



January • February • March
2009

AMERICALE JOURNAL

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

Three Days Near TAM KY



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commander's Comments

By David W. Taylor



Americal Legacy a Primary Focus

As I complete my first six months as your National Commander I am convinced the ADVA must have two top priorities as an organization over the next two decades. First, is to make every effort to locate and recruit our brothers-in-arms to this fine organization. I have seen the catharsis that takes place many times at national and chapter reunions when buddies come together, many for the first time since Vietnam. This occurs in other groups not associated with the ADVA as well, but as time goes on, I believe the ADVA will offer the most resources and programs for Americal vets to coalesce around. For example, services such as data-basing the names from all the Americal orders from Vietnam (now in our possession) for members to check for awards they may not have had received or whether buddies received the awards they were nominated for; developing an expanded buddy-locator system, providing more historical reference materials, etc.

I continue to encourage all of you who reunite with smaller groups of vets to consider having your group join us as an ADVA Chapter. Please contact me about this; I can assist you in the process, which is fairly simple.

Our second top priority is to take serious steps over the next twenty years to solidify the legacy of the Americal Division among the American public. It is unlikely the Americal patch will ever be worn again and it is up to us to establish, as we say in the advertising business - "mind share" - of the Americal Division. There are many ways to do this but foremost is to establish ourselves in Army museums and other historical venues where citizens interested in military history often visit. Other opportunities such as printed literature and videos will be undertaken. Please read carefully our National Adjutants article in this issue of the Journal concerning the Americal Legacy effort and volunteer to help or contribute to this important effort.

Army Division Associations

The Association of Army Division Associations (ADA) is a group of representatives from over twenty Army organizations like the ADVA, that meet once/year to share their experiences within their associations – problems, issues and successes – to learn from each other to make each association stronger.

In early December I appointed Ron Green, our Scholarship Chairman, to also be the ADVA representative to this organization and to report back to the ADVA staff with a detailed report after each meeting. I appreciate Ron's willingness to take on this new role and I am sure the ADVA will benefit from this close association with the ADA.

Americal Legacy Awards Announced

As part of our increased focus on establishing the legacy of the Americal Division, we established an Americal Legacy Award that will be given to those individuals who help in an extraordinary way to perpetuate the legacy of the Americal Division. The first award was presented by ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines to Bruce Flaherty. Bruce traveled over a number of years to the National Archives in Washington from New York State for a total of sixteen weeks, living out of a motel and working long hours to copy the Divisions Tactical Operations Center (TOC) reports so they could be processed for historical review and be made available to members.

ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines (Right) presents the Americal Legacy Award to Bruce Flaherty in front of Flaherty's fellow unit members during a recent reunion.



Les Hines also presented the Legacy award to Frank Mika. Frank is a non vet, who works with Dutch DeGroot (Creative Director of the Americal Journal) in the printing and graphics design business. Frank donated hundreds of hours of his own time and professional graphics talents to improve the readability and printability of many of the division TOC images that were copied from the National Archives (the original documents were of poor quality). In addition, Frank took on the job of designing the Americal Journal last year when Dutch DeGroot was on active duty serving in the Iraq - Afghanistan Theatre.

Frank Mika, receiving his Americal Legacy Award, presented by Les Hines. Frank is a non vet who has devoted hundreds of hours to the Americal Division Veterans Association.



Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

ADVA's membership gains have been very good since the last issue of the Americal Journal. During this time period, we added fifty eight new members. Of these new members, seven joined as life members. Four members converted their membership to life, and two former members were reinstated during this quarter.

During this past quarter, ADVA members David Eichhorn, David Rose, Wayne Butler, Charles Rando and Rich Sheffer sponsored new members for their first year member dues. And a tip of the hat goes to member John Dewing, who sponsored first year memberships for seven former buddies. These seven new members served with John in Vietnam as part of A/4/3rd Infantry.

Each quarter, many Americal Division veterans learn about the ADVA and join our ranks by way of the Internet and the World Wide Web. These new members use the Americal web site to find and fill out a membership application form. The web site has a very convenient link to the new member application. The application is designed to allow the form to be filled out on line, as an Adobe Acrobat Reader software form. The form also has a notes box at the bottom which can be used to list any interesting information about the applicant's World War II, Cold War era or Vietnam service. The process is very easy, and should take less than five minutes to prepare. Instructions for mailing the membership application and first year dues payment are listed at the top of the form.

As you meet with or chat with your former Americal buddies who are not members of ADVA, encourage them to join ADVA, and mention the ADVA web site as a convenient way to find and fill out a membership application form. This form can also be used to notify me when you move or have a mailing address change for dues notifications and Americal Journal mailings.



ADVA MEMBERSHIP January 31, 2009

World War II	592
Vietnam	2,204
Korea	8
Associate Members:	179
Total Members	2,983

NEW MEMBERS

Joseph C. Balanovich
73rd Avn Co
Pass Christian, MS
★ NC David Taylor

Ed Balwanz
3/18th Arty
Powhatan Point, OH
★ David W. Rose

Wayne Barksdale
196th LIB B/3/21st Inf
Athens, AL
★ David Eichhorn

Jim Bigham
174th ASHC
Lubbock, TX
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Ron E. Brundage
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Redding, CT
★ John Dewing

Edward W. Buttlar
Americal Div Hdqtrs
Valparaiso, IN
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Phillip Campbell
196th LIB 3/21st Inf
Clayhole, KY
★ NC David Taylor

Lawrence Carreras
1/82nd Arty A Btry
Tempe, AZ
★ Mac Harness

John E. Cass
3/18th Arty
Bloomington, CA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James E. Conway
196th LIB D/2/1st Inf
Grosse Point Farms, MI
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

William E. Cornelius
11th LIB A/4/21st Inf
Cincinnati, OH
★ NC David Taylor

Joseph M. Coyle
23rd Admin Co
Washington, DC
★ Self

Tom Crane
196th LIB 1/46th Inf
Meredith, NH
★ Self

Tom Delk
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Chino, CA
★ John Dewing

Ted Dima
196th LIB B/2/1st Inf
Hillsborough, NJ
★ Self

Kenneth R. Donley
198th LIB HHC/1/6th Inf
Manorville, NY
★ Paul Delvitto

Floyd C. Dunton
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Rushville, NY
★ Self

Daryl L. Elmer
11th LIB B/1/20th Inf
Evansville, WI
★ Self

Clarence E. Fune
17th Cav F Trp
Kahului, HI
★ Self

Chester J. Garnett
11th LIB E/3/1st Inf
Dora, AL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Daryl Guffey
198th LIB E/1/52nd Inf
Laurel, MT
★ Wayne Butler

Carl E. Hudson
196th LIB A/3/21st Inf
Seneca, SC
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Roscoe Jones, Jr.
196th LIB B/1/46th Inf
Hendersonville, NC
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Alan C. Kesler
196th LIB B/3/21st Inf
Duncanville, TX
★ Roger Gilmore

Stephen J. Leithleiter
11th LIB E/4/3rd Inf
Monticello, IL
★ Larry Barnes

Vincent R. Libed, Jr.
198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf
Honolulu, HI
★NC David Taylor

William J. Love
11th LIB E/4/3rd Inf
Avon, NY
★NC David Taylor

Edmund Mares
196th LIB C/3/21st Inf
Tucson, AZ
★David Eichhorn

Steven C. McConnell
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Susanville, CA
★John Dewing

Jerald J. McLane
11th LIB
Lexington, SC
★Self

Patrick T. Monahan
23rd S&T Bn Co B
Conneaut Lake, PA
★PNC Gary L. Noller

Donald M. Montuori
198th LIB 1/6th Inf
Matawan, NJ
★NC David Taylor

John Nelson
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Moyie Springs, ID
★John Dewing

Bruce L. Ordoyne
196th LIB C/1/46th Inf
Thibodaux, LA
★PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Patrick J. Parizek
198th LIB 5/46th Inf
Omaha, NE
★NC David Taylor

Chip Park
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Phelan, CA
★John Dewing

George Pennala
Div Arty
Livonia, MI
★Rich Scheffer

Larry M. Pistole
196th LIB E/1/46th Inf
St Stephens Ch, VA
★PNC Gary L. Noller

William D. Price, Jr.
11th LIB 4/21st Inf
Hiram, GA
★NC David Taylor

Lawrence N. Rooker
123rd Avn Bn 335th Tr Co
Birmingham, AL
★PNC Gary L. Noller

Billy R. Rose
No Unit Given
Welch, WV
★Self

I. S. Smiley
198th LIB B/1/6th Inf
Eastover, SC
★Charles Rando

Irvin L. Sonstegard
182nd Inf Rgmt A Co
North Branch, MN
★NC David Taylor

Michael Stachowiak
198th LIB D/5/46th Inf
Nanicote, PA
★NC David Taylor

Gary M. Suits
26th Engr Bn E Co
Cleveland, TN
★Self

Jose Vargas
26th Engr HHC (Recon)
Northglenn, CO
★PNC Gary L. Noller

Andy E. Veiga, Jr.
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Corona, NY
★John Dewing

Larry Walker
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Mena, AR
★John Dewing

Tom Williams
11th LIB A/4/3rd Inf
Richfield Springs, NY
★John Dewing

William R. Willison
3/18th Arty Srvc Btry
Martinsville, NY
★Self

William R. Wood, Jr.
Div Arty HHC
San Marcos, CA
★Jay Roth

NEW PAID LIFE MEMBERS

Earl M. Brannon
198th LIB HHC/5/46th Inf
Tenaha, TX
★NC David Taylor

John R. Nelson
328th RR Co
San Francisco, CA
★PNC Gary L. Noller

Randy Rosengren
198th LIB D/5/46th Inf
Ottawa, IL
★NC David Taylor

Michael A. Schmid
196th LIB B/4/3rd Inf
Fair Oaks, CA
★PNC Gary L. Noller

Monty L. Slough
63rd Inf Plt CTT
Little Elm, TX
★NC David Taylor

Harry T. Stokes, Sr.
3/18th Arty
College Park, GA
★NC David Taylor

Henry G. Vasil
1/1st Cav F Trp
Brook Park, OH
★NC David Taylor

Tim Bennett
11th LIB C/4/21st Inf
Windsor, IL
★Bob Kapp

John D. Isam, Sr.
11th LIB D/1/20th Inf
Tulsa, OK
★PNC Bill Maddox

Alvin E. Malloy
23rd Div Hdqtrs
Greenville, NC
★Gregory R. Parris

David M. White
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Elizabeth City, NC
★Self

Reinstated
David C. Blankenship
1st Spcl Frcs Det 423
Oak Harbor, WA
★PNC Jim Buckle

Michael D. Lottman
11th LIB 4/3rd Inf
River Falls, WI
★PNC Pete Messina

Taps

World War II Veterans
101st Medical Rgmt
Harold J. Esip
Holden, MA
Date Unknown

123rd Field Artillery
Lloyd T. Carr, Jr.
Anaheim, CA
October 11, 2008

132nd Inf Rgmt
Michael Sholtis
Shippensburg, PA
January 11, 2009

G Co
Milton A. Elberg, Jr.
Ridgewood, NJ
June 4, 2008

182nd Inf Rgmt
James R. Daly
Raytown, MO
July 8, 2008

D Co
Richard L. Minger
Alameda, CA
August 2007

247th FA
A Btry
Reginald C. Marchand
Somerset, MA
Date Unknown

C Btry
John E. Schotemeyer
Belleville, IL
August 17, 2007

Vietnam Veterans

198th LIB 1/52nd Inf
Reed E. Davis, Jr.
Sunnyvale, CA
March 20, 2000

182nd Inf Rgmt Co E
Frank P. Boccelli
Hometown Unknown
November 7, 2008

221st FA
John S. Dunn
Johnson City, TN
February 28, 2008

Unit Unknown
Paul A. Papke, Jr.
Milwaukee, WI
December 20, 2008

LAST ROLL CALL

198th LIB C/1/52nd Inf
James Pace
Brainerd, MN
November 21, 2008

3/18th Arty B Btry
Ron Keppler
Bear River City, Utah
November 12, 2008



Letters to the Editor

Dear editor,

I had a little different Christmas in 2008 than I did 40 years ago when I was in Vietnam. I just wanted to share with all American Veterans a very unique gift that I received from my wife, our two kids, and their families.

I had an 11B Infantry MOS. But when I joined Co. C, 1/6th Inf. in February 1968 I became a radio operator (RTO) in first platoon thanks to Lt. Mel Spencer. I carried a PRC-25 for seven and a half months. I then got the opportunity to go to the brigade tactical operations center (TOC) at LZ Bayonet in September 1968 to finish my tour.

The radio I received for Christmas really works although when I tried to call our company at LZ Bayonet nobody answered. I guess it was Christmas and nobody was there. They were probably out seeing Bob Hope in Chu Lai.

I wish everyone a very Happy 2009.

Mark Deam; mdeam@woh.rr.com



Dear editor,

I would like to say hello to and hear from any GIs who left Camp Edwards, MA in January 1942 to parts unknown. I was in Co. H, 182nd Inf. Regt. I am now 92 years old and feeling pretty good.

Cpl. Wm. "Puffy" Porter
12 Chapin Dr., Wilbraham, MA 01095

Dear editor,

I am seeking information concerning my father, Irvin S. Conover. I would like to know the company, platoon, and squad in which he served while on Cebu Island. I am not sure if he was part of Task Force 6418 or if he was a replacement. He never commented about New Caledonia, Guadalcanal or Bougainville.

Dad was reluctant to discuss his experiences regarding his service. He did reveal tidbits but was not very concise. I know he was wounded and can access his discharge papers. They indicate that he was with Co. F, 132nd Inf. and that he was awarded the CIB. He told me that he was moved to different squads or platoons or other units because of heavy causalities suffered by his unit.

Benjy L. Conover; 3250 Baltimore Pike; Littlestown, Pa 17340;
bjconover@embarqmail.com

Dear editor,

There have been many books written about Vietnam and I can't help but wonder why there has never been anything written about the Battle at LZ Ross. I can't remember the exact date when this all started but I believe the year was 1970 during Nixon's Vietnamization program. Btry. B, 3/18 Arty. was stationed there when the Marines moved in and set up on the helipad. Within 24 hours the preverbal crap hit the fan and for the next several days it was constant mortars.

It was during all this that Btry. B was ordered to move south. I was part of a five man team from Service Btry. left behind to air lift out the rest of the battery's gear. Within a day or so things really heated up to the point where a full scale ground attack by the NVA was imminent. Due to the length of time I had been in country, which was over 2 years, I was asked to

volunteer to assist a Marine 106mm recoilless rifle team as to the location of surrounding structures.

During the next several days mortars kept coming day and night. The ground attack finally happened. This battle lasted for what seemed to me to be days. It was the worst combat I had seen.

We were five GIs mixed in with a bunch of Marines in a fire fight for our lives. When it was over we finished our original mission. I was the last GI to leave LZ Ross. My transportation back to Arty Hill in Chu Lai was arranged by our CO who sent his Loach to fly me back.

I would like to know if there would be any after action reports on this event. A few years back one of the veterans I met at an ADVA reunion sent me a video of a trip back to Nam. They were not allowed to visit the former LZ Ross. The reason for that was there is a large memorial stone there honoring the NVA soldiers lost during that battle. I want to find any information on this battle that I can find.

Bobby Dale Albers;
daalbers55@charter.net

Dear editor,

I was very happy to see Frank Anton as a member of the ADVA. I read his book Why Didn't You Get Me Out? and I found it excellent and heartbreaking at the same time. I would like to offer Frank an apology for the Army not going north to try and rescue him and the other POWs.

I was with Co. B, 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB and we were never asked nor given the chance to go north. We were up at Phu Bai and Quang Tri for most of the first half of 1972 and if asked, we would have volunteered to go. I believe we should not have any trade agreements with the Vietnamese until there is a full accounting. Are there any American vets ready to go back? Welcome home to Frank and may God bless him.

Jim Gales; galesgemoll@aol.com



Capt. Rhinehart (original photo cut off) searching a hooch for contraband with Lt. Maxwell standing by.

[Note: The following letter was sent to Mr. Wayne Bryant, ADVA Product Sales Director]

Dear editor,

I'm writing today to tell you about a new novel called The Iron Triangle by Joe Rhinehart. Joe was the company commander of Co. C, 3/1st Inf., 11th LIB in 1967-68. I was a platoon leader in Joe's company from October 1967 until February of 1968 when I was wounded and was medivaced back to the world.

Joe was a terrific company commander for me because he knew what was important in order to accomplish the mission and keep our men alive. "These are our most important goals and I never put one ahead of the other," he told me as we trained in Hawaii prior to shipping out to Vietnam.

Joe was on his second tour at the time we were together. His first tour was with the 1st Infantry Div. and that is the setting for his novel. He writes in the first person as a Platoon Leader and then as a 1st Lt. Company Commander. I'm sure he combed experience from both tours into this one story.

Joe was awarded three Silver Stars and a Bronze Star for Valor for his Vietnam service. Vets who served with Joe after I left have told me stories about his exploits. They would be right at home in an updated John Wayne movie but Joe wasn't the type who liked heroics. He just believed in getting the job done.

Joe's widow told me that he worked on the novel for 26 years. It's a shame that he died of cancer just as the book was coming out.

Any Vietnam vet who reads this work will be transported back into the day-to-day life of being a soldier. I was reminded of how busy we all were just trying to get to the next objective on time with all the right equipment, ammo, socks, C-rats etc. and how sleep deprived we were from night ambushes, planning meetings, and perimeter watches etc.

The book is available from Amazon.com in paperback for \$18.99. It was published on June 30, 2008 by BookSouce Publishing.

Terry Maloney;
maloneyth@comcast.net

Mr. Bryant,

Enclosed is my order for an Americal Division flag. I recently found the Americal Division Veterans Association on the internet while doing research for my dad. He served with Co. I, 164th Inf. Regt. from just after Guadalcanal to the end of the war. He never talked about his war experiences until recently. He is now 83 years old.

Dad was only 18 years old when he joined the more experienced soldiers from North Dakota. Talk of his old buddies brings tears to his eyes and pride to his heart. For several months he was in the same foxhole as Woodie Keeble. Dad was very touched to see that recently his old buddy had posthumously received the Medal of Honor.

Mom recently got Dad an Americal hat and a copy of the book Under the Southern Cross. Dad is nearly blind now and does not read books much anymore. But he is going through the Americal story page by page and adding his own memories to round it out.

I want to get the Americal Division flag for Dad because his neighbor is a Marine vet from Vietnam and flies the Marine flag on all patriotic holidays. Daddy would love to "one-up" him by flying the Americal flag. Thank you for making these products available for our Americal hero to show his pride in his unit, his comrades, and himself.

Janet R. Jackson

Dear editor,

I am researching the connection between the Americal Division and the 176th AHC. I am looking for data that speaks to VC and NVA activity directed toward Chu Lai during the period 1967 - 1970. Other resources have indicated that Chu Lai took heavy mortar and rocket fire during this period.

Paul Rudd; arudd001@ec.rr.com

Dear editor,

I served with the 52nd Military Intelligence Detachment (MID) in 1967-68. We were assigned to the 11th Brigade at LZ Bronco and I can provide a list of personnel that I have available. 2LT Omar David Jones, who was with the Photo Interpretation Section, lost his life in May 1968 while flying with CPT Scarbrough in an O-2 over Quang Nai Province.

Stacy Gardner; sgardner@nep.net

Dear editor,

My father served in Vietnam as part of 75th Ranger Regiment, G Company. His name is Thomas Charles O'Connor. He served 32 years before retiring in April of 2001. He is currently a government civilian that works for Department of Army. He will be eligible for retirement from government service in a few years and my brother and I would like to honor his military and civilian careers.

He served as an infantry soldier before he began his career in MI. He very rarely speaks about Vietnam, but when he does, they are amazing stories. For my 21st birthday, he gave me a silver bracelet that he wore my entire life. I always wanted it; I thought it was beautiful.

When he gave it to me he told me of how he and his fellow soldiers protected a small village under attack. When the fighting was over, several of the Vietnamese men tried to give their daughter's to the soldiers to marry. Obviously this is not acceptable in American culture. The soldiers told them they were just doing their duty. One of the men gave my father that bracelet. It is the most precious gift I have ever received.

I was wondering if I could get a list of the men that served with my father in Vietnam. I think that reuniting them, if at all possible, would be an amazing experience. I would like to also make a book for my father that includes all of the soldiers he served with during the war.

I can be reached at (301) 833-7262 business hours or in the evenings. (410) 551-7417

Shannon O'Connor;
sho92625@yahoo.com

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

2009 ADVA Reunion
June 25-28, 2009
Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort
Shreveport-Bossier City, Louisiana

Make arrangements now to attend the 2009 ADVA annual reunion in Shreveport-Bossier City, LA. The reunion will be headquartered at Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort, 866-552-9629, <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 for a special rate of \$99 per night plus taxes. Special rates will expire on June 4, 2009 so make your reservations in advance.

Reunion activities will include a visit on Friday to Barksdale AFB, home of the 2nd Bomb Wing and the 8th Air Force Museum. The noon luncheon will feature USAF COL (Ret.) Steve dePyssler. COL dePyssler served on active duty in the Army and Air Force from 1940 through 1978. He is 90 years old and is still working as an unpaid volunteer in the position of Director of Retiree Activities. He has held 21 ranks from Private to Master Sergeant to Warrant officer to Second Lieutenant to Colonel. His service included WWII (Normandy), Korea, French-Indo China War (1954), Vietnam and CIA. He is the recipient of four Legions of Merit and French Legion of Honor.

Entertainment for Saturday night will be provided by duo Blue Eyed Soul. Recording artist Michelle DellaFave and actress Lindsay Bloom appeared on The Dean Martin Show as members of the Golddiggers and the Ding-a-Lings. They will present a USO type stage show that is sure to please all. In 1970 Michelle toured Vietnam with Bob Hope's Christmas show. Lindsay has starred in numerous television programs to include Dallas, Laverne and Shirley, and Starsky and Hutch. Find out more about them at www.michelleandlindsay.com.

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). Diamond Jacks will pick you up at the



airport if you make arrangements in advance. Call 318-678-7660 and ask for transportation service.

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. 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 complete listing of area attractions, events, and services is available from the Shreveport-Bossier City Convention and Visitors Bureau <http://louisianasotherside.com>. 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.

The reunion is presented by the South Midwest Chapter. Ron Ellis is chairman and can be reached at re196thlib@aol.com or 903-657-5790. Reunion treasurer is Malcolm East at 409-755-2892 or malcolm_east@att.net. Let them know if you have questions.

Make your own hotel reservations by calling Diamond Jacks and asking for the special rate. Reunion registration and events can be made by using the form on the following page. Rooms and event tickets are limited so do not miss out. Full information about the reunion can be found at www.americal.org/reunion.shtml. Make your plans today- you are promised to have a great time!



2009 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

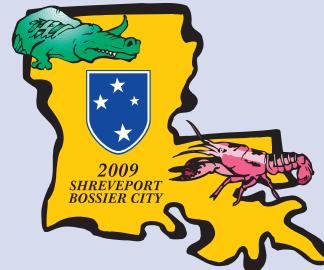
\$15.00/Person X = \$

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

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.

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 2009 Reunion
Mr. Malcolm East
9 Briarcliff Lane
Lumberton, TX 77657**

EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

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

COMMANDER

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

SECRETARY

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



<http://home.roadrunner.com/~sidneyalum/advaerc/> for upcoming information.

I stated in the newsletter that national is going to start reunions in the fall of 2010. This will be in direct conflict with our reunions. So, I am asking if we could hold our reunions in the spring or summer. This is a little survey to find out the wishes of the chapter members. Please let me know your feeling on this subject. I will need a volunteer to put together a reunion in 2010 no matter what time of the year.

The friends I made in the chapter is precious to me and I would not want it to stop. Every year the bond gets stronger even with the new attendees. For the Portland reunion you can contact me or Larry Shover at (207)364-2198 or e-mail at larryshover2@verizon.net.

On 6/25 to 6/28 the national reunion will be held in Shreveport-Bossier City, LA at the Diamond Jack's Casino and resort. Keep the credit cards away from your spouses. Hope to see some chapter members there.
Until the next journal, Welcome Home.

Registrations are rolling in for the reunion in June. Even though the economy is on shaky ground, don't miss out on a good time and a whole lot of bang for the buck. We have some terrific entertainment lined up for a show that is guaranteed to stir up some old memories and create a bunch of new ones. The tour of Barksdale AFB includes their excellent museum, lunch at the O club and more entertainment. High rollers and low rollers alike can test their luck at the casino, but a sure bet is the enjoyment of socializing with the great Americal brotherhood.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CHAPTER

IL IN MI MN WI

COMMANDER

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

Senior Vice Com.

Gary Gardner
Jr Vice Com.
Harold Waterman

Adjutant

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



I hope everyone had a safe and healthy holiday season. I want to start off by sending congratulations to Vice Commander Jay Flanagan and his wife Maryann on becoming great grandparents.

Our chapter reunion will be held in Portland, Maine on 9/10/09 - 9/13/09. Check the web site at

Howdy, please note that my email address as Commander of Great Lakes Chapter in the last Americal Journal is incorrect. The correct one is belked@ckhweb.com.

Good morning Vietnam..... The Chapter Meeting of the Great Lakes Chapter was very informational. It was held

at the 23rd Winterfest in New Glarus, WI. The Winterfest Parade was held at 9:30 PM on Friday evening with the temperature around 0. You could see how the Veterans involved were "Proud To March With Fellow Veterans" once again. The snowy streets and cold temps didn't stop these "Proud Old Vets" from staying in step and looking like well trained troops. Other than the regular agenda, many current veteran related issues were discussed at the meeting. These included PTSD, TBI, hearing loss, Iraq/Afghan vets returning home, VA hospital registration, etc.

There was also discussion on chapter dues, chapter reunion, informational emailing among members, and helping other veterans. The meeting went longer than scheduled, but it was extremely worthwhile time spent to allow all members to voice their thoughts on the various subjects. Everyone contributed to the conversation.

I am proud to be a part of this chapter, due to the intelligent, caring people that are an active part of it. Those who feel that "Winterfest is too isolated for a reunion and not focused on the Americal" are "BEAUCOUP DIEN CAI DAU"! Just ask all of those Americal veterans that attended this year's meeting! They were from New York, Ohio, Iowa, Nebraska, Ill, Wis, etc. The Winterfest Auction brought in \$4200. This will be donated to non-profit services and organizations. Veterans from 15 different states attended.

Currently, due to the economy, we are asking for input as to whether this would be a good year for having a large Great Lakes Chapter reunion? We are considering fall 2009 in St Louis. If any chapter members are interested in attending, please email me at belked@ckhweb.com or dale.belke@dwd.wisconsin.gov. If we have enough interest, we will proceed with setting a reunion up. If we don't, I will put that info in the next Americal Journal. If the national sets up a reunion in St Louis, we may just join up for that. We also would like to start a newsletter again, but need to build our financial account up to do so.

For those that have not paid their \$10/yr chapter dues yet, please send to:

Dale Belke, W655 Cty Rd E, Brodhead, WI 53520. The account will only be used for newsletter, meetings, and reunions. Also, please send me your email address, so we can communicate more easily. Peace to all my Americal comrades.

FAR WEST CHAPTER

AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT

COMMANDER

Rick Ropole
246 Coronado
Corona, CA 92879
951 • 218 • 3071
rropole@esri.com

SEC/TREAS

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



The 2009 Far West Chapter Reunion will be held at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno, Nevada from October 18 through October 20. The Atlantis is located at 3800 S. Virginia St. Reno, NV 89502. (800) 723-6500; <http://www.atlantiscasino.com>.

Rooms can be reserved now for a special rate of \$62.00 per night. To receive this rate, tell them you are with the Americal Division Veterans Association.

The Atlantis is located in the southern part of the city and about 3 miles from the Reno/Tahoe International Airport. Free airport shuttle service is available. The Atlantis offers free valet and self parking for those who will be driving in.

Join us and make a vacation out of it. The Reno area offers many attractions and fine restaurants and short drives to Lake Tahoe and Historic Virginia City. This will be our third trip to Reno for a reunion and our second trip to the Atlantis since 2002. Reunion Chairman, Rich Merlin and his committee promises a great time will be had by all.

Registration forms and tour information will be available soon. All veterans are invited to join us.

The Chapter offered free membership in 2008 to all ADVA members living in the former North West Chapter's area. As of January 21, 2009, twenty seven of those have chosen to renew their membership for 2009 and beyond in the Far West Chapter. Several of them joined us in Laughlin, NV last October for our chapter reunion. We are confident that others will also be joining the chapter in 2009.

As a reminder to all current chapter members, dues expire each December 31st. Look at the mailing label on the Chapter Newsletter, The Cannon, to see what year your dues expire. If there is a "08" after your name, then your \$10 yearly chapter dues have expired and are payable now. Send dues checks to Tom Packard, 6613 Birch Park Dr, Galloway, Ohio 43119-9386. Our goal is of course a 100% retention rate.

Our quarterly chapter newsletter is going electronic. We are in the process of updating the old and collecting new e-mail addresses for our members. When this feat has been completed, we will distribute the newsletter electronically to all members who have given us an email address. We anticipate this decision will save the chapter several hundred dollars each year. For those members who do not have access to a PC or would prefer to receive a hard copy, one will be mailed.

**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
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packard50@columbus.rr.com



We are putting out feelers to have a chapter reunion perhaps in 2010. This would be in addition to our chapter meeting held in conjunction with the ADVA national reunion. The main goal of this would be to enable former MPs to make a reunion if they have not had the opportunity to attend the national ADVA reunions

or our other historic gatherings. It will be open to all MP's or associates. The goals are to make it easily accessible, affordable, and interesting. We are looking for feed back from all of you. Our thoughts are to have it centrally located. Please contact me or the other chapter officers via e-mail or by phone if you do not have e-mail. In this way I can take all the suggestions and put them before a committee. Do not hesitate to get an e-mail to myself or any of the other officers of the chapter. dutch23mp@comcast.net

**Military Trivia**

It was necessary to keep a good supply of cannon balls near the cannon on old war ships. But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck was the problem. The best storage method devised was to stack them as a square based pyramid, with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine, which rested on sixteen

Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem -- how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others.

The solution was a metal plate with 16 round indentations, called, for reasons unknown, a Monkey. But if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make them of brass - hence, Brass Monkeys.

Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey.

Thus, it was quite literally, cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey. And all this time, you thought that was just a vulgar expression, didn't you? You must send this fabulous bit of historical knowledge to at least a few uneducated friends.

Courtesy Col. Vern Pike

4/3rd Infantry Reactivation Day

By Peter McDermott, James Downen, Michael O'Connor, and John Gonzalez

On 18 December 2008 the 4/3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment was reactivated at Ft Meyer, VA. The original 4/3rd Inf. was activated on 1 July 1966 in Hawaii as part of the 11th Infantry Brigade. It deployed to Vietnam in 1967 and after four years of combat the battalion was inactivated at Fort Lewis, Washington, on 30 November 1971.

The 4/3rd Inf. has a lineage dating from June 3, 1784. The unit fought in conflicts ranging from the War of 1812 to the jungles of Vietnam. It was a key unit of the U.S. Army's only named division- the Americal (23d Infantry) Division.

Twenty-five 4/3rd Inf. veterans and their guests accepted invitations to the reactivation ceremony. The veterans were welcomed by LTC Jaime Martinez, battalion commander. Martinez presented the veterans with Certificates of Recognition and his challenge coin.

The afternoon events were introduced by a musical presentation by The Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps. After the troops marched on to the drill floor, the National and Regimental Colors were introduced and took their position in the formation. The Commander of Troops, MAJ Daniel Rayca, S-3 of 4th Battalion, then escorted the reviewing officials, LTC Martinez and COL(R) John Shannon as they trooped the line. A soldier in Vietnam-era jungle fatigues and equipment joined them with the cased Colors of the 4th Battalion.

Following the National Anthem, COL Shannon, LTC Martinez, Battalion CSM Jackson, Regimental Commander COL Buche, and the senior ranking enlisted member of the 4/3rd veterans assumed their positions for the uncasing and passing of the Colors. COL Shannon passed the Colors to LTC Martinez signifying his assumption of command and the reactivation of 4th Battalion. The ceremony ended with the singing of the Army Song, dismissal of the troops, and a reception for all present. In all, it was a fine tribute to those who had served with the 4/3 in Vietnam and to those present day men and women who now are part of the 4/3rd Infantry.

The primary duties of 4/3rd are ceremonial. However, elements of the battalion are and will be deployed abroad in support of the Global War on Terror. LTC Martinez wants to establish contact with as many veterans as possible. He wants to start a small battalion museum with artifacts that veterans may have from the past. If interested in donating your items to the museum or in establishing contact with the battalion please contact him at Ft. Meyer.



4/3rd Infantry (The Old Guard) Reactivated

By John Dewing

The 4/3rd Infantry (The Old Guard) was inactivated 30 Nov 1971 at Ft. Lewis WA after serving several years in Vietnam with both the 11th Inf. Bde. and the 198th LIB of the Americal Division. The 4/3rd participated in eleven campaigns and received four Republic of Vietnam Crosses of Gallantry with Palm decorations during its tenure in the Republic of Vietnam.

It was a historic event when the battalion was reactivated at Ft. Myer, VA on 18 Dec 2008. Twenty-one soldiers who served with the 4/3rd in Vietnam attended and participated in the ceremony. They are John Shannon, COL (R); Robert Bankston; Ron Brundage; Robert Callahan; Jim Chambers; Phil Ciarlo, LTC (R); William Daknis, COL (R); John H. Dewing, COL (R); James Downen; Joseph F Filliben; Bruce Flaherty; John Gonzalez, LTC; Larry J. Burris, SGT (R); Marcel Lettre, COL (R); James Linn, LTC (R); Joe Marquez, IHO Julian Marquez, KIA 15 Feb 1971; Michael Mchugh; Robert Menist, MG (R); Nick Prevas, LTC (R); Andres D. Veiga, Jr; Harlan White; and Tom Williams.

SGT (Ret) Larry Burris assisted CSM Maurice Jackson, the current 4/3rd Command Sergeant Major, in the uncasing of the battalion colors. COL (Ret.) John W. Shannon, the last commander of the 4/3rd in Vietnam, passed the colors on to LTC J. E. Martinez, the current commander of the battalion.

The Americal veterans observed the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. A special tour of the quarters of The Old Guard soldiers who guard the tomb followed.

PHOTO at top of this column, (L to R): Tom Williams, John Dewing, Harlan White, Larry Burris, Ron Brundage, Andy Veiga, and Mike McHugh served together in Co. A during Operation Dewey Canyon II (Lam Son 719) in 1971.

Guadalcanal Memories

By Susan Morgans



When World War II veteran Harold Stein attended a 1992 reunion of the Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans in Las Vegas, little did he know the trip would lead him to one day donate a signed, limited edition poster by a famous artist to Mt. Lebanon Public Library.

A 43-year resident of MacArthur Drive, Stein is an Army veteran of the Guadalcanal campaign, a brutally hard air-sea-land battle against the Japanese for possession of the little known Pacific island of Guadalcanal that took place between August 1942 and February 1943. The campaign was costly to both sides, but ultimately resulted in a Japanese retreat that continued until their August 1945 capitulation.

Admiral William Frederick "Bull" Halsey commanded the U.S. Third Fleet during much of the Pacific War against Japan. When the island was secured, Stein, who was a teletype operator, recalls receiving a message from Halsey to General Alexander "Sandy" Patch, who commanded the Army and Marines at Guadalcanal: "When we sent a tailor to patch the enemy's pants, we never thought he would do it so quickly."

Fifty years after the campaign, as Stein tells the story, Guadalcanal vets attending the reunion donated money for a \$1 million monument to be erected on the island. In return, they had the chance to buy a commemorative poster, so he purchased one for \$20. "My poster had a lot of ships and one was the Juneau," he recalls. The USS Juneau, sunk on November 13, 1942, was the ship on which the legendary five Sullivan brothers were lost.

Stein donated his poster to American Legion Post 760 in Bethel Park, where he enjoyed seeing it framed and hung above the bar for several years, even though he's not a drinker. Then followed a period of five years, where Stein was housebound, caring for his wife. After her death, "I heard the legion had remodeled the place and I didn't have a lot to do, so I stopped into the bar to have a ginger ale," he recalls, "and my poster wasn't there—there was another one in its place." No one seemed to know what had happened to his poster or where the new one had come from.

Stein had no idea who had designed his poster, but the new poster, signed by an artist he had never heard of named Donald Moss, was nice, so he decided to try to look up the artist. He found Moss, of Farmington, Conn., in the Guadalcanal Veterans Directory. "I called him and we talked for an hour," Stein says. A Marine, Moss was in the first wave of troops into Guadalcanal in 1942 and also had attended the Las Vegas reunion. Unfortunately, the lost poster was not one of his.

"I never found mine, but in the meantime, I got a couple from him and one is of a land battle in Guadalcanal," says Stein. "They're signed, 'To Hal, best wishes, Donald Moss.'"

What Stein didn't know but later found out is that Moss is an internationally known artist who was the premier artist for Sports Illustrated for 30 years, painting more covers and editorial illustrations for the magazine than any other American painter. Named "Sports Artist of the Year" in 1986 by the United States Sports Academy, Moss has won wide acclaim for his work.

Three of his paintings were featured in The Champions of American Sports exhibition at the Smithsonian in 1981 and his paintings are in sports halls of fame and in many books. He has also done illustrations for Esquire, Golf Digest and Arnold Palmer Enterprises and has designed a dozen stamps for the U.S. Postal Service.

Stein repaid the favor by sending Moss a map that gives a date in 1945 and shows arrows marking where each Allied division would have invaded Japan, if the United States had not dropped the atomic bomb. Moss, "said it was awesome," says Stein, who is a firm believer that many more lives would have been lost in the invasion than were lost as a result of the bomb.

As he had done with his first poster, Stein decided to donate a Donald Moss poster, but this time the American Legion did not get it—Stein continues to search for the one that disappeared. Still his loss is Mt. Lebanon's gain. In January, Stein donated one of Moss's signed, framed posters to Mt. Lebanon Public Library, where it is prominently displayed in the hallway near the study rooms. He also donated a book about the Americal (American Troops in New Caledonia) Division in which he served, the only World War II division that did not have a number. The book is titled "Under the Southern Cross," referring to the division's shield, which bears four stars and is patterned after the constellation, the Southern Cross.

[Reprinted with permission from mtl magazine, a publication of the Mt. Lebanon, PA municipality public information office.]





Recent Scholarship Recipients



and honored to be an ADVA scholarship recipient. I plan to put it to good use as I attend Western Illinois University where I will pursue a degree in Construction Management. My father and I are very proud to accept your gracious contribution to my education.

Timothy M. Gates

I want to thank the Americal Division Veterans Association for your very generous scholarship. I am truly appreciative

Thank you for choosing me to receive a scholarship. It will help me so much in achieving my goal to become a nurse. By becoming a nurse I hope to help people in any way I can and also make my grandma and parents proud.

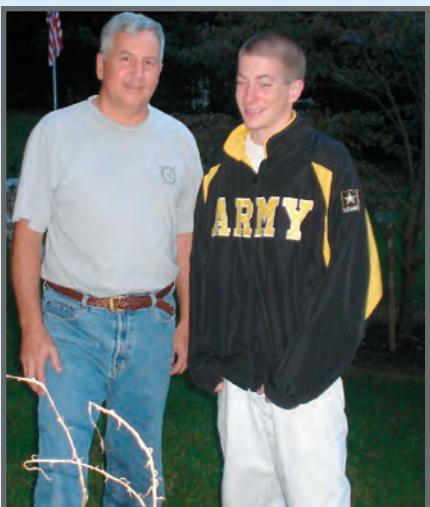
Tiffany Thiesen



I would like to thank the Americal Division Veterans Association for the scholarship I was awarded to help with my college expenses at

the University of Dayton. I plan to major in early childhood education. Your support of higher education is most appreciated. My Dad, Richard Smethurst, served in Vietnam with Co. B, 26th Engineer Bn.

Kimberly Smethurst



chosen by the scholarship committee to be a recipient of this award and I can assure the association that I will do my best in my educational pursuits. This award will certainly help me in that goal.

Sean E. Matthews

I want to thank the scholarship selection committee and the entire Americal Division Veterans Association for your generosity which will help me to meet the financial needs of pursuing my education. I am very appreciative to have been chosen



Thank you for awarding me an ADVA scholarship. I am very grateful for the financial support. I am looking forward to becoming a certified teacher for grades 1-8

in December, 2009. I am very proud of my dad and the time that he served in Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm. I would like to thank him and all of your service and for giving me the opportunity to complete my degree.

Kimberly Jackson



I would like to thank you for the very generous scholarship you have awarded me. I am extremely blessed to live in a nation where men and women help

younger generations achieve their goals toward education through financial help. I consider this scholarship an honor because of what the Americal stands for, a memorial to men and women who served our country in the military.

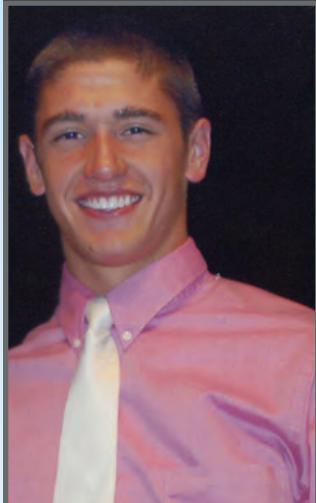
McKenzie Baird



I am grateful to have the opportunity to thank all of you for your very generous contribution to the furthering of my education at the University of Michigan. To re-

ceive this scholarship by such an admirable group of people makes me feel very blessed. You have served your country when called upon, and continue your selfless efforts by helping the country's young adult citizens pursue their goals. Your compassion is so greatly appreciated, and I thank you.

Caitlin Snow



Thank you very much for the \$500 scholarship I have received. I greatly appreciate the help the Americal Division Veterans Association has given me for the 2008-2009 school year. The money will help with my tuition payments year at Central Michigan University. It is truly an honor to be recognized and supported by such an admirable association.

Don Tait



I would like to thank the Americal Division Veterans Association for my scholarship in the amount of 1,000 dollars. I appreciate the consideration and decision that was made

to award me this scholarship. The money will be of great help to me at Gulf Coast Community College as I pursue a pre-veterinary degree and eventually a veterinary degree in medicine. I appreciate all of the contributions and assistance I have received.

Amber Allen



I am so thankful that I was a recipient of the ADVA Scholarship. Now that school has started, the money will certainly help pay for all of my expenses at the University at Buffalo. This year I am a senior studying Exercise and Nutrition Science and this winter I will be applying to Grad school. It means so much to me to receive this scholarship from an organization that means so much to my Dad. Thank you again for your generosity.

Melissa Bungo

America's Legacy is our Future Focus

By Roger Gilmore; National Adjutant

As National Commander Dave Taylor mentioned in the 4th quarter 2008 issue of the America's Journal, the America's Legacy Committee has been formed. I have been appointed as its chairman. Our mission statement points to the focus we, as the ADVA, must pursue for the next twenty years if we are to leave a legacy in America about our service and sacrifice as an Army infantry division.

Mission Statement

The Legacy Committee's purpose is to perpetuate the honor and memory of all veterans who served in the America's Division during World War II, the Cold War (Caribbean), and the Vietnam War.

The primary objective is to locate memorials at national Army historical sites, such as branch-specific museums or memorial sites and national veteran's cemeteries. The committee will work with each entity to establish permanent monuments dedicated to the division's service in defense of the United States.

All memorials will be for the Division in its entirety in all eras and not for any specific part of the Division at any given era.

By establishing this monument program we intend to promote the legacy of the America's Division. We will tell the story of the bravery and patriotism of all America's Division veterans. The secondary objective is to preserve a detailed legacy of the America's Division by preserving the America's Division's WWII museum in Worcester, Massachusetts and increasing its collection effort at the Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University.

Short Term Action Plan Two years (2009-2010)

Design, build and dedicate a monument at the new National Infantry Museum (Fort Benning), Columbus, Georgia.

Identify other sites, such as museums on U.S. Army posts, for branch-specific monuments to the America's Division. These monuments would highlight the branch-specific units (e.g. Artillery) which served in the division during its three periods of activation.

Identify opportunities with National Veterans Cemeteries, National Military Museums, and other locations where America's veterans can be memorialized. These opportunities will come from the ADVA membership, individuals or groups of individuals, who wish to "take the point" on select projects. The committee will assist those individuals in accomplishing their goals.

Long Term Action Plan Three to Ten Years (2011-2020)

Work to achieve objectives as outlined above (2 and 3).

Publish a definitive history of the America's Division during its three periods of activation and make it available for sale to members. Provide copies to all Army museums, military museums (i.e. WWII Museum), archival sites (i.e. Army Institute of Military History), etc.

Develop collateral information (brochures, pamphlets, etc.) suitable for use at museums where America's monuments are featured. The information will provide a concise background of the division's history.

The Legacy Committee

At the present time our National Commander and I have appointed the following members:

Legacy Steering Committee:

Roger Gilmore	Legacy Committee Chairman
Dave Taylor	ADVA National Commander
Lee Kaywork	Southeast Chapter Commander
Gary Noller	America's Journal Editor in Chief

Project Coordinating Members:

Wayne Bryant	Coordinator, Army Historical Foundation
Rich Merlin	Coordinator, Riverside National Cemetery Project

If any ADVA member has an interest in serving on the committee and/or an opportunity to extend the America's legacy, please contact me.

The National Infantry Museum Project

National Commander Dave Taylor and I visited Fort Benning and Columbus, Georgia on October 29-30, 2008 to review the plans for the new National Infantry Museum. We were given an executive presentation by the National Infantry Foundation Chairman, Major General (Ret) Jerry A. White, Executive Director Ben Williams, and Associate Director of Development, Dick Hagan. General White is the former Commander of Fort Benning and Commandant of the US Army Infantry School.



Review of the new National Infantry Museum plans, October 30, 2008. (Left to right): Dick Hagan, Ben Williams, MG (Ret) Jerry White, Dave Taylor, Roger Gilmore.

After our briefing and discussions, Ben Williams took us on a hardhat tour of the museum (still under construction) which is located just outside the main gate of Fort Benning. The facility and grounds around it are enormous. The museum is quite large and will include an IMAX theatre, gift shop and restaurant.

There are acres of parking available and plans call for a hotel to be built on-site by 2010. Victory Drive, the main road that connects the city of Columbus with Fort Benning, is nearby. Many hotels are also close.

Behind the large museum is the main parade ground where every graduation at Fort Benning takes place. On one side of the parade ground are the grandstands that are used for the many people who

see their sons and daughters graduate. The other side the parade ground abuts up to World War II Street which is composed of refurbished WWII barracks, a mess hall, and a chapel. As we walked down the "street" we were brought back to another era of war-time service. Organizations such as the ADVA can plan reunions at the museum and they will cater lunches at the WWII Mess hall-complete with a serving line



View from "The WWII Street", National Infantry Museum. Shown in background is the rear of the Infantry Museum. To the right of the WWII Tank is the parade ground. Also shown is one part of a restored barracks. The street continues to the left of the camera).

The trainees graduating from Fort Benning schools will march through the WWII Street and up a slight rise onto the parade ground and continue towards the reviewing stand. As they enter the parade ground they will pass by plaques in the ground that are dedicated to every cemetery overseas that holds American soldiers. Inside the plaques will be actual soil from those cemeteries. The reminder to those graduates will be clear: the sacrifice of their fellow soldiers who went before them.

On the end of the parade ground opposite the Infantry Museum is a slight rise of ground that is nestled in low-lying trees. This is the site of the Walk of Honor. It is here that Army organizations can dedicate monuments to their units. This is where we will work to dedicate our first monument to the Americal Division.

The "monument" will probably be several large stones or stands, each representing the Americal in one of its periods of activation. Behind the three markers will be a wall of some type to honor the locations and campaigns in which the Americal fought; Americal Medal of Honor recipients, and the like. We foresee a walkway or patio of some type that links the stones and wall.

Embedded onto the walkway will be Paver Stones (4" x 8") that any ADVA member can purchase from the National Infantry Foundation (NIF). The paver stone will remain in perpetuity at our site and may display a veteran's name, unit, dates of service, etc. Perhaps it would display the name of a buddy that was killed in war. Each stone costs \$250 (which is remitted to the NIF). Each person purchasing a stone will receive a miniature replica (2" x 4") for his home. More information about this program will be forthcoming as we move forward in our monument planning.



Dave Taylor and Roger Gilmore overlook the parade field and National Infantry Museum. To the left of the camera is the "WWII Street" and behind the camera is the site for the "Walk of Honor" for monuments such as that which will be dedicated to the Americal Division.



If you would like more information on the new National Infantry Museum and the grand opening in March 2009, visit their website at www.nationalinfantryfoundation.org.

Funding for the ADVA Legacy Initiative

We plan to establish separate funding for the Legacy Committee initiatives. As an ADVA member, you can participate in the Legacy Initiative through your tax deductible contributions.

If you would like to leave some portion of your estate to the Americal Division Veterans Association as support of any of the Legacy Committee initiatives you should meet with your estate planner to ensure specific language is written into your will directing your chosen amount to the ADVA Legacy Committee initiative.

The Legacy Committee has discussed silent auctions and raffles as possible Legacy Committee fund raising efforts. These activities may be conducted in conjunction with the annual reunion.

More information will be forthcoming in future American Journal issues as specific programs are put in place.

Remembering Loyd T. Carr, Jr.

By Loyd T. Carr, III



Mr. and Mrs. Loyd T. Carr

It is with regret that I have to inform you that Loyd T. Carr, Jr. died on October 11, 2008. Loyd was a steadfast member of the Americal Division Veterans Association and he would consider it an honor if his passing was recognized by his fellow Americal Division members. Through the years, Loyd was proud of the fact that he was one of the original members of the Americal Division when it was created at the beginning of World War II. Here is his story.

Prior to 1941, Loyd was a member of a National Guard 155 howitzer artillery unit in St. Louis, Missouri. In early 1941 his unit was called up to active duty and shipped to Tennessee for further training. Loyd recalled seeing junior Army officers such as Dwight Eisenhower and George Patton at his post in Tennessee. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Loyd and his unit were shipped to New York and put on troop transport ships. There were a total of three ships in their convoy. Two of the ships carried the personnel and one ship carried all of their artillery pieces and related equipment. The men on board of the ships were told that their destination would be the Philippines.

About the time Loyd's convoy reached Miami, the ship carrying all of their artillery pieces was sunk by a German U-boat. Their two ship convoy continued on through the Panama Canal and was within 300 miles off the Philippines coast when the Philippines fell to the Japanese. As a result of the Philippines fall to Japan, Loyd's troop convoy changed course and made its way to Australia. Loyd recalled that the arrival of his unit in Australia created quite astir. The people of Australia were overwhelmed with joy that the Americans had arrived. Evidently, the Australians were anticipating an invasion by the Japanese.

Eventually, Loyd's unit was moved from Australia to the island of New Caledonia. His unit was issued old French 75MM howitzers to replace their 155MM howitzers that were lost off of the coast of Miami. The French artillery pieces had smooth bores and failed to return from the recoil position after they were fired. In any case, Loyd and his unit were dug in with what they had and braced for the Japanese invasion that everyone knew was coming. Loyd and his unit would listen to Tokyo Rose radio broadcasts at

night and he remembered how she would taunt them about the pending invasion of New Caledonia. Fortunately, the Japanese advance toward New Caledonia was stopped.

As time went by, Loyd's unit was issued new equipment such as 155 howitzers. It is somewhere within this timeframe of Loyd's unit leaving New York, or landing in Australia or being moved to New Caledonia, that it became an original part of the newly formed Americal Division. Loyd served in the Americal Division in the South Pacific until some point in 1944. By then, he had earned enough service points to be transferred back to the United States. Loyd traveled back to the United States on a troop ship that held a number of personnel that were suffering from various levels of combat fatigue. Loyd had the job of guarding the most dangerous of the personnel and making sure they stayed within the hold of the ship. Once back to the United States, Loyd was formed up with an organization that was being created for the invasion of Japan.

After World War II, Loyd became a civilian and moved back to St. Louis, Missouri, where he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with a BA and MA in English. He later moved to Anaheim, California, where he lived for over 46 years. While living in California, he taught English at Santa Ana College for over 22 years. Loyd wrote and published a lengthy narrative of his memories in the South Pacific with the Americal Division. I am sure he would be happy if I shared this information with anyone else in the Americal Division Association. All you have to do is contact me and let me know.

My name and address info is as follows: Loyd T. Carr, III; 14651 Raintree Lane, Tustin, CA 92780; 714 544-8021.

A word from New Caledonia

By Emery C. LaVallee

Being the last living U.S. veteran on New Caledonia I want you to know the Caledonians have never forgotten the Americans.

An extraordinary fete entitled "Remember" was recently held to commemorate the saving of New Caledonia from the Japanese with the arrival of the American forces. It brought back all the memories of that period. It mentioned the formation of the Americal Division. The event was held in the Veledrome and all Caledonians were invited.

The music of the 40's played by a band became the background theme of the ceremony. A troop of dancers added to the color with a foxtrot and the boogie woogie. What a difference from the cacophony and rap of today!

And there was a never ending display of native dancing, yelling, and beating drums to the point when we partook of a by-gone invitation to a brisket of "long-pig." There was also a parade of restored jeeps with flowing American flags.

A large screen showed ancient photos of New Caledonia before the arrival of the Americans and after their camps, hospital facilities, parades and dignitaries. A person explained the photos as they were shown.

The grand finale was a display of fireworks that outdid the best of any public events we've had here. It was incredible. So much from New Caledonia, truly a jewel in the Pacific.

The Brave and Bold

By Dave Taylor

My squad leader Randy Backovich, who saved my life in Vietnam and received the Silver Star for his actions, sent me a picture of him and his two sons that shows he hasn't forgotten his "Nam" time. All three recently "commissioned" 198th Brigade "The Brave and Bold" patches for their permanent wear. We were in Charlie Company, 2nd platoon, 5th/46th Battalion. From the left is Randy's son Jared, Randy in the center and son Cory.



198th Brigade Patch

Description: On a blue shield arched at top and base, 2 inches in width overall, a stylized tongue of flame (shaped like an "S" reversed) yellow and scarlet with a portion of a rifle barrel with fixed bayonet all in white issuing diagonally from lower right to upper left and crossing over the flame all within a 1/8 border.

Symbolism: Blue and white are the colors associated with infantry. The tongue of the flame alludes to the units firepower, and the bayonet, a basic infantry weapon, is symbolic of carrying the fight to the enemy. The flame and bayonet together refer to the unit's spirit and readiness to engage the enemy in a firefight or hand-to-hand combat with the bayonet.

americal.org Locator Services

Former Northwest chapter commander Dave Hammond has volunteered to help with updates to the americal.org locator, electronic directory, and guestbook pages. These pages are typically updated once a month but the main locator page has not been updated in many months. If you would like to update a previous locator post or place a new locator message please go to www.americal.org/locator/ and fill out the submission form.

Your message will not appear immediately. It will have to be updated "manually". This is to ensure that each message is screened to keep out unwanted spam mail and junk advertisements. Thanks for your interest in this service that helps Americal veterans locate one another and find information of benefit to them.

LOCATORS

Looking for: **Sgt. Maj. Russell V. Gross.** I met him at an ADVA reunion in Reno, NV in 1996.

Contact: Bobby Dale Albers; daalbers55@charter.net

Looking for: Information about **Co. B, 9th Support Bn.**, 198th LIB. Contact: Marvin Osborne; mojo814@comcast.net

Looking for: A website that can give me the names of men that served with **Co. D, 123rd Avn. Bn**, 1969-1970. In particular, I am looking for the names of casualties during that period. Contact: Charles E. Goodrich; hgoodrich@earthlink.net

Looking for: A list of the company personnel of **HQ, 1/52nd Inf., 198th LIB, LZ Bayonet**, 1968-69. I am a retired E-8 First Sgt. and would like to get in contact with people.

Contact: David Petrey; petreydr@gmail.com

Looking for: Information regarding the combat death of **Richard Dean Shannon, Jr.**; HHB, 1/14th Artillery, 11th LIB, May 12, 1969 at LZ Buff. We were best friends in high school and I served in the Army in 1965-67.

Contact: Richard Hill; hill.d-b@sbcglobal.net

Looking for: **Capt. Larry Stafford**, Co. A, 1/46th Inf., 198th LIB, 1968.

Contact: Stephen Moss; 1301 S. Tyler # 302, Beeville, TX 78102

Looking for: Anyone who knew **SP4 Steven Gene Pettis**, Co. C, 1/46th Inf., KIA 14 May 1969 near Tam Ky. Contact: Chuck Drinkwater; gemstone11@verizon.net; (802) 524-6500

Looking for: Patches from the aviation units of the Americal Division in Vietnam. I was with the 123rd Avn. Bn. in 1969-70.

Contact: Larry Thomas; larry.thomas@dominionenterprises.com

Looking for: **Darrel Jay**, a 2LT in an engineer unit, I do not know which one. I was with the 54th Med. Det. (Dustoff) in Chu Lai in 1967-68.

Contact: Charley Ramirez; cerdustoff@wildblue.net

Looking for: Anyone who knew **Jerry McClellan**, Co. B, 9th Support Bn., 198th Inf. Bde. (Lt).

Contact: Marv Osborn; mojo814@comcast.net

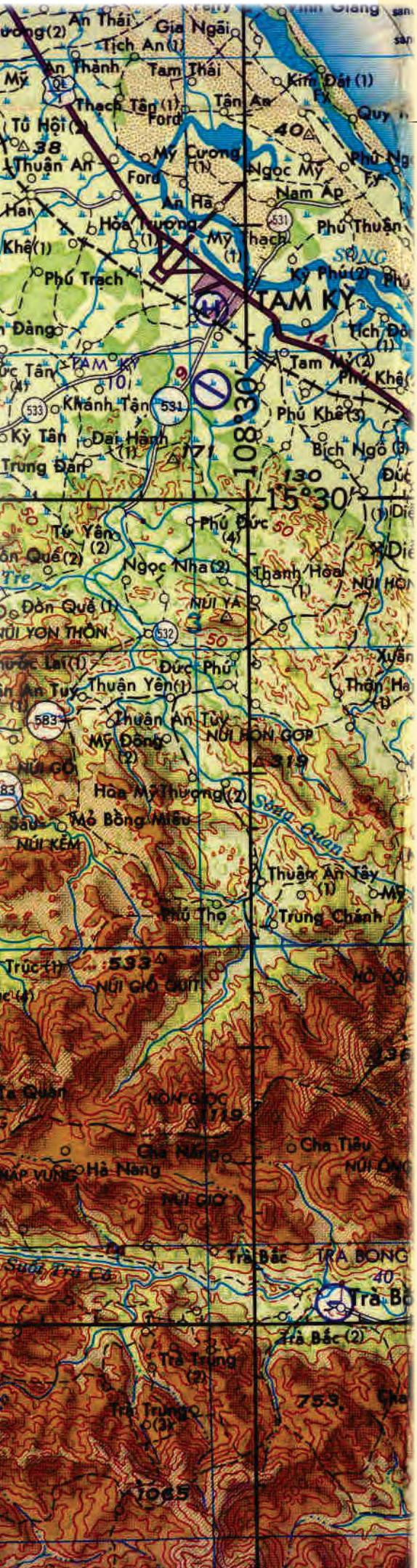
26th Engr. Bn. to Dedicate Plaque

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>.

Three Days Near

Tam Ky





By LTC Robert G. Vertrees



1LT Robert Glenn Vertrees

"Nam" September 1968

Day One: "Contact"

On 22 September 1968 the third platoon, Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, 11th Brigade, Americal Division, was somewhere near Duc Pho, Vietnam. I was the platoon leader. I'd been in Vietnam since July. Being part of an infantry rifle platoon was most likely the best way to see and experience the war in Vietnam. A lot of people like sitting in a front row seat. I never did like the front row, especially in school. But here I was in the front row because most firefights with the enemy started at the platoon level. The fighting would either end there or escalate to company and or battalion size operations.

The first two months in country had been pretty routine months for us. It was typical for us to hump (walk) all day looking for Charlie and then set up the night defense position and put out at least one ambush team. Encounters with the VC (Viet Cong; Charlie) were sporadic. Charlie would usually hit and run. Rarely did they stand and fight. I remember one time when they stood their ground and used innocent civilians for cover. I found out after the battle when I walked through and saw a few dead civilians including a baby that was still in diapers.

They were very good at concealment. Blending in with the surrounding jungle made the enemy almost invisible. They ambushed often. Their smaller size

gave them the advantage in the jungle as they could more easily move around in it. We were often harassed by a lone VC who would shoot off a few rounds and then run hoping we would follow into a pre-arranged ambush. Being ambushed could ruin your day.

One of the more important roles in the platoon that helped prevent ambush was the point man. He had the responsibility to see the enemy before the enemy saw us. A good point man had to be quiet and alert at all times. It was a lonely job but important. Some point men liked being on the point but not many. When somebody in the platoon was not giving their best, I would often threaten to put him on point if he didn't get squared away ASAP. All of a sudden most became highly motivated.

Wanting to personally experience the point I walked it a few times. This was more for morale purposes and not because I was brave or wanted to be a hero. One time while I was walking point I approached what appeared to be a small farm with one hooch (grass hut). As I neared it a white unarmed male with curly yellowish hair wearing only pants and boots ran out the front opening and around the hooch to the rear. I had him cold and totally surprised within twenty feet from my M-16's muzzle. My rifle was off safety and on full automatic. Killing him would have been a piece of cake as I could also see his blue eyes.

Inside the hooch I saw a woman who was naked from the waist up. Whoever ran out that door was having a little extra-duty hanky-panky activities when I scared him off. The only reason I didn't shoot was because he looked exactly like "PeeWee" who was the company RTO (Radio Telephone Operator) at that time. Never in a hundred years could I have planned on seeing what appeared to be one of us in my sights. In retrospect, I should have killed him. I'm pretty sure that if the regular man was on point that day the outcome would have been quite different.

There must have been an underground network close by because the fleeing man disappeared into thin air. We searched and searched. I called in an interpreter to question mama-san but



Osborne, Stout, Gohl, Gibson, Raterman resting up.

it was to no avail. Thinking back I can only conclude that he was a deserter or maybe a Russian advisor. We found out it was not PeeWee.

The Cong didn't produce that much fire-power as a rule, e.g. artillery or heavy mortar indirect weapons, nor were they very good shots. I had my share of near misses as I heard many rounds "crack" as they flew by my head but never hit, not yet anyway. We experienced our share of booby traps, snipers, leeches, mosquitoes and snakes. I almost sat on a deadly viper the "step and a half" (slang for you will only walk for a step and a half before falling over dead) but luckily I tossed my rucksack down first which scared him off.

I felt confident because of my training, particularly Ranger School. Completing Ranger training was unquestionably the hardest achievement of my life. Ranger training is very physical. We were purposely deprived of food and sleep for days at a time. Forced to march with full packs and rifles over rough terrain was common. The physical part of the school was the first few weeks. The drop out rate was very high.

Once past the physical part we trained as small units conducting raids and forays designed to disrupt the enemy where he may least expect it. The training was heavy on small unit patrolling techniques with emphasis

on map-reading and orienteering. I was trained to avoid trails when possible, never go the same way twice and always make sure that the flanks were as far out as possible.

It was in Ranger training that I learned the wedge formation which I preferred to use in Vietnam. There were times of course when the terrain dictated the platoon's battle configuration to that of a long line in heavy jungle. Sometimes the platoon was assigned to protect the engineers during mine clearing operations along the roads. I would then configure the platoon into two reinforced units on each side of the road with a reaction squad on the road itself.



LZ Amy. Incoming fire from nearby hooches. Destroyed everything.

The platoon liked working the roads because it was about the only time when we had the opportunity to get ice. Ice in Vietnam was hard to find and we obviously did not carry coolers in combat. The roads that were near villages would be filled with friendly vendors that sold ice along with soft drinks. The ice was not always safe as I had heard stories about some vendors mixing broken glass with the ice. We checked for glass and used the ice anyway- Vietnam was hot and humid.

The first thing I had to kill in Vietnam was a water buffalo. I didn't want to but I had no choice. The platoon was in fairly heavy terrain and we had to use a trail and we were in one of those line formations that I didn't like. Anyway as I was toward the front of the formation I heard this loud ruckus and men yelling. Suddenly this buffalo appeared coming right at me with an ARVN (Army Republic of Vietnam) soldier on top its head. As I remember the guy on the buffalo was a Vietnamese Kit Carson Scout that had been attached to us to help out not only as an extra rifleman but translator as well.

The buffalo tried to gore the scout as he tossed him like a rag-doll to the side of the path and continued to run toward me. I could see the rage by the amount of saliva that was spewing from his mouth. I unloaded a full magazine as did someone else next to me. The buffalo fell to the ground but not easily. The scout's eyes were as wide as the buffalos as he tried to catch his breath. I had to laugh a little but was thankful that he wasn't hurt. I reported the incident to Headquarters as water buffalo (oxen) were very valuable and I wanted the owner to be reimbursed for his loss. Things like this didn't make the GI very popular.

I could write a book about what I saw that we did wrong in Vietnam. Shooting friendlies, burning villages, rape, pillage, mayhem, you name it, I saw it. My operations area included My Lai, where the village massacre took place a couple of months before my arrival. An investigation was beginning and as I remember some of those in the company were questioned about it.



Caption Road sweep off LZ Baldy, October 1968

Keeping the platoon members from committing any of the above was a big part of my job. Making the distinction between the enemy and the locals was not easy. Frustration caused some soldiers to lose it, especially when booby-traps always seemed heavier near a particular village or hamlet as was the case at My Lai.

My first Viet Cong kill (up close and personal) was in a cordon operation. We surrounded a village with a man every three to ten meters depending on terrain so we were in sight of each other. We closed the cordon around 0400 hours and waited for first light. The Viet Cong would eat and sleep in local hamlets or villages at night and leave early the following morning. Today would be no exception other than the fact that the village was surrounded.

I spotted a set of VC black pajamas a few feet to my right and I turned as he ran by. I set my M-16 selector switch to "rock n' roll" (full automatic) killing him instantly. Another lieutenant, James Elliott, also fired and later said the he got the guy. We joked around about who really got the guy and I finally said OK you got him. Back then I thought bragging was bad luck. In reality we had caught him in a cross-fire with both of us hitting him so many times in the upper torso that when I kicked him to make sure he was dead my boot penetrated into his chest making a sound like broken glass inside a Raggedy Ann Doll.

Soon after another accomplice came through but stopped when he saw his dead comrade and heard us yell "Ngung Lai" (stop). We tied the prisoner's hands behind his back and made him sit while the operation continued. Later, when we were ready to move out, something caused me to look away from the prisoner and to his credit and physical condition (the Viet Cong were very agile) he was up and in a flash disappeared into the thick jungle before I could get a shot off.

One thing I had learned by this time was not to try and chase down a VC. A fellow platoon leader, Lt. Larry Bullen, was shot through the chest as he tried to run down a fleeing Viet Cong. Lt. Bullen was fearless. I remember how he liked to wear his .45 automatic low on his hip. His death brought the reality of war up close to me. I had experienced numerous casualties within the platoon's ranks but no deaths. Killing the enemy was routine. I never felt remorse. Having one of my friends die was another matter.

Up until now, the Viet Cong had been no match for the third platoon. That was about to change beginning with a company size air assault to the Tam Ky region of I Corp. Intelligence (G-2) reports suspected there were NVA (North Vietnamese Army) units near Tam Ky. Encountering the NVA (I was about to find out) would be something like playing high school football and then suddenly finding yourself playing in the National Football League (NFL).

I don't remember how many helicopters were involved in the air assault near Tam Ky but it was the biggest I had been in so far. We boarded the Huey's and after a long ride we hit the LZ (landing zone) hot. As our gun ships fired automatic weapons around our insertion area I gave the order to "lock and load". Fortunately the landing went smoothly this time.

Not long before I did a similar air assault and as we hit the LZ and formed our perimeter my RTO, Spc/4 Fred Grant (Specialist Fourth Class), was hit by one of our own over-eager door gunners. He got the million dollar kind of wound as the 7.62mm machine gun round went through his

thumb and bone. The bullet(s) hit as I was talking on Grant's radio. What got my attention was the fact that his thumb was blown about two feet from my head.

After this we moved out and continued to our RON (remain over night) position. We dug in for the night and moved out again the next day.

Our mission was to establish contact with the NVA forces. Each platoon would operate separately and if contact with the enemy was established the rest of the company would come running. At least that was the plan. Plans in war don't always go as planned...



Lincoln holding great ancestor of my first kill. Doug Hughes (no shirt), Rick Warren (radio), SGT Haas, SGT Rawlings, and me on far right.

Upon reaching our objective I issued orders for a clover-leaf search operation. Three squads would cover an area by going out a pre-determined distance and returning in a three-leaf clover shape. This was the best way to search an area and still have some support from one another. I kept the platoon's command at the center of the clover. With me were my RTO, machine gunner, grenadier, and rifleman. If contact was made I would be the first to support.

The platoon was under-strength. The regular platoon sergeant, S/Sgt. George Horvath (Staff Sergeant), was on leave and probably enjoying a Primo (brand name) beer about now in Hawaii. A Spc/4 had got the kind of "Dear John" letter that all of us dreaded. He was so despondent and ineffective that I

had to send him home on emergency leave. Other platoon members were in the hospital with various wounds and illnesses.

I was down to about 26 packs (men) at the time. That would mean that each of the three squads had only seven men or less. I had five with me. Normally on search and destroy type of missions I configured the platoon's formation to that of a "V" shape or wedge. This allowed maximum protection against ambush as two squads took the V formation and one squad was in reserve and protected the rear. Maneuver and support was the key to survival when operating in heavy terrain.

Prior to Tam Ky, I could always count on artillery support if we got in a bind. I used a lot of artillery and quite frankly was pretty good at calling it in. Again, army Ranger training gave me an edge when it came to map-reading. Using artillery was great but you had to know exactly where you were when you called for a first round Hotel Echo (HE; High Explosive) mission. One time, using binoculars, I remember catching a well armed unit of VC in the open a good klick (kilometer) away. I was able to call in a "troops in the open, first round salvo, fire-for-effect, Hotel Echo, air-bursts," that killed or wounded them all.

As I remember the action I was on top a mountain looking down into a valley. I remember that the VC were a long way off because it took a few days to reach the bodies. I saw that one of those killed was a Viet Cong woman. I knew because when we searched the body the maggots had already eaten away one breast and were quite busy with the second. Vietnam was hot and humid with lots of flies...



24

Sgt. Luis Santiago was elevated from squad leader to acting platoon sergeant while S/Sgt. Horvath was on leave. Sgt. Santiago was with the squad that first encountered the NVA. He radioed that he was in contact and needed help ASAP. His unit was under intense enemy fire. He had been hit in the hip and could not move. Other squad members were also wounded and pinned down.

I had a good idea of where he was but we were out of hearing range. I gathered my group and began to move toward Sgt. Santiago. I called company headquarters to report that contact was made and that I had a squad pinned down with casualties. I gave our coordinates to higher command and I was on my way. The element of surprise was gone and it was obvious the NVA knew where we were and were expecting (and wanting) our reinforcements to try and reach the pinned down unit.

Our movements now offered the enemy easy targets as they were dug-in in their numerous spider holes and waiting for us. When I came to an open area I would direct the grenadier to lob grenades into the nearby tree lines and heavy jungle. This allowed us time to run across the open area. At one point I asked for grenadier support but he told me that he was out of ammo. I then had no choice but to send a rifleman across an open area to provide cover fire from the other side.

Rifleman Spc/4 Brian Bates was almost to the tree line when a sudden burst of AK-47 fire took him down. I thought he was dead as he did not move or respond to my calls. I later found out that he took three rounds through his torso but somehow managed to live for the next few hours until help arrived. As soon as the rifleman fell I sprayed the tree line with my M-16 and pulled back. I could not be certain exactly where Sgt. Santiago was but I knew he was within range so I had to be careful with my aim.

As we maneuvered I spotted what looked like a bush about 300 meters away in a rice paddy. It didn't fit the terrain. Sure enough it wasn't a bush—turns out to be a heavily camouflaged

NVA taking a dump. I would have used the grenadier on the Viet Cong as I am sure he had friends nearby. But the grenadier was out of ammo so I directed the machine gunner, Spc/4 John Priesthoff, to take him out.

Our machine guns had a red phosphorous tracer every 5th round so it was easy to adjust fire. Unfortunately the enemy managed to make the nearby tree line before we could bring the fire to bear. It was funny watching him run and try to pull his pants up at the same time. This reminded me of when one of my own platoon members, Sp/4 Myles Morrison, was outside the perimeter doing his thing when he came under fire by the VC. With his pants half up he literally jumped back within the platoon's protective perimeter. Having to relieve oneself in enemy territory was sometimes a real challenge.

We came under intense enemy fire soon after the machine-gun began to fire. Our position was now exposed. I fell back with the machine gunner to find some cover. As I jumped over a berm John Priesthoff followed right behind me. I heard him yell "I'm hit." I got back to him and dragged him with me over the berm and laid him on his back. I felt moisture coming from his lower torso as I moved him.

I rolled him over and I saw where the AK-47 round had entered. He was bleeding profusely. The round came out his stomach area. I wrapped his field bandage around the wound in back and used my bandage for the front trying desperately to make them as tight as possible. All the blood made it difficult and the continuous enemy fire didn't help.

I began to fire my M-16 but it jammed and wouldn't clear. M-16 rifles were notorious for jamming. My RTO, Roy Hughes, was about twenty feet away from me and he rose up and fired his M-16 on full automatic and yelled and screamed and cussed to high heaven as he fired. I told him to get down but he kept shooting.

Roy's one of those guys you liked to have around when there was trouble. Roy seemed to like "Nam" and the action it offered. Onetime when he was walking point he cut down a Viet



Cong just as the VC was about to toss a grenade at the main body of our platoon. The VC fell and the grenade blew up while still in his hand. Ruined his whole day...

As Roy was reloading he was hit by AK-47 fire in his wrist and lower right abdomen. The bullets also hit the radio on his back which made it non-operational. He dropped the radio and somehow made it to Sgt. Santiago's position.

The platoon medic, Spc/4 Mike Sublett, was with the soldiers who were pinned down. There were now three out of my five men that were severely wounded by direct fire. I dragged John and his machine gun to what cover I could find and left my M-16 behind. It was of no use to me now so I said screw it. I had nowhere to go as John could not move and I couldn't leave him alone as he could not defend himself if a bad guy showed up. I had John's .45 caliber pistol handy just in case one did. I also had the machine-gun and a grenadier with no ammunition.

Support still hadn't arrived. I sure could have used some artillery but we were too far inland and were isolated from any friendly firebases. I was told that the fast-movers (fighter jets) would be on call. They had my coordinates but could not see my exact position. This made bombing runs impossible. I was on the edge of semi-thick jungle and could see an old dry rice paddy next to the soldiers who were pinned down. The paddy could accommodate a med-evac helicopter. This was the same open area where we tried to get the dumper with the machine-gun.

We were out of pyrotechnics (smoke and star clusters) and had no way

to mark our position. Some of the previous attempts at popping smoke were unsuccessful. I knew we were in grave danger. It was only a matter of minutes that we would be over-run as we were all low on ammo and fighting an enemy who was in well camouflaged pre-arranged fighting positions.

It was about then that John said that maybe a hooch that was nearby would burn and send up some signal smoke. He had a Zippo lighter that he always used (he smoked, as did most of us) and as he gave it to me he told me that he didn't want to die. I promised I wouldn't let him die. I



Ricky Gibson, Wayne Raterman, unknown, Rick Warren (new RTO).

was pissed off at the grenadier for not carrying enough ammo so I told him to low crawl to the hooch and burn it. He obeyed orders as he knew I may shoot him if the enemy didn't. He made it to the hooch and thank God, it lit.

No longer was I as mad at the grenadier (Rickey Gibsen) as I previously was. It took a lot of courage for him to do what he did. The hooch not only lit but burned with such intensity that a large plume of smoke, equal to a half dozen smoke grenades, went straight up. Almost immediately the smoke was spotted by a FAC (Forward Air Controller) as he had been trying to find us. He then relayed our position to the fast-movers but they wouldn't be on target for what seemed like an eternity.

Prior to the jets arrival I called for a dustoff (med-evac helicopter). The chopper attempted to land in that open rice field that I described. I remember seeing it set down next to the pinned down unit and seeing Roy with his white combat battle dressing reaching out and grabbing the right skid attempting to get on board. The helicopter was an easy target and began taking hits. The pilot had to lift off or be shot down and as he lifted, Roy went with him for a few feet, and then fell back to the ground as he was too weak from his wounds to hang on.

I gave the FAC target directions and range and told him to make the runs "danger close" from the smoke. All the Vietnam vets that I know would agree that the nicest noise they ever heard in Nam were the sounds made by our own helicopters. Today would be different. The sounds made by a pair of F-4 jets screaming out of the sky to begin their bombing runs almost on top of me is something I will never forget. As the lead jet passed over me I saw the pilot give a thumbs up sign. That's close air support to the max. They dropped 250-pound explosives that were so near that the fragments going over my head looked like big jagged Frisbees.

The bombs kept the NVA quiet for awhile but not for long.

The NVA were almost next to me and in their holes. The bombs had little effect on them but devastated other nearby positions. I found out later that we had made contact with a large NVA regimental size force and were out numbered by 25 to 1.

The FAC had us located and was able to direct friendly ground units toward my position. The other nice noise I heard in Nam was that of M-113s (APCs; Armored Personnel Carriers) with their steel tracks making that klankity-klankity-klank noise as they plowed through the heavy jungle. If I heard it so did the NVA. Now things began to ease up. The NVA knew that armored support was nearby. The jungle between me and the APCs was

too heavy for them to breech but the NVA didn't know that. I used John's .45 caliber pistol and by firing into the nearby positions I was able to break contact and make my way toward the sound of the tracked vehicles.

Being alone with only a .45 pistol with maybe two or three rounds left was both scary and eerie as I wondered who was going to kill me first- the NVA or my own friendly troops when and if I ever reached them. I don't remember the details of how but I did manage to hook up with the Company Commander, Captain Barry Gasdek, and his RTOs Scotty and Tango. They were with the mechanized unit from A Troop, 1/1st Cavalry. I briefed him on the situation and location and off we went to the battle.

It wasn't long before Capt. Gasdek realized the intensity of the situation. His RTO, James (Scotty) Scott, was talking on the radio and asked for medics and support from the mechanized unit. An AK-47 round struck Scotty right between the eyes and killed him instantly. The same bullet that went through Scotty's head hit Joseph Tango on his forehead. Tango yelled as he felt the impact and was bleeding but the round's velocity had been slowed enough so that it didn't penetrate the skull.

I crawled behind Scotty's body and confirmed that he was dead. I used his body as cover for myself knowing that a round would go through him. I stayed there for a short time then found an empty enemy spider hole and got in it. Before jumping in I checked for punji stakes and booby traps.

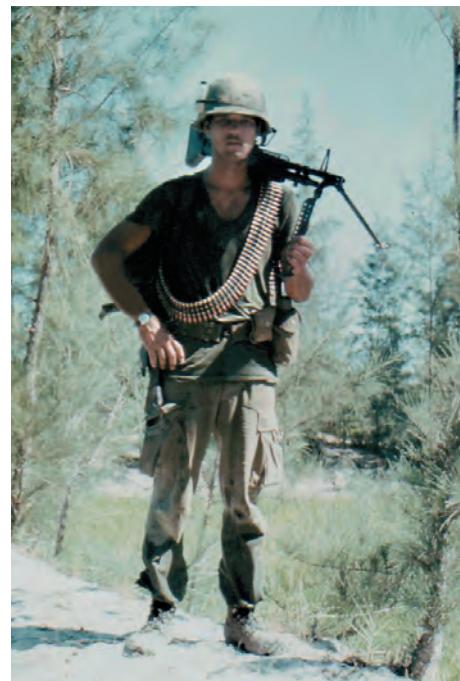
A medic from the mechanized outfit came down the trail and put an IV (intravenous) device in John's arm. John was unable to talk at this point but was still alive. The medic commented that he didn't like the looks of John as he was very pale from loss of blood. I didn't know it then, but the bullet had pierced John's spleen. This caused the wound to bleed non-stop. The last time I saw John he was being evacuated up the trail. He was wrapped in a blanket or on a stretcher heading for the mechanized unit's position and hopefully an awaiting med-evac chopper.

We broke contact with the NVA after all the wounded were recovered and evacuated. Air strikes continued into

the night. We rendezvoused with Delta Company and some mechanized units at the RON position. They say that "the anticipation of death is worse than death itself." I can vouch for that but the anticipation part was going to get worse on the third day near Tam Ky.

It was near dark when we reached the RON. Digging in wasn't too bad as the ground was pretty soft. Being highly motivated to dig in also quickened the process. As bad as it was that day, the air strikes did a lot more damage to the enemy than they did to us. That night I radioed back to Duc Pho (Battalion Headquarters). I was intent on learning how John was. I was surprised to hear that Brian Bates had survived. It was when I asked about John and heard the reply KIA. I requested a repeat and I'll never forget Sergeant Thomas Lincoln's reply when he phonetically phrased "Kilo India Alpha" for killed in action.

I couldn't believe it. I did not want to believe it. I promised John that I wouldn't let him die. I failed and was greatly despondent. I had made the mistake of getting to close to someone in my platoon. John lived in Woodland Hills, California. We had the California bond. He was a twenty-two year old light haired surfer kid that liked being around me. He always followed orders and didn't bitch and moan like some of the others did.



SP/4 John Priesthoff

For years tears filled my eyes every time I drove through Woodland Hills. One time I drove up to his parents' house but I couldn't make myself go to the door and knock because I was too distraught. I blamed myself for letting him die. Others would die too but it wouldn't hurt the same as losing John did. I've carried John's memory with me for all these years and will never forget him.

Day Two: "Reflections"

I never saw Sgt. Santiago or Spc/4 Bates again. Their wounds might have sent them home. Roy returned to the unit a month or so later with a slightly different attitude knowing he was mortal after all. My M-16 stayed on the battle site along with my eye glasses. They were replaceable. I'm not sure about the radio but I think it stayed too. As I said earlier the radio had also been hit by AK-47 fire and was non-operational. Getting all the wounded out of that scenario was a feat in itself.

S/Sgt. George Horvath returned to the platoon but not until after the battle at Tam Ky. We worked together again for a short while. He was a good platoon sergeant and I thought he deserved a job back in the rear at battalion level. Horvath was my mentor. He introduced me to the Third Platoon when I first arrived in country. I was considered green as were all the new replacements. I also knew I was green. Horvath was a good, no nonsense NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer).

Some new lieutenants and captains could be quite the arrogant all-knowing type. I was not. I listened to what the sergeant had to say and took his advice eagerly when it came to learning the ropes. We worked pretty well with each other. I remember asking George to consider going to OCS (Officer Candidate School) as I had done. His response was, "no thank you sir, I like being a sergeant".

After the war I visited George while on one of my reserve duty assignments. He was the highest ranking NCO, a Command Sergeant Major, at the Army Headquarters at Fort McPherson, GA. Prior to that he was the senior NCO for the European Command. I've lost track of him now but maybe someday we'll meet again at an Americal Division veteran's function. I hope so.



S/Sgt. George Horvath and Sgt. Richard Haas cooking at LZ Bronco

Day two found my focus more on defensive tactics as I was told that we would remain in this position for at least one day. For the first time in Vietnam I was without artillery support for a night defensive position. I didn't like it. The platoon was responsible for a part of the company's perimeter. Clear fields of fire were important when defending ground.

This was not easy as the terrain below our position was pretty thick jungle growth. We used machetes and C4 detonation cord to level as much growth as possible. In areas that we couldn't see or cover well with direct fire we put in some extra claymore mines along with flares with trip wires attached. When tripped the flares would light up the sky quite effectively allowing us to respond with first the claymores and then with grenades and direct fire.

Many times, when given a choice of night positions, I would try to find a graveyard to stay in. This may sound weird to many but the truth is that the Vietnamese people buried their dead above ground in a sitting position with an earthen mound around their body. These mounds offered pretty good cover and concealment against direct fire. Additionally the graveyards were in open and flat fields that were leech-free and dry. I had heard stories about the occasional grunt that made the mistake of getting behind a mound and to his surprise finding it to be an ant hill full of not so friendly critters. This definitely caused you to find another location ASAP.

A lot of letters were written home on day two by young men not knowing

what tomorrow may bring. Third platoon had suffered the most casualties of Delta Company on day one and day three would be no exception. I have no way of knowing if any of those soldiers that would die on day three near Tam Ky ever did write home to their loved ones.

Day Three: "The Battle"

On day three the company commander called all platoon leaders together and briefed us on the probable location of the NVA forces. The day before one of the mechanized vehicles was hit by an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) and immobilized in the middle of an old rice paddy located between a hill and tree line. Apparently the mechanized forces engaged the enemy without infantry support and had to withdraw as they were no match for the dug-in enemy and their RPGs. Our mission was to secure the tree line next to the M-113 personnel carrier and provide supporting fire for the engineer's who would destroy it with high explosives. We would then attack the hill.

As we neared the area I smelled the odor of death as I knew that some of those in the M-113 had burned to death. Burning human flesh is unmistakable and makes an indelible mark on one's memory. As sickening as it was it only added to my anger and rage toward the enemy. By no means did I look forward to the upcoming battle but I knew it was imminent.

As we neared the tree line the company went on line with my platoon taking the extreme right flank. The sound of automatic weapons fire was surreal. As my platoon fired so did the enemy. The enemy used automatic weapons and tossed grenades. An NVA hurled a Chi-Com (Chinese Communist) grenade out of his position as I approached. I didn't see it but I sure as hell felt it when shrapnel tore into my left arm. The blow spun me around and knocked me to the ground. I remember how hot my arm felt.

Being on the ground wasn't bad. A rifleman directly in front of me, Hiney Willis, was killed as he took multiple rounds through his upper torso. Hiney was a great soldier. He was an African-American from Houston, Texas, always did what he was told and had been in country since April 1968.

Our medic, Mike (Doc) Sublett, was hit by shrapnel from an exploding RPG round which hit a nearby APC. I didn't see him get hit. I crawled up to him and shook him. He didn't respond. I looked for blood but could not find any wounds. I began giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation trying to get him back.

Doc was a fearless medic who was killed trying to get to Hiney. Doc was from Searey, Arkansas. I knew that Hiney was dead but I couldn't figure why doc was down and apparently also dead.

Frankly, being on the ground may have saved my life because at the same time another soldier, machine gunner Mark Ellsworth, was hit in the face and head. He died instantly. Mark had been in country the longest and had forty-some days left before he was to go home. Mark was from Waterloo, Iowa.

They were all fine soldiers.

Finally, third platoon with help from second platoon managed to kill the NVA. Spc/4 Bob Whitworth and others used machine guns and hand grenades to silence the enemy. We then waited for the engineers to blow the APC. When they did they used so much explosives that I remember seeing the rear door fly overhead.

Other company units had also taken casualties but not as much as my flank did. Three killed and others wounded including me. However we still weren't done as the hill was next. The hill to be taken was just beyond from where the APC was. That was where the main enemy forces were.

We evacuated the dead and wounded. Anyone who had been hit could get on the chopper and return to the rear echelon and safety. The ARVN that was involved in the water buffalo incident was the first to get on board after the dead had been loaded. He had but a minor superficial wound but still couldn't wait to leave. As soon as



What was left of 3rd platoon after day three.

the going got tough many of the South Vietnamese soldiers would cut and run. I stayed with the platoon as I could still function. I couldn't leave my men. I had to finish the job.

The company went on line with the idea of crossing the open area while firing at the enemy on the hill. I did not much care for that idea as I had just lost a significant part of the platoon by doing the same formation. Platoon or company on line with weapons firing controlled bursts were commonly used when crossing open areas. I only hoped that the air support had softened up the area and that it wouldn't be too bad.

As we crossed everyone was firing. At one point the lines forward progress hesitated. Nobody wanted to hit that hill but I knew we could either die in the open or die on the hill. At this point I got in front of the platoon and with my jungle fatigues filled with bright red blood, gave the order "follow me." Everyone obeyed and followed me up the hill. I was first to hit the trench line and fell into it expecting to be blown away.



1LT Robert Vertrees, CPT Barry Gasdek, 1LT James Elliott

The trench was empty except for me. I was feeling pretty lonely but was awed by how precisely engineered it was. The trench went so many meters straight and then at an angle for another so many meters with firing positions throughout. It was structured so that a grenade or artillery shell impact would be minimized. I looked both ways but saw no enemy. Soon others began to fall into the trench and I was relieved to know that my guys were in the part of the trench that I couldn't see. We reloaded and began to go up the hill. We killed what was left of the NVA and took the objective without losing any more men.

Sitting on the military crest of that hill still spooks me when I think about it. At

anytime an NVA could pop-up and shoot anyone he chose. Again, the anticipation of death had been overwhelming for most of that third day and I was glad that it was finally over.

Epilog

The after action report said the body count was over three hundred NVA regulars killed. I'd give them all back for return of John, Mike (Doc), Hiney and Mark. War is hell. For having the idea that basically saved our butts, I recommended John for the Silver Star Medal. He received it and the Purple Heart posthumously.

I was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" device (Valor) for heroism in ground combat as well as the Purple Heart. I continued as Third Platoon leader for a few more months. I then became the Company Executive Officer and was given a desk job in the rear-area. Near the end of my tour in Vietnam I was appointed acting Company Commander and returned to the field for close to a month. I was the ranking lieutenant.

The Company Commander I replaced was Captain Wynn. He was wounded while doing an aerial recon. He was hit by ground fire and I never saw him again. I wish he would have returned because he was more soldier friendly and had been in Nam before. He cared more about the men than he did a high body count. He did his job, as I did, but he was smarter than his next replacement.

His replacement was a gung-ho ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) captain that I thought showed little empathy for the troops. I didn't like him and he didn't like me. I'd been there done that. After Tam Ky some of the wind came out of my sail and I admit it, I didn't want any more KIAs including yours truly.

This story is just a glimpse of Vietnam from a soldier who was there. I could never talk much about my experiences in Vietnam. They were not different from many other soldiers who may have had it a lot worse than me.

None of the above would ever have been written if not for my son, Robert Vertrees II. He encouraged me to write. When I first started I didn't think I could go through with it as the tears came back when the writing forced me to recall the loss of life and the intensity of war. I flashed back but

he kept me going by insisting that he needed material for some of his writing classes. My son was a student at UCLA (University Of California Los Angeles). He has since graduated. I want to thank my son for his persistence.

As I got into the writing I found that it was therapeutic in some way. Tam Ky was a long time ago. I did my best all those years not to think about it but could not help remembering. For years following Vietnam I would experience flash-backs. Seeing film footage in particular would set me off. Around 1977 or 1978 I remember going to a movie that I thought was a comedy romance titled Hero's with Sally Field and Henry Winkler. It was a comedy but when the movie showed scenes of Vietnam combat I was immediately transported back to 1968. I had to leave.



LTC Geoffrey Crowe presents 1LT Robert Vertrees with Bronze Star for Valor and Purple Heart medal.

Prior to seeing Hero's I went with some of the dorm guys from college to a 99 cent movie theater to see the Wild Bunch. It was just a cowboy movie but the director, Sam Peckinpah, used such real looking bloody scenes that again caused me to flash. I didn't leave that time as I was, after all, with some of the guys. I will always remember Vietnam and those who I was with when their lives were cut short by a war that divided our great country. If wars were won or lost by which side had the highest body count, then we won. I'm not sorry that I went.

There will always be the occasional tears when listening to our National Anthem or attending the next Veterans Day celebration. And there are tears now at this very moment as I type my final words and my fingers struggle to hit the proper keys.



The Great Tiger Hunt of '68

By Glen C. Davis
Div. Arty. Sr. Aerial Observer
and Intel. Officer; 1968-69



One day I and another member of the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company (21st RAC) were flying in an O1E "Birddog" airplane out of Chu Lai airstrip. From 1200 hours to 1500 hours we flew over the "Rocket Pocket" to register for several artillery units. They were Co. A, 3/18th Arty. at grid BT439020, Co. B, 1/14th Arty. at grid BT439020, and Co. A, 3/18th Arty. (155mm) at grid BT39450773.

I reported the following under Significant Sightings: "BT439022-rocket launching positions from night of 23 April 1968. Registered A/3/18-8 inch on area and B/1/14-105 mm tubes on area. Shot destruction mission on



CPT Loil (3/18th pilot) CPT Davis (DivArty S2 and senior aerial observer) in front of O1G Birddog airplane just before take off over SVN, June 68.

area upon completion of registration, using 8 inch and 105 tubes. Area well covered and units have excellent replot data in case this area is again used as a launch position. BT403080- while registering A/3/18-155s, from hill 58 on grid BT39450773, observed a "BENGAL TIGER" kill a cow, drag her across a stream into dense underbrush and proceed to eat her. He will probably lay up here for a day or so. This area is only two and one-half kilometers

west of unit on Fat City firebase (B/1/14). There are also infantry units in this vicinity. Estimate weight of tiger to be 550 to 600 pounds."

This is what I reported. And now, as Paul Harvey would say, here is "the rest of the story."

We were in the registration phase when we noticed a small group of cattle in the area. They acted spooked and kept running back and forth. These cattle were very used to artillery rounds going off around them and usually didn't react in this manner. I was paying close attention to the cattle as I suspected that it might be VC who were spooking them.

Suddenly, a tiger came out of the brush and knocked a cow down, picked her up in his teeth, and proceeded to drag her across a small stream into some bamboo. So there we were, with a tiger in full view, but what to do? Tigers attacked and killed many soldiers and marines at their remote outposts.

Since we already had 155s firing the registration nearby I decided to switch from registration to "tiger destruction".

I gave FDC the necessary corrections without telling them why. They complied with my instructions and fired. The rounds came very close to the tiger so I called in another correction. But a very stern FDC officer came on the radio and wanted to know 'what the hell was going on' with his registration?

I could have, and maybe should have, lied to him and told him I had observed enemy activity. But I told him

I was shooting at a tiger. He became very angry and told me in no uncertain terms that he wasn't going to shoot his artillery at any "damned tiger". He then broke off radio contact.

So there we were with a tiger right below us and no one to shoot for us. Since we always carried four rockets (two high explosive, two smoke) under the wing for marking targets for the Air Force planes, we decided to make a rocket run on the tiger. We fired two the



CPT Davis stands in front of his O1G "Birddog" as he prepares for next mission as artillery aerial observer.

first run and got very close. Then we fired the last two and scored a near hit.

Now we had no artillery and no rockets and a wounded tiger below us. I always carried my M-16 with ten magazines so I decided to finish the job with my rifle. Shooting from the air it is hard to see where the rounds are going. So we always loaded a tracer every third round in the magazine.

Each pass we made I emptied a magazine on full automatic. We made ten runs and I shot 18 rounds on each run. The tiger was hit numerous times, but now I was out of ammo for my M-16. How I kept from shooting off our wing or tail during all of this I'll never know.

I decided to try another pass at which time I let loose with my .45 automatic pistol. I don't know if any of the rounds hit or not since we did not use tracers in the .45 pistol. We were out of artillery rockets, M-16 ammo, .45 ammo, and almost out of fuel. We headed back to the airstrip at Chu Lai.

By this time the "big tiger hunt" was all over the radios of the artillery units as well as with the fixed wing aircraft and choppers in the area. When we landed a young chopper pilot met us. He wanted me to go with him back to the area. When I asked him why, he stated he wanted to land and skin the tiger. I told him the tiger was shot all to hell and if we landed in that area the VC would skin him and hang his hide on their wall. I told him, in no uncertain terms, that I wouldn't go with him. He then asked if I would show him on the map where the tiger was. I know that he was just crazy enough to go after the tiger so I told him "No".

That was the end of the great tiger hunt of '68.



An Army of One

By Harold R. Sargent

(Editors note: This is the final part (III) of Harold Sargent's WWII memoirs. Harold would like any vets from E Company, 132nd regiment to contact him at: 1139 Foxwood Drive, Hermitage, PA 16148)



On August 6th the Atomic Bomb was dropped and eight days later on the 14th Emperor Hirohito broadcasted the acceptance of the instrument of surrender. That evening we watched a movie and we were walking back to our encampment. It sounded like a bomb had been dropped and the entire island of Cebu shivered. The roar reverberated again. Then someone said, "The war is over." It then dawned on us that we could return home alive. We celebrated by drinking a ration of warm beer.



USS Goodhue

Our troopship, the USS Goodhue, still lay in the bay and on August 29th the 132nd was loaded aboard and we sailed for Japan. We arrived in Tokyo bay on September 8th and sailed past the USS Missouri to dock at the Customs House in Yokohama, which eventually was to be my location for the next year in Eight Army Headquarters. Units of the Air Force and Marines had landed ahead of us, but we were the first full division that landed in Japan. There is no way to describe the military might that lay in Tokyo Bay that week. A forest of aircraft carriers, battleships, destroyers, troopships and minesweepers filled the harbor. And, after the signing of the treaty thousands of aircraft flew over the bay for several hours. This was a demonstration to the Japanese that the Allies had the power. Several Japanese units had no intention of surrendering and one unit tried to capture the Emperor to keep him from surrendering.

The next day some large trucks appeared out of nowhere. We left the ship and climbed aboard. From atop the trucks we looked out across the city to the south. Although there were a few large buildings that had been spared along the coast, there was not a single building standing as far as we could see and Mount Fuji was visible in the distance. That previous March Yokohama had been fire bombed



Americal soldiers shop at the Black Market, Japan occupation

into oblivion. On occasion we would spot children or an old man lurking under what looked like tin roofs. Every Japanese had been told that we would kill people and rape the women. Aboard the troopship, a warning had been read to us that under no circumstances were we to assault any Japanese and we were assured by MacArthur, in no uncertain terms, that we would be dealt with immediately if there was an incident between us and the Japanese. We believed. According to the information I have, there was no incident between us and the Japanese. All Japanese treated us at least as well as we treated them.

Our trucks, with the 132nd aboard, arrived at a military barracks near Hiratsuka, similar to those found on our Army posts. The following day our squad was assigned to guard the Hachiman Shinto Shrine near Kamakura. We stood at the top of the long flight of steps to make sure that no one damaged the shrine that the location was "off limits" to all GI personnel. Other units fanned out to locate and destroy any military device. Following that assignment we were assigned to guard a "Made in Japan" factory.

We were not aware that several Japanese units did not want to surrender until one day I was told to report to the Captain of our Company. Once there I was told to put on my best uniform and go down the end of the road where the General of the Japanese unit would arrive to surrender formally. The Captain said, "Give him instructions as to where our headquarters is located. These units are now embarrassed and want to surrender formally with the presentation of their ceremonial samurai sword" I stationed myself at a crossing a quarter of a mile down our road. Sure enough, in



Remainder of Sargent's Platoon, October
1945, Japan Occupation

less than fifteen minutes a huge, black limousine pulled up to my side and stopped. A Japanese officer jumped out and opened the door for the General, who stepped out and came to the front of me. I stood at attention. All of them wore black, formal uniforms that I had never seen before. Here I am confronting a Japanese general. What was I supposed to do? I saluted and he returned the salute. I pointed in the direction of Headquarters and they got in the limousine and left. It wasn't until years later that I realized that my comrades in arms had recommended that I be the soldier to meet the general. It was meant to be a high honor.

Following those assignments, the veterans of my platoon were given a weeks R&R in Kyoto, the pleasure capital of Japan where we were introduced to the Geisha society. They were dressed like typical American teenagers, and were most eager to please us. They say that Geisha entertain by talking, and I can verify that. We visited a pub across from our location where most got acquainted with "Bieru" and sake. Exiting this pub one day we noticed a ceremony transpiring in a wide area known as Corps Headquarters. General Eisenhower turned our way as if to shake our hands. We left immediately to avoid meeting Eisenhower in our stupor. Ike had been assigned by President Truman to tour the world. He was a political opponent and this was a way to get him out of the nation.

Back in Hiratsuka I was assigned to the News Section of Regimental Headquarters. The division was downsizing. Most of the old veterans had been sent home. Those of us who still had at least a year to serve were being dealt out to other units in our region. During the day I went to regimental headquarters and returned at night. That is why I do not appear in any of the pictures taken to preserve the



Harold Sargent at beginning of Japan Occupation



132nd Regiment in Japan before it was disbanded

posternity for all Americal units. All of the personnel in the Information Section would be leaving in a few days. Looking out my window, I noticed Samurai Swords in a pile about six feet high. Part of MacArthur's philosophy concerning the occupation of Japan was that the military tradition associated with their swords had to be destroyed. Japanese were told to surrender all their Samurais. After the officers confiscated the valuable ones, I was given one used by the current Japanese officers because I had the Purple Heart.

That week, those of us with not enough points to go home were interviewed concerning our next assignment. Walters, my friend from Kalispell, Montana, Spencer from Louisville and Bastian, my Basque friend from the sheep ranch in Utah, were all assigned to Army Headquarters. These were friends from my infantry platoon back in Cebu. They were also with me on R&R in Kyoto. I was sent to the Adjutant Generals office in Eight Army Headquarters which was located in the Customs House where we arrived the first day. The Adjutant Generals office dealt with printing of secret and confidential orders and the protection of such. Our lodging was the warehouse that had been constructed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Because of the huge columns we could not see from one end of the room to the other. On November 22nd, the Americal was officially disbanded and those with enough points were put on a "Magic Carpet" and sent home.

In contrast to the behavior of the children and women at our arrival, now children followed the GI's to get candy bars and learn English. The same was true for women. Since the Japanese had no luxury goods, chocolate bars and cigarettes were highly attractive. The children and women wanted to learn English. Apparently English was taught in the schools since most Japanese knew some English. Our exit from the warehouse opened to a large patio where the women and black market operators thronged. Women and black marketers surged up against the doors. Military Police were stationed on the patio to allow troops to exit without injury. The March bombing of the city had left thousands of orphans and distressed families. Women would give themselves to men for a candy bar or a pack of cigarettes.



Sargent (center) at Japanese Pub. Note his 8th Army patch

Going from a dog-faced infantryman to the Eight Army Headquarters required a considerable adjustment on my part. This duty was considered the best in the Army, but I adjusted. The other members had no concept of what combat meant. Having a Purple Heart set me off from the others. We felt romantic beside the oriental beauties who let us know they were attracted to us. More than anything we were aware of our youth and the brevity of it all. A little over a year prior we were in high school and now we were transformed to adventurers that in the old days would have been called "swashbucklers." We divided into two groups: the youthful "letter writers" who penned a letter each day to their sweethearts or their mothers and then there were the older married men who left each night for a liaison.

Most of the soldiers were less than 22 years of age. At one end of the floor a group of five NCO's befriended me. After a few days of conversation I discovered that they were actually a Communist cell. All of them were older and from the New York universities. I always thought it was remarkable that they were stationed in the highest offices of the Eight Army. If this was achieved so easily, was it also true in other headquarters? Like our married troops, they disappeared most every night. Eventually they asked me to go with them. Trains and trolleys were the means of



Japans Imperials Palace – January 1945

transportation. After about an hour in transit, they ushered me into a house run by about five Geisha. Coming from a farm, my typical bedtime was about 9 to 10 o'clock. These girls were still talking at three in the morning and I was in deep misery. I found the bedroll and laid out on the tatami with a rice pillow and sleep. Obviously the girls stayed up all night and slept all day. What I discovered was that this location was part of the network that funneled information to Japanese Communists. The Communist Party was part of Japanese politics. Their big thing was to get the troops home immediately. I never met with them again. A week later some communist GI's commandeered a tank and demonstrated on it shouting and screaming that GI's should be sent home immediately. A description of this event appeared in the Stars and Stripes. They were high-point men and were sent home within a few days.

The favorable relationship between the GI's and the Japanese, especially the women, was remarkable. It seemed as if all Japanese women wanted to have a friendly association with a GI. This may have been due to the size of the Americans. It was unusual for Japanese males to be over 5'5". Whereas it was normal for GI's to be between 5'7" and 6'3". GI's had access to luxury goods. This made them more attractive since there were no luxuries produced during the first years of Occupation. The Japanese society was bound by traditional hierarchy. We were considered wealthy, taller, and most important, we treated them as equals.

Nearly every GI was part of the Black market. His weekly issue of soap, cosmetics, cigarettes, candy and razor blades had immediate currency. Cigarettes were an acceptable mode of exchange and were sold at the national, acceptable rate of exchange of at least 20 to 1. Under the haphazard, army delivery system, some units and soldiers had unusual access to these commodities. Such GI's became wealthy. The Master Sergeant in charge of our unit, since we had charge of the distribution system of all ration cards, was one of these. He boasted openly that when he returned to Phoenix he was going to buy at least a Ford car dealership. And I was sure he had sufficient finds. Bargaining with the fence had no advantage since the margin was so great. Such

business relationships increased communication between the Americans and Japanese. Everybody made money and the Japanese who had money before the war, still had plenty afterwards. The issue of Script in late 1946 made it impossible to send money home. However, the purchase of precious gems was common and they could go home in a watch fob pocket.

In the evening, we would jump on a trolley or railway and travel all over the Tokyo area. One night I heard a beautiful Japanese girl, dressed as an American, speaking perfect English. I went up to her only to find she was a Nisei, a Japanese person who lived and worked in the USA prior to the war. Prior to Pearl Harbor she came back to Japan on the Gripsholm with her father who sympathized with the Japanese. Over time I became close to her. She worked for a unit in the occupation. She felt as strange in Japanese society as I did. She took me to her home one night and introduced me to her parents. That's when I discovered she wanted to marry and go back to California. Our friendship ended there.

In the spring, a new location of Quonset Huts was built for us. The Japanese needed the warehouse for their own purposes. By this time most GI's, especially the older ones had established permanent relationships with a woman. Being close to the sea, the camp was always covered with a dense fog in early morning. We had to fall out for roll call each morning. The dense early morning fog allowed us to call out for each other which made it easy to stay overnight. In addition, the officer in charge had his own problems. There was a ten foot fence around the camp with only one entrance and exit manned by the MP's. As a rule, we were searched for black market items when leaving. That problem was solved through the buddy system. One man would leave with a laundry bag stuffed with dirty clothing for our cleaning lady; the other would go to the back of the camp and throw his laundry bag over the fence loaded with cigarettes.

Through the black market system most GI's had plenty of money. That spring the Club Shanghai opened, which provided excitement for men located in the headquarters. The Shanghai was similar to what would become the Playboy Club in the United States with lovely high type middle-class women, between the ages of 17 and 28. They wore long off-white evening gowns and could speak acceptable English. They eventually moved to a larger facility where alcohol was served. This provided excitement for young GI's. This was not just for sex as far as the locals were concerned. There were many long-term love affairs.

One time I was accosted by four drunken sailors on a street car. I did not back down, but was frightened until a Japanese man sidled up to me and whispered, "Don't be afraid. I am a Japanese policeman and an expert in Judo." This illustrates the relationship between the Japanese police and the GI's. Another memory, the Japanese saved human waste to be used for fertilizer. When the "Honey Dippers" came we had to keep all windows closed. The odor was overpowering.

I could tell you of a dozen exciting events that transpired over the next several months but I should limit the words to this memoir. In August of 1946, it dawned on our Colonel that all the men in our unit would have enough points to

go home, including me. There was no one left to lead the division of about a dozen men in the Adjutant General's office. The Master Sergeant asked me to report to the Colonel, who asked if I would stay on to lead the division. I replied that I had been overseas well over a year and was homesick. "Since you are a sergeant, there is no incentive to offer you another stripe. If I make you a Warrant Officer on the spot, would you take the assignment?" I wavered. "Think it over tonight, and come in tomorrow and tell me your decision." That next morning I reported to the Colonel. "If you will let me go home a month, I accept."

The Colonel responded, "This disappoints me but we can't do that because we need someone right now who can take over. We will have to find someone else." I replied, "Sir, I realize what an honor this is and I know it represents a real opportunity for me to make the Army my career, but I have to get home." With that I saluted and walked out.

The next week I got things together and boarded a Liberty Ship. A voyage on a Liberty Ship is like nothing else. The northern route took us close to the Aleutian Islands. At night we battened down all hatches and listened to the sea coming over the ship. This was tough on anyone who was subject to seasickness.

Our destination was Fort Lewis, Washington. It was September 7, 1946 when I arrived. I had been in Japan just one year.

Editors Note: All photos, except where noted, are courtesy of Harold Sargent



Sargent's Liberty Ship arriving in Seattle

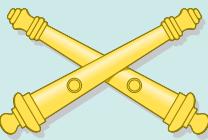


Harold Sargent with souvenir Samurai Sword, 2008
(Photo David W. Taylor)

Memories From Long Ago

By Lloyd W. Davis

A Battery, 247th Field Artillery Battalion



(Editors Note: This is part I of a two part memoir written by Lloyd Davis)

Times were not very good when I got out of high school. I got a job at the old J.C. Penney warehouse in St. Louis, Missouri. At first it was trucking freight with a two-wheeled hand truck, and then on to other jobs in the warehouse. I didn't make much money. I remember making \$22.50 for a five and half-day work week. After my room and board there was not much left.



Lloyd D. Davis, 1941

knew where we were. At this time the Illinois National Guard was part of the 33rd Infantry Division.

We were called up to federal service on March 5, 1941. My outfit was Battery E, 123rd Field Artillery regiment, 33rd Division. We recruited men to fill out missing spaces to get to the allotted strength. About March 15th we moved out by L&N train to Camp Forrest, Tennessee, just outside of Tullahoma. It was a new camp and Tullahoma was a small country town that had not seen much happen there since the Civil War; the population of the town was about 3,000 residents. The new army camp was a bonanza for the people as there were about 60,000 soldiers in the camp. You can imagine what happened when the first pay day came and all these men got passes and went to town. I think the first time passes were granted the town sold out of everything in just a few hours. There were also a lot of bootleggers and roadhouses vying for the Yankee dollar. At that time in early 1941 the town's people and the surrounding countryside was economically deprived,

particularly those living in the countryside. Their housing was very substandard, mostly just shacks. Today when you drive through this part of Tennessee you see very clean and modern homes. But I welcomed the Army life; it was better than handling freight for J.C. Penney.

It was not long after arriving at Camp Forrest that I was promoted to Corporal and was the gunner on the section cannon. It was a 155MM howitzer and we were proud of our section and our gun. We made a number of trips up to the firing range in the Cumberland Mountains in eastern Tennessee. During that summer of 1941 we participated in the Arkansas and Louisiana maneuvers which included several hundred thousand men training for what was to come later. After the maneuvers were over we settled back into more training in camp and it was not bad at all. It was easy to get a pass and we would often go to Nashville or some other big town for a weekend.

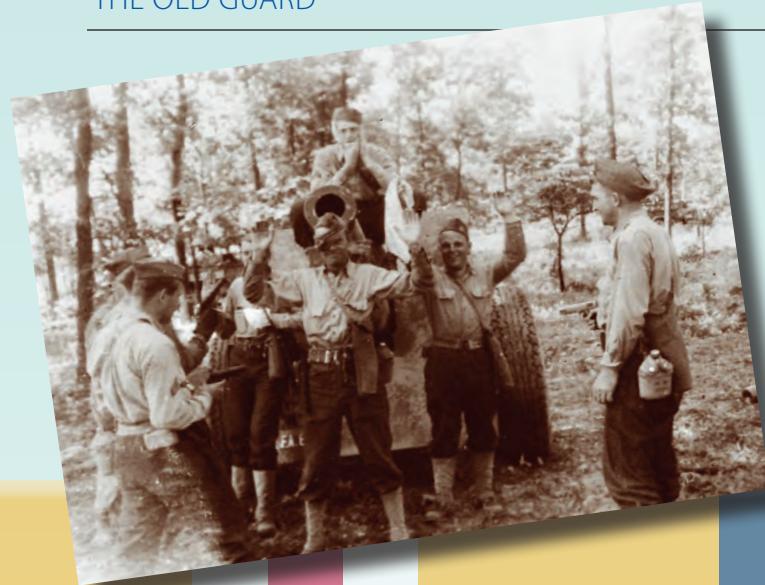
On some special occasions about five of us would hire a taxicab to drive to camp to East St. Louis, Illinois for a hurry-up trip back home. It was on one of these trips that I met a young lady, Mary Louise Eickholt, who was to become my wife. As I type these memories we have celebrated 57 years of married life, so I guess it's safe to say the marriage will last. When the government called us up for federal service it was supposed to be for one year. The Japanese extended that tour for me to five years, four months and 19 days.

On Sunday, December 7, 1941 I was laying on my bunk reading the Sunday paper. Someone had a radio on and that is how we heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In a very short time the entire camp was alerted and became a beehive of activity. Various guard details were quickly mounted and dispatched. Among about twenty of us I was assigned to guard a small hydro-electric plant on the Duck River and it was sure cold that night! There was a small office in the plant, not over 10 feet square but it was the only heated place we could use. I don't think the Japanese knew it was there. I know we didn't.

Although we were on alert or perhaps because of it, ten-day furloughs were granted. One half of the battery could go over Christmas and the second half over New Years. I drew Christmas but traded for New Years so I could be home for my birthday, my 20th. As soon as I returned from furlough we became very busy packing and preparing to ship out. About January 10th 1942 our battalion of artillery, along with the 132nd Regiment and a lot of other troops boarded trains at the camps railhead. Just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor the Army infantry divisions had been going under reorganization. Infantry divisions were being streamlined into triangular divisions from the old square divisions. The triangular divisions had fewer troops; one less infantry regiment and artillery regiments were reduced to battalion strength. The surplus troops from this reorganization became the readily available troops when the call came for men to be sent overseas. This was happening at other camps as well.

Our contingent boarded the train and with all the shades drawn departed for parts unknown. About 48 hours later we arrived at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania at the Indiantown

Camp Forest and maneuvers – 1941



Gap Military Reservation. There had been an ice storm and everything was glazed with a coating of ice. I recall that as we got off the train we were loaded into cavalry horse trailers and were transported to our barracks. One of the men slipped and suffered a broken leg. Of course he was hospitalized and we thought we would never see him again. Actually we did because he was never released from our rolls and, after some epic voyages he caught up with us on Guadalcanal a year later.

We went through processing at Indiantown Gap. We drew some equipment and were issued 1903 Springfield rifles. Mine was certainly old and had seen much action and service. Later I was to discover it was missing a firing pin and while enroute in our convoy of ships to the southwest pacific a ships machinist mate made me a new one. There was a highway running right through the camp. We were allowed to leave camp and some men from various eastern cities took off for home. All made it back. It was a weekend so I went into Harrisburg with some others on Sunday but not much was open. I called and talked to Dad and Mom and also called Mary Louise. I had sent her a ring from Tennessee so I guess we were engaged. There were four of us together in town. We met a group of girls and they took

us to a private club where we could get a beer and dance to a juke box so we had a pretty good day after all.

All in all we were in the Indiantown Gap camp about five days and again we boarded a train at night and in a few hours found ourselves on the shores of the Hudson in New Jersey. A ferry boat took us across the river where we unloaded at the end of a long pier. We were loaded down with a full winter uniform and equipment; rifle, pack, gas mask, cartridge belt, overcoat and two full barracks bags. All summer uniforms were in one bag and winter in another. It was still night. It was raining and we had a good mile yet to go to get to our ship. When we got to the ships' side we started to board when an officer would call out our last name. You answered with your first name and middle initial and then climbed up onto the ship. We went up narrow ladders, pushing one bag and pulling the other. The rifle was catching onto everything until we came out on a deck. A hold was open and we were instructed to drop #2 bag into the hold. It was about four or five stories deep and I hoped

my bag would not burst open. The first bags thrown in were well pressed before they were unloaded some 47 days later.

Well, we were on a ship but had no idea where it would take us. Workmen were still installing bunks and converting the former South American fruit liner and passenger ship into a troopship. It was the SS. Cristobal and fairly new. Our bunks were canvas laced to a pipe framework. Most in our section were three bunks high and not too bad as we were on an upper deck. In the former ballroom some bunks were six high and swayed quite a lot when we were at sea. It was January 20, 1942 when we boarded the ship. We sailed on the 22nd; most of us were between the ages of 19 to 21 and had been in the services at least 10 months. Morale was good. I don't recall any who were unduly nervous. Most of us were volunteers with only a few draftees.



On the early morning of January 22, 1942 we sailed and soon made up a convoy of seven troop ships (Editors note: Task Force 6814) and I guess a total of twelve or fifteen ships total. We went around Sandy Hook and steamed northeast so we immediately guessed we were headed for Ireland or England. Two or three days later we found we were sailing southwest. The convoy came back in fairly close to the coast around Cape Hatteras. There had been a number of ships sunk by submarines in this area and there was a lot of oil on the water. We had several alarms before we got to Panama. There were dirigibles for air cover and the subs did not like them and we got through without losing a ship. I recall destroyers dropping depth-bombs and it was reported a sub had been sunk.

The convoy passed between Florida and Cuba and we could see the lights of Miami and Havana. We passed through the Panama Canal and it was very interesting. Our Atlantic escort left us at Colon, the eastern entrance to the canal. After clearing the canal the transports docked at Panama City and Balboa to refuel and take on water and supplies. One of the MP's who went ashore brought me a quart of rum. I hid this away in my pack and a couple of weeks later I surprised my group with it. Nobody could figure out how I came up with a quart of rum a thousand miles out in the Pacific Ocean.

When we first got on board the ship in New York they were still loading supplies into the ships' holds. We noticed that a lot of cases of "good things" were being loaded and

began to plot and plan as to how to get our hands on some of it. We formed a "Ways and Means Committee" and before long somebody discovered a way into the holds and liberated several cases of tuna fish and other goodies which we proceeded to hide in various places. Soldiers don't call it stealing. It is "foraging."

After we were at sea a while we learned that the ship's baker cooled hundreds of loaves of fresh bread in the service area off the bakery and four decks below our quarters. We could smell the fresh baked bread. It came out of the oven about 3am. Our scouts alerted us when the road was clear and some ten or twenty of us would form a line down the ladder and bring up ten or fifteen hot loaves and they were quickly stored away. Forays into the kitchen area or even a tour of KP became an opportunity to liberate fresh onions and carrots to add to our hidden snacks.

Officially there were two meals a day with very long lines and the food was not the greatest. This ship had a Merchant Marine crew and the cooks were nothing to brag about. On other ships I found out later their Navy crews and cooks did a much better job. I recall one morning as we turned into the Tasman Sea between Australia and Tasmania it got very rough. The Tasman Sea is noted for its strong seas. The ship pitched a lot and we took heavy seas over the bow. Forty seven days out of New York we docked at Melbourne, Australia. Most of the trip had been through the tropics and we all had our winter woolens and I don't think we smelled very good.

When we docked and embarked we were formed up and marched through the streets of Melbourne. Great crowds lined the streets and seemed happy to see us. Some handed bottles of beer to the marching men. We marched up to a park and then bivouaced. The next morning we boarded a train and headed north. The trains were different from American trains; smaller coaches with compartments that opened directly out at the stations. At one stop there were many ladies who had set up refreshment tables and served us drinks and cake. About 125 miles north of Melbourne is the gold mining town of Bendigo. It was a city of perhaps 75,000 people. There were streetcars and all sorts of amenities. There we were to stay for about eight days. As we marched down the street a city official directed us by one, two or more to private houses where we were billeted.

It was very good; A most hospitable people. I stayed with the Arthur Eldred family. Our second bags arrived and we were able to put on summer uniforms and were much more comfortable. I recall that as I went into the Eldred home they led me into a private room with its own entrance. Mrs. Eldred drew me a hot bath and said after I bathed and shaved there would be supper ready. As I came out of the bath I found laying on the bed clean pajamas and a dressing robe. I put them on and went to supper. It was great.

Again we boarded the train and went back to Melbourne. My group was still field artillery but we had no cannon. Our commanders somewhere secured some Australian Army field pieces. They were British 18-pounders, much like the old French 75MM guns and some 25-pounders which turned



Noumea, New Caledonia – 1942

out to be similar to the new American 105MM howitzers. A number of cannoneer Non-Com's, gun sergeants and gunner corporals went on board a ship along with some Australian artillerymen and they proceeded to demonstrate the strange weapons to us. There were a couple of each type of these guns on deck so we could become familiar with them; Much to learn.

We still did not know where we were going. After about a week we landed on New Caledonia. This is a French island that had once been a French penal colony. Many of the people were their descendants. It is an island about 250 miles long and 30 miles wide. At this time it was one of the last places in the free world where the allies could get tungsten and nickel, both essential to making armor plate. It was a prime target for the Japanese and the French were very concerned it would be an invasion target. This proved true. There was a strong Vichy faction there but they were eventually deported. Our ship was the first to arrive and was followed in a few days with the balance of Task Force 6814. I seem to remember that there were only about 30 or so of us in the advance party, including the Aussies. We got word that the rest of our troops were coming in. We had bivouaced about 6 miles outside of Noumea, the capital and port.

Someone decided we had to feed the newcomers. I was told that I was now mess sergeant and to prepare to feed about 1,200 men. We had secured a couple of trucks so the officers and some men went to Noumea to get supplies. They brought back some new GI cans, food, bread, etc. I had some of the men dig trenches about a foot wide and deep

and 6-7 feet longs. We built fires in them and boiled water and cleaned the 25 gallon-size cans. We cut some limbs and made paddles to stir with. I made a stew with canned corn beef, corn, tomatoes and what other canned vegetables we had. Got it all to cooking and made lots of coffee.

About dark we could see the men marching toward us. I met the commanding officer and told him, "Everybody scald their mess kits and line up and we will serve them." We had bread from town and even had canned peaches for dessert. These men had not eaten all day and they had marches about ten miles from the port. Nobody turned up their noses at what we had. My own battery mess sergeant and cooks ate and they said, "Good job. We will take over now." Somehow we had enough for everyone and they were pleased to get it.

Soon after all the troops landed and vehicles became available we were sent to various positions around the island and established camps and set up guard. I ended up in or near Bourail, a small town about half-way up the island. They established small provisional gun batteries and we set up 18-pounders to protect the opening into Bourail Bay. Finally, the task force was organized into an Army Division named the "Americal" for "Americans in New Caledonia. There were several "alerts" about possible invasion. The biggest was at the time of the naval battles in the Coral Sea. The Coral Sea lies between Australia, the Solomon's and extends eastward to New Caledonia. It proved to be an allied victory but came at a great cost to the Navy.

To be Continued



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