

October • November • December  
2009



# AMERICAL

## JOURNAL

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

On the Road  
to Mary Ann



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS



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## Commanders Comments

David W. Taylor



### Trooping the Line

Fall is a busy time for reunions and I enjoy the opportunity to meet our Americal comrades. I started with the Eastern Chapter reunion in Portland, Maine on September 10-13. This was the first chapter reunion in New England since the Eastern Chapter and New England Chapters merged a couple years ago. It was a great opportunity for New Englanders to get together. I was especially gratified to see ten of our WWII vets attend. Many thanks to Connie Steers, Larry Shover and Mark Deam for their hard work to make it happen.

On September 17-20 I attended the 27th Annual Vietnam Veteran's Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana. As always I had a great time reminiscing with many Americal vets. Jerry "Doc" Anderson once again drove up from Stone Mountain, Georgia and helped me at the Americal table in the vendor tent. Doc is always there when you need him. His dedicated help at the Kokomo, IN and Melbourne, FL reunions is greatly appreciated!

It was especially gratifying to present Terry Babler a well-deserved ADVA Lifetime Achievement Award, in front of his fellow Americal Vets. Terry could not make the Shreveport reunion so I was happy to present the award in front of many of his comrades.

On October 9-10 I was invited to attend the annual reunion for H Troop, 17th Cavalry in Pittsburgh, PA. H Troop has a special place in my heart because they rescued my small team on 3 June 1969 when we were trapped by the NVA. Thanks to Tom Ondo and others for hosting a great event!

I flew to Reno, Nevada for the Far West Reunion on October 18-21. It was a good opportunity to leave the cold and cloudy skies of Ohio for sunshine and camaraderie in Reno! I want to thank "Reno Rich" Merlin for hosting a great reunion, along with Curt "The Bartender" Rothacker, Cindy "Ticket Lady" McGrath and Tom "Mr. Raffle" Packard along with Chapter Commander Rick Ropele. The chapter has a lot going on and I would encourage our ADVA members living in the western region to join the chapter.

### Far West Chapter to Sponsor 2011 Reunion

At the Far West Chapter reunion it was motioned and approved the chapter will host the 2011 National Reunion. Thank you! Tom Packard will be the reunion chairman. Their target location is Colorado Springs, Colorado, assuming we can get a reasonable hotel rate for our members. The back-up location will be Denver. The chapter wishes to host the reunion in the fall of 2011, the same time frame as the 2010 national reunion. More information will be forthcoming.

### Legacy Committee to be a Legacy Foundation?

The ADVA Legacy Committee, in addition to working hard to collect funds for the National Infantry Museum Monument, is looking strategically at other options to enhance its ability to meet its objectives over the next 10-15 years.

One such option is to create a separate IRC 501 (c) (19) organization to be titled, "The Americal Legacy Foundation". The foundation would maintain a strong connection with the ADVA with the ADVA providing oversight to it. But the creation of a separate entity would allow it to collect donations from sources outside the ADVA, such as corporations, seeking grant monies, etc. Other Veterans organizations, such as the "173rd Airborne Brigade Association" have taken this path for legacy projects and are experiencing great success.

The Legacy Committee is assembling the documents and IRS regulations required for forming such a foundation. Chairman Roger Gilmore is asking ADVA members with legal backgrounds, or those who have intimate knowledge of this type of organization, to please contact him to volunteer some time to look at this project.

### Seasons Greetings and Blessings!

As I write these comments Halloween and "All Saints Day" is just one week ahead. Then we celebrate Thanksgiving and by the time you receive the Journal, Hanukkah and Christmas will be fast upon us. All of these are occasions for celebrating blessings which come to us. Please know that each of you are a blessing to me and I thank you for being who you are and the support you give me as your national commander. You are in my thoughts and prayers.



**Terry Babler (left) receives ADVA Lifetime Achievement Award from National Commander, Dave Taylor**

## Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

ADVA's membership roster continues to see good gains through new member enrollment.

Recruiting initiatives continue to be a big part of our new member additions. National Commander David Taylor attended the annual Kokomo Vietnam Veterans reunion in September and signed up twelve former Americal Division veterans to one year memberships in ADVA. In October, Dave attended a reunion of H Troop, 17th Cav veterans in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania where he signed up four Americal veterans and two associate members for one year memberships.

For the quarter, we added a total of eighty-seven new members to the ADVA roster. Of these new members, six are WWII Americal Division veterans. We added twenty Life members; six are new members and fourteen annual pay members upgraded to Life membership. Thirteen former members were re-instated to the membership roster during this quarter.

The ADVA membership roster is constantly changing. We add many new members each quarter, but we lose members due to deaths and members simply choosing to discontinue their annual membership. We all need to recruit new ADVA members to keep the association vibrant. If you know an Americal Division veteran who is not currently an ADVA member, contact them about joining the association. If you know someone who has an interest in the association but is not an Americal Division veteran, that individual can be sponsored for an associate membership in ADVA.

For all annual pay members, please keep your dues current. Your annual membership expiration date is listed in the address box, on the line just above your name, on the back cover of this issue. If your dues expiration date is Sep09 or earlier, please mail your dues payment to PNC Ronald R. Ellis. Ronald's mailing address is also listed on the back cover.

In closing, I want to wish each member and Americal Veteran a very joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year.



### New Members

#### George Anderson

11th LIB E/4/3rd Inf  
Xenia, OH

★ Mark Deam

#### J. Dwight Anderton

23rd MP Co  
Guntersville, AL

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Richard Balsavage

17th Cav H Trp  
Oliverhurst, CA

★ NC David Taylor

#### Tommy Barnabi

198th LIB 5/46th Inf  
Sewickley, PA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Clinton P. Bean

196th LIB 3/21st Inf  
Norristown, PA

★ Larry Swank

#### John G. Becker

198th LIB E/5/46th Inf  
Perrysburg, NY

★ John Forshag

#### Harold Bender

121st Med Bn  
West Paterson, NJ

★ Self

#### Kenneth W. Bernard

3/82nd Arty  
Lansing, KS

★ Larry Swank

#### Stephen M. Bliss

23rd S&T Bn Co A  
Carlsbad, CA

★ Larry Swank

#### Douglas J. Bonneprise

11th LIB D/4/21st Inf  
Vancouver, WA

★ Self

#### B. Grant Booth

26th Engr Bn  
Plano, TX

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### William S. Burfield

Americal Div HHC  
Glen Allen, VA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Ralph Chapman

123rd Avn Bn  
Coldwater, MI

★ NC David Taylor

#### Robert E. Clemens

196th LIB B/1/46th Inf  
Melbourne, AR

★ NC David Taylor

#### Joe Cota

Americal Spt Cmd  
Hanford, CA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### John T. Craver

198th LIB E/1/6th Inf  
Libby, MT

★ Larry Swank

#### William H. Crawford

198th LIB A/5/46th Inf  
Los Gatos, CA

★ NC David Taylor

#### Jack E. Curtis

3/18th Arty D Btry  
Antlers, OK

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### James Daniels

26th Cmbt Engrs Co A  
Pownal, ME

★ Michael Trimble

#### Dennis Danneels

1/1st Cav A Trp  
Marine City, MI

★ NC David Taylor

#### George Dingley

164th Inf Rgmt HHC  
Indianapolis, IN

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Hugh L. Downey

11th LIB HHC  
Ringgold, Ga

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Jack P. Dugger

6/11th Arty  
Blairsville, GA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Roger Durham

198th LIB 1/6th Inf  
Monticello, IN

★ NC David Taylor

#### William C. Eglet

23rd MP Co  
Chardon, OH

★ Self

#### Dave Eicher

11th LIB B/1/20th Inf  
Turtle Creek, PA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

#### Earl W. Evans

178th ASHC  
Daleville, IN

★ Self

#### King Ferguson

196th LIB C/2/1st Inf  
N Charleston, SC

★ Kenneth Ruesch

#### Harold Fittry

1/1st Cav  
Chambersburg, PA

★ NC David Taylor

#### Michael Ghidoni

17th Cav H Trp  
Wood River, IL

★ NC David Taylor

### ADVA MEMBERSHIP

April 30, 2009

<b>World War II</b>	<b>564</b>
<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>2,376</b>
<b>Korea</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Associate Members:</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>3,120</b>



**Steve Goering**  
123rd Avn Bn  
Flagler, AZ  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Victor R. Haburchak**  
9th FA A Btry  
Nyssa, OR  
★ *Self*

**Mike Hadfield**  
1/14th Arty  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Joe Hatley**  
36th Sig Bn  
San Diego, CA  
★ *Self*

**Robert Johnston**  
1/1st Cav  
Marshfield, WI  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Daniel L. Jones**  
1/82nd Arty  
Huron, OH  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Dennis Jordan**  
1/82nd Arty A Btry  
Malden, MA  
★ *Mac Harness*

**David Kiel**  
196th LIB 2/1st Inf  
High Ridge, MO  
★ *Carl Jacob*

**Joe Kotarba**  
55th Arty G Btry  
Wonder Lake, IL  
★ *Self*

**Al Laferte**  
132nd ASHC  
Viera, FL  
★ *Bill McRae*

**Roger Langlais**  
26th Cmbt Engrs  
Frankton, IN  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Louis C. LaParl**  
196th LIB C/2/1st Inf  
Clay, MI  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Steven G. Lappenga**  
198th LIB D/1/52nd Inf  
Alto, MI  
★ *Larry Swank*

**Ron Lorance**  
11th LIB  
Phoenix, AZ  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Brad Melchior**  
198th LIB E/5/46th Inf  
St Charles, MO  
★ *Self*

**James Morrison**  
164th Inf Rgmt  
Tarkio, MO  
★ *Kenneth Johnson*

**Eugene Nolan**  
198th LIB 5/46th Inf  
Bogalusa, LA  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Thomas A. Ondo**  
17th Cav H Trp  
Kittanning, PA  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Charles Padilla**  
11th LIB B/4/3rd Inf  
Chicago, IL  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Wayne Pennington**  
1/82nd Arty A Btry  
Bessemer, AL  
★ *Self*

**William P. Perry**  
Americal Arty  
Dallas, GA  
★ *Cliff Barger*

**Jack L. Powell**  
23rd S&T Bn  
Montrose, MI  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Thomas Pozdol**  
196th LIB C/3/21st Inf  
River Grove, IL  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Carl A. Ramella**  
196th LIB D/4/31st Inf  
Belpre, OH  
★ *David Eichorn*

**Joseph M. Reta**  
196th LIB 2/1st Inf  
Ferndale, WA  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Jack Ryan**  
26th Cmbt Engrs Co A  
Troy, NY  
★ *Michael Trimble*

**Paul A. Saeva**  
523rd Sig Bn Co B  
LeRoy, NY  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Romeo Q. Salas**  
11th LIB B/4/21st Inf  
Moreno Valley, CA  
★ *Randy Fox*

**Joe M. Sanches**  
182nd Inf Rgmt HHC  
Victorville, CA  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Kenneth Schanke**  
198th LIB A/5/46th Inf  
Deerfield Beach, FL  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Jim Scott**  
523rd Sig Bn  
Henderson, TN  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Billy R. Self**  
198th LIB 1/46th Inf  
Baird, TX  
★ *Self*

**Wayne Setliff**  
196th LIB 2/1st Inf  
Flatwoods, LA  
★ *James Tarver*

**Cecil A. Smith**  
17th Cav H Trp  
Underwood, IN  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Samuel P. Smith**  
523rd Sig Bn A Co  
Port Huron, MI  
★ *David Rose*

**William R. Snell**  
132nd Inf Rgmt Co D  
Toledo, OH  
★ *NC David Taylor*

**Larry B. Solie**  
6/11th Arty A Btry  
Stanwood, WA  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Richard M. Sullivan**  
17th Cav H Trp  
Erie, PA  
★ *Phil Haymaker*

**Larry Taff**  
198th LIB 1/52nd Inf  
Cabool, MO  
★ *Larry Swank*

**John S. Taylor**  
1/14th Arty  
Rocky Mount, NC  
★ *James B. Prince, Jr.*

**Russell D. Thomas**  
11th LIB 3/1st Inf  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Joseph L. Vincent**  
198th LIB E/5/46th Inf  
Warrenton, MO  
★ *Robert A. Peterson*

**Ed Voss**  
1/82nd Arty A Btry  
Hot Springs Village, AR  
★ *George Salcido*

**Austin T. Waters**  
198th LIB E/1/52nd Inf  
Brandon, FL  
★ *Larry Swank*

**Joseph D. White**  
3/16th Arty A Btry  
Swansea, MA  
★ *Paul Pacheco*

**Charles E. Williams**  
Div Arty HHB  
Chicago, IL  
★ *Self*

### New Paid Life Members

**Michael R. Burns**  
11th LIB 1/20th Inf  
Ashland, PA  
★ *James Barrett*

**William T. Eller**  
198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf  
Prague, OK  
★ *Self*

**James B. Ferris**  
198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf  
Elmira, NY  
★ *Larry Swank*



**Harold Leavor**

23rd Admin Co  
Franklinville, NY

★ *Self*

**Douglas P. Roell**

1/14th Arty HHB  
Arapahoe, NE

★ *Robert Feeken*

**Ken Stretch**

198th LIB C/5/46th Inf  
Olympia, WA

★ *NC David Taylor*

**George W. Auxier**

198th LIB B/1/6th Inf  
Crown City, OH

★ *David M. Perry*

**Ken Bosc**

11th LIB A/4/21st Inf  
Terre Haute, IN

★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

**Joseph H. Broadus**

196th LIB 4/31st Inf  
Easley, SC

★ *Don Ballou*

**Gary W. Eisenhower**

11th LIB D/4/3rd Inf  
Freeport, IL

★ *Bob Castings*

**John J. Elish**

1/14th Arty HHB  
Kiezer, OR

★ *Lloyd Morrell*

**Larry L. Frie**

6/11th Arty HHB  
Bedford, TX

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Florencio N. Longoria**

17th Cav F Trp  
Radcliff, KY

★ **Russell Gross, Sr.**

**Noe Mata**

198th LIB A/1/52nd Inf  
Houston, TX

★ *PNC Ronald Ward*

**Merrill R. Matson**

1/1st Cav B Trp  
Goreville, IL

★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

**Everett M. Rowles**

198th LIB C/5/46th Inf  
Ogden, UT

★ *NC David Taylor*

**James W. Stein**

523rd Sig Bn Co A  
LaGrange Highlands, IL

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Dale Stivland**

196th LIB A/3/21st Inf  
Lowry, MN

★ *Ron Davis*

**Larry J. Stovall**

198th LIB D/1/6th Inf  
Columbia, TN

★ *Self*

**Larry Wilt**

1/82nd Arty C Btry  
Defiance, OH

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Re-instated  
Members**

**John R. East**

Unit Unknown  
Kokomo, IN

★ *NC David Taylor*

**Gary Gardner**

1/1st Cav A Trp  
Woodhaven, MI

★ *Bill Allen*

**Ronald E. Griffin**

1/82nd Arty A Btry  
Oskosh, WI

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Danny R. Heller**

198th LIB 1/46th Inf  
Hartford, WI

★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

**Robert D. Hull**

Div Arty  
Grant City, MO

★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

**Paul Letsch**

17th Cav H Trp  
Avenel, NJ

★ *W. Yarbrough*

**Steven A. Miles**

11th LIB B/1/20th Inf  
Chesapeake Beach, MD

★ *Self*

**Allen W. Query**

198th LIB  
Poland, IN

★ *NC David Taylor*

**Victor Ruiz**

26th Engr Bn HHC  
Hesperia, CA

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Walter M. Sanders**

198th LIB 1/52nd Inf  
Terra Alta, WV

★ *Self*

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198th LIB D/5/46th Inf  
Harrisburg, PA

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**Daniel R. Vess**

723rd Maint Bn HHC  
Gray Court, SC

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

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Members**

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NA

N. Quincy, MA

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**Kenneth J. Bachewicz, Sr.**

NA

Charleston, SC

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Jean Bandy**

NA

Fayetteville, WV

★ *NC David Taylor*

**Richard Moran**

NA

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**World War II  
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*182nd Inf Rgmt*

Belmont, MA

July 2008

**James P. Curran**

*164th Inf Rgmt*

*1st Med Bn*

Worcester, MA

January 27, 2009

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*182nd Inf Rgmt Co L*  
Lynn, MA

May 2009

**Dr. Raymond Ellerman**

*164th Inf Rgmt*  
Las Vegas, NV

May 4, 2009

**Victor Lander**

*57th Engineer Bn.*

Gainesville, FL

Date not available

**William T. Mansfield**

*125th QM Corp*

Ft. Pierce, FL

February 13, 2009

**Henry P. O'Melia**

*101st QM Corp Co B*

Winchester, MA

Date not available

**Leo W. Orfe**

*221st FA*

Burlington, NJ

June 1, 2009

**Albert S. Re**

*182nd Inf Rgmt*

San Rafael, CA

April 27, 2009

**James N. Watson, Sr.**

*246th FA*

Jacksonville, FL

December 26, 2008

**Florence Dennis**

*Widow – WWII*

Doylestown, PA

April 28, 2009

**Vietnam Veterans**

**Rick Savinen**

*196th LIB*

Greenfield, MA

May 3, 2009





## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

The Americal Journal staff wishes you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. May you be filled with the joy of the season and be blessed with the gifts of good friends and peaceful times.

There may have been an occasion or two (or more) that our military service required our absence from family gatherings at Christmas. But we had the good fortune to spend these Christmases with some of our closest friends. Make a point to give a buddy a special gift of a phone call or written greeting. We all like to know that others care about us. Don't put it off. Do it today. It's Christmas. It will be a fine gift.

Our men and women in the military will not get to stand-down for the holidays. They will continue to fulfill their important duties of protecting us from foe. Please keep our service members in your thoughts and prayers during the Christmas season. They have earned and they deserve our support.



## 362nd Aviation Detachment (DIV)

The 362d Aviation Det (Div) Chu Lai Air Traffic Control pocket patch is shown on a Vietnam era uniform. Chu Lai was the location of the largest airfield run by the Army. Kim Cantor served as an air controller with the 362d and provides a photograph of one of the rarest patches associated with the Americal Division.

## Huey Helicopters Head to Retirement

The Jeep was an icon of World War II and greatly changed the way front-line troops were able to move about the battle field. The WWII Jeep is now a museum piece. And it looks like it will soon be joined by the Huey helicopter.

Like the Jeep, the Huey greatly improved the mobility of the combat soldier. It is as much of an icon to the Vietnam War as the Jeep was to World War II. And to top it off the Huey had its very distinguishable "whoop-whoop-whoop" audible signature. It can easily be identified much sooner by its sound than it can be by its image.



The U. S. military purchased the first HU-1 (helicopter utility) in the mid-1950s. The HU-1 was officially named the Iroquois but aviators quickly named it Huey. This also has parallels the name Jeep which some say is taken from the acronym GP- general purpose. The Army later changed its convention of naming aircraft and the HU-1 became the UH-1. But it was always a Huey.

On October 2, 2009 the National Guard officially retired its last Huey in a special ceremony held at Ft. Meyer, VA. The bird was flown to the Ft. Meyer parade grounds and the decommissioning took place in front a gathering of VIPs. Similar retirement ceremonies took place throughout the summer by National Guard units in various states. All National Guard units were scheduled to end the use of the Huey by September 30, 2009.

Only a handful of Hueys remain in the U. S. military and they are all expected to be gone by 2012. Many are destined to foreign service and a few will be put on pedestals at local VFW and American Legion posts. The newest helicopter to replace the Huey is the UH72A Lakota.

Reports show that about 15,000 Hueys were manufactured with 7,000 of them flying in the Vietnam War. Approximately 3,300 Hueys went down in Vietnam resulting in 2,700 deaths. Vietnam veterans will remember the Huey for its life-saving service as a Med-evac dustoff, a close-in tactical support gunship, and a foot-saving way to get in and out of the field.





## New York VFW Convention

The Americal Division was well represented at the VFW Department of New York Convention held in Buffalo, NY in June 2009. Photographed left to right: Jan Milles 68-69 4/3 11th and 1/6 198th; Robert Ruffin, Jr. 68-69 198th; Robert T Spicer 68 Americal Div Arty; Mark Shoemaker 70-71 Aero Scout Co, 123 Avn Bn, 16 CAG; Dave Czarnecki 70-71 A Btry 6/11 Arty 11th; Bruce Mullenax 71 C 5/56 198th and A 1/46 196th; Harold "Mick" Leavor 67-68 23rd; Karl Rohde 69-70 523 Sig Bn 196th; Robert a LaDuke 70-71 3/1 11th; Art Hanley 70-71 G2-TMF HHC Americal.

Dave Czarnecki was the President of the Convention Committee corporation and did a fantastic job. Mick Leavor was installed as the Jr. Vice Commander of the Department of NY. Karl Rohde a Past State Commander was installed as the Quartermaster of the Department of New York. Art Hanley was installed as the Commander of District 2 of the Department of New York. He replaced Jan Milles whose term expired.

## AFRH Sets Opening

ADVA founding member Al Cotta is scheduled to be among the first residents to move into the newly constructed Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, MS. Hurricane Katrina destroyed the former facility resulting in the transfer of residents to the AFRH in Washington, D.C.

The new facility will open about October 1, 2010 and provides spacious and modern living quarters just off the beach on the Gulf of Mexico. Al is excited about returning to Gulfport and hopes the schedule does not conflict with this planned trip to the Chicago area for the 2010 ADVA convention.

In 1945 Al joined with other Americal veterans to form the Americal Division, Inc., the forerunner of the ADVA. Al was the first national adjutant of the organization. He is a retired postal employee.

## 2010 Elections

Election of national officers will take place in the first half of 2010. The elective positions include National Commander, Sr. Vice-Commander, Jr. Vice-Commander, Executive Council members, and Scholarship Trustees. Amendments to ADVA by-laws may also be voted on during the election balloting.

The Nominating Committee has the responsibility to present a slate of candidates for all positions. Additional nominations may be made by the endorsement of fifteen voting members in good standing. All nominations must be turned in to the National Adjutant no later than February 1, 2010. Each candidate for office must agree to being placed on the ballot.

Term of office for elected officers is two years. Commanders are limited to one two-year term. Executive Council members are limited to two two-year terms. Any former officer can be re-nominated after being out of office for one election cycle. Scholarship Trustees serve four year terms.

Ballots will be mailed near the end of March 2010 to voting members in good standing, i.e., current dues paid. The deadline for returning the ballots will be stated on the ballot. Newly elected officers take their posts on July 1, 2010.

Dave Hammond is the chairman of the Nominating Committee. He may be contacted at [dave.hammond@ymail.com](mailto:dave.hammond@ymail.com) or by calling him at 503-242-1331. By-laws governing the election procedures can be found on the internet at [www.americal.org/bylaws.shtml](http://www.americal.org/bylaws.shtml) or by writing to the editor.



**Cover On the Road to Mary Ann members of the Vietnam history group make the journey back to the scene of the battle at LZ Mary Ann (page32)**

## Each Journal is a Journey

Creating each issue of the Americal Journal is much like taking a journey to a far off destination. Plans are made in advance, preparations take place, the departure begins, and all looks well. But then there are unexpected delays, detours occur along the way, and some just plain nasty crashes snarl progress. Negotiations take place, repairs are made, and the push keeps going forward. In the end the destination is reached, the fun is enjoyed, and everyone heads for home ready to do it all over again.

It is hard to estimate the number of production hours that go into each 40 page edition of the Journal. An estimate of 100 hours seems too low, and 500 hours seems too low, but it is closer to the higher number than the lower.

In this issue of the Journal there are nearly 100 graphics and images. This keeps Dutch DeGroot on his toes as he has to correctly place each photo and graphic in the exact place it belongs. Dutch spends many hours evaluating photos and creating one-of-a-kind graphics. This gives the journal its first class look that is the envy of division unit associations throughout the country. None of them provide their members with the high quality design that is portrayed in each edition of the journal.



**Dave Taylor proofs each edition of the Journal at the printer's office.**

Dave Taylor is responsible for coordinating efforts up front and personal with the Journal printer. After the journal is electronically transferred to the printer a proof copy is produced for inspection. Dave is at the ready when the call comes for his evaluation. Last winter he reported on the first quarter edition: "The printers' proof-printer was on the blitz yesterday. I drove there this afternoon in a snow storm to approve the proof; it looks good! They'll go on press tomorrow...still hoping to get it to the mailing house Friday."

Each edition starts with a plan that is devised by Gary Noller. A typical magazine consists of about ten pages of World War II stories, ten pages of Vietnam stories, fifteen pages of news, and five pages of other items. The Journal has a two-fold mission: It is to inform members of things that are going on now and also to provide members a forum to share war era stories and photos. Collecting and editing submissions from members is always a high priority role for the editor.

The above is just a small glimpse of efforts undertaken by the staff. Members' submissions form the core of material for each issue of the Journal. Stories and photos are always welcome. The amount of material varies from issue to issue and sometimes there is a lag of two or three issues before a submission is used. But without member submissions the Journal would be very sparse and have little appeal. The editors will help you prepare your story and set its schedule for publication.

The Journal is published once each quarter. By the time you read this the staff will have already working hard on the first quarter 2010 edition. News of scheduled events must be provided to the staff well in advance. Our goal is to have each edition complete by the end of the first month of the quarter. This will deliver to readers about the end of the second month of the quarter. This schedule requires that submissions be to an editor at least by the middle of the first month of the quarter.

The journal will consider reprints from other published sources. Previously published material is generally covered under copyright laws which restrict any further editing. This causes problems in that permission to reprint the article may be difficult to obtain. If permission is obtained there are still restrictions on editing the article when further editing is deemed necessary. Original articles are preferred over reprinted articles.

Photos are always welcome. Paper prints should be copies as they may not always be returned. Digital photos should be submitted without being inserted into the text of the article. There is no need to attempt a finalized layout of photos and text together as the art director will handle this task.

Photographs always tell good stories and they are an important part of each magazine. They need to be high resolution in order to have the necessary quality for use. Digital camera settings need to be adjusted to take a suitable photo. Phone cameras usually produce very poor photos and are often rejected. Paper print photos need to be scanned at 300 dpi. Follow this rule: if a snapshot color photo is below 100 kilobytes in size it may be of low resolution. It should be more in the range of 150k to 500k or even higher. A one megabyte file size is probably more than enough but it is much better to be too big than too small.

Your comments and questions are always welcome. Please let the journal staff know how the magazine can better serve your needs. And be sure to send your photos and stories.



## EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

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

A.D.V.A.



### COMMANDER Conrad Steers

124 Harding Avenue  
Hicksville, NY 11801  
516 • 822 • 5938

[11thbrigade@optonline.net](mailto:11thbrigade@optonline.net)

We had our chapter reunion in Portland, Maine on September 10-13. There were 100 attendees including ten WWII veterans and 48 Vietnam veterans. Larry Shover did a good job and the Merry Manor Inn bent over backwards for us. The reunion was dedicated to the memory of founding member Leo Orfe. We really missed him and his antics and him calling me a smart ass.

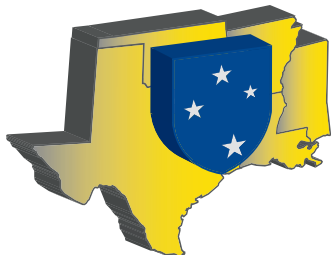
The chapter enjoyed the Lobster Fest and the saw a 1700 pound moose made of chocolate. Dave Taylor, National Commander, attended the reunion and performed the memorial service. National Sr. Vice-Commander Jay Flanagan also attended the reunion.

The tour of Portland was very interesting and the chapter saw all the lighthouses and toured Kennebunkport, Maine. If you missed this one I hope you come to the next one. There were no complaints and everybody had a good time.

Our chapter elections will be held at the next reunion. The next reunion will be held in Hampton, Virginia on May 20-23, 2010. Past Commander Dave Eichhorn will be the chairman. Check our web site for more information. Mark Deam is doing a great job on our web site. Drop him a line and thank him. Welcome Home!

## SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX



### COMMANDER Cameron F. Baird

P.O. Box 211  
Stonewall, TX 78671  
830 • 644 • 2704

[altdorf@kfc.com](mailto:altdorf@kfc.com)

The SMW Chapter is pleased to announce that a substantial donation has been made to the Legacy Fund towards the Americal monument to

be erected at the new Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning. We are blessed to have funds in excess of our immediate operating needs. There is no better use for those funds than to help establish a permanent reminder of the Americal's contribution to the nation's military history at the home of the Infantry. Hooah! This project is something we can all be proud of. After all, in another 20 years or so there won't be many of us left to tell the tale.

Plans are being made for a chapter reunion in May in military city USA, San Antonio, TX. The hotel selection process is under way and the exact date will be established when final arrangements are made. Possible activities are a visit to the Alamo and to the museum at historic Ft. Sam Houston as well as a dinner barge cruise on San Antonio's fabulous River Walk. Details will be announced soon.

Anyone who is interested in receiving the chapter newsletter via email is welcome to do so; send me your address and I'll put you on the list.

Best wishes to all for a joyful holiday season.

## 23rd MILITARY POLICE CHAPTER

WWII Korean War/Panama CZ Vietnam Global War on Terrorism

### COMMANDER Dale Meisel

### VICE COMMANDER Wes Haun

### SEC/TREAS Tom Packard

[packard50@columbus.rr.com](mailto:packard50@columbus.rr.com)



November 2009 marked the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the 23rd MP website by Paul Stiff at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/twentythirdmpco>. Since then there have been about 12,000 postings and there are about a thousand "hits" per month. I'm sure Paul could have in no way anticipated the more important

results: the spark that led to the coming together of so many friends, both old and new. Kudos to Paul for his initiative!

Many of you might not be aware that Typhoon Ketsana, which devastated the Philippines as a tropical storm, gained strength and then hit the Indo-Chinese peninsula right at ChuLai. There was much damage and destruction to individual homes and to the infrastructure. Some of those good people, who supported the U.S. war effort as civilian employees, still live in the area.

Al Feser, who, along with Dan Robinson, made several extended trips back to Vietnam, including ChuLai, in 2008 and 2009, was able to contact some of those he met in ChuLai and provided the above information.

Finally, planning is still ongoing for the MP reunion at Fort Leonard Wood in June 2010. A tentative agenda of activities at the MP School has been posted on our website. More details after the holidays. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all us MPs to all our Americal friends!

Americal Vets of the 23rd MP Company will be returning to Vietnam and the ChuLai AO between Feb 10 and April 14, 2010. Two of us have been there before and have some experience traveling in Vietnam. This is not an organized package tour set up for returning Vietnam Veterans with government sponsored guides showing you ceramics factories, water puppet shows and communist propaganda tourist traps. None of us are making any money, or getting free travel, by organizing, or promoting this trip. You make your own travel arrangements to get to Saigon and we meet there, or at the gateway city of Atlanta GA, and travel together or independently as the case may be. Our friend, and interpreter/guide, An Nguyen, can get us where we want to go in the ChuLai AO. Currently roundtrips to Saigon from the east coast are slightly over \$1000.00 and expenses in country would be about \$1000 per month for food, lodging, travel and entertainment. The transportation in country will be by plane, train, bus, taxi, and hydrofoil ferry. Those who are brave and adventurous, and have motorcycle experience, can rent motorbikes. Our total itinerary is not set yet but Dan and I will be in country for 65 days and we will be exploring in the ChuLai AO for several weeks. We may also do a motorbike ride from Dalat to Pleiku and across on Highway 19 to QuiNhon. If you are interested in joining us for a week or a month, or to learn more about this trip or our past adventures in Vietnam, contact me by e-mail at [afeser@yahoo.com](mailto:afeser@yahoo.com). Al Feser

**FAR WEST CHAPTER**

AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT WA OR ID UT MT WY

**COMMANDER**

**Rick Ropole**  
246 Coronado  
Corona, CA 92879  
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**SEC/TREAS**

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The Far West Chapter held its annual reunion in Reno, NV in October 2009. We had a respectable turn out with 27 veterans in attendance. With guests, we had 41 people there. Although on the chilly side with temps in the low 60's, we still managed to have a great time.

The reunion headquartered at the Atlantis Casino Resort. The festivities began Sunday evening in our hospitality suite with hot and cold refreshments. All those attending and staying at the hotel were upgraded to luxury suites in the main tower. All rooms afforded great views of the surrounding mountains and foothills.

Our bus tour on Monday to Virginia City was hampered by a cold rain with a few snow flurries mixed in. We still managed to stay dry for the most part and have a good time in that historic mining town nestled in the mountains southeast of Reno. We had lunch at a well known eatery in Carson City and ended the trip with a motor tour of a few historic sites in that city. The only let-down on the trip, other than the rain, was we weren't able to spot any wild mustangs known to frequent the area.

Tuesday morning began with a group photo in the hospitality suite after which we held our annual business meeting. All 27 veterans attended the meeting. At the meeting, we chose Salt Lake City as the location of our 2010 reunion. This is the most central location in our area. We hope this will give our newest members from the northwest states a better opportunity to attend a reunion.

We also informed the membership present that the Far West Chapter will host the 2011 ADVA National Reunion in Colorado Springs, CO. We have decided to hire Reunion Brats to manage the details for the reunion. National Commander, Dave Taylor attended and spoke at the meeting about the 2010 national reunion in Chicago, the Legacy committee and the ADVA calendars which were mailed to all ADVA members this fall.

The reunion ended Tuesday night with a very good buffet dinner, the raffle drawings and music from a local DJ.

Chapter elections will be held at the 2010 reunion. Any Far West Chapter member may run for any office within the chapter. Contact Rick Ropole or Tom Packard if you are interested.

If you are an ADVA member and have not joined the chapter, please consider doing so. You can join by contacting Tom Packard using the information at the top of this article.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:pointman69@tds.net)



There goes the summer. It was one of the coolest on record. Too bad it didn't happen during the Vietnam era. Now we prepare for winter.

Winterfest in New Glarus is gearing up once again. This is the 24th annual festival. If any good men care to go for a walkabout in the third week in January, come on down. We march Friday, January 15, 2010, at 10 PM following the burning of the Christmas trees. The bonfire helps keep us warm and the comradeship is fabulous! Everything is within walking distance (if dressed for Winter.) If you need more information, contact me, Dale Belke, via email.

The Great Lakes Chapter of the Americal will have a meeting at the Landhaus in New Glarus, WI on Saturday, January 16, 2010. If anyone has agenda items please let me know. The Great Lakes Chapter may have a hospitality room at next year's ADVA National Reunion in the Chicago area. Help is needed for staffing and planning this event. Any help or ideas are appreciated.

Planning is already started for the 25th Winterfest to be held in 2011. We plan on having some good speakers who earned and deserve our deepest respect. More information on that will be provided later.

Kokomo, IN in October 2009 was again a class event. All that attended had good memories and experiences with fellow veterans. If you haven't attended one, you should. It is held in September of each year.

In Wisconsin, a Green Bay Lambeau Field Welcome Home for Vietnam Veterans is planned for May 21-24, 2010. It should be quite an event. Vietnam veterans have not been forgotten! I am sure everyone agrees that is good for us vets to get together again. It helps relieve some of the stresses we have, since we all have "Been There, Did That"! That makes us equals. No one is better than anyone else at these events. Treat your fellow vet like you want to be treated. It will be returned! "CHAO" Peace.

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



**Dear editor,**

I wish to inform ADVA members of the 100th birthday of James E. Milano, 221st Field Artillery Battalion. He celebrated reaching the century mark on October 17, 2009. Jim served as a lieutenant on Guadalcanal and Bougainville and for those who knew him he was considered to be the finest officer in the battalion. He left the service as a lieutenant colonel.

Jim lives in Melrose, MA by himself and he still drives a car. He is a lawyer by profession and he was the mayor of Melrose, a large city north of Boston, for over 20 years. He is a long time member of the ADVA. We look forward to his 101st birthday in 2010.

**Lloyd Morrell;** 221st FA  
Redmond, OR

**[Editor's note: Birthday greetings may be mailed to: James E. Milano, 117 Grove St., Melrose, MA 02176]**

**Dear editor,**

While trying to write up a summary for my children of my year in the 196th LIB I came across an old clip from the November 8, 1971 edition of Time magazine. Towards the end of the article, it said "More than 100,000 men wore the Americal patch. Of those 11,500 were wounded and hospitalized, 11,000 were wounded and returned to duty, and 3,400 were killed."

My question is: are these statistics true? I have a hard time believing these numbers but I cannot find the answer in any resource.

**Rod Boltjes;** 196th LIB, Dec 67-Nov 68  
[boltjes@hotmail.com](mailto:boltjes@hotmail.com)

**Dear editor,**

I was with the 198th LIB from June to September 1968. I transferred F Troop, 8th Cavalry and became a scout gunner in a LOH helicopter. I should have stayed in the infantry. I served two tours in Vietnam. My second tour was with the 25th Inf. Div., 1/27th Wolfhounds. The 25th stood down and I was transferred to the Americal Division again. I requested F Troop, 8th Cavalry again and I got scout gunner again.

**Juan San Miguel;**  
[juan47sanmiguel@yahoo.com](mailto:juan47sanmiguel@yahoo.com)

**Dear editor,**

Some time ago I decided that I wanted to find photos of the grave sites and head stones of the guys in Echo Recon, 5/46th Inf., who were killed in Vietnam. I stumbled on to the website: <http://www.findagrave.com/index.html>. I got two hits and was able to get pictures of two of the seven that I knew about. It might be a good idea to list this site in the Journal in case others might want to try the same thing. There's no guarantee that who they are looking for will be listed but it's a shot.

**John Forshag;** [J4Shag@cox.net](mailto:J4Shag@cox.net)

**Dear editor,**

Just a brief note to pass along some news. The current VFW Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr. is an Americal veteran. He served with Co. B, 26th Engineer Bn, 198th Light Infantry Brigade, in the vicinity of Duc Pho and Chu Lai during 1967-68.

The August 2009 issue of the VFW magazine had a story about the passing of Cooper T. Holt. Mr. Holt had a great influence on the VA. He was a flamethrower operator in the Americal Division in the World War II.

**Les Hines;** ADVA Vietnam Historian

**Dear editor,**

After almost 60 years I hope I can get a question answered about an incident I was involved in on Bougainville in June or July 1944. After the Second Battle of Bougainville in March or April of 1944 we settled down to more or less routine day-to-day life in our encampments. One day the First Sergeant came into our tent and asked me if I knew how to drive a truck. Of course I answered "yes" as I was just dying to drive anything since I entered the Army in April 1943.

He told me he had a mission for me to go on and to go to the motor pool, get a 2-1/2 ton truck and pick three other guys to go with me. Three of my buddies were overjoyed at the thought of getting out of camp for a few hours. He gave me detailed instructions of where we were to go and to "ASK NO QUESTIONS!" The directions given to us by the First Sergeant were to load the truck with a 30-gallon drum of gas, then take a road we were not even

aware of. It came off next to the military cemetery that was directly across the road from our anti-aircraft position.

As we loaded up and started our own expedition I found out I did not know how to drive a truck. I made a lot of noise when I changed gears. The guys in back of the truck began to holler, "Sack, where in the hell did you learn to drive?" I did not know that the basic rule of driving a truck required shifting the gear into neutral between gear positions. I soon learned how to do it to the relief of the guys in the back of the truck.

We arrived in a clearing about a mile down this unknown road. In the middle of the clearing was a nine-foot high pile of khaki uniforms looking brand new with only some sweat marks on the necks of the shirts and several dirt spots on the trousers. A sergeant stepped out of a nearby tent and asked of we had brought gasoline? When we answered "yes", he said, "OK guys, your job is to burn this pile of khakis!" We looked at each other in amazement when all of our clothing was in rags from our stay on this hell-hole island. The sergeant departed and said he would return in an hour or so.

We took this opportunity to dress ourselves in several layers of those look alike new khakis to replace our ragged fatigues! We then poured gasoline on the huge pile of khakis and set them on fire, asking ourselves "why?" It seemed to be an obvious waste when so many in our unit could have used these like-new items of clothing.

We left to return to our unit after being warned by the sergeant at the burning site and our First Sergeant not to discuss or reveal what we had done in that jungle clearing! After all these years I wonder if there are some members of the Americal who served on Bougainville who would know where these new khakis came from or why they were ordered destroyed? Please solve the mystery! Please write me at 116 Kingsbury Dr., Brooklyn, MI, 49230.

**Leonard "Sack" Owczarzak**  
Btry. D, 746th AAA Gun Bn.



**Have you called that buddy?**

## 2009 Recent Scholarship Recipients

The follow messages are from recipients of 2009 Americal Scholarship awards. Additional recipients will be featured in the first quarter 2010 edition of the Americal Journal.



Applications for 2010 awards must be sent to the scholarship chairman postmarked no later than May 1, 2010. Scholarship details can be found at [www.americal.org](http://www.americal.org) or obtained by contacting scholarship chairman.



It is with great pride that I accept this scholarship. To Nana, thank you for the countless stories about my grandfather, Richard Carney, Jr., and to his pride in being a member of the Americal Division. I am confident that he is smiling down on me right now. Thank you all for making America a great nation that it is today and for your help and support in furthering my education.

*Darcy McDonald*; Fitchburg State College  
*Richard J. Carney (Jr.)*, grandfather;  
101st Med. Bn. and Americal Band



I would like to humbly thank you for awarding me the Americal scholarship. I will study journalism at Florida A & M University and this financial assistance will allow me to further my education as a college student.

*Dominique J. Mayes*;  
Florida A & M University

*James E. Mayes*, father;  
Co. B, 3/21st Inf., 196th LIB



I am so thankful that I was a recipient of the Americal Scholarship. The funds will certainly help pay for all of my college expenses. Not only has my father helped me every step along the way, but he also graduated from SUNY Buffalo

with a degree in Health Physical Education and Recreation. It means so much to me to receive this Scholarship from an organization that means so much to my Dad. (Photographed with her father.)

*Melissa Bungo*; University of Buffalo  
*Ronald J. Krul*, father;  
Co. A, 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB



I am proud to be a recipient of one of the Americal Scholarship awards this year. My family and I are extremely grateful and appreciative of your generosity. Your scholarship has made attending Harvard University possible for another year. I know

my grandfather, William McGoldrick, would be proud. (Photographed with grandmother, Louise McGoldrick.)

*Conor Walsh*; Harvard University  
*William F. McGoldrick (RIP)*, grandfather;  
TF 6814, 182nd Inf. Regt.



My family and I cannot show enough gratitude for your help and for the scholarship. Your generosity and kindness is truly American... and you continue to prove to be a true source of inspiration to us all. You are all truly heroes.

*David Perzynski*; Ohio State University  
*Leonard M. Owczarzak*, grandfather;  
Btry. D, 746th AAA Gun Bn.





My family and I would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to you for awarding me this very generous scholarship. This award has helped me greatly with paying for my college expenses. I am very proud to say that my dad and my uncle served in Vietnam in the

1/1st Cavalry. I want to thank them as well as all of those who have fought and those that are still fighting for our freedom. I will never forget the sacrifices that you all have made for all of us.

**Emily Burnett;** University of LA at Lafayette  
**Frank Burnett and John Roberts,** father and uncle;  
1/1st Cavalry



Thank you so much for awarding me a scholarship. It is such an honor to be chosen for the generous award. It will assist me in paying for my college education. I look forward to serving my country in the future and in the proud tradition of the Americal Division. (Photographed with grandparents Donald and Carole Buchwald.)

**Christine Buchwald;** James Madison University  
**Donald M. Buchwald,** grandfather;  
HHC, 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB



I want you thank you for the award of my scholarship. This contribution certainly helps me meeting my tuition requirements and I am very thankful of the fact that the Scholarship Committee has recognized me for my efforts. I am extremely proud to be associated with the

organization as a result of my Dads' service with the Americal Division during the Vietnam War.

**Sean E. Matthews;** University of Connecticut  
**Dennis E. Matthews,** father; 4/21st Inf., 11th LIB



I would like to thank you for your generosity and interest shown in my education. This scholarship will help me accomplish my goals and allow me to move forward on my path to success. I feel that the Americal Scholarship is contributing a wonderful gift not only to me,

but also to others that have also had family members serve in the armed forces.

**Alyssa M. Buehne;** Johnson Co. Community College  
**Gary Roschwitz,** father; Co. C, 1/20th Inf., 11th LIB



I want to thank you for the generous support I received with the Americal Scholarship. Upon graduation from college I hope to become involved in business. In order to achieve this I am pursuing a degree in business. With the help of this scholarship I will be able to devote more of my time to my studies. I want you to know how much the award of these scholarships mean to me and to the other students who receive them. (Photographed with grandfather, Bill Burrell.)

**Eric Mangels;** Garden City (KS) Community College  
**William A. Burrell,** grandfather;  
5/46th Inf., 198th LIB



I am honored to be named one of the recipients of an Americal Scholarship. This scholarship helps me to continue an education in chemical engineering. Without patrons like you, it would be much more difficult for me to achieve my career goals of solving water contamination

issues. I send my sincerest thanks to you for your continued generosity.

*Meredith Gibson*; Iowa State University  
*Jack Leaverton (RIP)*, grandfather;  
164th Inf. Regt.



Thank you so much for the generous scholarship you awarded me. I appreciate everyone that makes this fund possible for students like me. I will be attending college to pursue a degree in secondary education. I am so proud to have a grandfather that served our country in the Americal Division, and I

am glad that I can make him proud, too.

*Julia VanderMolen*; Calvin College  
*Kenneth VanderMolen*, grandfather;  
Co. G, 182nd Inf. Regt.



I wish to thank all of you for your very generous contribution to the furthering of my education. I am now a senior and I have received your financial support every year that I have applied for it, and for

that I am so very thankful. You are a very admirable group of people, and I am blessed to receive your support. Your compassion is greatly appreciated. (Photographed with father, Paul Snow.)

*Caitlin Snow*; University of Michigan  
*Paul R. Snow*, father;  
6/11th Arty. Bn.



Thank you so much for awarding me an Americal Scholarship and helping me reach my educational goals. Knowing an organization such as yours believes in my potential as a student really means the world to me. In this time of any young adult's life, there are uncertainties of the future.

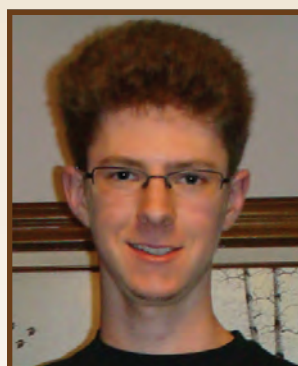
However, by being awarded with such a generous scholarship it makes me believe in my decision to continue school and stay motivated.

*Betsy Schur*; Ft. Lewis College  
*Alfred A. DeLong*, grandfather;  
Btry. A, 245th FA Bn.



I truly appreciate the scholarship I was awarded for the 2009/10 academic year. I take my college career very seriously and I believe this is an important time in my life. I need all the financial help I can get in order to pursue my career goals. Thanks again!

*Zac Hiser*; Indiana Wesleyan University  
*William E. Hiser*, father;  
4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB



I deeply appreciate the award of an Americal scholarship which has significantly aided in paying for college. I have decided to major in landscape architecture. Shown in the picture is my final architecture project for the year. Again, I wish to honor the Americal Division

veterans for giving their time and resources to help college students finance their education.

*Timothy Thorlton*; Ball State University  
*Dan Thorlton*, father; 23rd MP Co.



# Mark Your Calendars Now For The Best Americal Reunion Ever!

**The Westin Lombard Yorktown Center, October 6-10, 2010**

*Chicago*



The **2010 National Americal Reunion** will be at the ultra-modern Westin Hotel in Lombard, Illinois, just minutes from downtown Chicago and only 16 miles from Chicago's O'Hare Airport (specially priced shuttles will be arranged). The Westin is located outside Cook County (Chicago) which means lower hotel taxes for you! Rooms for the Americal Division Vets are only \$79/night (plus tax)! The official dates of the reunion are October 6-10, but members can come two days earlier or stay two days later for the same low rate! (October 4-12).

## Let's start with the hotel!

The Westin Lombard Yorktown Center is in a class of its own, with 500 luxurious guest rooms and within easy walking distance to the Yorktown Center and only four miles away from the Oakbrook Center, both offering Chicago's ultimate shopping experience. These two centers offer hundreds of specialty stores and restaurants.

Each guest room at the Westin offers high-speed internet access, Starbucks® coffee, refreshment centers and flat screen LCD televisions! Parking is free for over a thousand vehicles and RV parking space is available as well! A complete fitness center, indoor pool and business center is available 24 hours / day (The Westin is a smoke-free hotel).

Dining at the Westin includes Harry Caray's Italian Steakhouse & Bar and Holy Mackerel! Fresh Seafood & Cocktails. Each morning the large Americal Hospitality Room will offer free breakfast breads and coffee for one hour.

## Lots to see and do!

The opportunities for sightseeing, dining and touring are endless! The ADVA will be featuring a City Tour of Chicago on Thursday or members can visit Chicago on their own by car or using the close-by Metro. Information on Chicago attractions will be provided.

Friday will be a special Americal tour of nearby Cantigny, the estate of the prominent publisher of the Chicago Tribune, John McCormick, including the war museum, mansion and Visitors Center. Cantigny is named after the Battle of Cantigny, France in WWI where McCormick served with the First Infantry Division. ADVA vets will walk through World War I trenches, sit in a landing craft as soldiers storm the Omaha Beach on D-Day and walk through the jungles of Vietnam under the watchful eye of a camouflaged soldier on patrol.

The Visitors Center includes a restaurant which will be exclusively for Americal use for lunch. ADVA members can tour the grounds at their leisure and have lunch (included in the tour price) whenever they desire. McCormick's mansion will also be open.

## We haven't forgotten The Spouses!

Saturday from mid-morning to mid-afternoon spouses will be treated to a special tour at a nearby shopping center that includes a behind the scenes tour of an upscale restaurant, a three-course lunch, a fashion show at a moderately-priced woman's clothing store and a glamour "signature bag" containing gifts and samples from participating stores as well as a premiere coupon book.

## Make Your Reservations Now!

All reservations made by June 30, 2010 will be eligible for a drawing that will give **THREE UPGRADES TO SUITES** at the same low price as a regular room at \$79/night. Make your reservations now! You can always cancel them by 4PM the day before your arrival with no penalty! Plan to arrive early or stay late. The same low rate applies for all check-ins starting October 4th through October 12th. (Monday the 11th after the reunion is Columbus Day). Call **1-888-627-9031** and reserve your room now to be eligible for a possible upgrade to a suite!



**Westin Lombard Yorktown Center**



**Catigny War Museum**

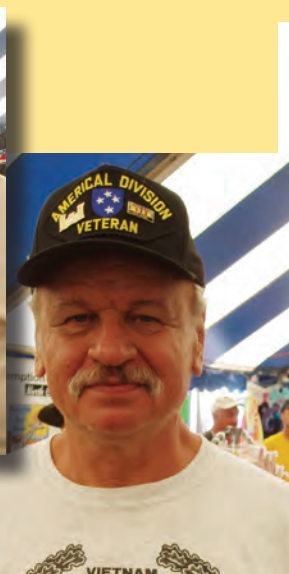


**D-Day, Omaha Beach in the Catigny War Museum**



## Together Again at Kokomo Reunion

Over 50,000 Vietnam Vets gathered at the 27th Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana on September 18-20, 1970. National Commander Dave Taylor hosted a booth in the large vendor tent so he could shake hands with Americal brothers. A number of Americal vets joined the association or renewed their dues at the booth. Over 300 Americal vets were in attendance at the reunion.





**If you need help in sending a reply to any of the locator messages please contact one of the editors. We will be happy to help you make contact. Contact information for the editors is in the directory.**

### World War II Locators

**Looking for:** Americal veterans who can provide information about serving in New Caledonia at the beginning of World War II. We are seeking information in conjunction with the construction of a new museum. The museum will be built in Oua Tom (next to the city of La Foa). It was a former US airfield. One of the spaces of the museum will be dedicated to the U.S. presence in New Caledonia. We wish to collect oral history and restore a DUCK named "Christy". Contact: Malia TEREBO; Direction de la Culture de la province Sud, BP 2365, 98846 NOUMEA CEDEX, NEW CALEDONIA; [malia.terebo@province-sud.nc](mailto:malia.terebo@province-sud.nc).

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my father, Willard E. Morrison, 221<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery. All I can get from the official government archives are his DD214 and discharge and those documents are less than informative as to details of service. My father joined the service in May 1941 in Massachusetts and was a member of the HQ 221st Field Artillery BN until his departure from service in September 1945. Contact: Glenn Morrison; 209-559-9911, [glenn@azmorrison.com](mailto:glenn@azmorrison.com).

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my father, Raymond Joseph Dowd, S/SGT. He passes away on July 3, 2009 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. I believe he was in Co. M, 182nd Infantry. I would like to know for sure. He fought on Guadalcanal in December 1942 through 21 February 1943 and almost died from malaria. He later fought at the Battle of the Bulge with the 78th Inf. and was wounded near the Remagen Bridge on March 4, 1945. He was 93 when he passed. Thank you for your web site or I would not have found out anything. Contact: Stephen Raymond Dowd; [stradostrado@yahoo.com](mailto:stradostrado@yahoo.com).

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my grandfather, Clifford Stanley Denslow. He was a 2nd lieutenant and served on Bougainville and other Solomon Islands. I am just interested in finding what regiment or battalion he served in. I know he won the Silver Star. He was from Big Rapids, MI and lived in Stanwood, MI. He died in 1984. Contact: Shane Denslow; [shanedenslow@yahoo.com](mailto:shanedenslow@yahoo.com).

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my father, Frank John Mento. He was in the battle of Hill 260 and served with Howard Whiley, Frank Diaz and Benny Dillio. My father was born on December 19, 1913, in Boston, Massachusetts, in the area known as Roxbury. He died on May 29, 1980, in Youngstown, Ohio. Contact: Frank Mento, 22 Bis Rue Du General Leclerc, 92270 Bois Colombes, France; [frank.mento@neuf.fr](mailto:frank.mento@neuf.fr).

**Looking for:** Robert T. Best, served as an officer with the Americal during WWII. After the war he was rifled to NCO and was my First Sergeant at Ft. Jay, Governors Island, NY. I was assigned to his unit as a PFC. He took me under his wing and taught me what it was to be a soldier. Apparently it worked- I retired as a Sgt Major. Contact: SGM (Ret.) Ed Komac, 2865 Meadowlark Ln., Maplewood, MN, 55109; [SGMCIB@aol.com](mailto:SGMCIB@aol.com).

**Looking for:** Information on the 1486<sup>th</sup> Engineer Maintenance Company. This company was attached to a larger unit that served in the Pacific Theater of Operations. My objective is to determine the company's army corps, division and battalion. My father, S/Sgt Arthur Joseph Debski, was in this unit. Another unit with a very similar name was with the Americal Division. Contact: Gary A Demske; [demske@verizon.net](mailto:demske@verizon.net).

**Looking for:** Information on my uncle, Cpl. Laurence Hughes, nickname "Bunky". The only information I have is that he was badly burned in a motor pool accident while serving on Guadalcanal. The pictures I have of him show him in Army uniform. I have a letter sent by his USAAF brother addressed to him at Bushnell General Hospital, Brigham City, Utah, postmarked July 1943. My uncle was born circa 1916-1918 and passed away in late 1980s. Contact: Thomas Hughes; [hughest004@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:hughest004@hawaii.rr.com).

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my father, Charles K. Laney, T/Sgt 182nd Infantry, awarded Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Purple Heart with Oak leaf Cluster. Combat service 21 months fighting in New Caledonia, Bougainville, Leyte, Cebu and Japan. He was from Greenland, Arkansas and entered the service 22 July 1943 and was separated 11 December 1945 at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas. He died in August 8, 1974 at age 54. Contact: Gary Laney; [gary.laney@yahoo.com](mailto:gary.laney@yahoo.com).

**Looking for:** Information about the 182nd Inf. out of Lowell, MA. I am helping a library patron trying to find information about the division in which he served. Contact: Susan Pizzolatto; 7 Barstow Street., Mattapoisett, MA, 02571, 508-758-4171, [spizzolo@sailsinc.org](mailto:spizzolo@sailsinc.org).

### Vietnam Locators

**Looking for:** Information on my father who served in H Troop, 17th Cav., 198th LIB, LZ Bayonet, circa 1968. He was medivaced out and received a Purple Heart when his APC took RPG fire. I've just grown to admire his service. I love him dearly and would just like to know about his service. Contact: Mike Dow Jr.; 817-721-9125 [txlgnd@hotmail.com](mailto:txlgnd@hotmail.com).

**Looking for:** Information on a rocket attack on Americal Combat Center in May-July 1969. I was in the 6/56th air defense battery next to the combat center during the attack. I would like a more exact date if at all possible. I lost partial use of two of my fingers and I have filed a claim with the VA. Contact: Monte R. Thompson; [marmont1@comcast.net](mailto:marmont1@comcast.net).

**Looking for:** Veterans of Recon, Co. E, 3/1st Infantry, Hill 411, 1969-70 including KENNEDY, Joseph (NJ); JOHNSON, Leon (LA); LEMAY, Sandy (RI); McCULLOUGH, Mike (GA); PARRISH, Joseph (CA); SMITH, Michael (SC); STOODLEY, Thomas (PA); THIEME, Steve (IN); and YELVINGTON, Charles D. (TX). We are planning a platoon reunion for June 2010. Contact: Mona Dollarhide, 938 Meadowlark Rd., Ozark, MO 65721; (417)582-1397; [codypuzzle@aol.com](mailto:codypuzzle@aol.com).

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my father, Ralph Adams. He was in Vietnam in 1968-69 with the 198th LIB and attached to the 101st Airborne. He served in Vietnam from November 28, 1968 until wounded on June 13, 1969. He remembers Sgt. Bell and Sgt. Dixon. Contact: Ralph Adams; [ra50uld@aol.com](mailto:ra50uld@aol.com).

**Looking for:** Old friends I was with HHQ, 1/82nd Artillery, in 1969-70. I was a BPR and track mechanic in Chu Lai. Contact: Kenneth Matt Hillman; [micken@charter.net](mailto:micken@charter.net).

**Looking for:** Looking for: Billy Nolting. Billy and I served in Vietnam in 1968 in Co. E, 4/21<sup>st</sup> Inf. I was wounded in August 1968. We were together at Schfield Barracks building up the 11 Brigade. Contact: Gary Weis; [weis@marshall.edu](mailto:weis@marshall.edu).

**Looking for:** Anyone in the original 196th LIB from Ft. Devens to Chu Lai, April 1967, Co. B, 4/31<sup>st</sup> Inf., did the USS Darby over and was at Tay Ninh. Contact: David L. Hoffman; Route 2 Box 87, Philippi, WV, 26416, 304 457 4494, [kwboffman07@netzero.net](mailto:kwboffman07@netzero.net).

**More locators can be found at**  
[www.americal.org/locator/](http://www.americal.org/locator/).

## Reunion Held in Honor of Nick Bacon

By Roger Gilmore

Veterans of Co. B, 4/21st Infantry Regiment gathered in Little Rock, AR on the weekend of August 21, 2009 to honor Medal of Honor recipient Nick Bacon. This date marked the eve of the 41st anniversary of the action in which Nick earned the medal.

Nick was awarded the CMOH for his role in action against a Viet Cong element west of Tam Ky, South Vietnam on August 26, 1968.

The reunion was organized by Dave Treadwell. Treadwell was Nick's commanding officer at the time of the action. In addition, nine veterans of Co. B attended the event. The ADVA was represented by Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant, and Ron Ward, Past National Commander.

Festivities for both Friday and Saturday night were held at a local American Legion post. Friday night's activities included a Karaoke session. The Saturday night event was a Hors d'oeuvres dine in, after which Nick was presented a beautifully engraved Buck knife with his name on the handle.



### Citation

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. S/Sgt. Bacon distinguished himself while serving as a squad leader with the 1st Platoon, Company B, during an operation west of Tam Ky. When Company B came under fire from an enemy bunker line to the front, S/Sgt. Bacon quickly organized his men and led them forward in an assault. He advanced on a hostile bunker and destroyed it with grenades. As he did so, several fellow soldiers including the 1st Platoon leader, were struck by machine gun fire and fell wounded in an exposed position forward of the rest of the platoon. S/Sgt. Bacon immediately assumed command of the platoon and assaulted the hostile gun position, finally killing the enemy gun crew in a single-handed effort. When the 3d Platoon moved to S/Sgt. Bacon's location, its leader was also wounded. Without hesitation S/Sgt. Bacon took charge of the additional platoon and continued the fight. In the ensuing action he personally killed 4 more enemy soldiers and silenced an antitank weapon. Under his leadership and example, the members of both platoons accepted his authority without question. Continuing to ignore the intense hostile fire, he climbed up on the exposed deck of a tank and directed fire into the enemy position while several wounded men were evacuated. As a result of S/Sgt. Bacon's extraordinary efforts, his company was able to move forward, eliminate the enemy positions, and rescue the men trapped to the front. S/Sgt. Bacon's bravery at the risk of his life was in the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.



Dave Treadwell presents Nick Bacon with an engraved Buck knife to commemorate Nick's heroism

Veterans gather to honor Nick Bacon, B/4/21 Medal of Honor recipient. (Left to right) Bob Griffin, Ron Ward, Randy Fox, Rusty Gates, Nick Bacon, Mike Moore, Don Landry, Joseph Krohn, Roger Gilmore, Evan Ketcherside, Dave Treadwell, John Tripp, Brian DeMary.





Guard Duty



Native Scout







## War As I Saw It

Doug Burtell  
164th Infantry Regiment  
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**Editors Note:** These two pages are a continuation of the unique "art of war" drawn by Doug Burtell of the Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoon, 164th Regiment. In the previous issue of the Americal Journal we presented Burtell's wartime autobiography. This article presents more of his art for ADVA members.

Lost Comrade – The Canal





## Friends and Foe

By Lloyd Morrell, Sr.  
As told to Gary L. Noller

I was born on October 4, 1917 in Boston, MA. My neighborhood was in South Boston where my father was employed as a butcher in a meat market.

Many of my favorite activities during my youth involved the Boy Scouts. At the age of twelve I was awarded the Boy Scouts of America Gold Medal for Heroism. One day in the winter of 1929 I was ice skating on a pond in Weymouth, MA when I saw a man at the other end of the pond fall through the ice. He was drowning in the frigid water. I went to his aid and was able to save his life. I am very proud of the award and the fact that I was able to prevent the man from drowning.

In September 1940, just before my 23rd birthday, I joined the Massachusetts National Guard. The next month I assumed my duties as a private assigned to the service battery of the 110th Cavalry, 26th (Yankee) Division. This unit still had horses. Our heavy armaments consisted of several French artillery guns.

It was not long before modernization efforts changed our unit. The 110th Cavalry was converted to the 180th Field Artillery Regiment. We no longer had horses. Along the way several members of the Harvard College ROTC joined our unit.

On January 16, 1941 our unit was nationalized into federal service at Camp Edwards, MA. We thought the activation was to be for one year. We spent time in training to include major maneuvers in the Carolinas. Near the end of 1941 we anticipated returning to our homes as our period of activation was nearing its end. But the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor changed all that.

We were quickly mobilized for overseas duty. We were moved out of Camp Edwards at night and without lights. We transferred to the Brooklyn (NY) Army Base. By this time the 1st Battalion, 180th FA split off from the 26th Infantry Division and became part of Task Force 6814 bound for the South Pacific. In January 1942 we boarded the transport ship *Argentine* for the voyage to parts unknown.

Our first stop was Melbourne, Australia. We stayed there for a short time and then we went to New Caledonia. New Caledonia was a French colony and had valuable natural resources such as nickel. The Vichy French, who were aligned with Germany, were in charge of the government. With our anticipated arrival the New Caledonians expelled the Vichy French and the Free French took over government of New Caledonia.

The Americal Division was formed on New Caledonia. During the process the 180th Field Artillery Battalion was



redesignated the 200th Field Artillery Battalion. On August 15, 1942 the 200th FA Bn. was redesignated as the 221st FA Bn., Americal Division, and my unit had no further changes in name for the rest of World War II.

Our first combat was to take place not at New Caledonia but at Guadalcanal. We arrived there in late 1942 and early 1943. The U. S. Marines had been fighting the Japanese army since August 1942. One of our major objectives was to secure Henderson Airfield. Both sides wanted control of this valuable asset.

Our guns dueled with Japanese artillery frequently. The 221st fired 155mm howitzers. Much action took place along a terrain feature that became known as Bloody Ridge. It was named this for obvious reasons as both sides sought to control this strategic high ground.

The Japanese artillery consisted of 105mm howitzers. The Japanese had a big disadvantage in having to hand carry ammunition to their artillery. The rugged passage was on the Maryuama Trail and this proved to be a costly logistical problem. In the end we held the Japanese off and they withdrew to Cape Esperance. They eventually fled Guadalcanal after suffering massive casualties.

The Japanese artillerymen were commanded by Major Akio Tani, nicknamed Pistol Pete. Little did I know at the time that I would someday correspond with this former foe.

I remained with the 221st FA through the battles in the South Pacific. In June 1944 I became First Sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery. I remained in the Army until September 1945.

After my discharge from the service I went back home to Boston. But I did not like civilian life so I re-enlisted and was assigned to the Army Air Forces. In 1947 this became the U.S. Air Force.







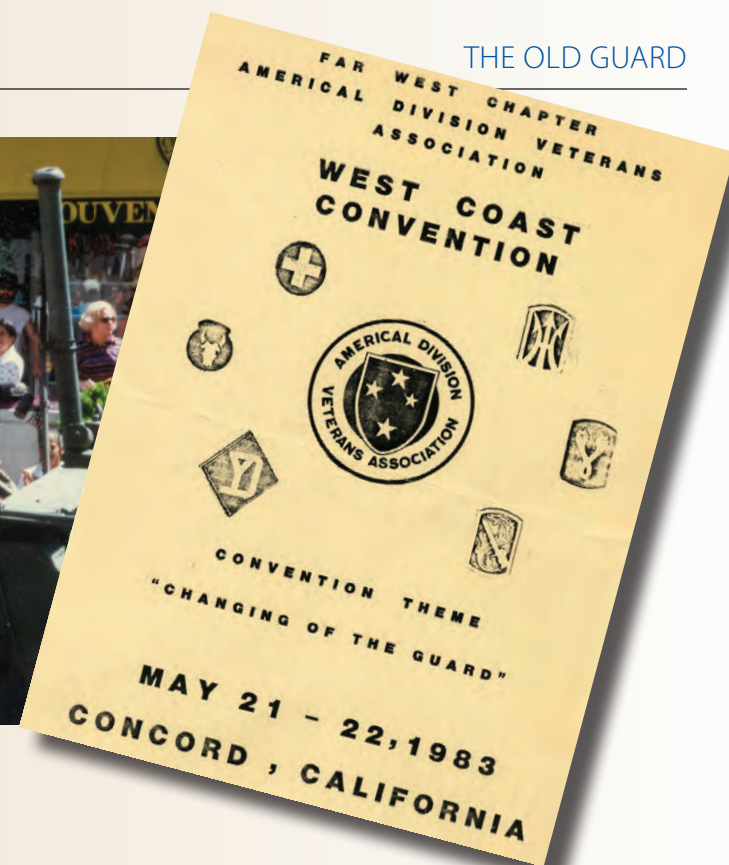
In 1955 I was stationed in Anchorage, Alaska and due for another move. But the family and I liked it in Alaska so I did not re-enlist. All together I had 15 years of military service. We stayed in Alaska for another ten years and then moved to Washington State.

I became active in the Americal Division Veterans Association. In the early 1980s I was appointed to form an ADVA chapter. The geographical territory of this chapter was to be all states west of the Mississippi River. This eventually boiled down to the current Far West Chapter. I held a chapter reunion in Concord, CA in May 1983. I held another chapter reunion in Reno, NV in 1984. Then in June 1987 I hosted an ADVA national reunion in Reno, NV. This was the first national reunion to be held outside the Boston area.

Bill McLaughlin was a very close friend of mine since our early days in A Troop, 101st Cavalry. One day Bill told me of his contact with Akio Tani, the Japanese artillery officer at Guadalcanal. They were in contact through an organization known as the Transpacific Old Foe Association. Tani had the distinction of being TOFA member number two.

I began to write to Tani in the early 1990s. He resided in Saitama, Japan and corresponded in English with hand written and typewritten letters. In a letter to me dated May 27, 1992 he wrote, "Thank you for the photo of my canon gun at Tanabasa, Kokumbona. I remember this scene quite clearly. I ordered my men to throw the aiming scopes into the sea so that the enemy could not fire our guns. The scopes, however, were not thrown away. This was my big mistake. This gun is now at the museum in Doma village in Guadalcanal."

In 1996 I again offered to host the ADVA national reunion in Reno, NV. Akio Tani agreed to make the trip to the United States and be a surprise guest at the reunion. Unfortunately, he became ill and passed away before the reunion was held. I regret that he was not able to attend the reunion and meet up with more of his former foe.



**Page 26** Coat of Arms of 221st Field Artillery. Old photo of Japanese 105mm "Pistol Pete" howitzers after capture on Guadalcanal, 1943.

**Page 27** Northwest Chapter Commander Lloyd Morrell rides shotgun in the Reno, NV western days parade in June 1996. The back seat is occupied by ADVA National Commander Steve Dennison and Sr. Vice-Commander Gary Noller (waving).

My official posts in the ADVA were as Far West Chapter Commander and then as Northwest Chapter Commander. I also served on the Executive Council and Nominating Committee. I have tried to help out in any way I could. I have enjoyed making new friends and I value them all very much.

I have organized several ADVA reunions and have attended many others. I enjoyed the 2006 reunion in Portland. I am very proud to have received the ADVA Lifetime Achievement award at the Portland reunion.

My health will determine if I am able to attend a future reunion. I do not get out like I used to. But I am always happy to hear from my old friends.

**[Editor's note: On December 13, 1986 I received a letter from Lloyd Morrell. He provided me with a copy of a recent ADVA newsletter and encouraged me to join the association. In his letter to me he said, "Through the process of osmosis the ADVA is fast becoming a nationwide organization that before long will be made up of just Vietnam vets. It is a solvent unit and the base is established for the perpetuity of the Americal name and heritage. Some of us older heads are pushing hard to pass it all on to you younger Vietnam vets who made us all so proud that our Americal heritage was in good hands." I am very appreciative of the support Lloyd and the many other WWII veterans gave to us "Vietnam boys" as we started to come out and seek our heritage. -gln-]**



## Engineers on the Move in the South Pacific

By Victor Lander  
As told to Gary L. Noller



The nation was stunned by the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. I was an infantryman with Co. B, 132nd Infantry Regiment when the war broke out. The 132nd was an Illinois National Guard unit and participated in maneuvers in Texas and Louisiana in the summer of 1941.

We quickly loaded onto ships and made the voyage through the Panama Canal and into the South Pacific. We were bound for parts unknown I wondered what all of this was going to mean to little ol' me. We heard that we may be headed for the island of Corrigedor but in March 1942 we arrived in New Caledonia.

I was a sergeant at the time but was lucky to have an opportunity to attend a six-week officer training school at Camp Stevens. I survived the course and received a promotion to lieutenant. I then moved from the 132nd Infantry to the motor section of the 57th Engineer Battalion. My previous work experience at an International Harvester tractor plant in Chicago gave me the necessary qualifications for the position.

In the beginning we did not have much in the way of heavy equipment. We had a bulldozer and several six-by-six dump trucks. As time passed we received additional equipment to include a motor grader, drag line, and a saw mill. We also had numerous smaller vehicles such as jeeps and five-quarter ton trucks.

Our first action was on Guadalcanal. We landed peacefully and began to get organized. Equipment and supplies were scattered helter-skelter in the camp area. I went with Captain Driscoll and our first sergeant to find some rations. Everything was stored outside and it rained almost every day. We managed to find some corn flakes that were in waxed containers. The corn flakes provided our first breakfast on the island.

We used the bulldozer to cut roads from the beach to the areas where the troops were fighting. The roads were used to take much needed supplies and ammunition to those at the front and to bring the wounded to the rear area.

We were always operating in sandy mud. This proved to be hard on the machine as it made the front rollers wear out

quickly. The U.S. Marines had abandoned a tank near the beach and I removed its track rollers and modified them to fit on our bulldozer. My commander presented me with a nice commendation for my initiative and ingenuity.

We obtained a great deal of labor from the resident population of a nearby island. We organized the men in groups of 25 and sent them by truck to our various units. They went to the quartermaster, hospital, ordnance, and anywhere else they were needed. We always had them helping us in the engineer units because we had much hard work to do. The laborers were fairly young men and were up to the hard tasks we asked of them.

One person out of each group of 25 laborers acted as a cook for the entire bunch. The cook made a fire and fixed a meal of rice and canned meat. The laborers dipped their hands into the pot of rice to get their share.

We had no paving materials so we made what was called "corduroy" roads. Our labor gang cut the trunks from palm trees and positioned them next to each other across a lane cut by the bulldozer. After this was complete the labor gang loaded dirt by hand onto the dump trucks. The dump trucks dumped the dirt on top of the tree trunks and the laborers smoothed it all out. The roads required constant maintenance due to the heavy traffic and wet weather.

We also used logs cut from palm trees as major timbers in the bridges we built. We had access to concrete reinforcing bar (rebar) and cut the rebar into shorter lengths of 12 inches to 18 inches. We then used the pieces of rebar as spikes to nail the timbers together and form the structure of the bridges.

One day we came across some small boats left behind by the Japanese. The boats could be carried by two men and when afloat they held eight men. We loaded the boats onto our trucks and took them to the front where our soldiers put them to use on the Matanikau River. This provided them a faster means of travel than using the trail through the jungle.

In addition to building roads and bridges we also cleared areas for other uses. We helped construct facilities for the artillery, quartermaster, hospital, and others. We used whatever materials we had at hand and we improvised all the time.





We finally succeeded in pushing the Japanese forces from Guadalcanal. We then moved to Fiji for some much needed rest and refitting. Almost everyone contracted malaria on Guadalcanal including me. On Fiji we received replacements to include eleven officers and forty-three enlisted men. But we were rarely at full strength.

Our next big push was on the island of Bougainville in the Northern Solomons. We left Fiji in late December 1943 for the 400 mile voyage to the former German colonial possession. We arrived in time to spend Christmas 1943 and I was still there for Christmas 1944.

Both sides fought hard for Hill 260. It was located near the Torokina River. This hill later became known as "The Million Dollar Hill" because of all the artillery that was spent during the fight for it. The hill was crowned with a very large Banyan tree with an observation post about 120 feet in the air. From this position one could see a large area to include positions held by Allied forces and Japanese forces.

I had the opportunity to climb the ladder to the top of the tree and observe the surrounding terrain. The observation post on top the tree was quite large and held two cots and several banks of field telephones. It also had a large telescope for viewing the surrounding area. I noted that our positions were not well camouflaged and I hoped that we would maintain control of the hill.

About this time we received a saw mill and quickly set it up. We cut over two million board feet of lumber with the saw mill. The boards were used for a variety of purposes to include framing lumber for tent buildings. We even used some of the lumber for the 57th Engineer Battalion headquarters tent. We supplied lumber for many of the other units and we kept some for ourselves. We ain't crazy.

The saw mill had a blade with a diameter of six feet. It was powered by a diesel engine. We fed local timber into the saw mill and had to be very careful with its use. Often the timber contained shrapnel from bombs and artillery shells. We tried to spot the shrapnel and remove it before we sent the log to the saw mill. If we missed the shrapnel it could be hit by the teeth on the saw blade and damage the blade.

The island received about 250 inches of rain a year and we were kept busy repairing washed out roads. Our job was eased a little once we received a drag line and rock crusher. The drag line made it much easier to excavate dirt to load on the dump trucks.

We also assumed the operation of a rock crusher. I changed the whole set up and had the crusher running with a great deal more efficiency. We quarried native stone for the rock crusher and used the crushed rock for a variety of construction purposes. We also made good use of a motor patrol grade to construct and maintain roads and grounds.

In early 1945 we made our next big jump and landed on Leyte in the Philippine Islands. I was assigned to battalion headquarters as a liaison officer. I did not like it at headquarters and wanted very much to get back to a company and be with the troops. I felt that my position at headquarters was that of a figurehead.

After our time on Leyte our next home was Cebu. I was put in charge of loading a LST (landing ship- tank) for the move. The LST was a large cargo vessel capable of being loaded and unloaded on the beach. The front of the ship consisted of two large doors that opened outward. A ramp could be lowered to the ground so that men and equipment could be moved in and out of the ship.

The LST had two decks. My job was to load portable Bailey bridges onto the lower deck. Men and lighter equipment went to the upper deck. The Bailey bridges came in sections that were connected together and fastened with large pins. It was quite a job to get these large items into the LST but I accomplished the task as required. I worked for one straight period of 56 hours without sleep.

The war would soon end. I was sent home in June 1945 after serving with all four companies of the 57th Engineer Battalion plus time with several infantry companies. I had a varied career during the war and I always received compliments for my achievements. I always thought of myself as being gung-ho and I always thought that I was a very lucky man.

I will be 96 years old on November 30, 2009. The report of my death earlier this year was greatly exaggerated. I am thankful to be alive and to able to have my stories recorded and shared with others.

***[Editor's note: Victor Lander resides in Gainesville, FL with his brother Donald. I regret that the earlier report of his demise caused concern to his many friends in the ADVA. But I am happy that he is doing well and has a great memory of the experiences he had as a soldier in the 57th Engineer Battalion. -gln-]***





## THE MAETSUYKER BEER PARTY

Richard Stevens, Colonel (Retired),  
(Then Corporal, M Co, 164 Regiment)

*(Editors Note: This article is reprinted with permission from the 164th Infantry News, March 2009)*

Living history. Personal recollections. Isn't our Editor doing a fine job of stimulating our memories to share them with others while we still can?

In this vein I want to put on paper what I think I know about what I'll label The Maatsuyker Beer Party. Those who were also billeted in the aft-most hold of that vessel on our trip between Melbourne and Noumea in April 1942 have firsthand memories of that of which I write.

On a Melbourne dock in three arduous days of twelve-hour shifts, 9-12 April, the 164th Infantry Regiment provided the manual labor in the transloading of our cargo from the American President Line's President Coolidge into three small aging Dutch registry cargo steamers, each temporarily carpentered to haul troops. The home port of the vessels - - the Maatsuyker, the Cremer, and the Van Heutsz - - was Batavia, Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) then recently captured by the Japanese. Their officers were Dutch, their crews Javanese.

Elements of the Third Battalion and perhaps others, but certainly including Company "M", were loaded aboard the Maatsuyker. Each of its cargo holds (two? three?) had been fitted out - temporarily - for troops. There were three cargo levels in our aft hold - - troops in the upper two, general cargo consigned to civilian interests in New Caledonia in the lower. It was to turn out that this cargo included a quantity of cased Australian beer in half-liter bottles.

Our upper troop level was typical - - a hollow square closely packed with double-decked wooden bunks surrounding a square hatch, open to provide ventilation. Only the lower (third) level was secured with rectangular hatch level components.

The aft cargo hold. It was entirely enlisted members who were located here. The officers were housed and fed elsewhere; perhaps there were passenger cabins.

Remember that these are my recollections. Certainly I was not a party to any inevitable subsequent investigation, formal or informal. But my memories are informed by those of others. Boy, did we talk among ourselves about this party for a long time later on.

Curiosity. Reconnaissance. Each of us is involved in the process every day. More of it in military operations later on could have saved a bunch of grief.

That's how the party started. It was evening, night had fallen. We were in our bunk beds, awake, lots of conversations, the areas dimly lighted. Unknown to the rest of us, some guys with a flashlight removed a lower level hatch cover component to take a look-see down there. Soon they found the beer. "Let's take just a few bottles, keep it quiet, and don't alert the others." But it was an infection and the virus slowly but surely spread.

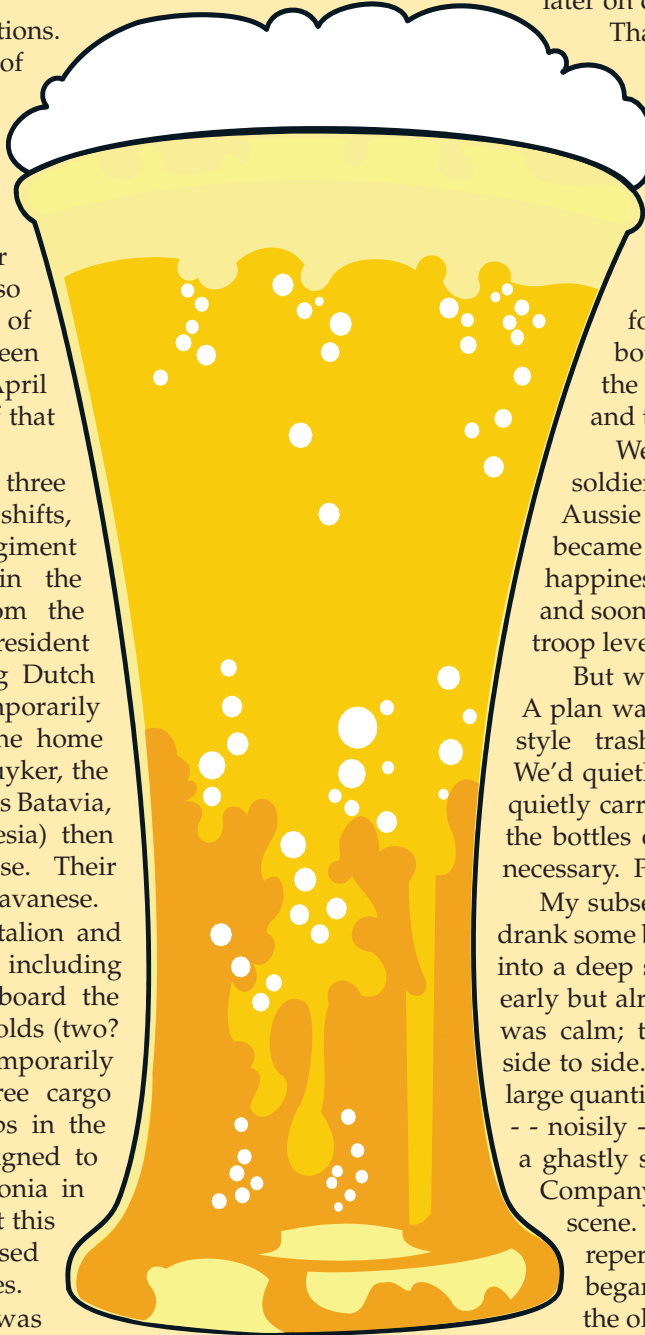
Well, you know what happens when soldiers get to drinking that strong Aussie beer. We on the upper level became aware that there was a growing happiness just below. We sent down scouts and soon the conspiracy had spread to both troop levels.

But what to do with the empty bottles? A plan was devised. There were large G.I.-style trash containers variously around. We'd quietly fill one; a carrying party would quietly carry it up on deck, and quietly pour the bottles over the rail. And do it again as necessary. Problem solved.

My subsequent memories are as follows: I drank some beer, (one or two, no more). I went into a deep sleep. When I awoke it was very early but already daylight. The sea obviously was calm; the ship was rolling gently from side to side. But, with each roll of the ship, a large quantity of empty beer bottles also rolled - - noisily - - from side to side. It was truly a ghastly sound. We were found out, soon Company grade officers appeared on the scene. However, our immediate dread of repercussions, beyond a cleanup, soon began to fade away. Life went on, and the old world kept on turning.

Months later, the pay of some was docked - - how many? Who? Certainly everyone I knew - - a little over three dollars. Restitution. But many paid who hadn't participated. "The fickle finger of fate."

Still I can't help thinking now about that nocturnal wake of the Maatsuyker as the result of our party - - a trail of empty floating beer bottles.





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*The Americal limited edition collectable knife with handsome collector tin is available for \$75.00 (includes shipping and handling). **All proceeds will go to the Americal Legacy Fund.***

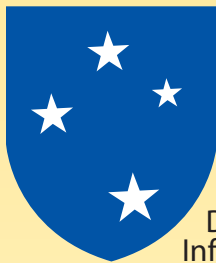


Mail your order to:  
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## The Americal Lineage



Constituted 24 May 1942 in the Army of the United States as Headquarters, Americal Division. Activated 27 May 1942 in New Caledonia. Inactivated 12 December 1945 at Fort Lawton, Washington. Redesignated 1 December 1954 as Headquarters, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and allotted to the Regular Army. Activated 2 December 1954 at Fort Amador, Canal Zone. Inactivated 10 April 1956 at Fort Amador, Canal Zone. Redesignated 25 September 1967 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and activated in Vietnam. Inactivated 29 November 1971 at Fort Lewis, Washington.

In World War II the division was only known as the Americal Division. In the Cold War the division was only known as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. In the Vietnam War the division was known by both names, but it was primarily known as the Americal Division.

### The Americal Legacy

Sixty-seven years have passed since the Americal Division was first activated in 1942. We know the lineage of the Americal Division, but what is its legacy?

In November 1945 returning World War II veterans formed an organization they named the Americal Division, Inc. The name of this organization was later renamed to the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA). We know the history of the ADVA, but what is its legacy?

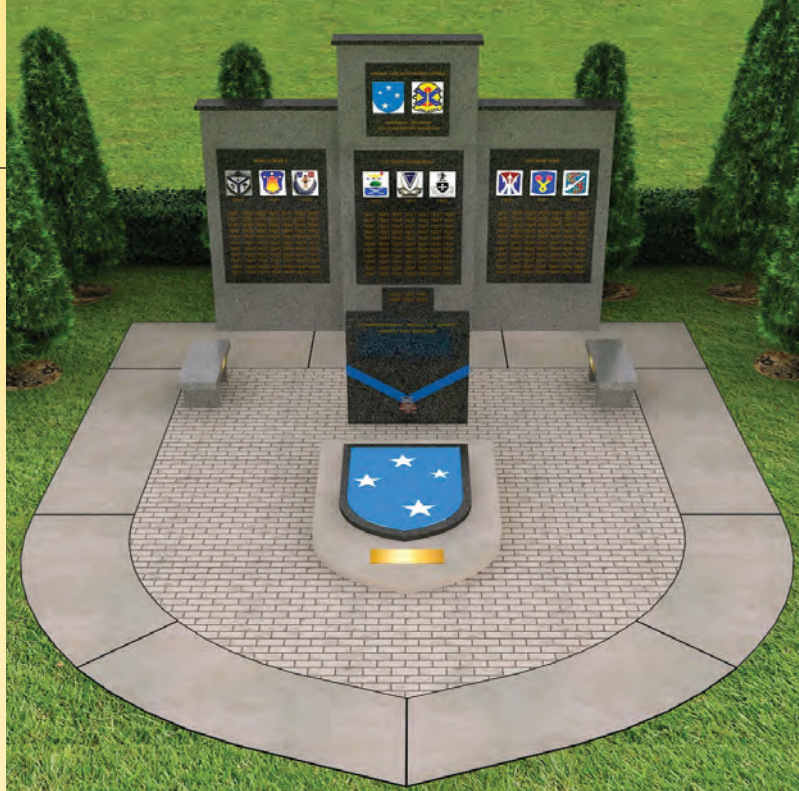
A legacy is a gift that one leaves behind for the benefit of generations that follow. It is a bequest passed on from a predecessor that may benefit the recipient for many years. What will the Americal Division and the ADVA leave as a gift for the many generations that will follow?

The legacy that will be left will be that left by the members of the ADVA. No one else will do it. If the members of the ADVA do not do it, it will not be done. It is now the time for the ADVA to create its legacy and the legacy of the Americal Division.

### A Call for Immediate Action

The current ADVA membership ranges in age from about 60 years old to more than 100 years old. The time to establish the Americal legacy is now. And it is urgent that you give your full support to this worthwhile effort

Commander David W. Taylor formed the Americal Legacy Committee earlier this year. The committee members include present and former officers of the ADVA. They are committed to developing and executing a plan that will be the pride of all Americal Division members. A central element of the plan is



the erection of fitting monuments to all who served in the Americal Division and 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division.

The initial action of the Legacy Committee is to design and build a fitting memorial to be erected at the Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, GA. Officials at the museum have sent a call to all infantry divisions to be represented on the Walk of Honor. The Americal Division will be one of the first units with a new memorial on the museum grounds. Plans for the Americal Division monument are well under way and need your immediate support.

### The Committee

The Legacy Committee is composed of the following members: Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant, Chairman; David W. Taylor, National Commander, Rich Merlin, Past Far West Chapter Commander; Wayne Bryant, Product Sales Director, Lee Kaywork, Southeast Chapter Commander; and PNC Gary L. Noller, Editor-in-Chief.

The committee had its first live meeting at the June 2009 reunion in Shreveport-Bossier City, LA. The most common mode of communication is through e-mail messages. The committee communicates regularly and sometimes several times a day. The committee is dedicated to taking all necessary steps to create and complete the Americal monument in the immediate future---months, not years.

### The Design

The monument to be erected at Ft. Benning will be made up of several parts. The platform of the monument will be a decorated shield-shaped concrete slab approximately 20 feet by 35 feet. A three panel stone wall approximately 10 feet high by 18 feet lone will be erected along the straight edge of the shield. Two benches and a stone pedestal will be placed in front of the wall. A raised horizontal

three feet by five feet shoulder patch insignia with complete the design.

The wall panels are composed of gray granite with black granite overlays. Distinctive full-color unit insignias are prominently displayed on the panels. A brief history of the division in each of the three eras of activation is carved into the stone wall. Visitors will get a concise synopsis of the dates, locations, units, missions, and achievements of the Americal Division and 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division.

The pedestal will recognize the valor of Americal Division soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor. The detail will include the recipients name, unit, date, and location at the time of the action. Eleven Americal Division soldiers received the Medal of Honor in Vietnam, one soldier received it in World War II.

One bench will recognize the creation of the Americal Division shoulder patch. The other bench will recognize the creation of the name Americal. The inscriptions on the benches will include the names of the soldiers credited with creating the Americal name and the Americal patch.

The large shoulder patch insignia will be raised above the surrounding platform and will be in full color. A plaque will describe the patch and explain the significance of the motto "Under the Southern Cross".

### Fundraising Is Underway

Fundraising for Legacy Committee projects is now in progress. A silent auction at the 2009 reunion resulted in over \$2,000 in funds. A commemorative Americal Division knife is now available for purchase. Proceeds from the sale of the knife will go to the legacy fund.

In November 2009 the committee mailed a 2010 Americal Division calendar to all ADVA members with an appeal for donations to the legacy fund. And the committee is making a direct appeal to all ADVA members and interested members of the public to contribute generously towards the work of creating the Americal legacy.



### Underwriters Are Needed

The committee is seeking significant donations to help underwrite the initial project. Donations of \$5,000 or more will receive special recognition. Major donors will be given credit for underwriting the portions of the monument. The following components are available for underwriting: The platform, each of three panels of the wall, the two benches, the Medal of Honor pedestal, and the raised shoulder patch insignia, and the inscriptions and decorations.

As of October 1, 2009 the South Midwest Chapter has indicated that it will underwrite the Medal of Honor Pedestal with a donation of at least \$5,000. Major donations are also being made by the East Chapter and the Southeast Chapter.

### Why Should We Do It?

It is hard to estimate the number of men and women who served in the Americal Division and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. Perhaps it was as many as 200,000. It is a known fact that over 5,000 were killed in action. They deserve to be honored with lasting monuments to their valor, courage, and sacrifice.

No one else will do this but us. It will not be done by the government. It will not be done by the Army. It will not be done by a museum or by a civic group. It is up to us and to us alone to see that the legacy of thousands of brave Americal soldiers is established. It is our duty. It is our obligation.

### What You Can Do

You can support this project and the projects to follow by providing generous financial support to the legacy fund. Urge others that you know to do the same. There is no amount too large and there is no amount too small. Your donations are appreciated very much. Don't give until it hurts, give until it feels good!

Do not let the Americal Division and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division be left out. We owe it to all who were lost while wearing the Southern Cross shoulder patch. And we owe it to ourselves. **Please act now.**





## Choppers: Icons of the Vietnam War

By Carl Jacob

Photos by Carl Jacob

Those of us in the infantry had only two ways to get to our area of operations (AO): we could walk in on foot or fly in on helicopters. Most of the time we flew aboard "Hueys". They could land in a small landing zone (LZ) and could easily get off again.

Once in the field all of our re-supply was brought to us by choppers. When we had casualties the wounded were taken out by helicopter "dust-offs". Heavy loads were lifted by Chinooks and Sky Cranes.

Close air support was provided by the Cobra gunship. It was a wonderful sight. We could call in the gunship so close that they were firing directly over our heads. This kept Charlie off our backs.

When we thought the enemy was in a certain area we would call in a hunter-killer team. The team consisted of a Loach and two Cobra gunships. The Loach would fly at treetop level until he took fire and then the Cobras would respond with massive firepower.

When a platoon or company came in contact with the enemy and needed support choppers could pick up soldiers from one area and rapidly transport them to the area needing help. Our company had so many combat assaults that most men were awarded the Air Medal.

The helicopter was the lifeline for the infantryman. The choppers brought in re-supply, took out our casualties, and were our major means of transportation. We were always thankful to have them on our side.

*[Carl Jacob served with the 2/1st Inf. and took part in the return to Kham Duc in the summer of 1970. He may be contacted at [Jacob@rconnect.com](mailto:Jacob@rconnect.com).]*

## A Chopper By Any Other Name Is Still A Chopper

By Gary L. Noller

A large variety of helicopters were used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. No matter how they were named in official terms they were all commonly known as "choppers". The whirling rotors produced the distinctive "chop-chop-chop" sound they sliced through the air.

Helicopters were used in combat prior to the Vietnam War. The UH-19 Chickasaw, OH-13 Sioux, and OH-23 Raven were used during the Korean War. After the Vietnam War the Army deployed the AH-60 Apache and UH-60 Black Hawk. Many Vietnam War era helicopters are still serving in the U.S. military and other government agencies.

**Troops waiting on the helipad at Hawk Hill for Chinooks to transport us to the field.**



**Huey taking off after bringing in a re-supply.**

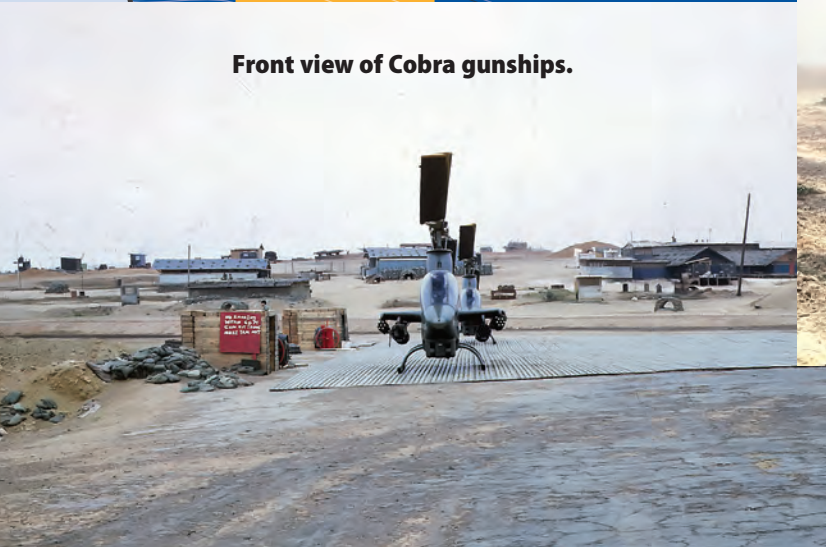


**Huey in flight transporting troops to the highlands probably on the way to Kham Duc.**





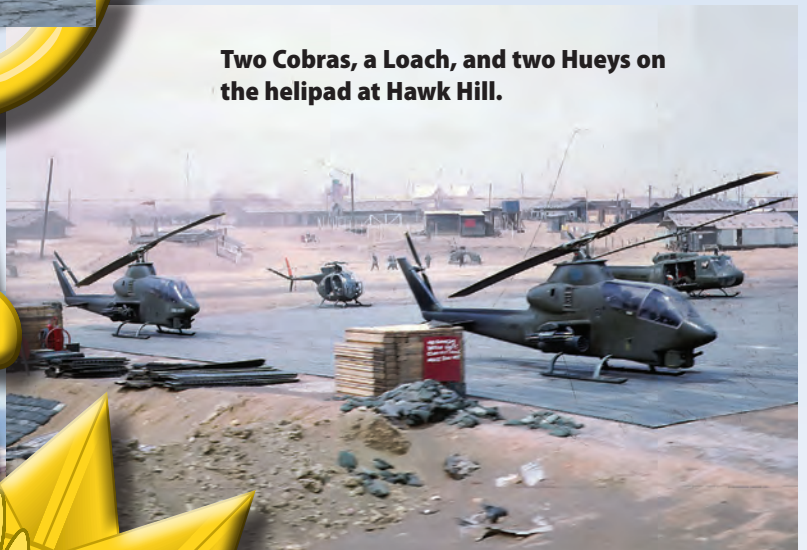
**Front view of Cobra gunships.**



**Above: Troops leaving a Chinook to the west of Chu Lai. Our company was pulling security as those arriving were unloaded.**



**Two Cobras, a Loach, and two Hueys on the helipad at Hawk Hill.**



**Sky Crane waiting at Hawk Hill for its next mission.**



**Below: Smoke out as Hueys approach to pick up troops for a combat assault. This was in the A Shau Valley to the west of Chu Lai.**





## On the Road to Mary Ann

By Max Levell

I have always enjoyed travel to remote and historically significant areas of Southeast Asia. I find the Asian culture fascinating and the people genuinely very welcoming and friendly to foreign visitors. I have traveled extensively throughout Vietnam over the last ten years and have enjoyed numerous visits to Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

I am a member of a Vietnam history group, a team of like minded individuals all with a historical interest in the Vietnam conflict. Members of our group range from 18 to 45 in age, and are employed in a wide variety of jobs from current members of the military, an anesthetist and most things in between. I am 30 years old, occupied with classic Porsche restoration, and am a part-time med-evac pilot. I currently live to the west of London in Windsor, England.

One of our former custom trips to a remote battle site was to Hill 881 South near to Khe Sanh USMC base. This trip took quite a bit of planning, was physically demanding, and at times dangerous: unexploded ordnance and rusty BLU cluster bomblets still litter the ground in the DMZ region.

Although challenging, we all found it very rewarding to research a battle and liaise with veterans. Then we were able to actually organise a visit to the site and were able to provide a modern day description and photos of the base to these veterans.

Our visit to Hill 881 South was several years ago. It was one of the very first visits since the base was abandoned. These days, the tour company we first planned this trip with, offers Hill 881 South as a standard tour.

Our most recent trip to a Vietnam battlefield was in March 2009 to Fire Support Base Mary Ann. We researched the history of FSB Mary Ann and read numerous veteran accounts. We also read the late Keith Nolan's excellent book *Sappers in the Wire*. This trip involved several months of planning and countless emails to both veterans and tour companies in Vietnam.



Mary Ann veteran Larry Pistole provided us with extremely helpful information for our planning. Larry supplied us with invaluable background information, as well as copies of period photos and maps. All of this came together to give us a solid picture of what terrain was to be expected, and once at the site, the orientation of exactly where we were on the base. Laminated copies of all of Larry's photos were taken with us on the trek.

The use of the Google Earth programme also proved to be very helpful. We were able to electronically overlay transparent copies of period tactical charts onto modern day satellite images. This gave us a very accurate fix of the location of the base.

I had a major problem trying to explain to our contact in Vietnam exactly where we were trying to go. By reading the war period maps I used the name Hau Duc for the closest village to Mary Ann. But my contact had never heard of this village. After weeks of correspondence he wrote to say that he determined that Hau Duc was renamed after the war and that the village of Tra My is now the closest to village to Mary Ann.

Will all tour details organised in advance, we set forth to Vietnam, via Laos, on March 5, 2009. We arrived in Vientiane, the capital city of Laos on March 6. My 30th birthday was spent finalising details for the trip to Mary Ann. We then sampled a few too many of the local Beerlao brews around town....

At this point, the Vietnamese local government in Hiep Duc district still hadn't agreed to our visit nor had they provided us the necessary visitors permit. Daily updates from our contact in Saigon provided us the latest information on the promised approval. Finally on March 8 we received the all clear for our planned trip.

After a whirlwind tour of Vientiane, we took a Lao Aviation ATR-72 turboprop to Hanoi where we connected with a flight south to Hue City, Vietnam. We spent several days relaxing in Hue, caught up with old Vietnamese friends, and researched the feasibility of next year's trip to FSB Ripcord.

One friend, a cafe owner in town, advised us to be cautious of the people in Hiep Duc district. He explained how they in particular had suffered greatly during the war, and because of this they were rather less friendly to outsiders than the typical Vietnamese.



We were advised to return to the safety of Chu Lai before nightfall and to avoid travel after dark, especially by motorbike in rural areas. Although we had only limited contact with the local people, it turned out that those we did meet were very courteous and happy to see us.

We spent the day before our departure for Mary Ann at Tan Thanh hot springs, a former North Vietnamese Army (NVA) R and R centre. The centre is set deep in the Hue countryside at the foot of rolling hills. This location is synonymous with the hill fights of the area.

At 6:00 AM on March 12 we took the train south out of Hue, over the infamous Hai Van pass, through Danang, and on to Tam Ky train station. Here we were met by our tour guide and private tour bus. Our guide was native Vietnamese but he was fluent in English. He was the perfect guy for the job - any problems encountered during our three-day excursion were swiftly resolved with a quick jabber of Vietnamese!

We got to know our tour guide and it quickly became apparent just how difficult it had been for him to obtain the necessary permits for our visit. I hadn't realised just how politically sensitive our visit would be. Our tour guide was insistent that

not only had our bus been 'bugged' in advance, but also that our driver was actually working for the government.

Our guide explained how on short notice the local authorities switched the tour company's driver for a different one. The replacement driver duly introduced himself and proved to be an interesting character. He was an ex-NVA regular. He did not spend his wartime years not around Tam Ky. He served further south in and around Saigon.

From Tam Ky we ventured south to collect two more of our team members. They flew from Saigon up to nearby Chu Lai airport for the trip. The Chu Lai airport is housed deep inside the former U.S. airbase. The new domestic terminal is set amidst original concrete revetments and hangers, and is naturally framed on one side by the South China Sea and by hills on the other.

The 85 km journey from Chu Lai to Tra My in Hiep Duc district took several hours. The roads quickly deteriorated as we proceeded further west. But the scenery became ever more spectacular. Brilliant green rice paddies gave way to jungle clad hills intertwined with rivers and ever more precarious looking bridges. Despite the bumpy ride it was great to once again escape

the well worn tourist trail and go in search of FSB Mary Ann.

From Tam Ky the main road inland from the coast is Highway 616. Beyond Tra My we hit quite a few fresh new roads and roads under construction. This totally threw me off the trail.

As expected, the town of Tra My proved to be very rural. It is a small farming town set midway between the coast and the border with Laos. Although firmly off the tourist trail, the area is financially benefiting from installation of hydro-electric power stations along the course of nearby rivers. The construction contract, worth just over \$10 million USD, was nearing completion whilst we there. As we were to discover the following day, the development of the dams was to have a major effect on the ease of our trip to Mary Ann.

A bad case of food poisoning temporarily immobilized me after arriving at Tra My. I spent the rest of the day and night confined to my bed in our guesthouse. The rest of the guys were invited to a dinner of roasted frog by the local chief of police. The police chief, fuelled with a little too much rice wine, demanded a \$500 cash payment for his "approval" of our visit. After much negotiation by our tour guide, payment was avoided



Mary Ann as it is today.



**Exploring the site of FSB Mary Ann.**

and we were back on track for a visit to Mary Ann the following day.

The next day we collected another “police observer” from the local police station. Then we drove out to the site of Mary Ann. After an hour of driving dirt tracks, we ended up at a small village hamlet in the middle of nowhere. Here we were introduced to an NVA veteran of the Mary Ann attack. Our guide explained how he personally visited the district a month before and spent several days locating one of the original attackers of Mary Ann.

Via our translator the NVA veteran explained how his team of sappers had been watching the base for quite sometime. Weapons and ammunition were planted around the perimeter of the base in advance. For camouflage his team dressed in black shorts and blackened their skin with charcoal from a cooking fire.

The veteran was very welcoming, friendly, and was pleased to see people returning to the battle site so many years later. We asked him about his feelings regarding Mary Ann and the Vietnam War. He simply smiled and said he was doing what he had to in order to defend his country. Although very much at peace with what had happened, he said he was sad for the losses on both sides.

Our research into Mary Ann had us primed for a hike across rough terrain as well as a river crossing.

Years earlier we were slightly under-prepared for our trip to Hill 881 South. This time we came prepared with a whole host of leach and insect repellants, Camelbak® water carriers, hot weather boots, snake bite and first aid equipment, and similar supplies. However, the reality was to be somewhat different.

We left the small village with our guides and began the final leg of our trip. As we ventured ever closer to Mary Ann the roads turned from mud to dirt, from dirt to gravel, and finally from gravel to asphalt! It transpired that the nearby construction of the hydro-electric power plant required the construction of a series of new roads and bridges.

A new bridge on Highway 616 spans the Song Trahn River. We crossed to the other side of the bridge and finally arrived at Mary Ann. The hill where Mary Ann is located is itself ringed at its base by a brand new road. Construction of the new power plant could clearly be seen at one end of the road.

We stopped our vehicle and went on foot. We proceeded up the shallow slope of the hill lead by the NVA veteran wearing only sandals on his feet. Heavy vegetation, razor grass, and leeches slowed progress. But just 20 minutes later we found ourselves at the very top of Mary Ann. We stood just to the right of the old helicopter landing pad, formerly known as the VIP pad.

The remains of bunkers and shreds of green nylon sandbag littered the ground. Using the maps we obtained from Larry Pistole, we soon orientated ourselves and made our way to the saddle of the hill, another former helicopter pad. Sections of concrete base still lay intact on the ground. In a nearby area the remains of a burnt helicopter cargo net lay scattered on the ground. Several C-ration accessory packets, .223 ammunition and AK rounds, and pieces of a M18 claymore mine all paid testament to the fighting that took place long ago.

Whilst on the hill we were always very mindful of the fact we were walking on hallowed ground. This is the site of tragic losses on both sides. In keeping with Vietnamese tradition, we left a bunch of smoldering incense sticks and said a few brief words to pay our respects to the fallen.

We made our way beyond the landing pad and past the former ARVN section to the 155 mm artillery area. Here we found hoop shaped pieces of a glass fibre packing case littering the ground.

All too soon it was time to make our way back to the bus. We exited the base via the old trash dump. We carefully proceeded down the steep side of the hill and onto the new road below. As we descended our guide explained how the local farmers had recently cut down all the vegetation on the steep slope. The plan is to terrace the slope and grow crops up the side of the hill in the coming months.

We walked the new road around the hill and back to the bus. We passed numerous heavy earth movers and construction trucks along our way. Our trip to Mary Ann was a success.

Despite having no personal connection with Mary Ann, we all found it a very humbling, moving, and historically fascinating place to visit. It was an honour to be able to visit the hill and pay our respects. Planning for our 2010 trip to FSB Ripcord will begin shortly.

I would like to give special thanks to Mary Ann veterans Larry Pistole and Tom Schmitz, and all others for their kind help in helping us research our visit.

## Pancakes, Peanut Butter, and Syrup

By Gary L. Noller

From time to time I glimpse the television news coverage of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the things that always catches my eye is how different the troops look from the way we looked 40 years ago in Vietnam. The individual combat soldier of today has much more personal combat gear than we ever did. This ranges from the highly sophisticated body armor to simple things like gloves, knee pads, and eye protection.

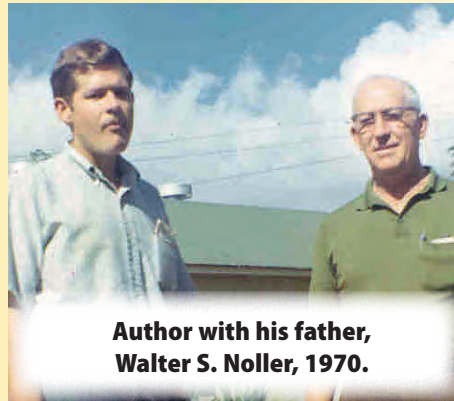
The troops also look chunkier than we did. They do not have the hollow sunken faces and the thin slender builds that we commonly saw in the bush. It appears that the troops today probably have access to much better rations than we had in Vietnam. And there is nothing wrong with that.

My momma always wanted big boys. And she had three big boys. I was always the biggest until many years later my little brother caught up and passed me. He may still have a slight edge on me today.

I entered the Army in September 1969 at 233 pounds. Some people gain weight in the military, some lose weight. With the help of my drill sergeant, SFC Hart, I was one that would shed a bit of my bulk. By Christmas 1969 I was down to about 200 pounds. Needless to say, mom was quite surprised. But this was not to be the end of it.

Circumstances soon took me to Vietnam and I was assigned to an infantry company. The old-timers did their best to knock the shine off us and make sure we knew the fun was over. Regardless of what we may or may not have learned in training, we were now thrust into the real thing. No more mess hall chow three times a day. We had to learn to pack our food and prepare it with almost no gadgets to help.

We ate C-rations almost all the time. We packed the cans in socks and tied them shut at the top. We often tied the socks to the outside of our rucksacks or stashed them in any pocket that had room. A case of C-rations had a variety of meals, most were edible although I would most likely starve before eating the turkey loaf. Beans and franks was probably the all-around favorite of most soldiers. I also found the spaghetti and meatballs to be okay and I was one of the few who actually sought out the lima beans and ham.



**Author with his father, Walter S. Noller, 1970.**

But my prized meal was the spiced beef. This came in a rather small can and it was similar to chili meat. A very fine meal could be had by putting a small amount of cheese on a cracker and then adding a dollop of heated spiced beef. I cannot think of any meal that was better than this.

We were to get a re-supply of rations every three days. But this seldom worked out on schedule. Most often we ate one or at most two complete meals per day. This combined with constant moving and a dearth of water led almost everyone in the bush to lose a fair amount of weight. I knew I had undergone big changes when I was able to fit into a small-long jungle fatigue shirt. I had not been a small anything for many years.

I only remember craving one food while in Vietnam. It was pancakes, peanut butter, and syrup. This was a common breakfast that mom fixed for us all through childhood. I vowed that when I got home my first breakfast request would be pancakes, peanut butter, and syrup.

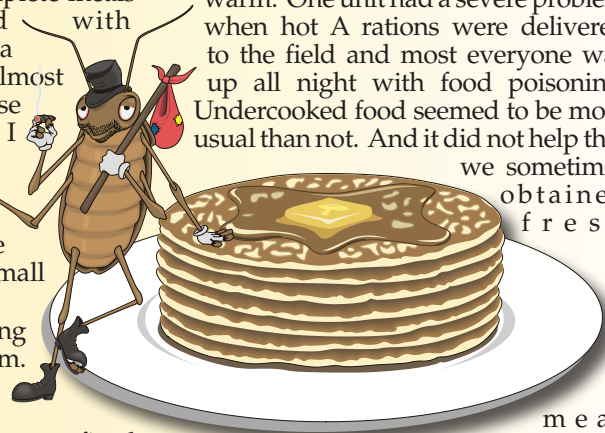
In the bush I had a ritual of putting the spiced beef cans in the bottom of the sock and the less desirable cans on top. This seemed to give me something to look forward to as I neared the bottom of the sock. Plus it meant that the larger and heavier cans would be eaten first. I thought this to be a very efficient strategy to lighten my load as fast as possible.

On one mission we missed our scheduled re-supply by a couple of days. Everyone was running low on rations and we finally got word that choppers were on the way. I was famished. But I had kept a can of spiced beef tucked away in the bottom of my rucksack for this very moment. I would wait no longer.

I took the can of spiced beef out and opened it with my p-38 can opener. I was not planning on heating it. It would be good enough just as it was. I cut the lid off with eager anticipation. And then I just stared at the prized meal and muttered a long drawn-out "sheeee-ittt".

It seems as if my meal included a slight adulteration. Right on top of my spiced beef was a dead roach. It was neatly centered at the very top of the can- legs up at that. It is if someone had packed it there on purpose just as one might add a maraschino cherry to the top of the whipped cream on a sundae. I hesitated. But not for long. I had humped that can for many days and had looked forward to eating my favorite meal. So with a flick of the plastic spoon the vermin was tossed aside and I ate happily and without regard for anything the roach may have left behind.

Getting a good meal in Vietnam was not easy to find. Even the mess halls on firebases had problems. Milk was delightful but most often it was served warm. One unit had a severe problem when hot A rations were delivered to the field and most everyone was up all night with food poisoning. Undercooked food seemed to be more usual than not. And it did not help that we sometimes obtained fresh

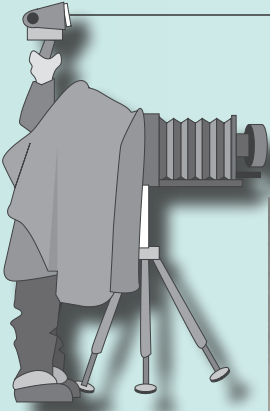


meat from the mess sergeant and then attempted to grill it over heat tabs. And we won't even talk about the ravages of the Hershey squirts.

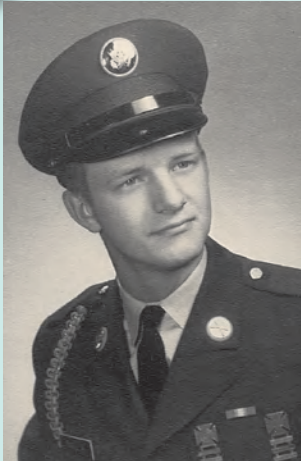
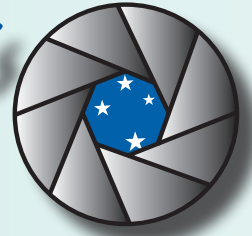
The end result of my sparse eating habits was that by December 1970 I was down to 165 pounds. I wrote my mom and asked her to get me some size 32 waist pants to wear on R and R. She replied that I had not worn 32 waist pants since grade school. I am sure she thought I was only dreaming.

When I finally arrived home in May 1971 my mom was astonished at my look. I had bleached hair, a deep tan, a drawn face, and easily visible rib bones. It is what she called my "Vietnam look". But it did not take long for me to erase the Vietnam look and get back to a size that was more appealing to mom. She just made sure that whenever I wanted pancakes, peanut butter, and syrup, I got it.





# Americal Photo Archives



## My Senior Class Trip

Michael Matalik  
(Co. A, 3/21st Inf., 196th LIB)

**A**



**B**



**C**

- A** My Uncle Sam gave me a great high school graduation present, an all-expenses paid camping trip (that included food and clothing!)
- B** The camp counselors encouraged us to use the firing range on the edge of our camp as often as possible. We could even use this larger gun called a 106mm Recoilless Rifle. We had all the ammunition we wanted (practice makes perfect).
- C** We took daily hikes; many times I was up front, called the "point man". Once I saw this nasty man and disciplined him. I took his rifle, called an "AK-47" but he wouldn't give it to me without a fight.
- D** Once we went to another campground called the "DMZ". There were some nasty people there. Some planes helped us by dropping what is called "Napalm".
- E** After 15 days at the DMZ campground my uncle was so nice he flew us back FREE to LZ Center.
- F** To get the bad people out of the area we had to break a lot of things in this village called "Nhi-Ha".
- G** Here we are taking a bath between the campground of LZ Baldy and the town of Tam Ky.
- H** There were a lot of not so friendly people around, who did not cooperate with us and hide their friends who constantly harassed us. Periodically our camp counselors would tell us to burn their shelters (an early version of "Urban Renewal"?)
- I** This is a picture of my platoon taking a daily hike near LZ Colt. Note the sugar cane in the distance.
- J** Here is my cabin on our campground called "LZ Center". My camp counselors called this a "Bunker". The scenery was excellent and I didn't have to pay extra for the view!
- K** We thought the mosquitoes were bad enough at camp but we picked up leeches on our daily hikes.



**D**



**E**





**Right:** This is me in the final weeks of my senior trip. That was forty years ago ... and every day I remember it still, in some small way. The trip will never be forgotten.





# NEW ITEMS



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## Eligibility for Membership

Membership in the ADVA is open to all officers and enlisted personnel who have served with the 23rd (Americal) Infantry Division in an assigned or attached status during the following periods of service:

<b>World War II</b>	1942-1945
<b>Panama</b>	1954-1956
<b>Vietnam War</b>	1967-1973

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## DEDICATION



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

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