmore Hammargren
164th Inf Rgmt
North Branch, MN
★ NC David Taylor

William E. Hampton
182nd Inf Rgmt Co D
Fayetteville, AR
★ NC David Taylor

Mac Harness
1/82nd Arty A Btry
Fremont, IN
★ NC David Taylor

Roy Hughes
11th LIB D/4/21st Inf
Bonham, TX
★ Robert Vertrees

Joseph Jackson
182nd Inf Rgmt Co C
Swartz Creek, MI
★ NC David Taylor

Henry Kostanski
26th Cmbt Engrs
Oak Lawn, IL
★ NC David Taylor

Neil Lenert
11th LIB 59th Sct Dog Plt
Sheridan, IL
★ NC David Taylor

Joe LoCicero
17th Cav H Trp
Huntington, NY
★ NC David Taylor

Robert F. Love
164th Inf Rgmt Co D
Spring Hill, FL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

John T. Mize
26th Cmbt Engrs
Lakeland, TN
★ Self

Jerry Pilman
1/1st Cav E Trp
Seymour, IN
★ Bob Cowles

William G. Query
523rd Sig Bn
Martinsville, IN
★ NC David Taylor

John R. Sartain, Jr.
1/14th Arty C Btry
Nashville, TN
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Louie Schmidt
1/1st Cav
Howell, MI
★ NC David Taylor

Otis M. Scott
182nd Inf Rgmt I Co
Amarillo, TX
★ NC David Taylor

Frank Slater
6/11th Arty C Btry
Sherman, TX
★ NC David Taylor

Larry Thompson
198th LIB 1/52nd Inf
Michigan City, MI
★ NC David Taylor

Alan R. Tinkous
1/1st Cav HHC
Holley, NY
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Lawrence Toppi, Sr.
11th LIB B/4/3 Inf
Wilmington, MA
★ NC David Taylor

William Tucker
164th Inf Rgmt M Co
Edmond, OK
★ NC David Taylor

Ric Warren
11th LIB D/4/21st Inf
Long Beach, CA
★ Robert Vertrees

Albert F. Weist
164th Inf Rgmt
Olympia, WA
★ NC David Taylor

John Williams
198th LIB A/1/6th Inf
Theodosia, MO
★ PNC Ron Ward

Thomas Zedick
1/1st Cav B Trp
Honeoye, NY
★ Connie Steers

NEW PAID LIFE MEMBERS

Frank Anton
71st ASHC
Satellite Beach, FL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Daniel Burner
198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Woodstock, VA
★ NC David Taylor

Christopher J. Conlin
198th LIB C/1/52nd Inf
West Hartford, CT
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Michael L. Hagen
198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf
New City, NY
★ Self

William Miles
198th LIB C/3/21st Inf
Penn Valley, CA
★ David Eichhorn

Daniel V. Simone
11th LIB C/1/20th Inf
Yardville, NJ
★ Self

Michael Slomka
11th LIB C/4/21st Inf
Macomb, MI
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Thomas J. Tradewell
26th Cmbt Engrs Co B
Sussex, WI
★ NC David Taylor

Kenneth J. Turner
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Smyrna, GA
★ Harris Louque, Jr.

Douglas J. Chiasson
11th LIB C/4/3rd Inf
Cut Off, LA
★ Self

Frank J. Davis
196th LIB A/1/46th Inf
Surprise, AZ
★ Rollie Castranova

Julian C. Humphries, Jr.
196th LIB HHC/3/21st Inf
Lawton, OK
★ John Anderson

Herbert L. Jensen
23rd Div Hdq G-2 MI
Hong Kong, China
★ Don Ballou

Brian Mahoney
11th LIB D/4/3rd Inf
Woodside, NY
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Mel Moyette
196th LIB C/4/31st Inf
Riverside, CA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

John R. Sartain, Jr.
1/14th Arty C Btry
Nashville, TN
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

William C. Spencer
198th LIB E/1/52nd Inf
Coldwater, MI
★ Rollie Castranova

Gregory D. Suchan
6th Supt Bn B Co
Berwyn, IL
★ Rollie Castranova

Ramon B. Vega
17th Cav H Trp
Safford, AZ
★ NC David Taylor

Robert G. Vertrees
11th LIB D/4/21st Inf
Valley Center, CA
★ Rich Merlin
Reinstated

James E. Crum
196th LIB B/2/1st Inf
Massilon, OH
★ Ronald Leclair

John E. Michalik
11th LIB C/4/3rd Inf
Chester, VA
★ Self

Ronald R. Towery
198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf
Harrisburg, IL
★ Rollie Castranova

Kenneth Vander Molen
182nd Inf Rgmt G Co
Grand Rapids, MI
★ Self

CORRECTION

Kenneth Sandora
198th LIB B/1/52nd Inf
Lakeland, FL
★ Dan Young

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Blake Kerbaugh
West Fargo, ND
★ NC David Taylor

Herbert L. Schultz
Petersburg, ND
★ NC David Taylor

Mary Simpkins
Oviedo, FL
★ NC David Taylor

Joan C. Smith
Azusa, CA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Edith I. Tuff
West Fargo, ND
★ NC David Taylor

Jean Warkow
Pembroke Pines, FL
★ NC David Taylor

Richard C. Weist
Lynnwood, WA
★ NC David Taylor

Taps

World War II Veterans
101st QM Corps
Thomas F. Downey
Wilmington, MA
Date Unknown

132nd Inf Rgmt
M. William Green
Moorhead, MN
March 21, 2008

182nd Inf Rgmt
Jack G. Morton
Springfield, OR
August 19, 2008

21st Recon Trp
George Vrattos
Lawrenceville, GA
May 16, 2005

247th FA HDQ Btry
Bernard T. McCabe
Needham, MA
May 14, 2008

Vietnam Veterans
196th LIB A/3/21st Inf
Randall J. Hain
Walden, CO
Date Unknown

LAST ROLL CALL
196th LIB
Gerald F. Goode
Randolph, NY
August 23, 2008



From the Editor-in-Chief

I wish to apologize for an error in the 3Q08 edition of the Americal Journal. Mr. Kenneth Sandora's name was misspelled in the New Paid Life section.

The Journal staff is very thankful for your recent contributions. We currently have many stories to publish. We always hope to get ten pages for WWII stories and ten pages for Vietnam stories in each issue. We will also have a multi-page story about the 23rd Infantry Division in the Korean War era in a future edition.

The WWII and Vietnam sections of the first and second quarter 2009 magazines are almost filled already. But we don't want you to quit sending stories and photos. We will get them in the magazine as soon as we can.

If you wish more information about the status of your submission please contact Dave Taylor or me. We always enjoy hearing from you and will gladly answer any questions you may have.

Letters to the Editor

Dear editor,

I am trying to locate information about an accident that happened on July 10, 1969 when a live hand grenade detonated during a training demonstration. The official division journal entry follows:

(C) 198th Bde, Sgt Fultz, LZ Bayonet, Firing Range, 1030H. (1) 1xH/gren accidentally exploded. Res: 25 US NEW(E), 2xPF's NEW(E). D/O compl at 1035H. (2) Instructor was giving a class on claymores, demonstrating that claymores should not be BT. Somehow, a live M-26 H/gren was used instead

of an inert one, for the demonstration. When the claymore was lifted off the live M-26 the H/gren det. (3) Number of wounded is 25, verified by LT Wooden Combat Center, by headcount. Ntify: C/S Sp Bailey; G3 SSM Skytta; G2 LTC Nerone; III MAF Sgt. Deans.

I would like to contact anyone listed in this report or have any additional information on this accident.

David Venditta; 1106 N. 20th St., Allentown, PA 18104-3099, 610-439-1391, cdvend@rcn.com

Dear editor,

I served with 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB in 1968. A former medic and I are collecting the stories of veterans' trips home from Vietnam. We think each story is unique and we will help fine tune each story to fit on the Freedom Bird page. Some stories are already posted at <http://www.buffgrunt.com/> The%20freedom%20bird.html. Please consider putting your story together and sending it to me.

Tom Skien; tskiens@centurytel.net

Dear editor,

I received my Americal Journal yesterday and have just now finished reading it. I owe a personal note of thanks to those who keep the Americal alive and well. That's right, because after the war even the Army wanted to bury us. But with you and the other fine men on the ADVA staff we're still here and "rumors of our demise are premature."

I have for many years worn the lapel pin of the Americal and I will now buy a life membership and look into donating to the scholarship fund.

Richard Vidaurri; 26th Cbt. Engr. Bn.

Dear editor,

I have finally completed Scenery for the War Years at Chu Lai Vietnam that will run in Microsoft's Flight Simulator 2002 or 2004. It has been over 2 years in the making. Airport for Windows, EOD, Coastlinemaker, BMP2000 and PSPaint are the main programs that were used in the creation of this Scenery.

The runways and roads were placed with a 1968 vintage 1:50,000 map overlay - the size that we used when fighting the war - so they should be relatively accurate in direction and location. The default FS coastline was close but not completely correct so I have used Coastlinemaker to correct it in this scenery. Many of the buildings, vehicles, ships, aircraft and even the few people that are in the scenery are textured from some of the thousands of photos of the area that I took and have also collected from various places. I have endeavored to make it as accurate as I can, not only in location and size but also appearance. Vietnam veterans who were at Chu Lai will see many familiar sights as they move through this scenery.

If you are a Vietnam veteran and want to reminisce a bit about the "glory days" of your youth, I think that you will find this scenery well worth the time that it takes to download and install it. If you were never there but just want to see what it was like, this will give you an idea, minus of course, the bombs and bullets. Even if you are a vet who was not at Chu Lai, I think that you may enjoy the trip.

To see some screenshots and also download the free scenery and maps, go to my Flight Simulator page going to <http://members.aol.com/asimmsjr/index2.html>. It will eventually also be posted to some of the FS online databases. Welcome Home!

Al Simms, SP5, Radar Mechanic
1/14th Artillery, 198th LIB, Americal Division - 1967-68

Dear editor,

The 174th AHC veterans are excited about the new addition to the Wisconsin Veteran's Museum in Madison, WI. The very same helicopter that served with the 174th AHC in 1969 now resides in Madison. The helicopter is currently displayed in 1st Cav. Div. colors. There are several photos and related stories about this helicopter on the internet at www.174ahc.org. (There is a link from the americal.org website).

I want to promote visits to the museum by Americal Division Veterans. I believe the more Americal Division visi-

tors that visit the museum and sign the registry as Americal/174th AHC supporters the more likely the helicopter could be restored to the original 174th AHC colors. This would be a wonderful legacy not only for the 174th AHC veterans but the many veterans of the Americal Division who appreciated the support of Sharks gunships.

Les Hines; ADVA Vietnam Historian

Dear editor,

A group of Americal vets are taking a 19 day trip to Vietnam 20 April-May 8, 2009. Our tour is being organized by Vietnam Battlefield Tours. We are covering a lot of territory during our visit. We will be leaving from Los Angeles and the cost for the tour is \$4,400 per person (single supplement \$550). If you would like more information please let me know.

Don Alsbro; 269-925-7176,
dealsbro@sbcglobal.net

Dear editor,

The gravesite locator <http://grav-locator.cem.va.gov>, online since April 2004, helps veterans' families, former comrades-in-arms and others find the cemeteries where veterans are buried. With the new online feature, people enter a veteran's name to search, click on the "Buried At" (burial location) link and a map of the national cemetery is displayed. It shows the section where the grave is located.

Spencer Baba; National Finance Officer

Reunions



The 23rd Recon Company (Panama) will have a reunion and 19 day cruise departing roundtrip from San Pedro, CA (Los Angeles) on April 26, 2009. The cruise will be aboard the Coral

Princess and will include port calls in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama. For more details contact Jack Rudder at 310-519-1522 or see the announcement at www.americal.org/23Recon.pdf.

The 26th Engineer Battalion (Combat) will have their 2009 Reunion at Ft. Leonard Wood Mo, October 14 – 18, 2009. During the reunion the 26th Engineer Battalion commemorative plaque will be dedicated at the Engineer Museum. For further information contact Linda Gordon at iwfrog@mcleodusa.net or visit the 26th's web site <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/26th>.

Locators



Robert (Bob) (Ski) Olszewski in Vietnam

Looking for: Anyone who remembers Robert (Bob) (Ski) Olszewski who served with the 4/31st Inf., 196th LIB from Feb. 1970 to Jan. 1971. He was in an ambush on June 6, 1971 near Hiep Duc. Contact: Karen Olzewski; 562-299-3470.

Looking for: Info on any mortar or rocket attacks in Chu Lai from Aug 1970 through Oct 1971. I was with the 328th RRU. Contact: Victor Vigil; csgtmaj09@aol.com

Looking for: Harry Black, American Indian, possibly with Americal Division with an armored personnel carrier (APC) MOS, late 1969. Contact: Gary Berry; gnmberry@davisp.com

Looking for: Comprehensive list of WIAs for the Americal Division in Vietnam. Contact: Raymond Keith; rekeith@fone.net

Looking for: Friends who served with me in the FDC and Btry. D, 1/14th Arty. in mid 1971. Contact: John Eubank; eubankjohn@hotmail.com

Looking for: Information about LT Larry S. Birchfield, Albuquerque, NM; Co. A, 3/1st Inf., platoon leader, 1968. Contact: Ally Birchfield; 817-714-3200, ally@alssys.com

Looking for: Information about crash of helicopter Oct. 1967 through Dec. 1967. I was with HHC, 1/6 Inf. when chopper went down a short distance from my hootch. Contact: Ken Donley: 631-909-1528, SPECIALK263@OPTONLINE.NET

Looking for: Information on H Trp., 17th Cav., 1969-70. Contact: Joseph E. McKenzie, Jr.; pebertq@aol.com

Looking for: Addresses for Robert Baker, Jr. and William Watson, both E-5 assigned to Co. D, 1/20th Inf., early 1968. Also looking for day report for D/1/20 for Feb. 18, 1968. Contact: Kitty Millard; nassaurm@aol.com

Looking for: Information on MG James Leon Baldwin, Americal Division commander, 1970-71. My father knew Baldwin since childhood in Wichita, KS. Contact: Stephen R. Loftus; steve.loftus@wachoviasec.com, (800) 889-5990

Looking for: Roster for Co. C, 39th Eng. Bn. 2nd Plt., 1966 and 1967. Contact: Jake Neta (Lt. Jake); needa@ez-net.com

Looking for: Anyone that knew Michael Sikich. He was KIA 12/23/70 while serving with C/1/46th. I believe he may have been with Dale Schultz of E/1/46th. Other names I have found include Dennis Little A/1/46th. Contact: Doug Mather; doogles69@hotmail.com, 651-503-2204

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

ADVA National Survey Results

By David W. Taylor

The April-May-June 2008 issue of the Americal Journal included a National Survey seeking member opinions and suggestions about the ADVA. We received a 9% response which was an excellent response. The following is a summary of the survey results:

ADVA Chapters

The lack of communications from most chapters (Either chapter newsletters or postings in the Americal Journal Chapter News) placed chapter affiliation out of the minds of many ADVA members. Other concerns were the general lack of chapter reunions while some chapters held reunions at the same location, making it difficult for chapter members to attend.

National Reunions

Of those responding to the survey, 56 had attended a national reunion and 186 had not. 22% of respondents don't attend national reunions because they are too expensive; 27% find late June as a bad time for them. Summer was most preferred for reunion times (but it is also when hotel rates are at their highest). A similar number of members requested fall reunions (September or October) and 27% of respondents cited poor location choices as the reason for not attending. It has also become increasingly difficult for our WWII vets to attend because of health issues. The East Coast and Midwest were most often mentioned as desirable areas for reunions.

We will work harder to control our reunion costs for members and welcome our first-time attendees. We will also explore holding a fall national reunion in 2010.

Product Sales

Our product sales have high customer satisfaction. Prices are seen as reasonable. The most often requested additions to our product line were T-shirts and collared shirts with Brigade (11th, 196th, & 198th) patches, either in conjunction with the Americal patch or without. Additionally, pins with regimental or brigade crests were a popular request. The ADVA product director will review the many items requested and determine what is feasible to offer.

Americal Journal

ADVA members enjoy the Americal Journal with a clear preference for more Vietnam and WWII stories to be offered. When asked to rank the Journal topics most interesting to you, the following scores were given: (1= low interest) (2=moderate interest) (3=high interest)

Senior Staff Comments rated a 2.19; Chapter News Section rated a 2.31; The WWII Section rated a 2.42; Letters to the Editor section rated a 2.60; Scholarship News section rated a 1.99; Vet Reunions section rated a 2.42; Adjutants Notes section rated a 2.14 and the Vietnam section rated a 2.90.

ADVA Programs

Respondents said the Americal Journal is the most important reason for joining the ADVA. The preference for other ADVA programs was as follows: (1 = low interest) (2 = moderate interest) (3 = high interest)

The ADVA Web Site was rated 1.79 in terms of importance to members. *The Americal Journal* was rated 2.88 (highest rating); *National Reunions* were rated 2.17; *Chapter Reunions* were rated 2.01; The *ADVA Scholarship Program* was rated 2.03 and *obtaining historical documents* was rated 2.39 (second highest).

National Recruiting

Many suggestions for recruiting offered by respondents have been tried or are in the process of being implemented. But remember recruiting is everyone's responsibility. Direct contact by members to Americal vets is the most effective way to recruit!

Leadership

The survey's respondents overwhelmingly approved of the way officers are elected and/or appointed (220 agreed, 5 did not).

Participation in the ADVA

Of the 242 surveys returned only ten individuals volunteered their skills in helping the ADVA. Several were limited in what they could do. We need many volunteers at the national and chapter levels to help in data basing, recruiting, holding offices, writing stories for the Journal, recording Vietnam history, helping with our WWII Museum, etc. Please get involved at the chapter or national level.

Vietnam Historian

Over 40 types of requested Vietnam-related information were listed by respondents. Some of the information requested is already available by our historian. Other items are in the planning stage to obtain as time allows. We need computer-savvy volunteers to work with the Vietnam Historian.

An often requested item in the survey was for a "map" which shows where the Americal area boundaries were in Vietnam and all the LZ's, Firebases, operational areas, etc. We have begun this project. The goal will be to develop a large and detailed Americal Poster Map for sale at a nominal fee, which covers the division's area of operations in Vietnam. Another frequent request was for the ability to locate lost orders and locate buddies. This will also be addressed in the future.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out and return the survey!

EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

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

COMMANDER

Conrad (Connie) Steers
124 Harding Ave.
Hicksville, NY 11801-3122
516-822-5938
11thbrigade@optonline.net



Eastern Chapter members boarding the BB Riverboat for a Thursday night dinner cruise on the Ohio River

By the time you read this the East Chapter of ADVA has completed its reunion. The agenda that Mark Deam put together was excellent. National Commander Dave Taylor and Vice-Commander Jay Flanagan attended the reunion. More details on the reunion will be in the next journal.

The next reunion will be held in Portland, Maine. Larry Shover will be running the reunion. I spent two days in Portland and it is fantastic just by the scenery alone. I hope our New England brothers come out for the reunion. Of course I will have more information in the upcoming issues of the Americal Journal.

I advise my fellow chapter commanders to have a reunion in their areas because it is good for retention of present members and a way to recruit new members. Let's keep the association going as a means to enhance the division's legacy as a group that made our country strong.

For more information on the East Chapter you can go to our web site at <http://home.woh.rr.com/sidneyalum/advaerc/>.

Our next national reunion will be held in Louisiana and run by Ron Ellis. I am sure it will be a great reunion. Keep the crawdads away from me.

Try to make a national reunion- it is well worth it.

Brothers, let us have a great recruiting year and keep the ADVA a model for all organizations. Let me not forget the gals that served in the Americal Division. Their service is highly respected. Our national officers are second to none and their dedication should be applauded.

Until our next journal, have a safe and healthy holiday season. Welcome Home!

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CHAPTER

IL IN MI MN WI

COMMANDER

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

Adjutant

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



Senior Vice Com.
Gary Gardner
Jr Vice Com.
Harold Waterman

Greetings to all Americal Great Lakes Chapter members! Chapter members marched in parades in Middleton, New Glarus, and Monticello and attended the Kokomo Reunion and New Glarus Winterfest this year.

The chapter has lost some active members due to health problems. We are asking for volunteers to help with everything from a bi-annual newsletter, planning a chapter reunion (including location suggestions), and any other ideas that would help to make the chapter stronger. We are looking for a convenient location to get together as comrades once again.

Instead of sending out a mail notice we are using this means to contact Great Lakes Chapter members about this year's chapter dues. The dues for 2009 are \$10/veteran. Please send your dues (and your e-mail address so we can communicate electronically) to: Dale Belke, W655 County Road E, Brodhead, WI 53520. You can call me at 608-897-4429 or send e-mail to belked@ckhweb.com or dale.belke@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

Dues will be used for the above mentioned goals and events and for future mailings to members. Please do not send chapter dues to Terry Babler, New Glarus, WI. He is not handling the finance duties anymore.

The next chapter meeting will be at Winterfest in New Glarus, WI, on January 19, 2009. For anyone that can't attend, please send me any information or ideas you would like presented or discussed.

GO AMERICAL!!! The Best Soldiers/Division in Vietnam!
I PERSONALLY WISH MY FELLOW COMRADES PEACE AND HAPPINESS IN LIFE. YOU HAVE EARNED IT!



New Year's Resolutions

The new year is just around the corner and everyone will be making a list of things to do in 2009. Here are a few suggestions from your ADVA leadership:

1. Contact a buddy and let him know you are thinking of him.
2. Make plans to attend a chapter or national reunion.
3. Display the American flag every day.
4. Visit a veteran in a VA hospital.
5. Say a prayer for our troops in the combat zones.
6. Volunteer to help your local and national veterans groups.

FAR WEST CHAPTER

AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT

COMMANDER

Rick Ropole
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Corona, CA 92879
951 • 735 • 7316
rropole@esri.com



The Far West Chapter held its Annual Reunion on October 12-14, 2008 at the Aquarius Casino Resort in Laughlin, Nevada. There were 32 people in attendance (including family members). There were five World War II veterans and sixteen Vietnam Veterans. Our hospitality room overlooked the picturesque

Colorado River and afforded spectacular views of the Black Mountains across the river in Arizona.

Comfortable temperatures allowed attendees to choose from many activities including a road trip to Lake Havasu City and the famous London Bridge or a drive on historic US Route 66 to Oatman, Arizona. Oatman is an old gold mining town where wild donkeys roam the streets and staged old Wild West gun shootouts occur throughout the day. High winds cancelled a jet boat ride down the Colorado. Next door at the Riverside Casino Hotel, we toured Don Laughlin's Classic Car Collection, which includes many unique, one of a kind, vehicles. And of course, we could choose from 12 casinos in town, all loaded with slots and table games, not to mention some pretty good stage shows and restaurants.

At our annual meeting which was held during the reunion, we elected officers for the next two years. Elected were Rick Ropole, Chapter Commander; Dave Hammond, Vice Commander; Tom Packard, Secretary/Treasurer; and Curt Rothacker, Sgt. at Arms. Gene McGrath was appointed Chaplain.

We discussed the FWC chapter's expansion into the former Northwest Chapter area and how we could best serve members in the area. Each ADVA member living in the northwest states was given a free Far West Chapter membership through the end of the year. We also discussed ways to retain those new members. Four members from the area have already submitted dues for 2009 and beyond.

Also at the meeting, we decided to follow through with the idea of sending our newsletter out electronically beginning with the first quarter issue of 2009. Collecting and keeping current e-mail addresses will be a task. We have also discussed sharing information in the form of trading newsletters with the other active ADVA chapters. We discussed the possibility of raising funds to have an ADVA memorial built at the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA.

We would like to thank Don Squire who served as our Chaplain for the past two years. Don served with the 3rd Battalion of the 132nd Infantry on Bougainville Island during World War II and is a retired U.S. National Parks superintendent. (Thanks also go to Tom Packard for a job well done in handling this year's reunion. -editor-)

The reunion ended with a Tuesday evening banquet. National Commander Dave Taylor was in attendance and

SEC/TREAS

Tom Packard
6613 Birch Park Dr.
Galloway, OH 43119
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Commander David W. Taylor speaks at Far West reunion.

spoke at both the chapter meeting and banquet. Dave gave us details of his agenda for the next two years. Entertainment was provided by "Ron's Party" direct from Las Vegas.

Our next Far West Chapter reunion will be held next fall in Reno, Nevada. Rich Merlin volunteered to chair the event committee.

SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX

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

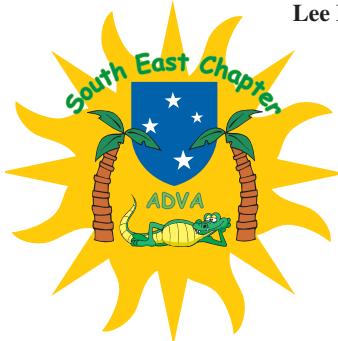
A few months ago I offered to step aside as commander so that someone else could come forward to lead the chapter. No one has volunteered so we're going forward for the time being. Our situation is not unique. In recent months two chapters have merged with other chapters due to lack of member support. These developments have occurred against the backdrop of the creation of the 23rd M.P. Chapter with the possibility of more unit chapters in the future.

National Commander Dave Taylor has suggested that the South Midwest Chapter merge with the Southeast Chapter. I am resisting the idea because the resulting geographic area would be too large and defeat the purpose of having a local chapter. But geographic size does not seem to be a concern for the 23rd M.P.s so we will see how things develop.

Recent changes to the ADVA national by-laws include a term limit for chapter representatives on the Executive Council. I have been fulfilling the chapter representative role for several years and I am no longer eligible. Fortunately we have someone to do the job in the person of Malcolm East. Malcolm has been a stalwart member for a long time and has served as chapter treasurer. His knowledge of the chapter and national leadership makes him an ideal representative on the council. In conjunction with his new responsibilities, I have appointed Malcolm to the vacant post of chapter vice commander.

ARTHUR R. WOOD SOUTH EAST REGION CHAPTER

AL GA FL TN VA NC SC



COMMANDER

Lee Kaywork

After serving in office for more than six years Paul Stiff has stepped down from the helm of the Southeast Chapter. I will be replacing Paul as Chapter Commander. I was the acting Vice-Commander and had recently served as the Chair of the 2008 Reunion in Jacksonville, Florida. Joining me are Jerry Nichols who will

serve as the Secretary/Treasurer and Jerry 'Doc' Anderson who will continue as the Sergeant-at-Arms.

I am a Life Member of the Americal Division Veterans Association and I was recently elected to the Executive Committee. After a successful career in the telecommunication sector I have recently begun working in the non-profit sector. I am heading a project to redesign the child foster care system in the Jacksonville area. I am active in veteran organizations in my community as a member of the VFW and the American Legion. I serve as President of the Vietnam Veterans of Nassau County.

Paul Stiff is credited with keeping the SE Chapter intact while commuting between his winter home in Florida and his summer home in Michigan. He has been a stable at the annual veteran's reunion in Melbourne, FL where the SE Chapter always hosted a hospitality event.

I plan on sending a letter to all the ADVA members in the southeast to solicit their views for the future direction of the chapter. I hope to hold a series of state meetings to develop a network of ADVA veterans who are willing to become more involved at the chapter level. I am grateful that both Jerry Nichols and Doc Anderson have agreed to work with him as we go forward. I look forward to working with National Commander Dave Taylor in his efforts to strengthen the chapters and expand the ADVA membership.

If you would like to become more involved with the SE Chapter please contact me at elkaywork@hotmail.com or call me at 904.219.5090.

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.

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

6613 Birch Park Dr.
Galloway, OH 43119
614 • 878 • 5197

packard50@columbus.rr.com



We are constantly working on improving the chapter. We are trying to get another gathering in addition to the annual ADVA reunion. Please stay tuned for this. There will be chapter elections for office in June 2009 at the national reunion. Now is the time for you to step up if you are interested and set an agenda of what you would like

to see the chapter implement. Think of who would be best in leadership roles for our chapter.

Unfortunately already have a conflict that will prevent me from attending the reunion in June 2009. After my tenure as chapter commander I plan to help with the MP history project. You have a lot of stories concerning the 23rd Military Police Company. I hope to capture them in the next few years. Mike Collingwood is assisting with getting images. The possibilities of getting all of these stories and images gathered are endless. They will be used on the web site and perhaps on a DVD and also in a traditional publication. It will take years to complete this project but in my opinion worth the time and effort.

23rd Recon Company Reunion and Panama Cruise

The 23rd Recon Company will have a reunion onboard the Coral Princess beginning April 26, 2009. The 19-day cruise will depart San Pedro (Los Angeles harbor) and include passage through the Panama Canal both outbound and inbound.

The reunion and cruise is being arranged by Jack Rudder. Jack served with the 23rd Recon Co. in Panama in 1954-55. The 23rd Recon was a Korean War era element of the 23rd Infantry Division. The 23rd ID assumed the lineage and heraldry of the Americal Division and had elements in Panama, Puerto Rico, and the United States.

Ports of call include the following in Mexico: Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta, Acapulco, Huatulco, and Ixtapa. Stops will also be made at Puntarenas, Costa Rica; Puerto Corinto, Nicaragua; and Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala. There will also be a full day cruising the Panama Canal and a day docked at Ft. Amador near Panama City and Balboa.

Complete information can be provided by Jack Rudder. He can be reached at (310) 519-1522 or jack.rudder@cox.net. Photos of Jack's 2007 trip can be seen on the internet at <http://gingership.smugmug.com>.

Cruise prices vary from about \$3,000 (DO) to \$4,000 (DO) plus government and port fees and subject to change. Travel arrangements can be made through AGE OF TRAVEL, 28 Montecillo Dr., Rolling Hills Est., CA, 90274.

More information on the Coral Princess can be found at www.princess.com/learn/ships/co/. This website includes detailed pricing information as well as a day-to-day itinerary of the cruise.

164th Infantry Regiment 2008 Reunion



Commander David W. Taylor attended the 62nd reunion of the 164th Infantry Regiment Association on Sept. 12-14, 2008. The reunion was held at the VFW club in Valley City, ND. Entertainment was provided by the 188th Army National Guard Band.

The association publishes The 164th Infantry News three times a year. Membership information may be obtained by writing to Secretary, 164th Inf. Assoc., Box 192, Sanborn, ND. 58480. Commander Taylor holds the post of ADVA WWII Historian and plans to research the 164th records for future stories in the Americal Journal.

Still Serving- 38+ Years

By LTC Ronald K. Swift

I have the good fortune of still serving my country after thirty-eight years of service. I was a member of the 23rd ID (Americal) from April 1971 through Sept. 1971. I was part of the 23rd Admin Co. (Finance) located in a Butler building close to the 23rd ID HQ in Chu Lai.

At that time, I was a SP4 finance clerk, a college grad and twenty-two years old. I was later transferred to Da Nang leaving right before the typhoon that almost wiped Chu Lai out. I served with the 196th LIB as a finance clerk before coming home in Feb 1972. I still proudly wear the "Americal" patch on my right shoulder, only now it's not sewn on, rather velcroed to my Army combat uniforms (ACU). More soldiers and veterans associate with the 23rd ID than the 196th LIB and I guess that's why I'm wearing it today.

I left active duty after eighteen months and joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard (PAARNG) so I could return to college on an early out program. I served as an enlisted soldier for eight years then graduated from OCS. I spent 28 great years within units of the PAARNG 28th ID as an M day soldier. I finally worked my way up to be the Commandant of the Div HQ.

I transferred to the USAR in 2000 to be promoted to LTC and reached my mandatory retirement date (MRD) in May 2007. I was mobilized the last two years before reaching my MRD and served as a training chief with the 99th Regional Readiness Command in Pittsburgh, PA.

Today I serve as an active duty retiree recall and teach ROTC classes at Gannon University and Mercyhurst College in Erie, PA. I just went over 38 good years for retirement

and hope to remain on active duty here for at least two more years. My goal is to reach 40 years or more continuous service as a uniformed Vietnam veteran. Many of my students are amazed to know they have a Vietnam veteran as an instructor. I'm very fortunate to be in excellent health and still stay pretty fit to keep up with the young Cadets.

My question is this: how many of us...those veterans still proudly wearing the "Americal" patch... are still serving on active duty, the Guard and Reserve? I'd be curious to know and certainly very willing to share this information with other 23rd ID and 196th LIB vets.

Someday I'd love to return to Chu Lai and Da Nang. I always liked the South China Sea, the beach and the Vietnamese people.

SFC Salazar Deploys to War

SFC Isidore Salazar of the Texas National Guard is preparing for a November 2008 deployment to Iraq. He was with a mortar crew in the 196th LIB near Chu Lai in 1969-70. He and 3,600 other members of the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (56th IBCT) of the 36th Infantry Division are receiving training at Ft. Stewart, GA. Salazar is assigned to Co. C, 56th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (56th BSTB).

MAJ James E. Sheil is the Community Catholic Pastor at Ft Stewart. Chaplain Sheil also served in the Americal Division in Vietnam and may well be the senior Americal veteran still serving. Of Salazar's presence at Ft. Stewart, Father Jim said, "It is good to see the patch on someone else besides me- somebody my own age (almost) to play with." Watch for follow-up stories on SFC Salazar and MAJ Sheil in future editions of the Americal Journal.

National Infantry Museum Plans Grand Opening

By Roger Gilmore

At the June 2008 annual reunion in Jacksonville the ADVA Executive Council members voted on and passed a resolution to make a donation to the new National Infantry Museum located at Fort Benning, GA. The \$250.00 donation was given to honor the memory of those Americal Division veterans who lost their lives in World War II and the Vietnam War.

With the donation to the National Infantry Foundation, each donor receives a four inch by eight inch engraved granite paver stone. The paver stone will be placed in the new Heritage Walk along the east side of the new museum. The museum and parade ground complex is scheduled to be complete in early 2009.

A three person committee, composed of ADVA members Cameron Baird, Connie Steers and Roger Gilmore, composed the paver stone inscription for the association. The National Infantry Museum plans to hold a grand opening on March 20, 2009.

**AMERICAL DIVISION
IN MEMORY OF
OUR FALLEN**

Moore's Marauders: Bringing Our Heroes Home

By Ryan Bach



The clouds hang low over the city, obscuring the tops of the tallest skyscrapers and trapping the heat and humidity below. It is another typical gray summer morning in Shanghai. It's June 26, 2008, and I'm in the coffee shop of the Shanghai Hilton, sipping oolong tea in an attempt to stay awake and alert after being up most of the night. I've got a very important package with me, one that may unlock long forgotten secrets.

After a few moments wait my contact arrives. Professor Yang Jing from Shenyang University sits down across from me and we exchange pleasantries. I slide the file across the table. Staring back at him as he opens the folder is a photograph of Staff Sergeant William Joseph Lynch, USMC. SSgt. Lynch is the only remaining MIA from the Mukden POW Camp, a Japanese-run facility located in Manchuria during WWII. This meeting is the culmination of hundreds of hours of feverish work by the volunteers on my team.

My name is Ryan Bach, and I'm a Team Leader with Moore's Marauders, an all-volunteer organization of over two hundred members. We are dedicated to finding and returning the more than 78,000 US servicemen listed as MIA from our country's twentieth-century conflicts. You can learn more about us at www.mooresmarauders.org.

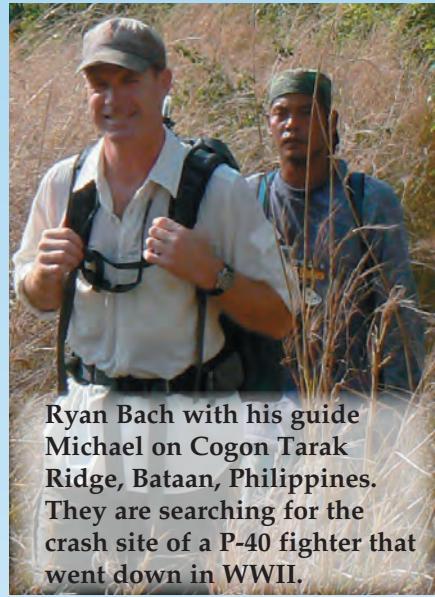
One month prior to my visit to Shanghai, Professor Yang Jing had contacted the Marauders for help. For many years he had sought information on SSgt. Lynch, specifically a photograph and information on the whereabouts of any remaining family members. All of his searches had come up empty.

As a pilot for FedEx Express, I live on the former US Navy base at Subic Bay, Philippines. I fly the routes of our Asia/Pacific Network. I was restless when I moved here in 1996. So I decided to find a way to make a difference in the world. I have led a fortunate life and I wanted to give something back.

Since I was a boy I have been fascinated by the citizen-soldiers who fought in WWII. Because of my aviation career, I was able to walk the beaches of Normandy on June 6th, stroll the English countryside around the abandoned airfields of the Battle of Britain, see the rusting wreckage of Corsair's on Guam and Saipan, and even land a plane on Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. Now here I was in Bataan, wondering how I could do something good and worthwhile.

That's when I found Ken Moore's organization. Ken had spent thirty years searching for his Uncle's B-29 which went missing after a mission from Saipan during WWII. Ultimately Ken found the plane, and because of the emotional reaction of his mother upon hearing the news of her brother being found, Ken decided to devote the rest of his life to bringing answers to other families whose loved ones never returned from war.

Ken is an astounding individual- a person who can move mountains. He is the inspirational core of this organization



Ryan Bach with his guide Michael on Cogon Tarak Ridge, Bataan, Philippines. They are searching for the crash site of a P-40 fighter that went down in WWII.

I've joined. The day he awarded me a Team Leader position is one of the proudest of my life.

Because I live in Asia and travel frequently to China, the Professor's request became my mission. With very little time to accomplish our goal of finding a photograph and a family member, I pulled out all the stops. The team of volunteers I assembled was unbelievably talented and diverse. A doctor in Boston, where Lynch grew up and enlisted,

searched local archives. An historian in Oklahoma delved into the world of genealogy. An attorney in Saipan consulted legal documents pertaining to the family.

Through the Marauders' extensive military contacts (we count many former military personnel among our ranks) we secured the help of several active duty flag officers and their staffs. The dogged determination demonstrated by these men and women, all volunteers, is really what sets the Marauders apart from other organizations. Through their hard work, I was able to slide that photograph of SSgt. Lynch across to Professor Yang Jing, along with the rest of every known military record pertaining to the Staff Sergeant's enlistment, capture and imprisonment.

We also found and contacted all four of Lynch's nieces and nephews. We even provided the professor with transcripts of interviews of the former Japanese Camp Commander who was questioned by the camp liberators about the whereabouts of SSgt. Lynch. In less than one month, the Marauders had accumulated more data on SSgt. Lynch than any previous researcher had in over sixty years.

After a long discussion, Yang Jing must return to Shenyang, and I must fly back to the Philippines. The professor will take SSgt. Lynch's photograph to an aging gentleman in Port Arthur. The man worked at a Prison Hospital there in WWII, and remembers one single American coming into the Prison. The professor thinks it might have been Lynch.

I hope he is right. If he is, I will lead a team to Port Arthur to continue the search. Hopefully we can find remains that can be DNA matched to his remaining family here in the US. In the meantime, I will move on to other missions.

The Marauders have nearly thirty scheduled expeditions around the world. Some will be in steaming jungles, some will be underwater, and some will be in coffee shops in cities around the globe. I've found my way to give back, my way to say "thank you." I intend to bring our heroes home.

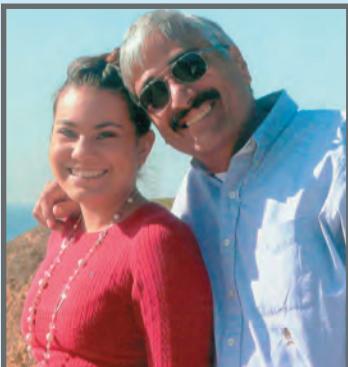
Moore's Marauders is a not-for-profit organization and relies on donations of time and money for its work. Additional information is available at the website indicated above. -editor-]



Recent Scholarship Recipients

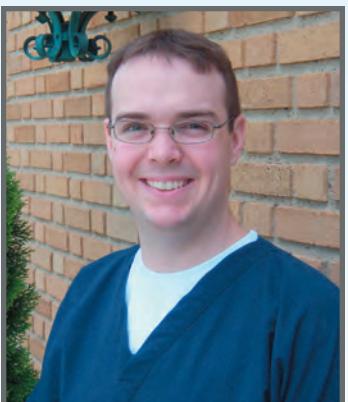
Thank you so much for the generous contribution you have made towards my education at Bates College. My first year was amazing and I am very excited to begin my sophomore year. Among other things I will be declaring a major, planning a semester, and running track.

Alexandra Stevenson



Thank you very much for your contribution. I will graduate from the University of New Mexico in the spring of 2010 and I would like to continue my education at graduate school. I hope to receive my PhD degree in International Finance with focus in Economics and Accounting.

Crystal F. Martinez



Thank you for your generous support of my education. I am entering my third year at Misericordia University. I enjoy the opportunity to be a student at this outstanding University and have found the degree challenging. The scholarship will greatly help to ensure the successful completion of my degree.

Jason Platts



especially Americal Division veterans.

Jeff DeGroot



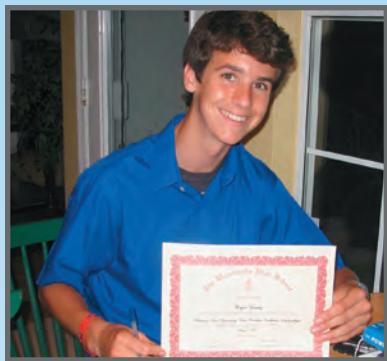
I am proud to receive an ADVA scholarship. Your generosity is an integral component in making my attendance at Harvard University possible and is indicative of the support which my grandfather, William McGoldrick, so valued in the Americal Division. Thank you for helping to make a dream a reality.

Conor Walsh



I would like to thank the ADVA for awarding me a scholarship. Although my grandfather is not here to see me graduate he was proud to see me begin my dreams. I will continue to work hard to succeed and will graduate in May 2009 in his honor.

Jeanne Harwood



Thank you very much for considering my scholarship application and the award toward my education at Montana State University. My grandfather, Victor Lander, was very pleased to hear that I was chosen as one of the recipients. Thank you again- every little bit helps.

Bryce Young



Thank you so much for awarding me this scholarship. I will use this scholarship to help finance my education at American University in Washington D.C. where I have been accepted into the class of 2012. I plan to study International

Relations and languages to help improve the world around us.

Eric Oliver

From A Recent Graduate

Thank you for awarding me scholarships for both the 2007 and 2008 academic years. Your generosity and support is much appreciated as is your service to this great nation.

I have completed my undergraduate education, graduating summa cum laude, and having received the Curly Harris Award in Government from SIUE this past May. I am currently "shopping" doctoral programs in International Relations with a focus on Conflict Negotiation and Resolutions.

With the help of the ADVA I have been able to realize my strengths and grow as a human being in a complex but wonderful world. I will always remember your support and hope to repay it in kind into the future. Thank you once more.

Emily Siemer



I am extremely grateful to the ADVA for the generous scholarship. I know my great-grandfather, Jack Leaverton, was proud of his service in the Americal Division during WWII. The generosity of the ADVA is an amazing testament to him. I intend to honor him by continuing my hard work at Iowa State University. Sincerely Yours,
Meredith Gibson

Thank you for the scholarship award. It helps greatly in being able to continue my education. I am in my senior year of college with plans to continue my education at graduate school. The support the ADVA has given me in the past three years has been invaluable.

Patrick Bright



Thank you very much for the generous scholarship awarded to me. I am relieved to know that my hard, dedicated work has made paying for college less of a burden for my parents and me. This scholarship has truly made a difference for my family. We deeply appreciate the assistance.

Timothy Thorlton



An Army of One

By Harold R. Sargent

(Editors note: This is part II 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)

Luke Hadley disappeared into the tunnel where the Japanese had kept the guns they rolled out at night. No one followed. We assumed it would be booby trapped. He reappeared in ten minutes with several pounds of Filipino script that the Japanese had printed by the pound, and tossed sheaves of this bogus money into the breeze that filtered the paper money down the hill. Laughing derisively, he remarked, "There's no guns in there." He went back into the cave again and emerged with propaganda leaflets distributed to the Filipinos during the occupation. The next time he emerged with a large Japanese flag.

We had taken up residence facing west away from the bay, much like a mile high stadium. "There they are," someone shouted. In the valley, some figures moved slowly as if escaping. Several soldiers began to pepper the group with bullets. From this distance, there was no semblance of accuracy. One body continued moving, oblivious to the bullets landing around him, but he finally keeled over with the others. No one felt a victory, but Hadley's explanation made sense. "If we hadn't killed him, he'd kill us on the next hill. We thought of ourselves as heroic and valorous. We sat for a while pondering the incident. Battle isn't a place where one has time to sort out action. Mostly it's how to stay alive. Sitting on top of this hill, it was cool and pleasant. There was no enemy to kill us any longer. It wouldn't last long. By now, we knew that tomorrow there would be another hill, and someone would die.

The following day we went down the hill and followed a dirt road along the sea for about an hour. Here we rested under the trees for a full day. Replacements came and we girded ourselves for the next onslaught. By now, I knew the Japanese were great fighters and trained professionals, which we were not. They had spent a year erecting fortifications, and in assaulting the hills, we didn't have a single device to protect us. Always, our primary objective was to waste the territory through artillery shelling before we attacked.

SONNET FOR A WARRIOR

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**The old warrior fights on within his dream,
In jungle foxholes where he killed the foe,
Who pierced his flesh, and blood flowed in a steam.**

**They waited 'til the sun was high to go
And storm the next, strategic hill ahead.
The dead lay in the sun, their flesh did swell.
At dawn when they went out to count the dead,
The air gave off that perfumed smell of hell.**

**The guns were silent now, the field serene.
With bayonets they probed the enemy,
Spilling photos of a family scene
Which bared that bond with all humanity.**

**The warrior's dream now has no happy end;
Except, the slain rise up to call him friend.**

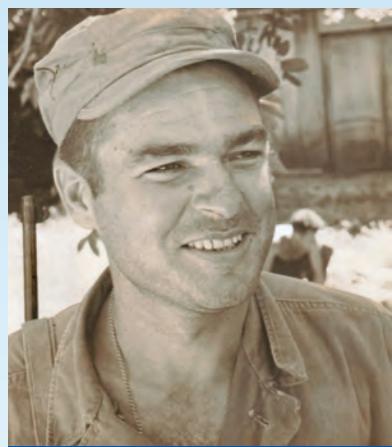
On April 19 two trucks appeared and our company jumped on the rack and held on. In less than ten minutes we reached the rest of the battalion. We hopped off and made for the shade of the coconut trees. It was obvious that our officers meant to surprise the enemy. Two jeeps drove up and the officers spread a huge map over one of the vehicles. They repeatedly pointed toward a substantial hill covered with trees and brush. For once, our company was going to be in reserve. Our platoon waited quietly as the other patrols disappeared into the woods. Mortar and gunfire echoed in the distance. It's difficult to describe how young men go into battle knowing they may not come back. Some can't take it. My mouth was so dry I couldn't talk. Goss waved his arm forward and our platoon joined the file inching up the hill. In addition to the BAR, back pack and my belt, I had fifty rounds of ammo in two bandoleers swung over my shoulders and more in my belt. I looked like Pancho Villa. With fifty pounds on my body, I began to slip down the steep incline. Troops ahead had placed ropes around trees so that we could pull ourselves further. It was slow going.

Howie was the biggest problem. He kept telling me that the Japanese were hiding behind every tree. To satisfy him I would look behind each tree. It didn't matter. "Yeah! Sarge, there is another. Yeah! There is. 'Rot there'. I ain't goin another step." I pointed my BAR behind each tree, just in case. There was nothing. I advanced further. In battle, sometimes the guy next to you is more dangerous than the enemy.

Mortars whined down on us and I could hear moans. A flare rose up and exploded a hundred feet over our heads.

Reaching an open space we emerged at a trot to find about a dozen dead Japanese laying in every position, still holding carbines in their fists. Instinctively we pointed our guns at the dead bodies ready to unload. "Don't shoot," shouted Goss, "They already have a ton of lead in them." The walking wounded from the lead platoon filed past us down the hill.

Captain Stewart had thrown a flare to notify headquarters that we had taken the first objective and this had created a fire that consumed the entire hill. Flames and heat licked at our heels. Lt. Goss ran through the raging fire while we waited. In a minute, he jumped back through the flames and motioned toward me. "See that elephant grass down there off the hill?" With trembling hands he pointed to a level area about two-hundred yards to our left. "Take your weapon and go down there in that tall grass. You can hide there. We can't afford to let them flank us." He ran through the flames in to the copse where I assumed Captain Stewart was with the rest of the company. I trotted down and squatted behind the elephant grass, five feet high. Nothing was going to happen here. I assumed it was safe.



**Sargent's Company
Commander
Captain Stewart**

incident had caught up with me again.

Gasping in the heat, I picked out one of my clips and placed it on the ground so that I could retrieve it for insertion in an emergency. It never occurred to me that I would be attacked. Then, I decided it would be interesting to see what was going on especially up on the hill where the grass was burning so fast there was no smoke.

I slowly lifted my eyes to see over the grass. My heart skipped three beats. A hundred yards away, six to eight Japanese were advancing on my position, three of them lugging a machine gun. When your life is at risk, even a teenager can think



**Sargent's Platoon Leader
Leutenant Goss**

fast. Their goal was to achieve the high ground behind me where they could zero in on the rear of our company. I didn't have time to equivocate. Taking a good bead on the center of them, my arms trembled as I squeezed all twenty rounds from the BAR and dropped to the earth behind the tall grass. Thank God! I was surprised the weapon worked, even as the barrel rose with each shot. I thought I was a sure goner.

Wishful thinking raced through my confused brain. Perhaps they would leave. Maybe I had killed some of them. I jammed another clip into the gun and rising in the same position, poured another twenty rounds in their midst. That should frighten them I thought and lowered my head again. From the distance it appeared they wavered and scattered slightly. Bullets rained in on me. I had revealed my position. Sand and dust skipped off the dry earth beside my combat boots, reminding me of how rain makes spurts of dust back home. Grass fell on me as if a scythe had cut it down, but I had escaped without wounds. Talk about luck.

My brain jumped around. "Those guys are shooting at me." That was like an insult. "I'm supposed to be shooting at them." That put a whole new light on a perilous situation. I wasn't going to exit without a fight. None of the bullets hit me. Aiming low meant they were veterans. Maybe, because of my age, fear left me and I decided to fight my way out. Odds were not in my favor, but until they could set up their machine gun I had a 20 to 1 advantage. With three of them carrying the gun carriage, they only had 20 caliber carbines and I had an automatic that could deliver 20 M1 bullets in five seconds.

It was my instruction to prevent them from flanking my company. I had learned what to do from the Western movies. I moved to the left about eight feet while bullets still struck the dust where I had taken my shots. Congratulating myself, I wondered why they were still advancing. When I peeked above the grass, they were still advancing with the machine gun as fast as their little legs could carry them. I was frightened, but I had no time to think. Aiming carefully, I zeroed in low because with each shot the BAR rose until it pointed 45 degrees into the air. Emptying the clip, I ducked down, shoved another clip into the rifle and let them have it again. Khaki figures, outlined against the tan grass, began to topple. I lay on the earth for a while with nothing but my

fatigue pants and combat boots, thinking I was too young to die. They could make a desperate Banzai. I could mow most of them down but the remaining soldiers could eliminate me.

I churned up my guts to look over the grass again, supposing I would be looking into the whites of the enemy's eyes. The sight brought me more joy than I had ever known. All I could see was the enemy in Khakis running away from me as fast as they could. Just for effect, I emptied another clip in their direction to give them every encouragement. Dropping to earth again, I did some hard thinking as stars danced in my eyes. If I continued to fire, perhaps they could turn or should I be happy that I was still alive and had thwarted their mission. "Let them go", my mind said and I did. I was alive and I had no idea how many of them were still alive.

On the perimeter of the fire, Lt. Goss appeared in the distance and shouted, "Sargent! Come up here!" I struggled up the slope to face him. He never asked what had happened and I was too traumatized to tell. Flames of fire still flickered at our boots. Under pressure of battle, Goss could hardly talk. Running, he jumped through the wall of flame and I followed. He pointed to a line of kneeling troops with M1s leveled at the enemy. He bellowed, "Help these guys," and disappeared. As I looked around to get my bearings, Captain Stewart, Company Commander, appeared five feet from me, blood oozed off his nose. He shouted, "I'm with you guys and I'm getting hit too." No doubt he was sheepish about throwing the flare which ignited the grass fire, but he was at the front with his troops. Many of his company had been killed or wounded, and he took it personally. I squatted beside four GI's along the battle line. A volley of shots echoed on the right.

Oporto, the five-foot-one Portuguese from Boston, with biceps the size of my upper leg and a body built like a locomotive, rose up with a broad smile, lifted his arm into the air with four fingers pointed upward, shouted with elation several times, "I got four of them – four". Waving his fingers in the air, he shouted again, "I got four of them!" Before he pulled his arm down, a piece of shrapnel took a gash out of his huge right arm, leaving a square-inch hole spurting blood. Looking down at his arm in astonishment, he mumbled "Medic," and walked to the rear. I was to see him once more.

There was a slight rise ahead of us and beyond that a bush to the left that blocked my view. I watched that bush no more than five feet from me for any movement. A hand came above the clump holding a grenade that sailed eight feet in the air. I screamed, "Grenade! Grenade!" pointing to its arc. My buddies scrambled away as the grenade exploded, sending dirt into their faces. No one was wounded. They stared at me as if I had given them a second life. Sighting my BAR to where the hand appeared, I unloaded twenty rounds into the clump. Taking a grenade from my waist, I pulled the

pin, waited four seconds, and threw it with my arm fully extended. I had been kneeling with my right knee raised to support the weight of the BAR, with the other knee on the ground. I heard a crack and it seemed as if a horse had kicked me. I slapped my right hip, but there was no blood. Feeling a tingle, I slapped my right leg and hip again. My hand came up covered with blood. I panicked. "Where did that bullet come from?" The other GI's just looked at me. I searched for the probably azimuth. Pointing to the high trees beyond the brush, I shouted "sniper!" grabbed the trusty automatic and sprayed the trees. "Shoot into those trees" I said. Nobody moved. They didn't fire a single shot. Shoving another clip into the weapon, I put half of it into the clump and the rest into the tree. Moving to my left an incredible odor filled the air. Talk about problems. The impact of the bullet had knocked it out of me. I stripped my pants off and screamed, "Medic!" then wiped myself off the best I could. Someone whispered, "The medics are busy." A GI came forward and said, "I'm a medic". I replied, "I've been hit." He looked at me slightly amused and replied, "You and everybody else." He looked at my condition and mumbled, "Well, go to the rear!"

I was mobile. With nothing on but me combat boots, I left the weapon, ammunition, my fatigues, and joined a group of wounded headed for the aid station. Oporto, the soldier with the hole in his biceps waved to me, pointing to his arm. "Hey Sarge, I'm going home." In the sorriest circumstance, GI's can find something to laugh about as one of them made comments about my naked body. What could I say? In a trauma, I didn't even recognize that I was naked.

At the aid station, they laid me on a stretcher, stuck an M1 with a bayonet in the ground and gave me plasma. I began to sob. A medic looked at me quizzically and muttered, "What'ya crying about soldier?" As tears rolled down my cheek, I replied, "Left my wallet up on the hill and has my girl's picture in it." That seemed to be a good answer at the time.

I lay there for at least fifteen minutes. A truck pulled up. An African-American driver came to my side and told me to get on the truck and hold tight. "We're out here fast – faasst." Revving the motor, we sailed off into the gathering night as I listened to shots coming out of the jungle.

In less than twenty minutes, I lay on a hard table in what looked like an abandoned church. Two doctors, one on each side, poked and scrubbed my wound. "You got lucky," one of them opined. "Looks like it went in here," pointing two inches above my knee, "and came out here." He grunted as he swabbed an area just below my buttocks. The examination didn't last five minutes. They had probably seen a dozen like me and more were waiting outside. That's how our MASH operated. After I crawled between the two white sheets, a beautiful nurse came in and talked to me before I fell asleep.

In the morning, the twentieth of April, they put me in an ambulance and took me to a waiting LCI, and we crossed over to the Mactan airstrip. The litter was bolted to a rack inside of

the plane. In less than an hour the plane landed on Leyte. I spent a month in rest and recuperation in the Field Hospital before I returned to Company E of the Americal Division.

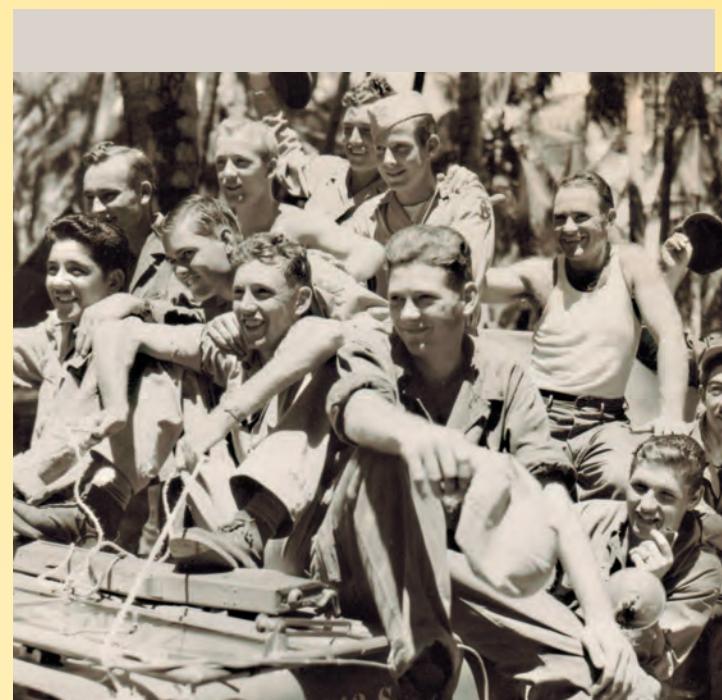
I had fulfilled my mission of not letting the enemy flank us, but nobody knew what I had done. Fifty-five years later, after an x-ray, I learned that the bullet had never left my body and was embedded no more than a quarter inch from my spine. I keep the x-ray for proof because people don't believe. But Lt. Goss never knew that I had saved the company from being flanked. He never knew of my activity on the line and now I wish he had.

Those wounded or sick on Cebu were flown to Leyte just south of Tacloban to the base hospital. Although my wound healed in a couple of weeks, I contacted the dread, tropical ailment, "jungle rot," a common disease among the troops. It thrived on any spot where the skin came in contact with clothing, another part of the skin, a belt, or the top of combat boots. The pain and misery continued twenty four hours a day. At its height, I walked around with my arms akimbo. Round pieces of skin up to the size of a quarter would drop off, leaving permanent scars. At that time there was no medicine for cure. The doctor recommended a dip in the salty ocean, then to let the sun dry the skin. I followed his instruction religiously and it went away. It may have been possible for me to be sent home, but when the doctor asked me what I wanted, I always said I wanted to return to my Americal platoon. By late June I flew back to the 132nd Regiment on Cebu.

Just as before, a sergeant in a jeep took me to the bottom of a hill to the north of the island. "Follow that lane and you'll find your company at the top of the hill." Walking cautiously, I soon met a bunch of GI's coming down the slope. They chided me for being gone for over two months. "We chased these Japanese around the hills while you were sitting it out."

"What have you been doing" I asked. "Scouting and patrolling, nothing important. In fact, the last face to face combat was on the hill you were wounded. We call it Purple Heart because of the high number of wounds. What have you been doing for the last two months?" Once we were bedded down, I explained what R&R meant.

Our bivouac was a large collection of tents with a squad in each tent. The first week, the Regiment continued to patrol, making sure that small squads of the enemy were not out in the hills. We knew they never surrendered. But we did have one surprise. Sitting on the side of a slight rise my squad saw a lone, dark figure moving straight toward our patrol. He never once stopped. Up close, we could see he was a Japanese officer, pushing his hands up in front of his waist holding a pistol. In full-dress, formal uniform, it appeared that he was ranked above a Captain. We motioned him back toward the officers. We knew he would be important for interrogation. That was the only surrender that any of us ever saw



Soldiers from the 132nd Regiment return from their final combat patrols on Cebu

In late July we began serious training for the invasion of Japan. This involved the encircling a position rather than a direct confrontation. After a week of this activity, a troopship nestled in the bay within site of our encampment. For the next two weeks we loaded on the ship and practiced landings on a beach. each morning, with full battle equipment, which with the BAR, ammunition, back pack and helmet weighed at least forty pounds, we would go over the side into the LCIs and rendezvous, then break for the beach so that each craft hit the beach at the same time. The rendezvous would stir up huge waves. Each soldier had his own way of dealing with this phenomenon. Our First Sergeant, on touching the bottom of the LCI, would get seasick and vomit all over the bottom of the boat. In defense, he would lay on the steel bottom and wait for us to reach shore. As soon as the ramp came down, he was first off the craft. All of us would scream and take the first hundred yards before falling on our face. We would then go through the practiced exercise, rest after taking the enemy position. Exertion is more difficult in the tropic temperature. Then we returned to the troopship to do exactly the same thing in the afternoon. We were experienced, tough warriors, the ideal type for the invasion of Japan.

To be continued.



Editors Note: All photos courtesy of Harold Sargent

Come to The Other Side of Louisiana: Shreveport-Bossier City 2009 ADVA Reunion June 25-28, 2009 Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort

Where do you find a little bit of Cajun mixed in with a little bit of cowboy? You find it in Northeast Louisiana, the locale of the 2009 ADVA National Reunion. The twin cities of Shreveport and Bossier City face each other along opposite sides of the historic Red River. Both cities offer a variety of fun and exciting things for reunion attendees and families.

The reunion will be headquartered at Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort <www.diamondjacks.com> located on the banks of the Red River in Bossier City. Diamond Jacks is a 570-room all suite hotel located just a block south of Interstate 20. Room options include a single king bed or two queen beds. Whirlpool bathtubs are standard in all rooms. The hotel features the largest outdoor swimming pool in town and has its own 32-space RV park.

Travel to Shreveport-Bossier City is easy by car or by air. Mileage distances from nearby metro areas within a day's drive include Dallas-Ft Worth, 202; Oklahoma City, 385; Kansas City, 543; San Antonio, 399; Houston, 245; St. Louis, 611; New Orleans, 345; Atlanta, 598; Jackson, 219; and Little Rock, 212.

The Shreveport Regional Airport (SHV) offers a schedule of 62 arrivals and departures. Airlines and their one-stop connecting hubs include American (Dallas-Ft. Worth), Allegiant (Las Vegas), Continental (Houston), Delta-Comair-ASA (Atlanta, Cincinnati), and NWA (Memphis, Detroit).

One of the major attractions of Shreveport-Bossier City is the Louisiana Boardwalk <www.louisianaboardwalk.com>. Louisiana Boardwalk is just a few blocks up the river from Diamond Jacks and is served by a local shuttle service for \$5 round-trip. Located in this entertainment-dining-shopping center are more than 70 moderate to up-scale businesses. The anchor is a brand-new Bass Pro Outdoor World complete with an alligator pool.

Restaurants located at the Louisiana Boardwalk include Fuddruckers, Hooters, Salt Grass Steak House, Joe's Crab Shack, IHOP, O'Brien's Irish Pub and Restaurant, Funny Bone Sports Bar, and Sonic. A Regal Stadium 14 movie theater is nearby. Getting around is made easier by a short-line trolley car line that serves the establishments along the boardwalk.

A complete listing of area attractions, events, and services is available from the Shreveport-Bossier City Convention and Visitors Bureau <<http://louisianasotherside.com>>. You can request a visitors' guide and learn more about transportation, history, museums, theaters, golfing, parks, dining, antique shopping, and children's activities.

All sorts of dining experiences are available in town. If you like crawfish or steak or seafood or just a plain hamburger it can be found at one of the local restaurants. Or you can stay in and enjoy a fine meal in one of Diamond Jack's four eateries. Legends Buffet offers a moderately priced buffet for three meals a day. The Creamery provides coffee, pastries, ice cream and deli sandwiches 24 hours a day. DJ's steakhouse is an upscale restaurant open for fine dining each evening. The Agave is a Mexican taqueria style cantina open from late afternoon until late night.

Diamond Jack's offers easy walking access to its nearby floating casino. If you drive in be sure to use the free valet parking service. If you fly in give prior notice to Diamond Jacks and they will pick you up at the airport free of charge. Enjoy the large outdoor swimming pool and the fitness center or make an appointment for a relaxing therapeutic massage at the in-house spa.

Reunion activities will include a visit to nearby Barksdale Air Force Base. Barksdale is the home of the 2nd Bomb Wing which still flies the famous B-52 bomber. The visit will include a stop at the 8th Air Force museum where over 40 vintage airplanes are on static display. Lunch will be at the Officers Club and will feature the annual memorial service. Also included in this event is a special address by a retired USAF colonel who was at Dien Bien Phu (North Vietnam) with the French army in 1954.

Chuck Carlock, a former pilot with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company (Rattlers and Firebirds), is scheduled to display one or two of his Vietnam-era restored helicopters. Chuck's special display received a great response at the 1999 reunion in St. Louis.

Entertainment for Saturday night is tentatively scheduled to be a USO type stage show featuring performers who made trips to Vietnam with Bob Hope to entertain troops. The banquet room features a full stage so everyone will be able to enjoy a great view of this fun-filled performance.

The reunion committee is doing all it can to make this a fun reunion that is easy on your pocket and provides plenty of time of you to visit with your buddies. Here is all you need to do: 1) make your hotel reservations; 2) complete and send your registration form; 3) tell your buddies to do the same; 4) come to The Other Side of Louisiana and have a great time. See you there!



2008 ADVA NATIONAL REUNION

REGISTRATION FORM

Shreveport-Bossier City, LA June 25-28, 2009

Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort
711 Diamond Jacks Boulevard
Bossier City, LA 71111
866-552-9629

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Spouse/Guest(s) Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: State: Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Unit/s: _____ WWII VN

ADVA member	\$10.00/Person	X <input type="text"/> =	\$ <input type="text"/>
Guest/spouse of ADVA member	\$10.00/Person	X <input type="text"/> =	\$ <input type="text"/>
Non-member (Americal vet)**	\$25.00//Person	X <input type="text"/> =	\$ <input type="text"/>
Guest/spouse of non-member (Americal vet)	\$10.00/Person	X <input type="text"/> =	\$ <input type="text"/>
All others	\$25.00/Person	X <input type="text"/> =	\$ <input type="text"/>

***Pre-registration closes on June 10. Add \$5 per person for registrations after June 10.**

****Registration fee for non-member Americal vets includes one year ADVA dues.**

Friday: June 26, 2009 9:30 AM-3 PM

Barksdale AFB (includes lunch) \$35.00/Person X = \$

Saturday Saturday night banquet: June 27, 2009 6 PM

and entertainment \$40/Person X = \$

Saturday Saturday night entertainment only : 6 PM

\$15.00/Person X = \$

The reunion rate of \$99 plus tax per night is effective for reservations made before June 4, 2009. Call 866-552-9629 and ask for the Americal rate. A credit card is necessary to make reservation. Check in 4:00 PM, check out by noon. If you arrive by air call the hotel in advance and they will pick you up at the airport.

TOTAL \$ **Mail form and check to:**

How many times have you attended an ADVA reunion?

Contact e-mail: malcolm_east@att.net Contact Phone: 409-755-2892



**Checks Payable to:
ADVA 2008 Reunion
Mr. Malcolm East
9 Briarcliff Lane
Lumberton, TX 77657**

My Americal Grandfather

by Nancy Antonietti

August 15, 1942

Weather clear and warm. I washed and worked on the ambulance. We made a trip to Paita and the 9th Station Hospital. It is 6:20 pm and I just wrote to Frances. Chase was singing and he made me make a couple of mistakes. I sent him out to fill the water bottle.

My grandfather, PFC Alfred Piscitello, served as a medic in WWII, in the Americal Division's 121st Medical Battalion. He shipped out the Brooklyn Navy Yard on January 23rd, 1942 and served in New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Fiji, and Bougainville, returning stateside in 1944. My first memory of actually "hearing" anything about his wartime experiences was when I was a college student. We were in my car, just the two of us, and as I drove, he recounted a story of a priest coming into his Army encampment on the back of an open truck. In the middle of the sermon, while the priest stood preaching from the elevated truck bed, a Japanese plane passed overhead, strafing the open area where the men had gathered. When the plane had gone and the men had dusted themselves off, the priest told them that they would certainly go to Heaven when they died, as they were experiencing Hell during their living years.

I've often asked myself how did I go so long without listening to his stories. There are two components to the truth. One is that he didn't talk much about the war. Like most of that Greatest Generation, he came home from the Pacific Theater and put that topic aside while he raised his family and made a living. In fact, only recently, most probably as a result of increased funding for the VA Mental Health program brought about by the returning soldiers of Operation Iraqi Freedom, has he been diagnosed with and treated for PTSD. All those years of not sleeping well, of unfocused anger – he just accepted it as what you lived with when you had seen the things he had seen. Before he retired from the workforce, his own children were only vaguely aware that he had served in the military.

The second component of my years of ignorance is that, as the young are prone to be, I was sheltered and egocentric. When I heard him talking about Guadalcanal or Bougainville and there were other people to give him an audience, I wouldn't really tune in. I would just allow the conversation to wash over me and let someone else be the active listener.

I am so thankful that I've had the pleasure of my grandfather's company for the twenty years since that first day when I really heard what he had to say. Together, we have unearthed boxes that he hadn't opened in decades, discovering and restoring genuine treasures from his time overseas; a bracelet that he made out of Fijian and Australian coins; a photograph frame which he had fashioned out of the aluminum of a downed Japanese fighter plane for his sweetheart Frances, my grandmother-to-be; photos he and his buddy Chase printed on aerial photography paper in the

darkroom they had rigged up in the back of an ambulance; and most importantly, his diaries, irregular recordings of both the memorable and the unremarkable days, written early on in Italian, later in English, which I translated and transcribed, and from which the above quote was taken.

I love this diary entry because it hints at his relationship to my grandmother, his sense of humor, his acquisition of writing skills in his second language, for which I am so proud of him, and his relationship with Chase, which I know was important to him. My writing project about his life has become my way of honoring my grandfather while he is still with us, for which opportunity I will always be grateful.



One Last Campaign for the Old Guard!

MUSEUM
dwtaylor@ohio.net

Contributions to the
renovation fund of the
Americal Museum are tax
deductible. Please send your
donation to:

David W. Taylor
970 Kenner Ave.
Medina, OH 44256

The Americal Museum
will become part of the
responsibilities of the newly
formed Americal Legacy
Committee. See the next
issue of the Americal Journal
for more details.

UP THE RIVER

PFC Alfred Piscitello
Authored by his granddaughter
Nancy Antonietti

"I'm looking for Pisky," the sergeant said.

I had been playing cards with Chase, Baxter, and Gallagher. I folded and stood up.

"You're Pisky?" the sergeant asked.

"Yes, sir."

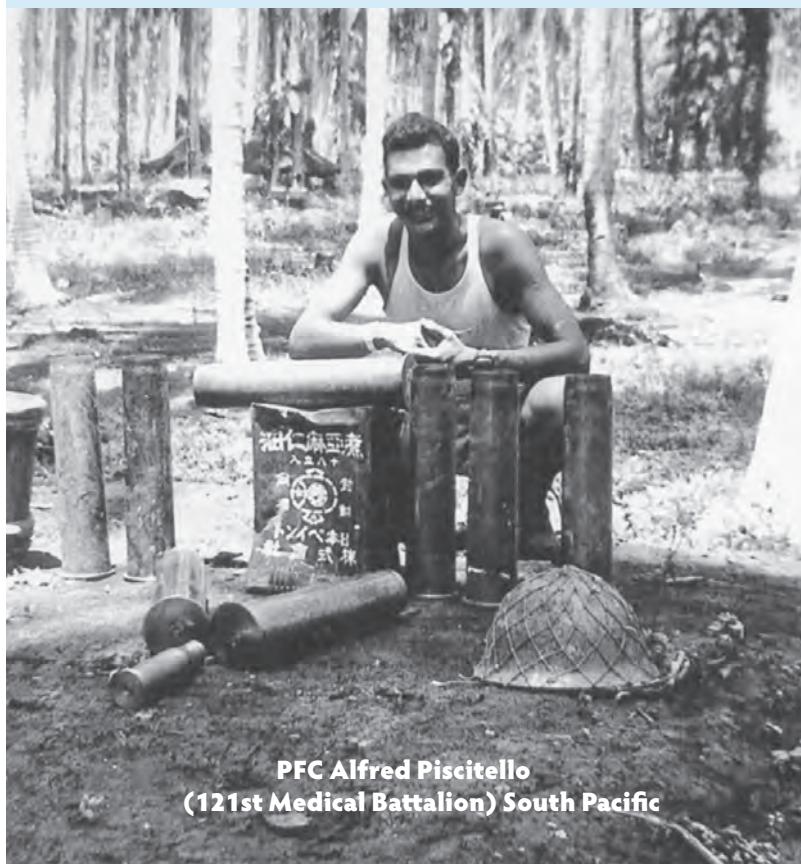
"I heard you're a fisherman and you might be able to pilot a boat."

"I sure can, sir."

He explained that a soldier had broken his leg while on maneuvers up in the mountains. "We have no way to get him out except down the river. We've got a sixteen foot outboard, a native guide, and two rifles for you. Can you take care of this, private?"

I assured him that I could. I actually appreciated the change of pace. Besides, I had been winning the card game, and I always like to leave with full pockets.

Baxter and Gallagher both wanted to come with me, but I could only take one, as we'd have the guide, and, on the way down, the soldier. I chose Baxter, since, as a medic, I had never fired a rifle before. Of the two of them, he was the better shot.



I went to the ambulance to gather some supplies. Then, the sergeant walked us to where the motorboat, the rifles, and our guide were waiting for us at the river. As we shoved off, the sergeant gave me ten shear pins, in case some broke in the shallows.

The grasses grew as tall as a man along the river bank, but Baxter noticed what looked like spears sticking up above the green tips. He pointed it out to the guide, who made a throat-slicing motion across his own neck; head-hunters!

Soon the guide gestured for me to turn to the port side. He didn't speak English, and neither Baxter nor I spoke Fijian, but I thought we could understand each other through hand gestures for what we needed to know. Well, that wasn't working. The water off the port side was swirling and yellowish, which to my way of thinking indicated shallow water. But I figured he must know what he's doing, so I turned. Bam! Our propeller struck bottom and we lost forward thrust. Sure enough, when I pulled up the propeller, I saw that the shear pin had broken, and I had to replace it. I gave the guide the benefit of the doubt, not one more time, but twice. Both times he directed us into shallow water. At this rate, we were gonna run out of pins and fail the mission, or worse, get eaten by cannibals. The next time he started motioning for me to turn, I saw the shallow water waiting, and I hit my limit.

"No," I said, "I'm not turning."

He started yammering in Fijian, and his volume rose.

I pulled the boat over to shore, and told him to get out, but he didn't want to leave. Baxter had his rifle in hand, and I leveled mine at him, too, and motioned with it.

"You get out now, or God help me, I'll blow you to bits," I told him. He ran off the boat then, and we continued on.

We found the soldiers waiting for us, along with an American missionary priest and two nuns. The priest and nuns approached Baxter and I, blessing us and talking about our role in the war. I learned that the nuns were from a seminary in Methuen, Massachusetts, and they were here to educate the natives. They were excited to hear that I was also from Massachusetts. One of the nuns wanted me to take some things back with me, so that when I got home, I could bring them to the seminary.

"Sister," I said. "I can't promise I'll visit your people. I don't know if I'll even make it home myself."

"Take this, then." She handed me a wooden rosary. "I made it, and I want you to have it."

I kissed the cross and hung the beads around my neck.

"May He protect you," she said.

Behind The Lines

By David W. Taylor



Donald Eichelberger was one of nine children raised in Hopewell (Bedford County) Pennsylvania. With two older brothers already serving in WWII, he wanted to do his part. His parents would not allow him to enlist so he went with his buddy to volunteer to be drafted. Later he found his buddy had actually applied for a deferment exemption as a farmer, but then went to work in a coal mine.

Eichelberger was drafted at the age of 19 in February, 1943 and trained in Gainesville, Texas, in what became to be known as the "Teenage Division", the 86th Division, preparing for the invasion of Europe. The 86th shipped out but Eichelberger moved to Louisiana for more maneuvers then found himself sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge on his way to New Caledonia. He then shipped to Guadalcanal to join the Americal's 164th Regiment, but the fighting on the Canal at that point was largely over, and he found himself off-loading ships for several weeks.

The 164th and Eichelberger then shipped by LCI to Bougainville where he was placed in the regimental headquarters Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. Don, known by his comrades as "Ike" spent several weeks in May 1944 training with a squad of 12 men for reconnaissance missions far behind the enemy's lines. He remembers, "I got my training with some old timers, experienced men, so it was pretty good. I started on actual missions while still in Bougainville, the jungle was extremely dense, and our patrols always lasted at least one week if not more ."

Their missions were always to observe and report, not engage the enemy in combat, where assuredly they would be wiped out. Always in their minds were the horrific stories of the treatment rendered by the Japanese, when they captured prisoners.

While in Bougainville his recon platoon discovered a platoon of 23 Japanese soldiers near Tavanatu. For three days they carefully observed the enemy to study their daily habits. Eichelberger's platoon leader, Lieutenant Milton Shedd (who would later become the founder of Sea World), radioed for permission to attack the enemy group. A platoon of infantry was sent to reinforce the recon element. On November 17, 1944 the attack came at sunrise, after the Americans cautiously and silently surrounded the enemy's grass shacks. At the Japs first movement they opened fire with M1's and carbines and annihilated the entire group without a single casualty. Many weapons, supplies, equipment and ammunition were captured. The entire fight lasted 15 minutes. The recon patrol with the infantry platoon then returned to friendly lines which took two days and one night to get back. The Bronze Star was awarded to everyone who participated in the raid.

Christmas on Bougainville was special for Ike. The 164th headquarters held a contest to see who could create the best Christmas display. Pine trees grew on Bougainville so Ike obtained one and set it up with "GI decorations", using C-ration can tops and other items available to the dogface soldier and won first place. His prize: A half-case of Australian Ale, which Ike still remembers today as being "very tasty." Ike would see his platoon leader, Milton Shedd be rotated to a line company, which happened often to recon platoon leaders because that's where the need was greatest for Lieutenants. In many cases the recon patrols were led by sergeants.

After Bougainville the 164th arrived in Leyte where jungle patrols continued in March of 1945. Action on Cebu Island in April was followed by a beachhead on the neighboring Negros Island. Ike was a Corporal at the time and he recalls, "We were waiting around there for three days on alert but nothing was happening so I decided to do a little fishing. Well, I looked over and there's a guy waving at me. I get over to the beach and he said we are moving out. They were all loaded up in trucks and taking off. So I gathered my equipment real fast and we got to the landing craft bound for Dumaguete, on Negros. The Lieutenant said to all the guys, 'I want you to listen to this. Eichelberger, you're a Private.' Ok I thought I probably deserved it. Then when we weren't far from the beachhead, he says, 'Eichelberger, you're a Sergeant.' Ike wasn't sure whether or not the Lieutenant was serious about the demotion. When he looked at his service records while in the Reserves after the war, he saw that he had indeed been officially demoted to Private and promoted to Sergeant on the same day.

On Bougainville he remembers, "In the beginning we'd take a dog out with us. But we found from our experience while training that we knew as much as the dog did. One of the signals was, as long as you could hear the jungle sounds,



**"Ike" Eichelberger,
South Pacific, age 21**



Eichelberger at 50th Anniversary ceremonies on Guadalcanal

the birds and what have you, there's n o b o d y a r o u n d . But when it was quiet... that's another matter. Also, if you walk down the trail and you run into cobwebs, there's nobody around there. If you see some trees that have been cut off, you can tell how recently they were cut by how much they've grown. They grow back from the inside out."

One of his patrols went 20-days without fresh clothing, bathing or much food. A few C-rations and local food such as coconuts and bananas were all they had. Water from streams was supplemented by coconut juice and water from bamboo shafts.

It was during the long patrol that Ike saved the life of another platoon leader, Lt. Ross. He recalls, "We were coming out of the bush and came upon four Japanese soldiers foraging for food. After verifying they weren't Filipino's from our interpreter we opened fire. We killed them all as they were digging for food. Then their guards, who were stationed in the nearby hillside pinned us down. Lt. Ross instructed me to contact the nearby Huk guerillas by running to their camp. They came back and gave us support. After the Japs retreated deep into the bush we proceeded to our Filipino base camp.

Ike remembers arriving at the camp "which seemed like Shangri-La". It was located in a valley with steep ridges and a mountain stream bubbling down over the rocks. Palm trees, bamboo and fern huts surrounded a campfire. Here we had our first hot meal, rice and some tough caribou. We stayed one night and continued our patrol.

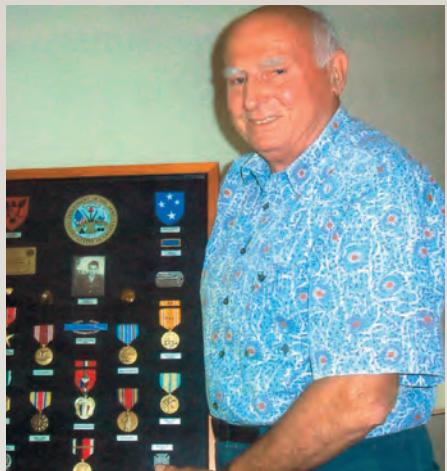
After patrols on Negros his platoon was returned to Cebu Island to aid the 132nd regiment in mopping-up duty. Eichelberger was made a Sergeant. They, like the rest of the Americal, then prepared for the invasion of Japan. Ike recalls, "We were one of the units that were going to be in the first wave on Japan. We didn't know what they had waiting

for us. Their planes were all converted to suicide planes to take out the troop ships, even down to landing craft." Like many of his fellow veterans, Eichelberger agrees with the dropping of the Atomic Bombs. "Had they not done that, as horrible as it was, we would have lost a million people there, US and Japanese."

Don Eichelberger spent three months in Japan doing occupational duties. His service with the Recon platoon has earned him, among other awards, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, two Bronze Stars and some medals from the Philippine Government. His biggest pride was that, "We never lost a man. Doug Burtell was the only one who got a Purple Heart from a Jap grenade on Cebu."

The 164th Regiment had seen the longest combat duty of any regiment in the Army and the Americal Division had the longest combat record of any division in the Army. Eichelberger, like many others in the division had suffered much from their jungle duty. During his tenure with the recon platoon he contracted malaria, jungle rot, amoebic dysentery, hook worms and was hospitalized for tropical ulcers. He remembers, "My welcoming home was walking into the house and being embraced by my parents. I didn't have any bells ringing or parades or what have you." After the war Don Eichelberger went to Bliss Electrical College and was hired by Westinghouse (Sharon, PA) where he worked for 37 years. He enlisted in the Army Reserves in December 1945 and re-upped twice, but was never called up for active duty in Korea. He retired in the nearby town of Sharpsville, PA.

On August 7, 1992 Donald "Ike" Eichelberger returned to Guadalcanal for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the battle for control of the island and the dedication of a monument. Over 350 veterans from all branches of the services which fought on Guadalcanal were present. Memories of a distant time came into sharp focus as Ike laid a commemoration wreath on the monument with General Flo, who was a Lieutenant with the 164th Regiment in 1942. Looking out at the dense, foreboding jungles which surrounded the ceremony he paused and remembered under the tropical heat, his small group of Intelligence and Reconnaissance soldiers, that this same jungle could not defeat long ago.



Eichelberger with display of his service



Remembering Jack Morton

By Edward J. Gekosky

The Last Of A Gallant Forty-Three



The remaining eight members of "Roy's Raiders", veterans of the long and bitter war on Bougainville, are shown at a base somewhere in the Pacific. Left to right, Sgt. E. Gekosky, Kalspunt, Pa.; Pfc. S. L. Gonzales, San Angelo, Tex.; Sgt. T. F. Marion, Charles Town, W. Va.; Sgt. H. P. Simonsen, Whitman, Mass.; Lt. Richard L. Roy, Mountain Lake Park, Md., for whom the group was named; Sgt. R. L. Egler, Rockville, Ill.; Sgt. J. G. Morton, Portland, Or., and Sgt. H. K. Norman, Columbus, Ga. (AP Wirephoto, as appeared in NY Times 12/12/1944.)

AP news story about "Roy's Raiders", December 1944. Far left is Sgt. Edward Gekosky. Fifth from left in soft cap is LT. Richard Roy. Second from the right is Sgt. Jack Morton.

The men in this photo were all larger than life to me.

That AP Wirephoto, "The Last of a Gallant Forty-Three", hung in my house since my father passed in 1970. Although I didn't know if any lived beyond WWII, the men in the photo were immortal in my mind, the stuff ancient legends were made of.

The photo was taken in 1944 on Bougainville and was featured in many of the top newspapers around the country. Jack had survived Bougainville, and he was in the photo with my dad, so I knew his image well. Then, I managed to find Jack around 2001. To me, it was like a Greek Legend had come into my life and this heroic figure was anxious to talk with me, since I was the son of another of Roy's Raiders.

I had these servicemen on a high pedestal; I thought no one could live up to their heroics that I imagined. I wanted to get the truth; I researched, and talked with Jack, and others. And then I cried, and cried, and cried. My youthful imaginations, it turned out, were far less than the reality of what Jack and his men went through for us:

Jack lived through early 1944 only because, when left behind for dead, a hanging vine, in the Bougainville jungle, deflected the grenade coming straight for him.

The top of Hill 260 was not much more than a football field in size. By the time the 19-day battle in March was over, at least 658 were dead and thousands wounded.

Each patrol was very hazardous. Jack lost count of his Bougainville patrols after he reached 100. Roy's Raiders may have been the most patrolled platoon on the island; casualties were commonplace.

In October, one of Jack's men lost his glasses and, half blinded, stumbled in front of an enemy pillbox to his death.

Jack responded by personally charging the pillbox only to find the enemy about to reach him with bayonets. Firing from the hip and releasing his grenade saved him from the rush, and more grenades disposed of the pillbox. The platoon knocked out dozens of pillboxes.

On Leyte, Jack heard fellow Roy's Raider "Bob" cry out and he looked back, to see the results of a Jap knee mortar on his friend. Jack made the beach landing on the heavily-mined sands of Cebu. Unable to take the mountaintop behind Cebu City after days of trying, they fixed bayonets and attacked uphill, at night, to finally take Babag Ridge. Of the three platoons with Jack, half of one platoon made it to the top.

An entire mountain blew up just as Company A was on it, taking many of the 200-man company with it. Jack was one of the first to the scene. He then volunteered, for what was described as a death wish assignment, to scout the next mountain looking for enemy explosive-laden caves which the enemy could similarly blow. Only after the traps had been cleared, would the men march on to the next mountain.

Jack continued to fight across the entire width of the large, mountainous island, and afterwards, marched back to Cebu City on the eastern shore, to train for a lead role in the invasion of Japan. He was happy to make Japan, acknowledging having to be carried off the ship there on a stretcher and spending a long time in a hospital.

My research, and talks with Jack and others, revealed men that endured much more than I thought men could endure. Yet Jack came through all of this ... or despite this ... or because of this as a man with a great deal of love. Jack took pains to tolerate my endless questions, understanding I was a lost puppy, missing my Dad, and he fully understood that human yearning for a loved one.

Jack took pains to ensure he knew my family was doing okay, always taking time to talk to my spouse as well as me. Jack was akin to our tribal elder; he had wisdom and understanding and counsel that no one could have if they had not gone through his extraordinary life.

He fretted over some mistakes he had made, and cautioned me to learn from him. He hoped all his family understood just how much he loved them and how proud he was of them. He lived through violence that none of us who were never in war can even imagine yet he cared with every part of his soul for his family!

Gail, his daughter, relayed Jack's last words to his family, words that were not physically possible for him to speak according to the medical personnel. Jack was fond of telling me he cheated death six times, and at his last moment he cheated it a little, again, by telling each of his family, "I love you"

There is definitely something immortal about Jack Morton; saving us from evil in WWII is part of it. Yet his true legacy, to me, was in seeing the horrors of war and afterwards allowing love to prevail. He was my hero and my dear friend, Jack Morton.



“Before You Go”

Quietly, you've all turned gray
 You did your job – you saved our way
 Our life and freedom you preserved
 We've thanked you less than you've deserved

You never boasted, bragged or asked
 For adulation for your past
 You did the job you knew was right
 And quietly, you cry at night

For bodies maimed and comrades lost
 For sights beyond our furthest thoughts
 For what you lived and felt and seen
 For what the cost of freedom means

You leave us blessed with every breath
 That cost you arms and legs and death
 You won the worst and greatest war
 We owe you more, we owe you more

Thank you for your wondrous feats
 For open speech and quiet streets
 For worship as we choose to pray
 For preservation of our way

Before you go, we need to show
 That in your silence we still know
 What you accomplished and what you did
 For who we are and how we live
 So go with love from wives and sons
 And daughters – for a job well done
 From kids who've never seen a tank
 We give you thanks, we give you thanks

For homes and jobs and baseball games
 For many colors, many names
 You saved our lives and we're still free
 From shining sea to shining sea

Thank you, Thank You, Thank you
 Go in peace.

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Together Again at Kokomo Reunion

September 18-21 saw the 26th Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana and many Americal veterans were there to share memories and camaraderie. Reunion organizers estimated attendance at approximately 32,000. The ADVA had a booth in the large vendor tent for recruiting and where National Commander Dave Taylor could shake hands with Americal brothers. We estimate well over 300 Americal vets attended the reunion.



The Second Battle of Firebase Mary Ann

By Larry M. Pistole

The Virtual Wall ® is a wonderful website dedicated to the memory of American soldiers lost in the Vietnam War. It is perhaps the best site dedicated to our fallen brothers. You can find it on the internet at www.virtualwall.org.

As good as this site is it does have some mistakes. Some are minor mistakes such as assigning a casualty to the wrong company. But other mistakes are more dramatic. Survivors of the March 28, 1971 attack on Firebase Mary Ann have a major concern with part of the description The Virtual Wall ® uses for the events that occurred that tragic night.

The Virtual Wall ® includes the words "...sadly, 12 of the 30 dead were killed by friendly fire brought down to force the VC from the overrun areas of the base." When I read this I was enraged. Other veterans who were on Mary Ann on March 27-28, 1971 were also enraged. It is not true that friendly fire killed these soldiers.

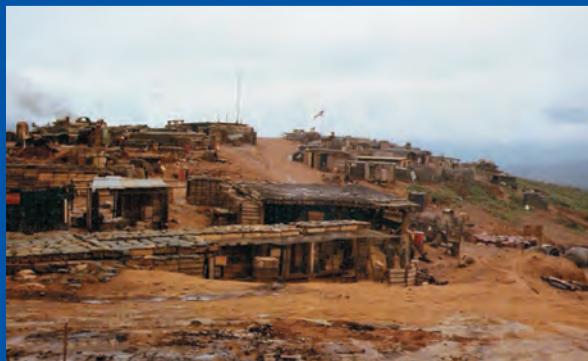
I sent an e-mail to the author of the statement and told him that it was false. He replied that he wrote the description the way it was officially recorded in military documents and that he would not change the description just because he was requested to do so by veterans. He said that he would make a correction only if the official version was proven wrong.

The complete text used by The Virtual Wall ® is as follows: "On the night of 27/28 March 1971 Fire Support Base (FSB) Mary Ann was occupied by 209 Americans from several units of the Americal Division: HHC 1/46th Inf.; C Co. 1/46th Inf.; Recon Platoon; elements of Mortar Platoon; two 155mm howitzer sections, 3/16th Arty; and 20 ARVN artillerymen.

"At approximately 0230 hours, 28 March 1971 the VC mounted a coordinated mortar and sapper attack. Almost simultaneously with the mortar attack, sappers employed satchel charges and rocket propelled grenades

(PRG) to penetrate the south side of the FSB's perimeter. Americans in the perimeter bunkers hunkered down until the explosions from the mortar rounds, satchel charges, and PRGs had subsided, but by then the sappers had breached the trench line and were inside the base. Once inside FSB Mary Ann, the sappers struck over half the bunkers. By the time the VC withdrew, 30 American soldiers were dead and 76 wounded- sadly, 12 of the 30 dead were killed by friendly fire brought down to force the VC from the overrun areas of the base."

The problem is in the fact that 12 casualties are listed as "misadventure", the term for friendly fire, and all 12

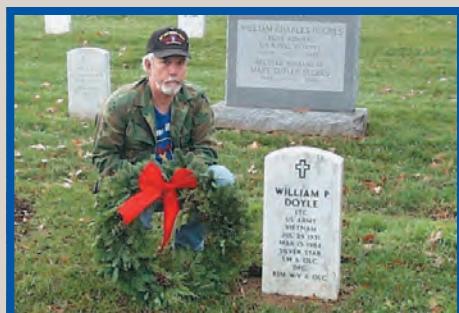


FSB Mary Ann from resupply pad looking south. Ammo bunker is in foreground. TOC is at the top of the hill, left side of road. Photo by Richard Vidaurri.

killed by "artillery/mortar". None of the 12 was listed as killed by small arms fire or any other means. Survivors of the attack have completed sworn statements that say there was no United States' artillery or mortars within firing distance of Mary Ann.

In addition I have read over 700 pages of statements and interviews taken after the attack and friendly fire is not mentioned. News accounts made at the time did not indicate that there were any casualties by friendly fire.

LTC Doyle, the battalion commander, was wounded in the attack on Mary Ann and replaced the next day by LTC Clyde Tate. Colonel Tate was at the time and is still unaware of any friendly fire casualties that happened during the attack. One can be reasonably sure that Tate would be aware of any such casualties as he took command of the



Larry Pistole at grave of LTC William Doyle, Arlington National Cemetery, December 2006. Photo by Larry Pistole.

battalion and prepared the firebase for a potential second attack.

The bottom line is that the statement on The Virtual Wall ® must be changed and justice done for the men that died that night. As it stands now history is recorded incorrectly. It will stay that way unless we prove it is wrong. What good is history if it is incorrect?

I would like to obtain the official autopsy reports for any and all of the casualties listed as "misadventure". I need to find someone who can get access to these reports. I will gladly accept help from anyone.

I also want to say that it is not fair to attack The Virtual Wall ® for this error. This website is created and maintained by Vietnam veterans and does a wonderful job for all Vietnam veterans. I challenge veterans to make sure that their lost buddies are listed on this site. We owe it to them.

I will stay dedicated to this cause until I die or until the correction is made. What is stated is not true and it is not history. The truth is the history.



The full story on the attack on FSB Mary Ann is told by Keith Nolan in his book Sappers in the Wire. Nolan begins his account about a year prior to the attack and concludes with the results of the Army investigation of the tragic events. He relies on official Army documents as well as first-hand accounts of Americal veterans who survived the fierce battle..

THE WALL THAT HEALS

By Linda Anderson © 2008

From 1996 through 2004 my husband John and I traveled the country with "The Vietnam Wall". We were honored to take the second of three replicas of the memorial across the country on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. I'd like to share with you some vignettes of our experiences with "The Wall" and the profound effect it has had on many people.

In June 1999 we set up in Mansfield, PA. This is a very small town and we set the Wall in a park with lots of shade trees. One of the visitors was a woman looking for the location the name of her fiancé who died in Vietnam. When she asked John for the name he recognized the name as a pilot who served with him in the Blue Ghosts in 1969.

John told her he knew her fiancé Robert and that he had pictures of him in Vietnam. The woman was shocked. She started firing questions at John in between her sobs. Then she shared her story.

After Robert was killed in Vietnam she married someone else. She later divorced and all her pictures and letters from Robert were destroyed. She had lost contact with Robert's family and had no way of getting any more pictures of her first love. She got some from John that day in the park.

Since then she has attended three Blue Ghost reunions and has talked with the pilots and crew who were with her fiancé the day he was shot down. Her visit to the wall helped her begin her journey on the long road to healing. In turn she was able to help one of the pilots who had been with Robert that fateful day. He had always blamed himself for Robert's death and she was able to give him comfort that Robert was doing what he wanted.

In October 1999 we displayed the wall in Miami, FL at Miami Dade College. One of the professors gave his students an assignment to write a paper about the Wall. I found out about the assignment after some of the students came by the tent asking questions. The professor shared some of the papers with me.

A student from another country authored one of the papers. She started out by saying that she was very upset

to have to spend her weekend writing a paper about the Wall. Her country was not involved in the Vietnam War and it meant nothing to her. She described her visit to our information center and reading the notes and letters on display. They brought tears to her eyes and she started to see the Wall and its visitors in a new light.

She sat at the apex of the Wall and watched the visitors. She looked at the items they left behind and she felt their emotions. I remembered seeing her there all day Saturday and I thought she possibly had a relative on the Wall.

The student finished her story by saying she was going to learn more about the Vietnam War and to try to help veterans in some way. She didn't know the 58,000 names etched on the Wall. But she read the letters and notes left behind ... and then the names had faces, and they were sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, mothers, and fathers.

We opened the exhibit on April 20, 2000 in Cape Girardeau, MO. A former POW came by for a visit. He hadn't been to the traveling Wall before but said he had been to the Wall in Washington, DC. He told me that it was much harder to visit our Wall. The emotion and impact of seeing the Wall is greater during visits to peoples' hometowns. They see their family and neighbors reflected in the Wall. Their guard is down. They are relaxed and not distracted by their surroundings.

The former POW said he would like very much to talk to the family of a local boy whose name was on the wall. He needed to pass along a message to the family that he had been holding for 30 years. We hooked them up and under the trees in view of the Wall they had a very long talk. The conversation at first seemed very tense. But before long there were smiles and laughter and then tears shed. The catharsis began for two separate families inextricably linked by a common bond.

Another city we visited during 2000 was Leicester, MA. A former US Marine came to see his buddies' names on the Wall. The Marine had to be wheeled to the Wall because he was on a gurney. He was in the last stages of cancer and very weak. But his mind was sharp and he was able to give us names, ranks, and dates of death for all his friends.

We could tell his body was giving out



Heather Hull receives Girl Scout Gold Award for Wall display.

quickly. The hospice caregiver and his daughter wheeled him down the walk and stopped in front of each name which he then called out. He gave a little salute and said a few final words to his friend. He ended by telling the ladies a little about his buddy.

We found an exceptional young lady in Los Alamos, NM. On September 9, 2000 Miss Heather Hull, an eighth-grader, received the Girl Scout's Gold Award in front of the Wall. This was the end of a four-year project that Heather started.

In 1996 Heather Hull took a trip to Washington, DC with a group of other students. She wanted to combine her Girl Scout's Silver award project with the trip. She visited veterans groups in Los Alamos and asked anyone had any mementos or items that they would like her to leave at The Wall in Washington.

The items Heather collected came with stories told to her by the vets with tears in their eyes and lumps in their throats. The vets entrusted her with their precious gifts because they couldn't make the trip themselves. She left their items at The Wall and took photos back to the vets at home.

Heather was humbled by the stories told by the veterans. She told her parents that she wanted to do something special for the veterans to thank them for all their sacrifices. She wanted to bring the Wall to Los Alamos. This was the beginning of a process that would have a profound effect on the Hull family and their community.



Ailing U.S. Marine gives final farewell to fallen brothers.

Heather sent the application and got the exhibit date as requested. She went to the community and got the support and volunteers needed. She presided over countless meetings, gave hundreds of interviews, kept her grades up, participated in Girl Scouts, played in band, and squeaked in a social life. During the four years of planning the town watched Heather grow into a lovely young lady.

When John and I arrived Heather and her mother were there to meet us. Heather spoke at the opening ceremony with the composure of a businesswoman talking to her board of directors. She hosted the site with compassion and took time to speak to all the family members who visited the Wall. She personally handled any problems and made sure everyone was taken care of properly.

Special things began to happen because of the display. Veterans started talking to their families and friends about their time "in-country". They put on uniforms that had been hanging in the back of the closet for years, dusted off the medals, shined shoes, and proudly spoke of their service to thousands of school children that visited the Wall.

Visitors left many mementos at the Wall. There were letters and pictures of children and grandchildren being given to loved ones just as you would send them to your family members. Also placed at the Wall were notes from soldiers finally saying goodbye to buddies left behind but obviously not forgotten. There were poems written

by school children dedicated not only to those on the Wall but to all veterans thanking them for their service and sacrifice.

Heather Hull received the Girl Scouts Gold Award for her efforts in bringing the Wall to Los Alamos. She gave a very moving and emotional speech. Heather started to think about all the young men and women on the Wall and tears of sorrow started to fall.

In March 2001 we visited Laurinburg, NC. Included in the things left behind were the pages of a scrapbook. There were pictures of a fallen soldier in uniform along with prom pictures and family photos. There were a couple of paragraphs from loved ones and friends.

The pages told of the tremendous loss of one young lady. She lost her first love and husband in 1970. When he was killed in Vietnam their dreams were stolen. They were now "Sweethearts in Memory". One page displayed a picture of a bride and groom and talked of the "sweetness of his kiss" and "the sparkle in his eyes". For those of us who never lost anyone in the war it is impossible to imagine the pain and loss this young lady had to endure.

In April 2001 we displayed in an elementary school yard in Sharonville, OH. The faculty and children made this stop a very special visit. As soon as the Wall was set up the children directed visitors and answered questions. Every child and faculty member wore a bracelet on his or her wrist. Each

bracelet had the name, rank, and casualty date of someone on the Wall. At the closing ceremony the bracelets were placed in a hole on the school grounds and a tree was planted at that spot.

During our visit John met a nurse who had been in charge of the Emergency Room at the 312th Evacuation Hospital in Chu Lai. When John, a medic with Blue Ghost, brought someone to the hospital during busy periods she would put him to work. When John introduced himself and recalled those times she started crying and gave him a big bear hug.

Two days after the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were attacked we were in Salt Lake City, UT. Usually visitors come to the Wall after work or on the weekends. But in the wake of 9/11 they showed up during breaks and at lunch. For some it was like a trip to their church. They sought comfort, reassurance, and some sort of understanding. Others just wanted to talk with "old friends". One left a note:

Dick,

Well, here we go again with another threat to our country. It's not like before but our casualties are high. This ribbon and what you know it stands for, is my pledge to you and the rest of the guys that I will do my part, in your names. The promise we made so long ago still stands! I just wish I wasn't so damned old now."

Semper Fi, Guys,

Doug, 1st Mar Div

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Lam Son 719

Operation Lam Son 719:

LZ Shepard

By Ron Green

[This is a continuation of a story that appeared on pages 30-31 in the Apr-May-Jun 2008 Americal Journal. -editor]

After a long trip from Duc Pho I finally settled in with the 4/3rd Infantry at LZ Shepard as their temporary artillery liaison officer. I inherited a small culvert covered hole in the ground with the battalion S-2 officer. He had one end of the three feet deep trench while I bedded down in the other. Until I was able to get my hands on a folding cot I slept on a stretcher that the medics loaned me. It was "home sweet home" for the next three weeks.

My work area was a small attachment to the conex container used as the tactical operations center (TOC). There was enough space for one man, two men if we took turns breathing. Work proved interesting since our ground location was on the landing approach for the airstrip at Khe Sahn. This restricted our direct fire capability from 0600 to 1800 hours daily unless we had contact with the enemy. For some strange reason, Air Force pilots don't like to fly through friendly artillery and mortar fire.

We obtained indirect fire clearance through the 5th Infantry Division (Mech) located on Khe Sahn. We had great fire support from a half battery

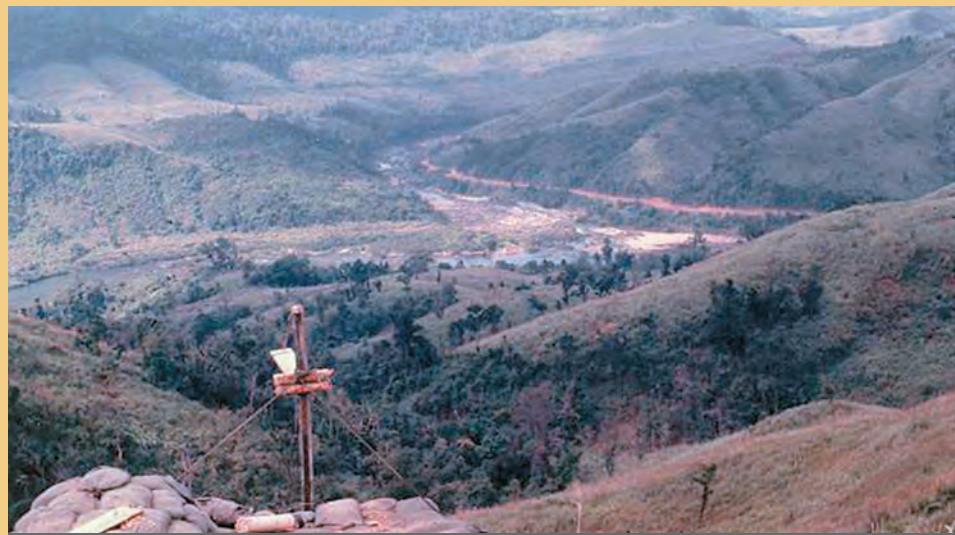
of the 3/16th Artillery (155mm). They occupied the knoll to the west about 500 yards. On a clear day we could see at least five miles in all directions.

The mornings on LZ Shepard were spent watching helicopters fly west towards Laos. The afternoons were spent watching the Hueys bring back smaller damaged choppers, the Chinooks bring back Hueys, and the Cranes bring back Chinooks.

Even though work during the day was boring we did receive some interesting and often humorous entertainment. A river ran parallel to QL9 (the major dirt road running through Khe Sahn and into Laos) about a mile to the north of us. During one of the many convoys on QL 9 a driver lost control of his 2 ½ ton truck. This resulted in the rear of the truck sliding into the river with the nose up on the river bank.

An enterprising motor sergeant brought a five-ton wrecker to pull the partially submerged deuce and a half out of the water. He stopped the wrecker up on the road perpendicular to the drowning truck. He swung the boom and hooked up. But he failed to lower the stabilizing jacks on the wrecker. The wrecker was soon on its side. A tank retriever righted the wrecker. I departed a couple of weeks later and the truck was still in the water.

One day I saw several sets of boots at the entrance of our bunker. I crawled out to observe Major Frakes, the S-3 officer; LTC Coates, the battalion commander; and the 5th Infantry Brigade commander looking through binoculars toward the river south of the hill. I asked the major what they were looking at. He pointed to people swimming in the river about a mile



QL 9 as it turns to head toward Khe Sahn with the river nearby.



My home away from home on LZ Shepard.

away. It looked like they thought there were protected from our view by the small hill in between our locations.

I asked who they were and no one seemed to know. Since I was in a relaxed mood I decided to have some fun. I asked Major Frakes if I could put in a fire mission on the swimmers. He said, "No." I asked if I could use dome "fire cracker" rounds on them. He said, "No, what if they are friendly?" I assured him that there would not be friendly when I got finished with them.

A patrol took the re-supply helicopter to investigate the swimmers. The patrol soon returned with their "prisoners" and I strode down to the helipad to see who had been swimming in the river. The Vietnamese who got off the chopper wore shorts and several carried sandbags. One Vietnamese ran over to me and showed me his sandbag full of fish that he had caught. I thought to myself, "those fish almost got your butt blown away." We discovered later that they were Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) truck drivers. And we wonder today where things went wrong.

One day our Command and Control (C and C) chopper had to sit down at LZ Vandergrif to refuel. As Major Frakes and I talked an entire hill about

a hundred yards away disappeared in a tremendous explosion. Being a "big" veteran of two days at Vandergrif, I told the major that the engineers frequently had a number of those "fire in the holes". No sooner had the words left my mouth when a second 122 mm rocket hit nearby. I barely got my leg on the helicopter as it lifted off the ground.

As we climbed into the air I received a ferocious pounding on my shoulder from the door gunner. I saw that he pointed to his ammo box in front of me. Getting that box to him in mid-air proved to be quite a chore. As we circled overhead in the helicopter we watched the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) fire 22 122 mm rockets into Vandergrif in the middle of the day. On another night the 3/16th Artillery at Vandergrif had a gun crew wiped out by a rocket.

The 5/4th Artillery of the 5th Infantry Division (Mech) lost a M109 155 mm mechanized howitzer gun crew on Khe Sahn. The gun crew was firing scheduled night harassment and interdiction (H and I) missions. An investigation discovered an empty eight inch powder canister among the 155 mm canisters. The speculation was that the gun crew mistakenly put the eight inch powder bag into the 155 mm

gun. This caused the breach of the gun to blow killing the two men in the cab.

I awoke late one morning and met Major Frakes. He told me to go down to the artillery area and see what kind of damage we had done. I was puzzled. He told me that in the middle of the night we had accidentally dropped a mortar round on the artillery area.

I took the E Company commander with me since he was in charge of the mortars. As we approached the artillery area we observed the artillery first sergeant standing with his hand on his hips. He began bellowing that we owed him a new tent. I asked him what he meant. He told me that we had destroyed his tent and he wanted a new one.

I reminded him that he only had one tent and we could see it nearby. They had one GP small tent and it looked all right to me. We walked over to the tent and he pulled back the door flap. It revealed the back wall which had so many holes it that it looked like a mosquito net.

I could not understand why he was so upset until the story unfolded. He and another soldier were asleep in the tent when the round went off. Fortunately they were both prone and the flowering affect of the round caused the fragments to go over them. One of the men had a small spot under his eye where a piece of shrapnel had hit him. The first sergeant stayed on my back for the rest of my time on the hill. He wanted me to get him a new tent. I still think he was just irritated because we disturbed his sleep.

Our investigation indicated that the "hot gun" was an 81 mm mortar that was being manned by a 4.2 inch mortar crew. The two mortars had different gun sights. The 81 mm has a 3200 mil sight while the 4.2 inch has a 6400 mil sight. In the dark of the night the gunner forgot to make the correct adjustment which caused the fired round to go in the opposite direction than it was intended. Fortunately no one was badly hurt.

Monsoon weather set in during my



Tactical Operations Center of 4/3 Infantry on LZ Shepard with my sandbag addition on the end of the conex container.

time on LZ Shepard. One night while I was on duty at the TOC my bunker mate told me that we had a problem back at our bunker. Water had soaked into the ground around our bunker and caused big chunks of dirt to fall off the sides of the hole. If the sides cave in a couple of more inches then the culvert half roof would cave in on us. We managed to scrounge some ammo crates and a hammer and spent the rest of the night shoring up the wall.

My daughter was born while I was on Shepard. We still have the message. It was written on a corner of a duty log. All it said was, "female, 7 lbs, 8 oz, all well." Everyone that I told asked me her name and I told them that I did not know. But I had a daughter.

I discovered later that the Red Cross tracked me all the way from Chu Lai to the 4/3rd Infantry rear area at Khe Sahn. They called and asked if the 4/3rd had a "redleg" by the name of Green. The operator said, "No." Fortunately the executive officer said, "Wait a minute, we have a new one on the hill." They found me.

One of our forward observers (FO) was a very fine young lieutenant that came in-country with me. I believe his name was Jerry Campbell. He was a former football player at Texas A & M and a devout Christian. Late that night I called him on the radio to let him know that Stephanie had been born.



Resupply by Chinook on LZ Shepard. We needed the water, but he blew everything down!

After I signed off with him several others on the radio net called to offer their congratulations. I believe that I enjoyed my time in Vietnam with the infantry the most.

I met man good people with the 4/3rd Inf. One was a young chaplain (Baptist, I believe) who conducted the most beautiful chapel service in a mortar pit at sunrise on a Tuesday morning. He spent most of his time in the bush with the troops.

A veteran mortar sergeant taught me to cook C-rations that tasted great. Another mortar sergeant and I spent a frustrating evening trying to adjust 81 mm illumination rounds on a road. A young sniper on the bunker line let me look through his Starlight scope into the tree line at night. I worked with many great people with the 4/3rd on LZ Shepard but the names fail me as I get older.

LTC Hobbs, my battalion commander, flew out one day to get me. The fun times were over and I had to get back to my job as S-1 officer of the 6/11th Artillery at Dong Ha. I felt sad to leave LZ Shepard and all of the good folks I had met. But new adventures awaited me on Operation Lam Son 719.



The 155 artillery position and the saddle in between on LZ Shepard.

THE WAR WON'T END

By Lee R. Gunton
Co. C, 5/46th Inf., 198th LIB

**The war won't end,
It'll never be the same.
The heat, the sweat,
The tears, the pain.**

**The war won't end,
The bullets won't stop.
In the middle of the night,
There's still a loud pop.**

**The war won't end,
We still have the scars.
They don't go away,
With needles or in bars.**

**The war won't end,
Did Saigon really fall?
All we have left,
Is a long, cold, black wall.**

**The war won't end,
50,000 and more.
Keep asking the nation,
What was it all for?**

**The war won't end,
It's there every night.
It was just the beginning,
Of a very long fight.**

**The war won't end,
Did I do what's right?
Some of us fought,
Others took flight.**

**The war won't end,
For some it just lags.
Whose sons and brothers came
home,
In green body bags.**

**The war won't end,
For the mother who grieves.
Her son will come home,
She still believes.**

**The war won't end,
Can't you take it away?
I want to live and to breathe,
I want to work and to play.**

**The war won't end,
Can I explain to my sons,
The battle still rages,
The fighting's not done.**

**The war won't end,
Three grunts in D. C.,
Sometimes in the night,
They are all that I see.**

**The war won't end,
Maybe it's not all that bad,
Ed, Dean, Mark and Wilk,
The best friends I've ever had.**

**The war won't end,
Not so for the mass.
But for others, no peace,
At the bottom of a glass.**

**The war won't end,
It goes on and on.
From the bunkers at Khe Sahn,
To the streets of Saigon.**

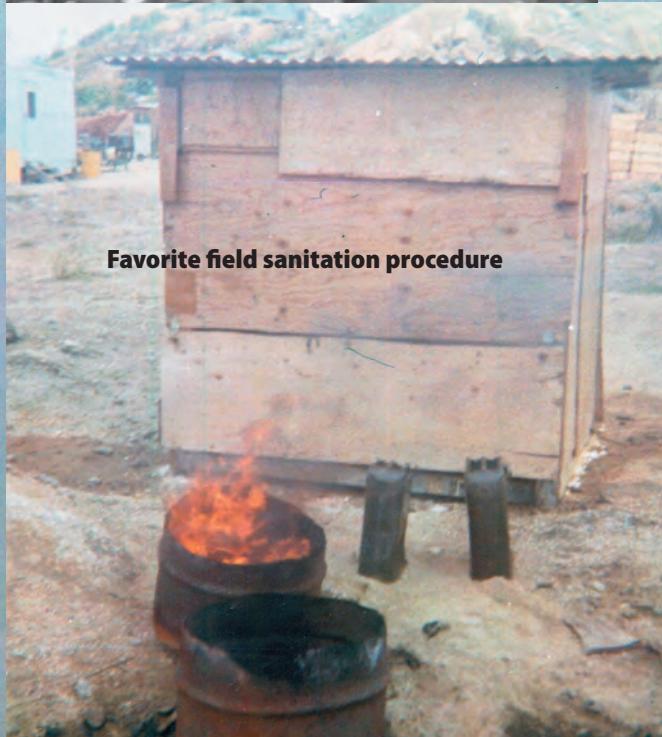
**The war won't end,
I'll never be free.
The screams and the blood,
Are forever part of me.**



Above FSB Linda, trench and fighting bunker, 1972



Hill 411 trash dump scavengers



Favorite field sanitation procedure

Vietnam Photo Album

Photos by George T. Mitchell

George T. Mitchell was assigned to Co. E, 3/1st Inf., 11th LIB in 1971. He served in the 4.2 inch mortar crew for three months at Chu Lai, Hill 411, and Charlie Ridge. He was then assigned to Co. E and Co. C, 1/46th Inf., 196th LIB. He served seven more months at Ridgeline, DaNang, and FSB Linda with the 4.2 inch and 81mm mortar crews. He also went on infantry missions. He can be reached by e-mail at gringomitch@yahoo.com.



FSB Linda 1972: Old Glory proudly waves



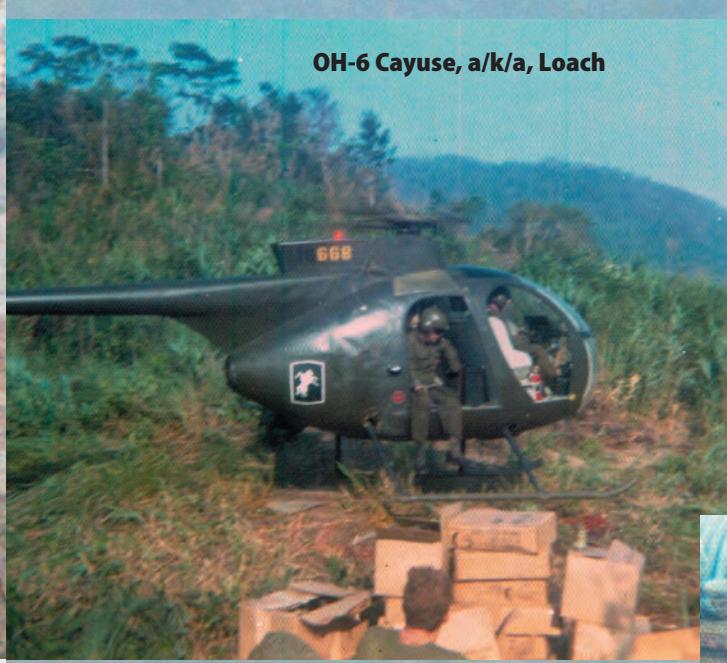
FSB Linda 1972: Always building something



One-man poncho hooch



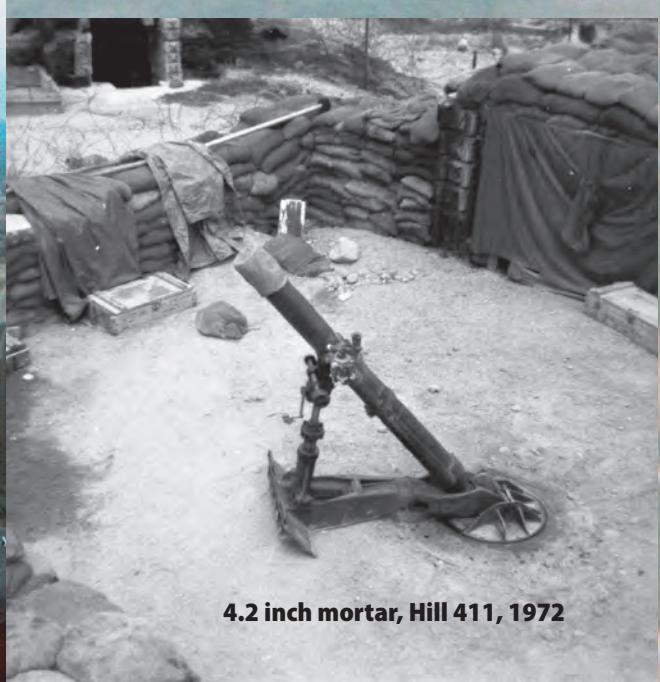
Sapper in the wire



OH-6 Cayuse, a/k/a, Loach



Work detail, Charlie Ridge, 11th LIB



4.2 inch mortar, Hill 411, 1972



: FSB Linda 1972: Repairing defensive positions





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